Ethics and the moral limits of policy

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May, 1997
Implementation is often the orphan of the policy creation process, causing problems that raise ethical warning flags. When drafting policy, flexibility is often absent from programs. Discretionary powers are denied to implementors, resulting in a condition of abstracted judgment that can cripple or derail the original intent. For example, government policies toward the aging often create and form perceptions that radiate outwardly, becoming assimilated by corporations and institutions, and hardened into programs that are often implemented unsoundly. The moral composition of a community is affected. Society absorbs fragments of thought generated by these policies and forms biases and prejudices that it, in turn, often uses negatively in assessing the value and rights of older citizens. Mandatory retirement at age 65 and more specifically, the Social Security program, are examples of policies that may have once held merit but have either become obsolete or harmful, or both.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>...................................................................................................................</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>........................................................................................................</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2</td>
<td>BACKGROUND .......................................................................................</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historical Perspectives ........................................................................</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Industrial Factor ...........................................................................</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Attitudes ....................................................................................</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3</td>
<td>THE ART OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION ........................................</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy Effects .......................................................................................</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rules and Limits ....................................................................................</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How We Define Our Ends, or Do We? ..................................................</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4</td>
<td>HOW WE PERCEIVE MORALITY ..................................................................</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   | PART ONE  
|   | Absolutes, Relativism, and Moral Imagination ...................................... | 43    |
|   | The 'Good' Person VS. The 'Good' Society? ........................................ | 47    |
|   | Defining a 'Good' Society - An Impossible Task? .................................. | 58    |
|   | Judgment ..................................................................................................... | 64    |
|   | PART TWO  
|   | Defining Freedom .................................................................................... | 69    |
|   | Institutions ............................................................................................. | 73    |
|   | Moral Experience, Argument, and Beliefs ............................................ | 78    |
| CHAPTER 5 | CULTURAL COMPARISONS ....................................................................... | 91    |
|   | The Japanese View of Aging .................................................................... | 94    |
|   | Aging and Ethics in Other Societies .................................................... | 100   |
|   | Moral Implications .................................................................................... | 107   |
| CHAPTER 6 | ANALYSIS OF AGING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS ..................................... | 116   |
|   | PART ONE  
|   | Ageism ..................................................................................................... | 118   |
|   | Social Security ........................................................................................ | 124   |
|   | Duties of State ........................................................................................ | 133   |
|   | Realities and Possibilities ...................................................................... | 140   |
PART TWO

Recommendations .............................................................................................. 148
Perceptions of aging ...................................................................................... 151
Monitoring aging policy implementation ...................................................... 155
Ethical behavior and attitudes in the community ........................................... 161

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION .................................................................................. 168
Policy Limits .................................................................................................... 173
Findings and Assumptions ............................................................................. 178

BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................................................................. 182

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis considers three intermeshing topics that could have been looked at individually and each given far more time and space than has been done here. However, I found it interesting to tie their sometimes tenuous and sometimes blatant threads of dependency on each other together while at the same time defining each topic in its own right. Briefly stated, then, this thesis is looking at 1) how policies should be monitored and by whom, and by what kind of individuals during implementation - the most important time in the life of a policy; 2) the differences and similarities between the individual and the community in their perceptions and attitudes toward what ethical behavior is; and focus these two discussions by looking at 3) how our society perceives aging. I will seek to discover if treatment of the elderly is fair in relation to that of the rest of society; and if ageism affects the policies we create and the programs we enact on their behalf.

Ultimately, I hope to determine if there are indeed moral limits beyond which public, corporate, or institutional facilities cannot or should not range in order to be effective. In order to give focus to the issues addressed here I will look at policy toward the elderly, and the more specific recommendations will, in fact, be in that particular area. I hope to present
ideas that will be relevant to policies in general as well as to the aging and Social Security policies I have targeted within the body of this work. For instance, one recommendation will be that policies all contain built-in review systems that assess initial policy goals in relation to conditions existing at the inception of implementation. In doing this, it will address the actuality of changes as they occur within and outside of all dynamic systems, whether sooner or later, but which, nevertheless, impinge upon a policy's effectiveness and continued success. Another important factor to be addressed in relation to general policy efficacy is that every policy should build in measures that allow implementors to have a certain amount of discretion so that they can use their best hands-on judgment in order to immediately handle on-site problems and adjustments as these changes impact upon the function of their programs. So although this thesis focuses on and makes specific recommendations for policy regarding the elderly it also contains more general suggestions that developers of policy in other areas could consider.

Chapter Two first explores the concept of ageism in the United States. It then moves on to historical perspectives, from Cicero and Juvenal to our own Colonial times. We will touch on how the industrial era has had an impact on forming our current aging policies and programs as well as attitudes toward the elderly which tend to set them apart from the rest of society. These basically negative attitudes fostered a pessimistic outlook toward aging in general, while at the same time it was woven into the development of programs and the institutions that would oversee them.

The role of industrialization (as we shall see according to Simone de Beauvoir), has made it possible for the community to supersede the family in importance for an individual
in old age. For at this time of life needed services, even shelter, are provided, in many cases not by the family, but by the government. John Dewey will continue this theme and debate de Beauvoir’s premise by promoting the family as a sort of nurturing community based on the gathering and sharing of food, with different types of families evolving in different types of communities based on the economic theme that holds each together, i.e. industrial, nomadic, etc. Consequently, we often find that the family in a given society will, to a degree, mirror the society in which it is situated. This theme will recur later in Chapter 4 as we delve into the relation of a person to his or her community, as well as to the differences between the individual and the community regarding duties and morality.

De Beauvoir and Carole Haber will show how social attitudes are impressed upon the individual by the community in which he or she dwells. Along with this comes the status we hold within the community. If negative connotations relate to any segment of a society difficulty will ensue when attempts are made to deal with their particular problems. As such, either independence or dependency can ensue as a prevailing attitude in a targeted population segment. Artificial definitions come to replace those which arose from the natural aging process - a process that occurs earlier for some and later for others. Foner will counter this view in her assessment that these circumstances existed prior to both industrialization and urbanization. The chapter concludes that imposing derived characteristics on a group or class of people seldom correctly identifies individual attributes or differences, making it difficult for communities to adequately address the needs of all within such classifications, and poorly or unjustly serving many.

Effectual policy implementation is discussed in Chapter Three. It looks at policy
development as a two-stage process, and finds that implementing any policy creates an effect on its targeted population segment. But aside from this obvious manifestation, unwanted or unforeseen effects can occur, rippling through the community at large. These "externalities" can be, in some instances, benign or even beneficial, but often, due to lack of forethought in planning or attention during implementation, they produce undesirable side-effects.

Intellectual and moral competence are inseparable requirements in policy implementors. Deficiencies in either area will injure both the effectiveness and integrity of a program. In addressing these areas of ability, experience, and moral excellence we turn to Aristotle who provides a solid base from which to venture into assessment and exploration. Here, and throughout this thesis, Aristotle's guidance will gently weave its way, sometimes directly, other times through the voices of his later followers and modern advocates. But always, there will be an echo of his insightful urging to follow the mean.

Garry Brewer and Peter de Leon provide a look into the nuts and bolts of policy making and its implementation process, pointing out how it can be affected by government and outside activity.

This is followed by a discussion of "ends", how we seek to achieve and evaluate them, how we engage our policies with certain "ideals" in mind. Two points of view, those of Sherman and Edel, are discussed here; each viewing the subject from a different perspective. Yet in the end each viewpoint can be seen to enhance the other rather than to create polar opposition.

Chapter Four looks at the various ways we view moral virtue, and the institutions that help to frame and define our social values. Since the material covered here is so far-ranging,
it is necessary to divide the chapter into two parts. Many voices will be heard here, each
highlighting a different perspective in this multi-faceted discussion which ranges from how
judgment is formed, to differentiation of moral duties between an individual and a society, an
individual and a citizen.

The chapter begins by discussing the moral life, what it is that comprises a virtuous
act, and the components that are necessary for such action. How do we think when we
undertake to evaluate an ethical situation? The ideas of Mark Johnson will explain the
importance that metaphorical reasoning contributes to our understanding of how we act and
why. He discusses two somewhat extreme, opposed points of view - moral absolutism and
moral relativism - and suggests that positive facets of each view can be assimilated into a new
formula when combined with imagination, to create a new viewpoint for assessing moral
problems.

As the chapter proceeds, moral codes and rules are discussed by Emile Durkheim. We
see that many codes operate side by side within a society such as ours, and are derived from
the various religions as well as the ethnic roots of those who make up our diverse society. We
see how the rules governing the morals of an individual can differ from those governing a
society. This leads to a look at moral virtue, what comprises it or how it is formed, and how
it leads us to make the right or best choices under a set of given circumstances. In this section
the ideas of Aristotle and William Galston merge to highlight the similarities and differences
between a good person and a good citizen, keeping in mind that justice is an important
element of this whole. Dewey will join in to explain the importance of family relationships
and how they influence our value systems. The family is the first source of socialization for
the individual. Yet, the social outlook of the individual is made up of input that comes from more than one source - family, ethnic origin, and religion to name a few.

But, how do we know what is good? Ends - specifically the definition of ends and how we choose and define them - are important. This is a skill or an art that is taught by example. It requires that a system of social order functions in a fashion that fosters the ability to discern the difference between what is and what is not good. Thus we find that without proper education and preparation each new generation of young people will have difficulty arriving at decisions which are morally good for themselves and the society within which they are a part.

The next segment of this chapter attempts to define a “good” society. It begins by defining the concept of the good itself. Prompted by Robert Bellah, et al., we then inquire if a “great” society can also be a “good” society.

Input from various sources is assessed through a dialogical approach that touches on moral pluralism, the contrasts and similarities between modern and ancient ethics, and moral particularism. All moral viewpoints discussed in this important chapter help to give us a picture of the intricacies involved in defining the moral make-up of this country, while also showing why it is important to not let any extreme or even moderate view prevail in influencing our policies. Extreme viewpoints are generally held by a minority of the population. They have the capacity to harm a majority, while even moderate stances, if allowed to harden into dogma, have the ability to harm based on the fact that they no longer contain the elasticity necessary to accommodate changes in the environment and/or demography of the affected population. We will find, then, that in our country there are many
areas - from churches to professional organizations - which offer definitions of correct moral conduct.

The importance of critical thinking to the formation of good judgment is discussed next. This ability to judge well is the vital core for policy implementors. We look at the many crucial steps that allow this talent to form and emerge.

Thus, Part One of Chapter Four focuses on how a society is composed, its many facets. Yet we, as individuals, reflect the type of society in which we live, even while that society reflects to all others, in a sense, the type of individuals it contains.

Part Two will begin by looking at the concept of 'freedom', its various definitions, and how the meanings of the word have subtly changed over time as has the environment in which we live and the institutions that guarantee freedom itself. Dewey will point out why greater freedom requires greater responsibility and care in the interaction between institutions and individuals.

An in-depth look at institutions - from simple customs to formal government structures - is presented by Bellah, et al. Then, an example of how institutional change can be effected is considered. This is followed by an historical overview of how and why certain of our current institutions originated. We will find that individuals do not exist apart from institutions, nor do institutions exist without people to form and affect them. Problems arise when we attempt to solve social challenges by excising ethics from technical acumen, rather than using the whole of knowledge in an integrated fashion by which we draw on each part as the need arises. Moral reasoning is equally as necessary as engineering ability and analysis when we are attempting to understand and solve the challenges of living in a society.
In the section titled “Moral Experience, Argument, and Beliefs”, Aristotle highlights the differences between the community or political society and the family or daily companionship. Dewey, Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, and Abraham Kaplan introduce a look at morality - its language and our reactions to it. Different ‘languages’ - dogmatism, or liberalism, for example - can evoke different reactions dependent on the type of person exposed to each, and under what circumstance the exposure occurs. Social conditioning plays into this, so it is necessary, especially in a multi-cultural society such as ours, for implementors to be able to judge the good for society without being influenced by personal conditioning. Wisdom is required.

A main thrust of this chapter is to present and highlight the idea that the moral quality of the policy implementor him- or herself is every bit as important as having a policy that is well-thought-out.

Implementors are themselves an important part of the process of implementation. The quality of their abilities should therefore be as high as the quality one seeks in any product one purchases. In this case the quality to be optimally found in an implementor is multi-faceted yet cannot be broken down into component parts that can effectively be used alone. Each facet contributes to the whole of an implementor’s ability.

Chapter 5 looks at other cultures’ beliefs and ways of dealing with problems, particularly those arising with old age. Here, we find that some cultures revere rather than ridicule the elderly. In particular, we will take an in-depth look at Japanese society to see how another industrial culture views aging. Similarities as well as differences between Japanese and American aging views will be considered. Other societies are briefly touched on in order
to present the diversity of old-age belief-systems found throughout the globe in non-industrial countries. In doing this we will also be summarily looking at the ethical systems that guide these small-scale societies. Inequalities between young and old will be seen to exist even in simple social milieus.

However, we will also find that improved global communications as well as technological advances are altering the basic systems that have been in place in these societies for centuries, so that we must be careful not to be too quick to look to them for 'utopian' solutions. Ruth Benedict provides important insights into perceptions of 'normality' as it relates to a pan-cultural setting.

Abraham and May Edel provide much of the input for the discussion of how morality drives a given culture under a variety of conditions. So from culture to culture, myriad differences are seen in how old age is defined and treated. The importance of our culture in how we understand our world is highlighted by Christine Fry.

Looking at these many cultural differences on a global level may give us, on a national level, a new insight into how our multi-cultural country operates, and perhaps how it can improve operation where aging policies are concerned.

Chapter Six pulls together the three main areas of discussion in this thesis - policy implementation, perceptions of aging in our society, and how moral attitudes and ideas are framed. These three areas are used as a basis from which to examine a specific aging policy - Social Security. Questions are posed which probe whether or not this government 'pension' system can be improved or if it should be abandoned. Alternative measures are considered. Here, we analyze what prompted this policy and how it has come to affect both employed and...
retired Americans. In many cases, we will find that the elderly wealthy and middle class are, in effect, receiving a generous and unnecessary entitlement from Social Security. We will see how and why social conditions have changed since the inception of the program so that it no longer fits the purpose for which it was originally fashioned. This, it will be found, has occurred in part because designers and implementors of the program, in its early stages, did not have the foresight or preparation necessary to allow for flexibility based on demographic changes and other events that could, and obviously did, cause unforeseen externalities relating to its effectiveness.

In this chapter we will also be looking further at ageism, its positive and negative aspects, how it is defined, and how the existence of ageism itself can affect the very programs that are designed to aid the elderly. We shall see how value conflicts arise between generations and how these contribute toward a build-up of resentment on both sides of the generational gap. Views will be presented as to why aged individuals can now be perceived as being better off, financially and physically, than those of preceding generations.

Since policy recommendations are included in this chapter, making it rather lengthy, I have divided it into two sections, as I did with Chapter Four. In this case, the recommendations comprise most of Part Two.

Part One of Chapter Six examines the State and its obligations and duties toward its citizens. Looking at Social Security in this light, we will find that it is not serving our society as well as it could in some instances. As it is currently set up, it appears to penalize the few for the benefit of the many. But, as shall be seen, it is also serving a large segment of society which does not nor should not benefit from it. In other words, the 'whole' of working society...
is not being considered in the big picture, for all are summarily required to deposit part of
their wages with the government rather than with the investment instrument of their choice,
where retirement security is concerned. This, I believe, is a great wrong as well as a great
disservice to all employed Americans. The lack of choice stifles personal responsibility and
enterprise, and it encourages reliance on the State by the individual, in effect, allowing the
government to make an important personal decision.

Mandatory retirement at a specific age regardless of physical condition or financial
necessity is an institutional requirement that also needs to be reconsidered. Alternatives that
could be beneficial to both employers and employees are explored.

According to Peter Uhlenberg we find that life is centered in three areas for most
people: education, work, and leisure. In actuality, we will see that these areas are too rigidly
defined in terms of age in our country. Consequently, removing age-specific tags from these
activities is an area we need to concentrate on, for they only serve to promulgate ageism and
to foster generational resentment. Yet this does not mean that we should generalize rules or
do away with them, for they are necessary for handling moral problems that arise. I intend to
show that our government-managed ‘pension’ has lost its connection to the environment,
where its many ‘donors’ and ‘recipients’ are concerned. This lapse, in my opinion, is greatly
responsible for the moral and financial challenges that Social Security now faces.

Allowing private retirement fund systems to operate in lieu of Social Security for
those employed individuals who do not wish to participate in the government-run program
is, as will be argued, the only reasonable and fair way to salvage, supplement, or phase out
the crippled, existing program. We will see that other government resources on the local,
state, and national level are already in place to provide necessary programs for those elderly individuals who are truly indigent and/or unable to handle their own affairs.

Since many persons are now being provided a “service” that they neither need nor want, I propose that it is now time to seriously consider alternative approaches to the current Social Security policy.

The concluding Chapter Seven takes up a discussion that will center on the title of this thesis, “Ethics and the Moral Limits of Policy”. Drawing on what has been discussed in the preceding chapters, and adding to it with input from Elizabeth Wolgast, we shall consider “the moral limits of policy” as these may relate to the roles and actions that government takes in a society, and how these act upon the autonomy of the individual.
CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND

Ageism has been referred to as the ultimate prejudice, the final discrimination, the most merciless rejection.¹

Age stratification is a system by which people are classified by their age. Most societies incorporate this system into their structure, using other classifications such as race, socio-economic status, and sex as well. There is either an implicit or explicit ranking, from higher to lower, in all of these systems. The elderly hold the highest position in gerontocratic societies while the youngest hold the lowest. In our society, according to Erdman Palmore, the middle-aged tend to hold the most power and prestige, children the least, and the young and old rank in between. This ranking is a form of ageism which is implicit with age stratification systems.²

Most Americans exhibit prejudice against seniors in several ways. This comes out in various studies which have continually discovered that most of those participating believe erroneous stereotypes about the elderly, such as:

-- the majority of aged are not able to adapt to change;
-- most are lonely, bored, often irritated and angry, and live alone;
-- most live in poverty, or in nursing homes;
-- the aged are more often victims of criminal acts than

13
younger persons; and
-- the aged are injured more often than others.\textsuperscript{3}

Ageism is mirrored by use in our society of such idiomatic expressions as "old crock", "old duffer", "old fogy", "old goat", "crone", "coot", "geezer", and "hag", to name a few.\textsuperscript{4}

Sociologists speculate whether or not the elderly should be classified as a minority group. Perhaps they should, because, like Blacks and Hispanics, they too are subjected to discrimination and prejudice. Gerontologists have noted that mere stereotyping does not represent older adults nor does it measure our responses to them. Like all facets of any culture, we see in the elderly a variety of representations: the wise and foolish, the nice and mean, the rich and poor, the strong and weak. Stereotypes are not a real measure of discrimination for or against the elderly nor of prejudices relating to them, for these are complex reactions.\textsuperscript{5}

The elderly in our culture are expected to retire at a specific time, take care of their assets and health, and to reap the rewards and privilege of receiving Social Security benefits. Such age norms can be construed as ageism depending on whether the assumptions in which they are grounded are prejudicial or not, and whether or not those assumptions and expectations are appropriate and realistic. When age conflict occurs it is usually over values or scarce resources. A disadvantaged age group may desire more power or goods while the more privileged seek to retain and protect what they already have. While this usually takes place within such institutions as the family or the workplace\textsuperscript{6}, it also extends to the wider community at times. For instance, recent concerns have been aired by young adults over their
doubts that they will ever see any of what they are currently paying in to the Social Security system.

A newspaper article recently noted the scepticism felt by the young, due to the deficit and "bleak economic times". The elderly are seen as now receiving more than their fair share of the "economic pie". Their interests are seen as being in collision with those of the young, and they are perceived as holding too much power and wealth. In turn, some elders reject this view stating that they worked hard for what they have, and the young do not carry as much responsibility as they did when they were young.\(^7\)

Twenty years ago, Simone de Beauvoir pointed out that Americans have removed the word "death" from their vocabulary while also avoiding allusion to great age. She notes, however, that this has become a phenomenon of all Western industrialized nations. Aging is perceived as a sort of shameful, forbidden subject bound by a "conspiracy of silence". In such circumstances the elderly become outcasts in their own societies; and she sees this social neglect as a criminal offence.\(^8\) This "fallacy", as de Beauvoir calls it, is further endorsed by legislators and economists when they refer to the non-active segment of society as burdening the active segment, forgetting that today's elderly raised and educated today's middle-aged; and those who are currently active will, soon enough, join the ranks of the non-active. She believes that this short-sighted point of view does not recognize that when they take care of the elderly they are insuring their own futures.\(^9\)

Many other cultures tend to admire the characteristics of old age while ours tends to equate old age with ugliness and youthfulness with beauty. In Japan, for example, wrinkles
and silver hair are frequently associated with maturity, wisdom, and long years of community service.\textsuperscript{10}

On one hand, Western society offers the aged a "purified image" of themselves as white-haired, venerable sages rich in experience and elevated above the common state of life, but if they should deviate from this unrealistically perceived standard of how they must be, they then seemingly fall below it,\textsuperscript{11} and somehow fail.

Many people decide that the elderly are unable to carry on with their jobs, and that the ones who do not retire are unproductive. One third of college students surveyed think "older workers usually cannot work as effectively as younger workers". This prejudice is the framework for the policies of compulsory retirement and discrimination which are still seen in hiring, retraining, and promoting elderly workers.\textsuperscript{12} How have we arrived at these views? Is there rational justification for holding them, or have we unthinkingly gone along with popular sentiment and misperceptions? And how have our public policies added to the practice of ageism?

\textbf{Historical Perspectives}

In the U. S. in colonial times, according to Palmore, "positive ageism" was practiced. This was based on several factors: elders' control of land and crafts; elders as a primary source of information; a relative paucity of elders; and the power of the family, traditions (dominated by elders), and the church. He sees these factors as having been reversed irrevocably in current times since neither church, tradition, nor family are as powerful in society as they once were. Television, magazines, educational institutions, and books are all perceived as now

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eclipsing the role of the elder as a source of information. But this does not necessarily indicate that information emanating from the media is equal to or better than wisdom or good judgment.

In order to better understand the roles that seniors now have in our society it is necessary to look at the roles they have had in Western culture in the past. Depending on the era depicted, observers and historians present varying perspectives on aging as well as on the treatment of the elderly within their particular social spheres.

Cicero, the Roman author, orator, and statesman (106-43 B.C.), wrote of old age as a time of great attainment, particularly for men, during which they were capable of providing important contributions to society. He likened old men to the pilots of ships:

Just because they sit quietly does not mean they are idle, for great things are accomplished by deliberation, influence, and judgment, qualities with which old age is usually blessed.

Old men have been active intellectually. Some say that memory becomes weaker with age. Certainly that may be true if the individual is not too bright to begin with, or fails to use his memory.

Old men are active in educating. Nor does old age prevent study. Solon prided himself on learning something new every day. Socrates mastered the lyre when an old man. Cato... learned Greek...

Old age makes the body weaker. Physical strength is relative. Athletes certainly can become flabby. However, it is ridiculous to mourn an inevitable change. Each age has its own characteristic, e.g. weakness in childhood, strength in youth, maturity in old age. Since life is lived only once, man must make the most of whatever each period offers.

Proper attention to physical and mental health will counter the negative aspects of old age. Intellect activity is a must. A man who spends his life in intellectual pursuits will not feel old age creeping up on him.

Man has been given no better gift than his mind; nothing is more inimical to it than bodily pleasure. Where pleasure rules, virtue cannot exist. Nor can a man under the influence of pleasure use his mind for thought and reason.

Old age has its privileges. These privileges derive from the authority and prestige which crowns old age. However, certain types of prestige will
only be enjoyed by those who lay the groundwork for it in their youth. It is the result of a life well-spent. Sparta honored old age best. In the college of augurs at Rome, the oldest is respected even more than those holding the highest curule office, and is always asked to speak first. There are no sensual pleasures which can compare to those which emanate from prestige.

Defects of old age are due to character. The elderly are often accused of being peevish, irritable, difficult, even avaricious, but all old men are not this way.

Nothing lasts forever. Nor can we turn back the clock. Therefore each must be satisfied with his allotted span and live it as best he can. Nature decrees that the old shall die. Whatever happens according to nature should be considered a blessing.14

However, a little over one century later the poet and playwright Juvenal (55-140 A.D.), depicts the elderly Roman male in quite a different light:

Yet how grisly, how unrelenting are longevity's ills! Look first at your face, you'll see an ugly and shapeless caricature of its former self: your skin has become a scaly hide, you're all chapfallen, the wrinkles scored down your cheeks now make you resemble nothing so much as some elderly female baboon in darkest Africa.

But old men all look alike, all share the same bald pate, their noses all drip like an infant's, their voices tremble as much as their limbs, they mumble their bread with toothless gums. It's a wretched life for them, they've become a burden to their wives, their children, themselves; the noblest and best of them become so loathsome that even legacy hunters turn queasy. Their taste buds are ruined, they get scant pleasure from food or wine, sex lies in long oblivion -- or if they try, it's hopeless... What can the future hold for these impotent dodderers? Nothing very exciting...

Other senses deteriorate: take hearing, for instance. How can the deaf appreciate music? The blood runs thin with age, too: now nothing but fever can warm that frigid hulk, while diseases of every type assault it by battalions.

But worse than all bodily ills is the senescent mind. Men forget what their own servants are called, they can't recognize yesterday's host at dinner, or, finally, the children they begot and brought up.15

On the surface, it is difficult to believe that each author is speaking of the same culture. However, in the intervening century between the two, cultural influences could have subtly changed the outlook toward the old. But perhaps the answer is as simple as noting that
each writer approaches the subject from a different perspective; each, obviously, was serving his craft in his own way. Cicero was a statesman, used to influencing people and being treated with respect. Juvenal made his living by making people laugh, by pointing out the ridiculous. Yet each portrayal of aging is probably true for certain types of people. Cicero gives the most thoughtful and well-rounded assessment, while Juvenal has used caricatures that emphasize the worst possible scenario. Whatever the reasons for these differences may be, it is evident that we can draw parallels between perspectives held in ancient Rome and those currently held in our society regarding aging. It is not difficult to find ample evidence of both veneration and satirization of the elderly in our society.

According to Haber, around the middle of the nineteenth century the unique problems of the elderly became the focus of businessmen, charity workers, doctors, social workers, and social theorists. The writings of these "experts" showed the elderly to be without much purpose within the framework of an industrial society, and were centered particularly upon those elderly who no longer were shielded by traditional justifications of prestige. These policies resulted in tending to further segregate the elderly from their communal origins. The experts saw the elderly as having little of significance to contribute to society, and this outlook was extended beyond the realm of those suffering from illness and poverty. But perhaps it is now past time to challenge the scope and direction of this extension.

This attitude became institutionalized in programs which were begun to assist the elderly and manifested themselves in the form of institutions and asylums, geriatric medicine, and pension plans. These programs all focused on the removal of the aged from industrialized society, seeking to house them in an environment purposely set apart from the younger
generations. These measures, in their formulation, reflected the beliefs of the experts that usefulness and productivity were ended for this segment of society. Ironically, these pessimistically based views of aging had been created as a means to "assist" the elderly. The problems of the elderly had created an awareness and concern that was, in fact, genuine. Social Security, as we know, was enacted; retirement homes began, and focused on the special needs of the elderly. This was all done because of a seemingly newly developing social conscience that could not sanction the perceived outright abandonment of the aging. But some policies which affected the aging had been implemented without full consideration of the far-reaching effects they might induce. Chapter Six will concentrate on and further develop this theme. Once a policy is in place it needs to be evaluated to be sure that it is doing what it was meant to do, to be sure that it is being used the way it was meant to be used. This will be more widely explored in the following chapter on policy implementation.

Nancy Foner points out that in pre-industrial America adulthood merged with old age without "institutionalized disruptions". Work and parenthood were the two major social roles for adults, and these periods flowed over an entire lifespan. Compulsory retirement and an "empty nest" were unheard-of terms. It was only after older people were gradually ousted from the labor force along with the decline of parental functions, in their later years, that a new awareness of old age led to age segregation.

Even during the colonial period of the U. S. certain types of people were always characterized as outdated or overaged. Among these were elderly individuals who did not have wealth, family, or occupation to back them up. They were a powerless group. Many were boarded out with neighbors, passed from town to town, or were placed in almshouses.
to pass their final years in poverty and weakness. These superannuated elders retained tenuous ties by which they could stay integrated within society.19 Yet we are often told that old age connoted esteem and honor in the colonial era.20 This disparity between descriptions of conditions experienced by the elderly does not necessarily mean that one is true and one is false. We would have to examine the points of view taken by each historical recorder to find the underlying reason(s) for such opposing views. I believe that the description varies depending on the race and social class to which particular elders belonged. Then, one would have to weigh the possible differences in class and race between the recorder and the recorded. Finally, we would have to find out if the accounts given were written during the time being written about or if they were written during a later period and perhaps tinged with romanticism or other prejudicial leanings.

In contrast to these colonial measures, the programs later enacted during the industrialized era of the mid-nineteenth century did far more than rescue the elderly from the almshouses. These policies did not call on the elderly to do piecemeal work for charity organizations based on their abilities. Rather, the elderly simply found themselves institutionalized. Age restrictions calling for mandatory retirement actually were part of a rational effort to alleviate myriad problems. In a sense, using age as a determining factor eliminated many uncertainties in an era where urban and industrial growth seemed to magnify the complexities of society. This became a way to measure one's place in the world. As each year passed, a person moved through planned stages. In large urban areas, during the mid-nineteenth century, children were placed in grades at school according to their chronological ages21 rather than their abilities, as had previously been done.
Our current concept of adolescence did not start to assume its present meaning until the late nineteenth century. It was at this time that entry into the work force was delayed due to prolonged schooling. The effects of sweeping age-based regulations began to be more fully felt in the aged population by the early twentieth century. These regulations, in some respects, were not a bad thing in and of themselves, because of child labor laws, which addressed the exploitation of school-age children.

Due to the trend of supplanting the wisdom of the elders by way of the mass media and educational institutions, positive ageism became greatly reduced. This also came about in part because after the American Revolution an emphasis on secularism, equality, the free market, and individual achievement began to accelerate. Positive ageism was affected by these ideological developments. In addition, negative ageism was spurred, after the Civil War, by modernization trends whereby the skills of older workers were rendered obsolete.

The Industrial Factor

According to de Beauvoir, the advance of industrialization as a whole has led to a "progressive dissolution of the family unit". In industrialized countries the marked aging of the population since the 1920s has led to the community taking the place of the family. The economy of industrialized countries was founded on profit and this has come to rule our entire civilization. De Beauvoir strongly believes that humans are of interest [to society] only in so far as they are profitable, being otherwise tossed aside and regarded merely as rejects and scraps in the final fifteen or twenty years of their lives. This treatment of the elderly reveals what she calls "the failure of our civilization". She believes that society would be
profoundly moved if only it could see this obvious truth. However, one has to wonder how "the community" delivers a comforting hug, wipes away a tear, provides a sympathetic ear, or delivers any other of the practically indefinable comforts engendered within a loving family circle. Perhaps de Beauvoir's point is that it cannot, but this is not made clear. Does it not seem that what the community attempts to provide are services? And at the base of policies providing these services, do we not find an ambience that promotes a shift away from family stability toward fiscal reliance? The community can supply medical treatment, food to the hungry, and schools in which to learn a new trade or to update an old one. But never can we truly believe that it takes the place - or even attempts to do so - of the "family unit". If some elders are ignored by their families public assistance can and will care for them physically but is incapable of providing the loving care and attention that can only emanate from one's personal circle of friends and relatives. Love and caring has to be every bit as important as community services to the health and well-being of an elder. I suspect that de Beauvoir did not address this because it would have blurred the lines of her argument, for she was intent on showing that the elderly are, in many cases, discriminated against.

Dewey enlarges on and investigates this theme more deeply. Looking at the concept of family itself, he sees the family as being, first and foremost, a food association on which the notion of community is based. He backs up this central idea by referring to anthropological research findings that clearly place the family unit as a centralized community for locating and distributing food. Thus we find that, in principle, there is a family wherever community action is taken together for the sake of food. The special impetus for the community has been an economic one. This principle holds true, in general, for various kinds of family life.
Consequently, in his view, if we have an industrial society, under certain relations, we will be quite certain to find a given family type, whereas an agricultural life will offer up a particular, and different, type of family life. It follows that the nomadic life would engender yet another style of family life. We see by this that the element of stability in family life has a direct relation to that present in the economy. The evolution of family life is, therefore, concurrent with the evolution of economic stability. Thus, we can have many concepts for the "stable family", none of which may attain an ideal, but where, within all given family systems, the basic necessities - such as food, shelter, and protection - are met.

Up until the introduction of the factory system the family was essentially an economic unit, according to Dewey. It is still a unit of consumers, which points out what he presents as "the organic interaction" between the economic and the family institutions. Economic difficulty related to old age is simply another aspect of this interaction. If economic worries were an isolated matter, this would be relatively simple to resolve. But the ability to save is also tied into this problem. These issues, therefore cannot be solved at the individual level but must be addressed at the social level. And, it appears that they must, in being thus addressed, be viewed not as, for instance, "the problem of the elderly", but as a series of related issues in a continuum. Expressing this another way, we must see the problems of the elderly as individual subsets (financial, health, nutrition, mobility) of the issue of the elderly in society, which is itself only a facet of the greater issue of the overall health of that society.
Social Attitudes

Old age, according to de Beauvoir, not only changes the individual's relationship with time, but also with his or her own history, and with the world. Since we live in a society rather than "in a state of nature", in old age as well as in the preceding periods of life, the society to which we belong imposes our status upon us. Thus we become "conditioned" by society's practical and theoretical attitudes toward us. As long as our elders are perceived as being apart from the community there will be problems in dealing with them and difficulty in resolving their problems.

Haber believes that there is no doubt that age-based measures and the beliefs on which they were based have had a great impact on the elderly. By 1970, three fourths of all men over age sixty-five were retired. Ironically, these measures have ensured the dependence of a great number of the elderly in an attempt to assist those suffering from illness and poverty. The programs of this policy have separated many of the elderly from the means that once assured their ongoing prestige. In effect these programs, although well-meaning, end up defining the natural aging process as something suddenly defined artificially. Age becomes analogous with decline and uselessness. An individual who is productive and active at sixty-four is suddenly, upon becoming sixty-five, no longer a valid contributor to society. His or her talents have just dissipated. This social attitude appears to be a matter of perception that is engendered by the language and impersonal administration of the programs themselves. It also presents an image of elders as so many sheep docilely waiting to be herded. Surely that cannot be.
A different perspective, however, is aired by Foner who states that the premise that changes in age relations occurred after industrialization is now being challenged by historians of aging. She cites studies which show that, for instance, in the English population, extensive shifts in the proportion of the aged did not come about until more than a century after industrialization occurred. And in the U. S., the noticeable undermining of the authority of the elderly was begun well before urbanization, industrialization, or mass education had any effect here. The elderly in Europe and America never existed in idyllic circumstances in preindustrial eras, according to this view. Their actual condition was a mixture of some real power, cultural derision, official respect, and ample economic and physical degradation which, therefore, saw improvements in some respects while it deteriorated in others with the beginnings of modernization. In pre-industrial Western societies, for instance, the condition of the elderly was varied according to class, racial group, and sex. These variations were found not only among those societies but within them. We can also see many continuities between the past and present conditions of the elderly, and cannot absolutely state that they were better provided for in pre-industrial times than they are now. Foner states emphatically that:

There is no reason to suppose that in the traditional era deliberate provision was made for the physical, emotional or economic needs of aged persons, aged relations or aged parents in a way which was in any sense superior to the provision now being made by the children, the relatives and the friends of aged persons in our own day, not to speak of the elaborate machinery of an anxiously protective welfare state.

Foner appears to have a more realistic view here of the condition of the elderly with respect to historical changes. Realistically, their condition would have to be a mix since people differ
so completely in areas of economy, power, class, background, education and mind-set. Social change is never wholly bad nor wholly good. Certainly some individuals will benefit while others are not affected by policy implementation. The challenge is, I believe, to have policy facilitators administer their programs with these differences in mind. Affixing a stereotype on a whole class or group of people rarely targets anyone correctly.

Before delving further into policies regarding the elderly we need to take a break and look at the components of policy implementation and its importance in the attempt to create better ways of dealing with social issues.

2. Ibid., 14.

3. Ibid., 4-5.

4. Ibid., 5.


9. Ibid., 3.


11. de Beauvoir, 4.

12. Palmore, 22.

13. Ibid., 176.


17. Ibid., 126,127.


19. Haber, 2.


21. Haber, 127.

22. Foner, 4.

23. Haber, 127.
24. Palmore, 177.

25. de Beauvoir, 209.


28. Ibid., 375.

29. de Beauvoir, 9.

30. Haber, 129.


32. Ibid., 199.
CHAPTER THREE

THE ART OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The art of policy implementation might well be modeled after Aristotle's sense of the art of moral well-being. We should approach our moral challenges in a manner of enthusiastic investigation, fitting the right program to the right purpose, at the right time, and for the right reasons.¹ Not directly facing these challenges out of a fear of change or from a desire to maintain the status quo can be readily seen to be self-limiting and potentially maladaptive or even destructive to the community. Consequently, certain systems within the substrate of the social structure can and will fail, or at the least, falter and get off track, and they will no longer fulfill their original agenda. Aristotelian concepts are at the base of my argument as to what constitutes the art of effectual policy implementation.

Due to the complexity of social systems, unexpected "externalities" often occur that were neither intended nor foreseen. These unanticipated results of policies and their programs can, however, be calculated, to a limited extent, prior to implementation, by the practically wise diligent policy planner. It is unrealistic to expect the sheer force of reason to produce perfect foresight and total reduction of uncertainty in this respect.² However, imagine that a particular policy has been fashioned in as conscientious a manner as possible, attention
given to all readily foreseeable consequences, and the implementation process has begun. At this point the policy has been tightly crafted to address a particular problem, offering well-thought-out solutions and attention to costs as well as to benefits. In short, we are supposing that it is as close to being 'perfect' as it can be. We could refer to this as 'stage one' in a two-step process, 'stage two' being the active implementation itself. It is at 'stage two' that the 'perfect' policy can go awry, according to how it is used, and how it is managed. Up to this point the policy has been crafted by experts and it has been created as the result of care and caring; it is the fruit of public participation and a sound deliberative process. Its eventual emergence as a full-blown policy can be seen as akin to the birth of a perfect child. But like a child, this policy will be influenced by its environment, by the people who handle it on a daily basis. And ideally, these people should be morally and intellectually competent to do so. Activation and implementation of 'stage two' of the policy begins at this point. It is the crux of practicality.

**Policy Effects**

According to Brewer and de Leon, shortly into implementation an evaluation must be done in which the consequences flowing from complex problems are sensed and addressed. They state that at this point accurate feedback information is needed in order to decide whether effects from the policy are negative or positive, to what extent, and for whom. Such assessments can lead to other policies being instituted that bolster desired effects and eliminate unwanted ones. Ideally, policy makers will watch to see that outworn policies and programs are either terminated or adjusted. Attention must be maintained to spot unwanted
externalities, for they represent potentially serious issues. But we know, too, that other considerations often come into play here and impede active pursuit of the ideal; such things as the question of the dedication and integrity of those who are entrusted with managing policy implementation. There are the foibles of human nature which come into play; when self-aggrandizement, greed, or plain incompetence derail a program or sabotage a policy. How can we guard against this happening?

Aristotle was one of the earliest to point out that:

In every field, it is those who are experienced that judge its products correctly, and are privy to the means and the manner in which they were accomplished and understand what combinations are harmonious. The inexperienced, on the other hand, must be satisfied if they do not fail to recognize whether the work has been produced well or badly.

A problem we face, therefore, is how to ensure that the people into whose hands these policies are placed are capable both technically and morally, to faithfully guide, yet be astute enough to recognize and correct for the appearance of unwanted externalities, even to the point of admitting that their particular program or policy may have seen its last days. Are there many who could do so and risk possible or even almost certain elimination of their current positions in so doing? Or, is it better to have the policy makers themselves also be the assessors of their policies? If so, would not these previously stated concerns apply also to them? And would they be capable of admitting that a 'pet project' was not all that it could be? Would they be capable of judging impartially?

In their schema for policy implementation Brewer and de Leon deliver their understanding of the humane aims of a democratic society as being permanent even though circumstances may change. Consequently these aims must be constantly respecified "in
concrete circumstances via specific policy measures so that whatever potential for progress exists can be realized". As they see it, policy is one of the concrete embodiments of a collective perception of the future. Humans are always looking to the future and hold a more or less collective perception of what it should be. This perception comes from many sources and is based on one's experience, identity, and expectations. This has to be taken into account when a policy is being produced, or during 'stage one'. However, it should also be kept in mind that these same collective perceptions will affect what happens to a policy during the time it is guiding practice. People involved in the day-to-day operations emanating from the policy will inevitably bring to their execution of policy-related tasks their own perceptions of how they should be executed, these perceptions having been filtered through their own unique experiences. This certainly affects how the policy is used, both in subtle ways and on occasion, in ways that are more apparent. Consequently, it follows that assessment of a policy will be somewhat influenced by these same types of prejudices, although perhaps in an unconscious fashion.

Not only can the effects of a policy trickle down to intended beneficiaries, but they can also "bubble up", thereby changing or reforming the policy from within. Brewer and de Leon relate the following example which occurred during World War II. Local gasoline rationing boards started, on their own initiative, to allocate additional gasoline to returning veterans. This began from a sense of patriotic duty, and was not authorized by either national guidelines or legislation. The national board later revised its standards to conform to local procedures, "bowing in part to the bureaucratic rationality of local sub-units, and in part to regional fear of losing control over local boards as an outgrowth of this set of ad hoc
decisions". Policy implementors are able to modify a program by formulating their own judgments within it and thereby changing it to such an extent that it is not recognizable to its originator and even ignores the policy's intent. But, as in this example, that judgment can be practically well-advised and so improve the policy.

Even though the result of the actions of the local boards was beneficial to a "deserving" group of citizens, these actions, taken outside the policy guidelines, could have had a negative effect not discussed by Brewer and de Leon. If there had been a dire shortage of gasoline the general population could have been affected, and perhaps gasoline that might have been earmarked for emergency vehicles or construction machinery, for instance, would have been diverted, due to the local board decision. Returning servicemen were also marrying in record numbers after the war, and housing was in short supply for these new families. A further restriction on post-war construction could have exacerbated this problem. This is not to say that policies should be blindly followed if it is perceived that changes can improve their function. Innovation has often yielded positive results. But if it is not done in accord with a concern for the overall benefit of society its purpose will be diminished, it will not be effective. This requires a continual focus on the ideal ends of an action as well as on possible externalities.

**Rules and Limits**

Participation in the implementation process is seen by Brewer and de Leon as a daily interaction among various implementing agencies. Congress influences this process. It issues formal statements, on what should be done, in the form of laws. Additionally, it fosters the
activities of legislative committees and subcommittees to ensure compliance with legislative intent. On this national level "the General Accounting Office, the Congressional Budget Office, the Library of Congress and the Office of Technological Assessment" have the ability to affect implementation in different ways. Interest groups as well as strategically placed individuals also have a role in this process. And finally, bureaucratic rivalry has a part in this complicated interplay of activities which often appears to impede the process more than benefit it.

Brewer and de Leon declare that there are many views of implementation, such as "carrying out a program of actions", or "executing a selected option". Primarily, implementation is seen as "an evolutionary thing in that we merely converted the requirements of the law into administrative requirements". And because implementation has not been regarded as a separate part of the total policy process but rather as just one step among many, this has made it nearly impossible to faithfully convert the policy into its separate operational programs. This requires a special effort. Another reason that implementation can be seen as problematic is due to its complexity, which causes difficulty in description and analytical classification, thereby impeding assessment. These multiple factors are seen as clouding clear understanding. "Some simply equate implementation with politics and leave it at that. Usually, administrators are left such broad discretion in carrying out legislation or an executive order that they can easily modify the policy to fit bureaucracy's particular interests or personal requirements." But, where does this leave the individuals for whose benefit the policy originally was intended?
How We Define Our Ends, or Do We?

Abraham Edel points out that eventually we must realize that "every treatment of evaluative method has to face the problem of how we can evaluate ends". He states that it is apparent that means can be evaluated because they can be assessed in terms of the ends. But those ends themselves are never evaluated. Instead, they are merely pursued or imagined. But if we take time to consider it, the ends too should be evaluated specifically because we are continually faced with the fact that newer generations are following us in time. We cannot just simply hand them old attitudes, because conditions are constantly changing. Otherwise, we leave these generations nothing of substance to work with. We give them jobs to perform, the content of which holds no values, perchance to be filled by whatever passing fancy happens to catch hold. Therefore it is an indispensable element of evaluation that we attend to the nature of our ideals and to the criteria by which we evaluate them. This is a good point. Our policies age. Nothing remains static. Do we expect the next generation to use our methods for solving their problems? In some instances they will be faced with problems similar to ours, and in those cases perhaps "old" methods will be perfectly adequate. But we should try to educate our young in such a way that they are able to think creatively and be able to elicit their own solutions to fit the new situations that will occur in their lifetimes. This does not imply that we should leave our problems for them to solve, but that we must set policies in place with an eye to their perceived ends in light of future challenges and changes in the nature of circumstances. Policies must be flexible while at the same time serving their intended purpose.

To quote Edel:
...whether one philosophical outlook will prefer to speak of ideals themselves as changing, and another of ideals as eternal but men's relation to them changing, there is in both cases a phenomenon of change which it is possible to describe once we have the location of the particular ideal. In this sense, we may think of the history of an ideal and speak of the succession of qualities and relations it has during its history as its *career*. In this respect, change is a normal feature of ideals and the career of an ideal is to be found on the face of history as events. Thus an ideal may have a coming-into-being and even a passing-away. There is no inconsistency in the notion of the death of an ideal. In fact, we may even speak of the natural death of an ideal. The natural death of an ideal is to pass from feelings to human institutions and, when so embedded, to be taken for granted to such an extent that intensity due to tension disappears, so that only a madman would act contrary to it. This does not mean that the values it embodies will have died, nor is it our aim to kill all ideals. In the case of some ideals at least - peace on earth, for example - natural death through achievement in the sense described is overdue.**

If we replace the word "ideal" with the word "policy", what Edel has said would also apply to a good policy. The only discernable difference might be that the ends for which certain policies are designed might cease to exist, perhaps to be replaced by something worse, such as the circumstances produced by corruption or war, thereby rendering the policy useless through no fault of its own.

Nancy Sherman would not agree with Edel's assertion that ends are never evaluated. Instead, she believes that we make our plans "in order to maximize the possibility of coordinating our various ends". Consequently, we find that life holds moral ends, personal concerns, and political ideals.*** Thus, over time we may reach a series of ends, such as in pursuing the goal of living one's life well. In this respect, various ends are not necessarily achieved simultaneously; they may be achieved in stages that could be described as plateaus. Yet at each plateau which is attained, one does not merely travel on toward the next end, but reassesses one's situation, making certain attitude changes or adjustments while contemplating...
the necessity for retaining other plans. In this fashion a life is built toward excellence, toward living as well as one can, given current conditions.

Thus, according to Sherman, the network of ends we seek must be sought based on decisions which relate to how the ends we seek fit into a continually changing life-course, and certain ends may give way to more preferable ends in our overall calculations of how to best achieve our goals. Consequently, we must be flexible enough to revise our ends based on experience and reflection upon our goals. Ends can be refined and changed by imagination and belief, and we do this revising relative to other ends we also desire. In view of this it can be seen that ends are not fixed and static but become fluid when guided by reason. Overall, Sherman's view would not disagree with the outcome of Edel's chain of thought, but only with his statement that ends are never evaluated. For Edel does not say that ideals cannot be evaluated, only that they are not evaluated. One difference in their approaches to this subject seems to be that, in this instance, Edel speaks of policy in particular while Sherman focuses on life and how it is or should be lived. Edel does concur that assessment and evaluation should be an important part of determining our ends. What holds for achieving personal goals also holds for implementing policies - in both cases the original design requires feedback from actions taken in order to continue to work toward the planned outcome in a particular situation.

This section has striven to emphasize the importance of continually evaluating ends during the lifetime of a policy or program, noting that nothing can be forever set in stone. Conditions change, people and their needs change, and sometimes they change their minds. Government restrictions and input also play a role in developing goals. These factors all add
to the interplay of what Sherman refers to as a network of ends. As Aristotle, Dewey, and Sherman discuss this idea of evaluation for personal ends, this chapter has adapted their thoughts for the evaluation of policy implementation.

The policy facilitator who guides the implementation process must be able to recognize and prepare for shifts due to potential and actual variables, as mentioned above. This is why it is greatly important that this person be able to judge the progress of the policy with wisdom as well as experience, as Aristotle has counseled.

Later, we will see how Social Security policy regarding the aged has fared in view of these elements. But for now we need to delve into the ways that our important decisions are made and discuss the various points of view that ultimately factor into what ends up being the official philosophy driving a policy and its programs.


3. Ibid., 95.


5. Brewer and de Leon, 106.

6. Ibid., 107.


8. Ibid., 331.

9. Ibid., 254.


11. Ibid., 323.

12. Ibid., 331.


CHAPTER FOUR

HOW WE PERCEIVE MORALITY

In this chapter, as the title suggests, I will delve into certain aspects of our perceptions of morality. In doing so, I will be attempting to define and analyze the concepts of the 'good person', and the 'good society'. Since this subject is so far-reaching and contains so many inter-related aspects, it is necessary to divide this chapter into two parts so that the material presented will be more easily followed.

What comprises the moral experience and determines what moral virtue is? How important is the community in relation to the special needs of our elderly? Ethical values will be discussed. Where do they come from? How are they perpetuated? How do we come to judge things, and what forms that judgment? I will briefly look at "universalists", "historicists", "absolutists", and "relativists", and their points of view regarding morality.

Institutions, what they should be and what they actually are or have become will be a major concern, for they help to form our perceptions about how society should behave, and provide the setting and framework in which management choices must be made. The individual and his or her role in social life will be discussed. Is this role strictly as an onlooker, a witness to greater-than-life happenings, or does the individual play one or many roles; does
he or she matter, and if so, how? Differences in moral perceptions and how or if they affect individual lives or just the life of a society will be examined. Are all moral duties alike? How important is freedom to all of this? Can it actually be defined, and if so, can we also discover how it might be lost?

These questions will be addressed primarily from an Aristotelian perspective by Dewey, Alasdair MacIntyre, Mark Johnson, and others who are concerned with the moral direction in which our society is currently headed. In the course of this discussion it is hoped that the argument for the importance of the role of the policy implementor will be clarified and strengthened.

In the discussion which follows, input from several sources will be considered. First William Galston voices concerns over changes which are occurring in our institutions and, by extension, in our country. John Dewey then elaborates on this theme by enumerating how means either create or work toward ends, and which among these are of actual importance. As we seek moral direction for our policies during the periods of implementation, clear-sightedness and the ability to make realistic and fair-minded judgments about the means we use become more crystallized when attention is given to projecting moral consequences.

Mark Johnson will join this orchestra to comment that the way we think influences how we see and react to moral situations. Thus, different ethical orientations can result in solutions that are poles apart unless there is a willingness to abandon cookie-cutter concepts in problem-solving.

Robert Bellah and his co-authors provide a motif of coherence as they explain how many of our large institutions are failing to meet our needs as a society, and the necessity for
these institutions to be updated as situations change within the social substrate. The theme is expanded when Emile Durkheim joins in to elaborate on the importance of rules, codes, and laws in a society and how these must adapt in order to conform to social progress.

Differentiation between the good individual and the good citizen is discussed by Judith Shklar, and again, as with the other contributors, she provides a positive addition to the central theme, offering it from yet another perspective.

The ancient wisdom of Cicero is offered to show that while technology may advance over time, humans remain very much the same in many ways.

Julia Annas and Herbert Schneider look at judgment, the ways it is formed, how it should be formed, and its importance to the solution of moral dilemmas.

All these contributors, while giving social commentary from their own unique perspectives, lead into and are in agreement with the basic tenets of Aristotle regarding the importance of family, institutions, and the individual in creating and maintaining a successfully working community. These multi-level views of community are necessary if we are to even begin to understand the nature of the influences at work on any policy throughout its ‘life’.

We need now to look at the idea systems that influence the thinking of individuals and which, in turn, ultimately affect the ways in which public policy is engendered, enacted, and received.

PART ONE

Absolutes, Relativism, and Moral Imagination

Galston notes that in our country we can perceive rising doubts in reaction to the
ascendancy of self-interest in private as well as public life. This, he believes, is causing a proliferation of fears regarding "the fragmentation and privatization of American society, mounting concerns about the effects of institutions - ranging from families to schools to the media - and a renewed disposition to believe that without certain traditional virtues neither public leaders nor public policies are likely to succeed".¹ He reflects current feelings of cynicism toward our policy procedures and our institutions. Examples of this self-interest can be seen in the recent explosive proliferation of ethnic and/or nationalistic groups, in the last decade, which now insist upon recognition or consideration apart from the general population of the nation. In part, this has given rise to the use, and occasional abuse, of terms of 'political correctness' regarding certain types of conduct which may be interpreted as 'insensitive' or prejudicial.

Dewey, in reflecting on the moral life, says that we are all concerned with ends one way or another, and with choosing, arranging, and using the emotional, intellectual, and practical means that comprise these ends. These acts, taken together, form conduct. But not all conduct contains moral importance. Take for instance stirring a fire, or eating. Consequently, an act is morally indifferent "whenever one end is taken for granted by itself without any consideration of its relationship to other ends".² Ends which are aesthetic, hygienic, and intellectual can stand alone without any particular thought as to consequences. "But let the value of one proposed end be felt to be opposed as to appeal to a different kind of interest and choice, in other words, to different kinds of disposition and agency, and we have a moral situation."³ Dewey's careful definition is important here so that we are clear about exactly what a moral act is.
Galston follows this line of reasoning also, stating that when certain practical and theoretical imperatives are accepted it is because we take virtue seriously. So the right thing to do within a particular situation, is defined relative to "what a person with a virtuous disposition would do if he or she were in possession of the pertinent facts", and getting them is an act of judgment, discernment. When emphasizing particulars the need for "cognitive virtues" is implied. These virtues are focus, attention, judgment and imagination. They allow the moral agent to evaluate ethically exacting situations correctly so that appropriate action can be taken. Mark Johnson, too, expresses the necessity for us to be aware of the role that our thought processes play in evaluating ethical situations.

According to Johnson, many of our actions are rooted in a system of metaphorical understanding or interpretation. He sees our ends as being directed by our purposes along a pathway. The choices we make along the way determine not only what kind of a journey we will have, but whether or not we reach our determined end. This end, hopefully for the individual, is a purposeful life. Again, by analogy, it is easy to transfer this view of attaining ends from a personal format to the policy format. If wrong choices are made by implementors during its life a program will miss its mark or not reach its desired, projected end.

Johnson looks at the ways we approach our current problems. He believes that, in general, we are not even aware of why it is we make the choices we do or how we come to believe certain things in the particular ways we do. He sees two major viewpoints as representing the bases for our formulations of what we believe defines morality: the absolutist, and the relativist. In presenting their views he uses "moral objectivity" as a means to discuss or illuminate them.
The absolutist, according to Johnson, sees moral objectivity as resulting from "universally binding moral laws" which emanate from a higher power and are shared across political and cultural boundaries. As such, moral objectivity is seen as a state of being wherein the moral agent rises above his or her humanity and assumes a godlike universal outlook. Universal reason, on this view, is static; it never varies. Relativists agree with the absolutists regarding universal moral laws, but do not believe in shared cultural values that are temporally lasting, believing rather that each culture defines morality in relation to its own particular customs. In this context, imagination does not play any part in the formation of moral precepts. Some relativists may acknowledge the role for imagination, but take it to be an amorphous, ungovernable capacity.®

Yet, rather than totally discarding these imaginative ideas, which do hold some possible and practical attributes, Johnson believes we should alter them to reflect the advances that have been made in the cognitive sciences so that they can adequately address our current problems. He recognizes that it is natural for us to want and need stability in our lives, as is reflected by moral absolutism. But he finds moral relativism to be quite dangerous because it encourages the ignoring of problems which are common to all countries, such as environmental concerns, by insisting that there are no moral principles that are universally held across cultures. And the "god's-eye point of view" of objectivity espoused by the absolutists presents a humanly unattainable ideal. In fact, there is no all-encompassing concept that we can rely upon. Instead, solutions can be attained by utilizing various concepts in varying proportions depending on the problem at hand. Thus, we may draw on elements derived from metaphorical definitions and prototypical designs, as well as from imagination.
Points of view have to be found that can be shared by those who do not share identical beliefs and prejudices. Therefore, when we try to define our moral concepts we must ask "What metaphorical frame (or frames) is it defined relative to?", for our ideas of rationality are "defined relative to particular values, interests, and purposes".7

In this regard, we can make positive use of our prejudices by transforming them rather than discarding them. For it is by these that we are able to initially make sense of our surroundings. We must see our position as being the means by which to enhance our moral growth and understanding.8 Prejudice then, in this sense, is used to interpret what it is that confronts us in our life experiences; it is not used as an unjustified distortion of truth. We need to be sure that our policies embody continual self-reflection, dialogue, and criticism among opposed viewpoints.

The 'Good' Person VS. The 'Good' Society?

A different yet complementary picture of how moral concepts, or the lack thereof, affect the use and outcome of policies is expressed by Bellah, et al, who see institutions as patterned ways of living together:

Walking in any American city today, one participates in a ritual that perfectly expresses the difficulty of being a good person in the absence of a good society. In the midst of affluence...we pass homeless men or, often, women with children asking for money for food and shelter. Whether we give or withhold our spare change, we know that neither personal choice is the right one. We may experience the difficulty of helping the plight of homeless people as a painful individual moral dilemma, but the difficulty actually comes from failures of the larger institutions on which our common life depends. ...with this issue, as with many others, we tend to feel helpless to shape the institutional order that made these choices meaningful - or meaningless. In a world undergoing enormous technological, economic, and political change, many of the established ways we have of living together are not working well.
Some of them are not working as they were intended to. Others are having alarming and unintended consequences that affect not only people but the national environment. Consequently, institutions established at different times and under different conditions might need to be reformed from time to time.®

This insight by Bellah, et al. provides reason enough in itself to look for ways to restructure a program such as Social Security so that it better serves those for whom it was intended.

Many of our social policies are no longer working as they were meant to. Some, such as Medicare, created problems and opportunities for abuse right from their onset, or implementation.

Cicero succinctly pointed to the way in which society and the individual are inextricably linked:

Society's interest and that of the individual are the same, else all human relations - justice, liberality, ... melt away. To reserve moral action for relations with kinfolk only is to deny all social obligations or common interests. If foreigners were fair game, it would destroy the brotherhood of man. It is totally unnatural to wrong a fellow man for gain. The starving sage may not steal the food even of the most useless member of society.¹⁰

There are two kinds of rules of moral universal application, which, according to Durkheim, are divided into two groups: individual moral codes which we apply to ourselves; and rules that relate to our dealings with other people. Individual moral codes function to seat the foundation of morals in the consciousness. This is where "all else rests". He tells us that one of the next highest points in ethics is formed by the rules which mark out the duties people owe to each other.¹¹ The difference between the two kinds of rules - rules of duty and individual moral codes - is that the morals of an individual are distinct from the morals of a society.

Firstly, there can be more than one moral code in operation in our society. From the
religious perspective there can be the obvious differences between Jewish, Catholic, Muslim, and Protestant moral codes. And from a cultural perspective, differences can be seen between the moral codes of varying ethnic backgrounds. An Irish-American draws on a different moral code than that of a Chinese-American, whose moral code has been shaped by a different history, geography, economy, or social custom. The individual, consciously or subconsciously, draws from both these influences to shape her or his individual moral code.

Secondly, the rules of duty seen in the communities in our country have occurred as the result of an agreed-upon consensus by a majority of citizens that these are the rules they wish to observe for the sake of community cohesion and cooperation. Thus in a society one generally finds only one set of the "rules of duty". We only have one proper interpretation, for instance, for the red, yellow, and green lights on a traffic signal; a double yellow line on the highway means no passing in all situations to all drivers; all youngsters must be vaccinated prior to entering the public school system; and dogs must be kept on leashes when off their owners' property in urban areas. These few examples are among the duties or obligations people in a community owe to each other and are expected to conform to for the sake of all persons in their society.

But we must keep in mind here that both types of rules can and have been wrong, or interpreted wrongly, in many instances. What is of greater importance is for one to have and exhibit good judgment in any given case, rule or no rule. Good judgment will be discussed later in this chapter.

Whether or not a person is an admirable human being depends on what emotions he or she feels in various circumstances, according to Bernard Williams. Aristotle elaborates
on this when he writes about the necessary ways to pursue the good life, a life well-lived. He states that "The proper function of man...consists in an activity of the soul in conformity with a rational principle or...not without it." Moral virtue comes about as the result of good habits; it is a settled disposition of character that results when, through deliberate thought, one follows the mean, avoiding extremes in action.

According to Galston our ethics, as Aristotle suggests (NE 1178a8-21), are reflected in our socialness, our rational capacities, and our bodily constitutions. "[T]he human virtues are the virtues of our composite nature", which is suspended "between the beasts and the gods". There are different ways to understand human virtues, depending on "whether one's point of departure is theological or secular".

We tend to see the virtues as instrumental goods when we look to human circumstances, or else as dispositions that allow us "to perform well the specific tasks presented by our situations" when we look to the kind of life we are choosing to live. The instrumental conception, within differentiated societies, guides toward an understanding of virtues related to particular social roles. The instrumental conception, within political communities, guides toward a perception of the good citizen as having "the virtues appropriate to specific regimes". Galston tells us that according to Aristotle, these instrumental understandings make sense in the "distinction between the good citizen, the content of whose virtue may differ with and between political communities, and the good human being, whose virtue everywhere is the same". Instrumental virtues are, in this regard, "inherently relative to tasks or roles that are themselves situated with social contexts". Consequently, understanding the virtues as self-development is a crucial component of the
guidance we require as individual and social agents, but only a component. However, this is no reason to disregard the virtues.\textsuperscript{17}

Aristotle tells us that "one citizen differs from another, but the salvation of the community is the common business of them all. This community is the constitution; the virtue of the citizen must therefore be relative to the constitution of which he is a member".\textsuperscript{18} Therefore, too, "it is evident that the good citizen need not of necessity possess the virtue which makes a good man".\textsuperscript{19} And this is the problem today: If the good citizen has the virtues which are also found in the good man his efforts will produce one result. However, if he does not possess them his efforts will produce an entirely different result. We can also argue that in a polity with a bad constitution, a good man \textit{will} be a bad citizen. Since Aristotle believed, as do many of us today, that the human community was a partnership of citizens in a constitution, one could assume the partnership to be dissolved when the government of a state drastically changes. If these changes result from tyranny or conquest in war, and if the political philosophy became such that the state turns into an oppressor rather than a partner and protector of its members, then the good person would be perceived as a bad citizen when he or she chose not to support the changed administration. The community of mankind, he tells us, requires \textit{justice} to bind people together, "for the administration of justice, which is the determination of what is just, is the principle of order in political society".\textsuperscript{20} He also remarked that "there must be a union of those who cannot exist without each other".\textsuperscript{21} The most basic form of community being the family, we find a basis here for the care of the disabled elderly to naturally begin with the family. And as the community assumes the status of a wider, extended family, this points to the probability that it, too, has a certain amount of
responsibility for the well-being of its older citizens.

Dewey supports Aristotle and expands the subject further by stating that the relationships and function of a family are abundantly important to [human] life - more than we can sufficiently emphasize. This function and its importance to humankind cannot be overstated. But in our consciousness we contain the results of the influences the family has had upon us. "We get the outcome though we could not state the process by which we get it." This idea is in accord with Johnson's belief that often we are not sure about what it is that forms or molds the choices that we make in life.

Some of the ethical values that result from the family, according to Dewey, are ethical "in the wider sense". Others, however, come to us "as conditioned, dependent, doubtful". If particular conditions occur these values will be fulfilled. What controls this, the decisive condition, is the attitude and effort put out by an individual. While we can say a particular value usually "belongs" to the family function, it is a different case to determine that in a particular instance the value does not, in and of itself, exist within the individual. Its transformation from a conditional, problematic condition into a social categorical condition is dependent upon what the individual desires and what effort is put forth by the individual. And "in the narrow sense", the value becomes ethical when it has been taken from its realm in the general sense as problematic and then conditioned by our personal attitude and efforts. This is what Dewey sees as the basis of all problems of morality. In the larger general sense moral ends or values are a part of society as a whole, part of an existing system into which an individual is born, and therefore this system endures apart from the individual. In a way, this ethical world has a reality as substantial as that of the physical world.
Dewey believed that society [in this century] is in a dualistic stage, [of organic and inorganic relationships] yet always working toward "a more perfect form". We have to assume that society as a whole is essentially and inherently progressive, and that instead of progressing toward a particular, defined end, its only end is progress; and this "end" is dynamic, by definition. But 'perfection' is never actually attainable. If it were, society would no longer be dynamic, but would instead become static and eventually stagnant. This is because there always exist, within society, those individuals who do not feel obliged to observe the laws and rules. He would call this a "nonorganic" relation. A "socialized" person is one of the "static goals" of society, and the process leading to this goal is dynamic. During the process of becoming socialized, a person realizes that his or her best interests are also, in a sense, the best interests of society. The unsocialized individual has a static point of view, for he or she is concerned only with personal interest.

Additionally, counter-culture groups similar to those seen in the 1960's occasionally arise in our country. While the group itself is in rebellion against what has been the norm in society, the individuals who comprise the group may and often are socialized to the extent that they have become aware of certain social aspects that no longer work for them as well as they may have for their parents or grandparents. In this case we can see where a strong and large-enough movement can effect visible changes in certain social patterns and institutions and become slowly absorbed into the fabric of daily life. In these instances such movements can become quite dynamic. The counter-group rebellions of the Sixties gave rise to the acceptance of Rock and Roll music and long hair on males in mainstream society along with an examination of our moral attitudes toward unnecessary warfare, spurred by the Vietnam
conflict. And after a few years these and other changes of that era were accepted and, some of them too, eventually became static. For after a while, people began rejecting those now-accepted but previously unacceptable ideas and practices: Popular music again changed its beat along with hair styles, but the introspective look at our reasons for going to war remained with us. Thus, the fabric of our moral perceptions was somewhat altered by a group that, at first glance, was denounced as unsocialized by those who looked only at its fringes rather than at its heart.

Consequently, we find that morality is not located as an inscription on our consciences like a system of abstract rules; nor is it found solely in the office of the moral philosopher. It is not so surprising to discover that morality is a system of functions found within the social function, and which has been created and compressed by the pressure of societal requirements. The sense of the ideal contributes to the growth of ethical notions, but is not responsible for their creation. Durkheim sees the laws of morality as natural laws since they have been "derived from human nature and the nature of society". This derivation is unique to humanity. A lawmaker only discerns laws and clearly formulates them rather than inventing them. The laws are a result of a day-to-day progression in human relations insofar as we determine them to be necessary. "They express the condition of our mutual adaptation. Rather than being foreseen a priori, they result from the integrated efforts of a society," and social phenomena arise from practical causes. All human behavior is aimed at adapting the individual and society to its environment. We should look at society as a being with its own personality and life, and its progress and welfare must be looked after by ethics. Consequently, any progress that society makes must give rise to new requirements. Seen in
this light, we find that changes are not only desirable in public policy - they are absolutely necessary. And the policies should be designed and implemented with a flexibility and ease of adaptation that results from built-in contingencies.

Now, according to Dewey, a person who is already good has no problem spotting the good in either the general or the specific sense. However "the one who does not yet know the good, does not know how to know it". Moreover, this individual is hampered by the obstacles that his own ignorance presents because he or she sees solutions in ends which are shallow and impermanent. Since these ends satisfy immediate concerns an habitual absorption with them prevents the individual from possibly envisioning the final end. "Only if the individual is habituated, exercised, practiced in good ends so as to take delight in them, while he is still so immature as to be incapable of really knowing how and why they are good, will he be capable of really knowing how and why they are good, will be capable of knowing the good when he is mature." This assumes that the adults around the child know the difference between the good and the lack of the good. But a social order has to be in place which can foster this knowledge[!]

Judith Shklar speaks of the fact that the good man and the good citizen are not the same. She points out instances where philosophers have not been able to agree about who makes a good judge. According to Shklar, Plato believed that it is the judges who basically perpetuate and legitimize ongoing systems. Plato was speaking of courts of law, but nevertheless it is easy to take his thought one step further and apply it analogously to all policy analyses. Shklar states that where philosophy is concerned, a person steeped in Aristotle's syllogistic reasoning and the laws of the land - still using the courtroom analogy -
would be able to see beyond the spirit of the law in adjudging the letter of the law. For, being a part of the process, the judge already has a vital interest in its success. Nevertheless, the judge can be only as good as are the laws themselves. Here, in the Aristotelian sense, we see that this can be a clue as to how we need to approach and instruct the people who train those who implement and manage policies. They must be sensitized to the fact that, aside from their skills, they are not outside the process they oversee, but are an integral component.

In summation, Bellah, et al., began this section by expressing concern that a society which allows people to suffer in the midst of affluence presents a moral dilemma for the good person. They do not believe that a society such as ours, then, is a good society. An unbalanced infrastructure has resulted, in great part, from inattention to the shifting conditions that normally result within a thriving dynamic society, plus a lack of attention to the way we manage and assess our policies.

Yet the community, as we have seen, is primarily composed of “good”, or at least, well-meaning people. These individuals often end up following the dictates or influences of educational, religious, or governmental institutions and/or established practices. However, when they participate in the preparation and implementation of policy these people can, and often do, perpetuate and even magnify erroneous or obsolete concepts. Thus such concepts end up obviating the intended good in the long run, for they do not “work”.

Cicero saw people as inextricably linked with and to their society. By contrast, Durkheim looks at the problem differently and finds two sets of moral codes: personal and public. He sees this as a definite division between the morality expressed by a society and that of the individual.
A third view is that of Aristotle, for whom the good man and the good citizen can, but need not, be mutually exclusive. He sees the family as the first "community" to which people belong. Dewey's view reflects Aristotle's but is more detailed as to the interaction between the person and the society. He sees the family as being where our first social perceptions and values are formed, happening within the personal matrix of a person's efforts and desires which work, to a greater or lesser degree, upon the social system which exists apart from the individual. It is not an integral part of the person, so its effects are dependent upon the individual becoming "socialized" or attuned to the needs and interests of society in the larger, general sense.

But even though, as with these thinkers and Shklar, the good citizen and the good person are not the same, it must be argued that they both are, nevertheless, parts of the process. For even the most socially detached individual is affected by and also affects society by how he or she chooses to act/not act, or interact/not interact with and within the community. However, a community, and especially a 'healthy' community, requires citizens, leaders, planners, and implementors who are aware of its needs, aware of its goals, and aware of its shortcomings. This sort of awareness is fostered by an atmosphere of clear-sightedness and clear-sighted goals which can only be stated when the participants are well-schooled in all the options at their disposal. When dogma is replaced by an education that focuses on what is currently happening in addition to what has occurred in the past this will begin to happen. Herbert Schneider, in accordance with Dewey, believed that moral experience, unlike information, was something that could not be taught, in the classical sense; it had to be acquired anew by each generation. But there are many parts to this process. The young
person must be prepared so that he or she can intelligently assess the moral experience. An important educational facet is to make the individual aware that he or she is a part of the system rather than only an observer, an actor rather than someone to be acted upon. This is not to say that one should not observe the system in action, but that observations must be made in such a way that the observer also sees him- or herself within the structure of the system, as an integral segment. In discussing how he sees a successful society operating, Dewey has taken great pains to point out the importance of this fact.

In order to promote this self-awareness it is important that a sense of civic duty be imparted to young students in the public school system, and indeed, in all elementary schools. While the subject of re-vamping this massive social and socializing institution is too vast to be more than summarily mentioned here it is, nevertheless, one of the major cornerstones to initiating individual awareness of one’s place in the scheme of our current social matrix. According to Schneider:

[W]e cannot assume that [conscience] is a built-in regulator of human nature, infallibly indicating to the owner when and how he goes wrong, for conscience itself must be trained to become responsible.\textsuperscript{33}

As Schneider points out, our consciences do not automatically go into action at birth. In order to become responsible, a conscience must be trained. And this is an area to which not enough attention has been paid during the last few decades when educating our young.

\textbf{Defining A “Good” Society - An Impossible Task?}

Before we actually attempt to define a good society, perhaps we should take a brief look at the term ‘good’ itself.
Dewey points out that it is logically difficult to pinpoint the actual reason that a quality, such as wealth or health, is good or not. But we cannot separate the question of the nature of the good from the question of the form of the good. "If the good represents a concept it must be because there is a certain unity of form or principle running through all this variety of actual concrete experience." Consequently, in order for an experience to be called "good" we must assume that certain conditions exist. Furthermore, those conditions must be fulfilled. It is from experience itself that we must find these conditions. So when we examine the concept of good we are examining a particular function and position in our experience. Quite simply put, in order to determine if life is worth living we must first determine whether our happiness overrides our misery. When we deem the perfection of human nature to be a desirable end we have to know realistically that this is not an ultimate but only an approximate statement.

Bellah, et al. ask if a great society is necessarily a good society. Today, industrialized society, in the form of the exchange economy and the division of labor, has been pushing humanity in the direction of a planetary interconnected whole. But this process has not been smooth. It has caused "crises of moral meaning and solidarity, as well as breakdowns into extraordinary violence and anger, as the units and conditions of life develop unevenly". Consequently the concept of a good society comes to be seen "not only as an idealistic project but as the long-term practical necessity of the new era". But there is no readily available pattern to be found for a good society to which we can compel people to conform. The fact is that this is "an open quest" which, being central to the concept of a good society, requires the active involvement of all of its members.
Michael Perry asks the primary question: "How can we know what way or ways of life are good for a person - that is, how can we know what a person's well-being consists in?" We find that there are certain manners of living that are conducive to the well-being of all human beings.

But is there reason to think that there are ways of living which are good not just for this person or that, or for this group or that but for human beings generally? That is... are there ways of life that are good in a nonrelative, universal sense?

The position of the universalist [or Aristotelian] according to Perry, is that whatever the meaningful differences are, humans require many of the same basic things [such as food, shelter, companionship, etc.], and accordingly there are things of value that every human can agree upon. There are basic requirements for fulfilling human lives, "or at least lives as fulfilling as any of which they are capable", that all humans must have. So, when we think of human good it must be a pluralistic concept, keeping in mind that people differ across time as well as across political boundaries; they differ from each other interculturally as well as intraculturally. Perry has given a concise rendering of the notion of pluralism in the moral sense.

Yet, "historicist thinkers" deny the concept of a shared human nature. They tell us there is nothing beyond socialization or history which simply defines the human. This outlook is found to be very common among current thinkers, according to Perry, and it subverts the dialogue about basic human rights. He quotes Chomsky, who argues against historicist views:

A vision of social order is...based on a concept of human nature. If in fact man is an indefinitely malleable, completely plastic being, with no innate structures
of mind and no intrinsic needs of a cultural or social character, then he is a fit subject for the 'shaping behavior' by the state authority, the corporate manager, the technocrats, or the central committee. Those with some confidence in the human species...will try to determine the intrinsic human characteristics that provide the framework for intellectual development, the growth of moral consciousness, cultural achievement and participation in a free community.39

As is quite evident from recent literature, as well as from any person with an observant nature, the social character of the individual begins to be shaped by experience and genetic expression early in life, and continues to be shaped thereafter by personal habits as well as institutional requirements and inputs - such as schooling. However, to state that we are solely shaped by our society is not entirely correct. Humans are not "indefinitely malleable" as the historicist thinkers would have us believe.

MacIntyre, another Aristotelian, states that the idea of moral pluralism in our culture is too indefinite, that it is spoken of complacently in "surface rhetoric". "For it may equally well apply to an ordered dialogue of intersecting viewpoints and to an unharmonious melange of ill-asserted fragments." He suspects that the term 'moral pluralism' is usually meant in the latter sense and that we do not realize that all of these fragments each once belonged to total value systems of their own. In such, they had a function and a role which is no longer contained in them. Over a period of three hundred years a concept can change its meaning. MacIntyre elaborates:

In the transition from the variety of contexts in which they were originally at home to our own ...culture 'virtue' and 'justice' and 'pity' and 'duty' and even 'ought' have become other than they once were. [W]e simultaneously and inconsistently treat moral argument as an exercise of our rational powers and as mere assertion. We all too often...treat the moral philosophers of the past as contributors to a single debate with a relatively unvarying subject matter, treating Plato and Hume and Mill as contemporaries both of ourselves...
and of each other. This leads to an abstraction of those writers from the cultural and social milieus in which they lived and thought and so the history of this thought acquires a false independence from the rest of [its] culture.\textsuperscript{30}

Julia Annas looks at this point more fully. She believes, for instance, that ancient ethics can be quite pertinent to current moral philosophy. "But if we rush to establish similarities too soon, they will peter out." First, we have to be aware of the deep contrasts between ancient and modern ethics. In this way it will be easier to locate their similarities. She finds three distinct sources from which our current ethical thinking stems:

Modern ethical thinking is the product of several ethical traditions:
1) Judeo-Christian religious framework; the idea that morality is in some way guaranteed by God;
2) Deontology, embodies the idea that the basic questions in ethics are those concerning what one ought to do and what one's duties are;
3) Consequentialism, embodies the idea that the fundamental ethical questions are rather those as to how one should produce the best consequences.

We have an ethical framework which is concerned not only with bravery and cowardice but also with duty and obligation, and with producing the best outcomes. Studying ancient ethics... will not lead us to reject, in favor of virtue, notions like rule-following and appeal to benefit; but it may make us rethink the role they play in modern theories, and the ways we relate them to virtue and goodness.

Annas finds that a modern assumption is that moral theories should aid us in deciding what is the right thing to do, and particularly in believing that it should help us to find answers to difficult moral cases and dilemmas. But no theory can help us, on its own, to settle hard cases. For "all theories, whether deontological, consequentialist, or virtue based direct us towards the principles we need to apply in order to produce [or to judge] right answers, but this does not mean that they give us the answers; we apply them to give the answers."\textsuperscript{41}

When we look at the problem of social ethics we find that society has an "organic" nature, according to Dewey. This nature is dynamic and must be sustained by action. A
person's awareness of this organic character of society stimulates his or her moral consciousness. And through one's conscious effort moral consciousness is maintained. This activity creates a constant awareness of situations within society "which are not yet organized". This forms a criterion for one ethical perspective in society. It arises from the recognition of certain relationships and factors which have not yet been organized and consequently are not totally socialized. But others are, and they too are parts of public ethos.

Durkheim's outlook does not dispute Dewey's, but provides another ethical perspective where he sees definite divisions among organized social activities. He finds that there is a degree of variance in morals which arises due to the differences among the people who practice them. Those differences comprise, in part, the distinctions that arise from a greater or lesser degree of kinship, of the sexes, and of the ages. Moral relations are affected by all these differences. We find the same with civic duties, or those of a person toward the community. Civic obligations will vary depending on the type of government involved, and all governments have different foundations, with some being democracies, others monarchies, and so on. Family duties and civic duties do, however, share much in common. Yet, where civic morals are concerned, we see that the ethical duties of a merchant differ from those of a professor, and those of a scientist from the soldier or the priest. Not only is one type of moral duty distinct from the other, because of the 'office', or the role and its duties, but between some we find actual contrariety. For instance, where the scientist must train herself to have an open mind, the priest or soldier must, in many respects, be obliged to passive obedience. In every society, then, we can find a plurality of morals that function in parallel lines. Durkheim refers to this as "moral particularism", and states that it does not work where
individual morals are concerned, but appears "in the domestic morals of the family, goes on
to reach its climax in professional ethics, to decline with civic morals and to pass away once
more with the morals that govern the relations of men as human beings". 

Moral particularism then, can be said to be a morality of groups rather than of
individuals. It finds a consensus among people who are concerned with group goals, which
often differ from individual goals. Moral particularism is highly focused to represent the
particular end or ends of a particular group. It is best exemplified in professional organizations
which strive to promote the appropriate interests of their specific businesses or skills. Thus,
the members have agreed to a particular level of conduct and service that best highlights the
distinctive service or product offered to society. Consequently, Dewey perceives this
"plurality of morals" as independently arising and being formed by separate groups, yet all
having, as a goal, ideals of form and practice that will hold their members to tightly specified
standards that have been agreed upon in advance. Each, in its own way, contributes positive
input to society as a whole, based upon its self-imposed ideals of the good.

Judgment

We find, then, that theories in themselves do not answer nor offer patented solutions
to difficult problems. However, a "theory" of good judgment in any and all cases should be
our goal. And good judgment will never go out of style, is adaptable as well as practical (by
definition). Yet it is an attribute that one rarely possesses without being taught how to think
critically. Policy implementors do not spontaneously emerge full-grown, in this sense (aside
from their particular academic specialties), yet must be critically able to assess each new
situation as it arises. This involves knowing how to think, and being able to “separate the wheat from the chaff” as it were, where ambiguous and superfluous verbiage is involved in presentations, protestations, and professional and political documents. In other words, the implementor must be a clear-thinker who has become knowledgeable, over time and by training, in the process of critical thinking. Old ethical standards can however point the way. They can make us think about how to derive new solutions to our own unique problems and thus effect positive changes.

Herbert Schneider believed that an education that was broad enough would generate “an interest in the art of life”. He defined this as “the accumulation and interrelation of many types of good judgment gathered from the various fields of experience”. Unlike the conscience itself which he felt must be trained, the principles of conscience “are not given us ready-made when we get our consciences. They must be learned with social intelligence, not with the tongue”. Additionally, the discovery of values comes about “experimentally” by testing and tasting. And so, judgment becomes a form of knowledge. One becomes aware of “how to interpret social reactions” and comes to be aware that conduct often has social consequences. The ability to use the right judgment comes through a combination of such factors as cleverness, originality, imagination, skill, experience, and insight. And knowing how to think critically is what makes these components all ‘work’ together productively.

Much current thought seems to suggest that there is no connection between judgments about what people should be like and what they should do. But when we separate judgments of character from judgments of acts our moral discourse becomes ambiguous. If we cannot see them as related we will never be able to derive a system of moral theory. But when we
think of our lives as a whole we need to ask ourselves how we have become the persons we are now; how past plans, successes and failures have created us as the individuals who are now involved in the projects and attitudes we have. We also have to think of the future and how we visualize our plans as continuing. If we do this many of us find dissatisfaction with not only our achievements but also with our prospects. However:

...it is only the dissatisfied who have the urge to live differently, and hence the need to find out what ways of living differently would be improvements. Ancient ethics has nothing to say directly to those who have never reached this point of reflection about their lives or are unimpressed by it: the dull and the complacent, for example. These people can benefit from ethical philosophy only indirectly, through doing what books, or other people, tell them to do. Nor can ancient ethics say much to or do much for those who are not prepared to carry the lessons of ethics into their plans for living. Even those of us who are not dull and complacent will not usually detach ourselves from emotional engagement with present concerns and think about our life as a whole when we are young; those who never do, the immature, form another group of people on whom ethical thinking has no direct hold.  

What Annas is saying, in part, is that curative, 'pre-formatted' answers cannot be realistically dredged up from humanity's past and be refitted for application to certain current social problems; and for some individuals, advances in ethical theory will only help them indirectly through the work of others.

But, as Schneider has pointed out, there are no shortcuts to moral knowledge. The responsible individual can attain good judgment only by having first learned the various factors required.

As far as dissatisfaction is concerned, however, one could argue that the term "dissatisfaction" can be discerned in more than a general sense. We can use it to describe how an individual feels about his or her poverty. In that sense, certainly, the individual would want
to improve life as far as possible within the limits of his or her ability. And perhaps another individual is merely dissatisfied with his surroundings and 'improves' his life by moving to a new area. But I think it is important to emphasize that there is a type of dissatisfaction that does not grow out of desire for an end which is purely personal. Rather, this type would be the dissatisfaction felt by individuals who are concerned by the lack of harmony and fairness in the socio-political national or corporate structure, or in (as Bellah, et al. refer to them) our "institutions". These dissatisfied individuals would be concerned with learning the reasons for the poverty experienced by the person described above, and would search for ways that might prevent this from recurring. Thus policies would, hopefully, be implemented by individuals of good judgment to change the situation and allay the underlying causes.

In Part One we have been looking at the possibility that a good society can exist. We have looked at some of the various components it could include if it were to exist. We have seen that there are different concepts of what should be required of a good society. Societies are comprised of individuals, families, corporations, professional groups, and institutions of government, education, and religion, as well as commercial organizations for production, distribution, and sales. Each contributes its individual or collective perceptions of what it considers to be of paramount importance to making our society good. While some perceptions are or can be self-serving and shallow, others can be too highly idealistic. Aristotle, Dewey, Durkheim, and others in addressing this problem have, each in their own way, cautioned against extremes in either direction. Johnson, in particular, shows how individuals, while presumably autonomous, are nevertheless a reflection of their society in how their thinking patterns develop, thereby echoing the tenets of various institutions and
traditions. Yet we see that a society is also a reflection of its individual members. It reflects their depth of conscience, their moral values, their community involvement, or their lack of such qualities. Through all of this we have come to see the importance of having policy makers and implementors who are imbued with a strong sense of duty to civic responsibility as well as having highly developed good judgment. These individuals do not spring full-grown from some mythic deity’s forehead, for they come to us from the general population. It is necessary that the foundations for this ‘knowledge’ be imparted to them beginning with their early schooling. This is not to suggest a form of ‘brainwashing’, but instead to propose that it starts with elements that used to be taught in schools as a matter of fact - citizenship and civics, for instance. These should be re-introduced to the curricula. These and subjects like these can only provide the students with more ‘tools’ to use in going about their daily lives. And, as they mature, the students would further benefit from the introduction of and heavy emphasis on such subjects as government, ethics, and various social sciences. The ability to form and utilize good judgment, as Schneider stated, needs to be molded and nurtured from an early age. As Annas pointed out, good judgment never goes out of style. But knowing how to use it, how to think critically, must be taught. This is a challenge to our future, for without it, it seems likely that certain of our policies will go on, thoughtlessly rushing toward obscure, outdated goals or relying for implementation on persons with little moral sense as to how and why a policy is needed.

But there are elements indigenous to a morally successful society that we have yet to explore. Some of these require an in-depth look before we can reach a more totally fair assessment of the perception of morality in our society.
Part II will look at the concept of freedom and what it means to different people. Who is responsible for our freedom? When we attain freedom, does that mean we no longer have any responsibilities to worry about?

Next, we will take a closer look at institutions and organizations, how they foster and augment our perceptions and policies, and what impels them toward inner change or causing changes in the way we think about particular things. We will find that their influence on us can be a powerful determinant as to how we face our challenges and set our goals, and if we do it insightfully or haphazardly.

This consideration then leads into a discussion about morally responsible behavior. Is moral outrage enough to support a change in people’s behavior and attitudes? Can it overcome institutional influences? How do we judge our moral experiences? Is it done through scientific inquiry, set against the framework of a legal system, or resonated in the background of our cultural attitudes? What is the difference between the form and the substance of a moral action? There are undoubtedly other areas that could be explored, but these should round out the discussion of how we perceive morality.

PART TWO

Defining Freedom

For most Americans, freedom is an essential ingredient in defining a good society. But it is necessary to look more deeply to determine what freedom really denotes. “For many of us, ‘freedom’ still has the old meaning of the right to be left alone.” That idea had a particular plausibility in an earlier America, where individuals could spend most of their life on their own
homesteads. But today, "freedom must exist within, be guaranteed by institutions, and must include the right to participate in the economic and political decisions that affect our lives." Freedom has meaning on several levels and this meaning depends on one’s social situation and placement in time.

Paul Boller presents a somewhat stoic perspective on the concept of freedom, stating that, in the case of the self-perfectionist, humans can be said to be truly free only if they have emancipated themselves from their passions and prejudices and brought their wills into harmony with reason. This differs from Johnson’s view that we need to re-mold our prejudices into useful instruments for social survival. But, to examine his point charitably, perhaps Boller is speaking of prejudice in its most negative aspect. Or, he may not differentiate between forms of prejudice at all. Boller is not altogether clear in his concept of “reason”.

He states that an exercise of power is implicit in liberty, such as the power to speak; it connotes freedom from fear, or an absence of constraint and restraint. Yet to Frederick Douglass (1817-1895), freedom “meant dignity, self-reliance, and moral responsibility”:

It meant the possibility of choosing a vocation and working at it with pride and zest. It also meant continual knowledge, virtue, and social concern. There was nothing lawless about freedom; it was closely linked with character. Nor was there anything easy about it; it required hard work to achieve and determined efforts to retain. For Douglass, ‘Freedom, Industry, Virtue, and Intelligence’ were all of a piece, ...and it was slavery’s denial of a person’s right to moral and intellectual development that chiefly made it an abomination.

Dewey, however, sees freedom as being granted by the individual to him- or herself, if certain social morals are present:
Freedom for an individual means growth, ready change when modification is required. It signifies active process, that of release of capacity from whatever hems it in. But since society can develop only as new resources are put at its disposal, it is absurd to suppose that freedom has possible significance for individuality but negative meaning for social interests. Society is strong, forceful, stable against accident only when all its members can function to the limits of their capacity. Such functioning cannot be achieved without allowing a leeway of experimentation beyond the limits of established and sanctioned custom. But socially as well as scientifically the great thing is not to avoid mistakes but to have them take place under conditions such that they can be utilized to increase intelligence in the future.56

When Dewey speaks of increasing intelligence, he means it in the sense of increasing our collective intelligence regarding what works and what does not work well within our social institutions. Policy implementors should learn from mistakes, and use them as lessons by which to guide their future decisions and actions. With regard to freedom, we can be hemmed in by our own self-limitations. When we do this to ourselves, we also impose it on others through our limited expectations.

Dewey explains that not only is an individual's freedom greater in a more diversified and comprehensive social order, but so is his or her responsibility. With increased and varied stimuli to social action we have greater freedom as well as greater means by which it is possible to fulfill our potential. But this only increases our responsibilities, for we also are faced with more reasons to consider the consequences of our actions. This greater freedom also provides more means to society for showing us the errors of our ways should we be negligent in our use of it. Many of the actions we take in our society will not only touch more individuals, but will affect the less visible ties between social institutions as well.57

Dewey states that while we have the freedom to act, we must be prepared to handle all the consequences that result from those actions - the good, the bad, the physical, and the
social. For we do not execute these acts in a vacuum! Freedom is a means for us to be free from subjection to the will of others; from slavery; from direct obstruction, and interference. But, these are only its “conditions”. In order to have freedom we must possess the resources necessary to actually “carry purposes into effect” as well as the “mental equipment” plus the trained powers of reflection and initiative [critical thinking] required to be both farseeing and cautious. 58

Thus, freedom cannot be exercised without careful attention to the responsibility that comes inherently linked to it. This strongly addresses and supports my overall theme regarding the importance of the role of policy implementors within the policy process. The freedom to act in putting a new policy into effect must be tempered by constant vigilance for unwanted externalities - effects that were not foreseen by policy makers. And this vigilance should be one of the most necessary responsibilities of implementors.

It is interesting to note that in his tour of the United States early in the last century Alexis de Tocqueville warned against a possible (then) unforeseen direction that a free society could take. He believed that a democratic society is capable of providing the groundwork for severe oppression characterized by:

An innumerable multitude of men, all equal and alike, incessantly endeavoring to secure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives. Each of them, living apart, is as a stranger to the fate of all the rest...Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratification and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent if, like that authority, its object was to prepare man for manhood; but it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood: it is well content that the people rejoice provided that they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such government labors...it everyday renders the exercise of the free agency of man less useful and less frequent; it
circumscribes the will within a narrower range and gradually robs a man of all
the uses of himself...Such a power does not destroy but it prevents existence,
it does not tyrannize but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes and stupefies
a people.59

How many individuals in our country today do more than take their freedom for granted,
without seeing it as a privilege which requires constant work to maintain? How many even
understand what their freedoms are or are not? We read that people elsewhere yearn for
release from tyranny, aspire to democracy, and see our society as a model! But in our society
citizens often see themselves as voiceless, because many institutions in the substrate of our
culture simply are no longer working well for them.

Institutions

An institution, in its formal sociological definition, is a pattern of hoped-for action of
groups or individuals supported by social sanctions, both positive and negative. These can be
simple customs such "as the confirming handshake in a social [or business] situation", or
"highly formal institutions such as taxation upon which social services depend, where refusal
to pay may be punished". There is always a moral element in institutions.60 Bellah and his co-
authors elaborate:

Individualistic Americans fear that institutions impinge on their freedom. Institutions are normative patterns embedded in and enforced by laws and
mores. In common usage the term is also used to apply to concrete
organizations. Organizations certainly loom large in our lives, but if we think
only of organizations and not of institutions we may greatly oversimplify our
problems. If we do not distinguish between institutions and organizations, we
may think that our only problem with corporations is to make them more
efficient or more responsible. But there are problems with how corporations
are institutionalized in American society, with the underlying pattern of power
and responsibility, and we cannot solve the problems of corporate life simply
by improving individual organizations: we have to reform the institution itself.
Thus, we need to look at new and different methods in an effort to make these changes. When a policy outlives its usefulness, yet the traditions that support it are so entwined with the daily life of each of us, it is often an uncomfortable prospect to consider suddenly eliminating a familiar portion of our daily routine. For decades, we took for granted the ability and the freedom to be able to drive wherever and whenever we wished without restriction. Yet in many of our largest cities we were suddenly faced with the prospect of having to severely curtail this activity. Ozone inversions and smoggy air polluted with sometime dangerous levels of carbon monoxide and lead caused us to have to stop and take a ‘reality check’. Certain cities promoted car-pooling, reserving a freeway lane just for participants. Radio and TV were urging people to not drive and to even stay indoors on high-pollution days. Car manufacturers then began to design more efficient engines; oxygenated gasoline was developed, and its sale became mandatory in many states during the smoggy season; and emission testing of motor vehicles to detect faulty operation became a requirement in one state after another. All these changes were necessary so that the quality of the air we breathe could improve, and it has improved. But a real change had to occur in the automotive industry and its associated institutions and industries - state regulators, the gasoline producers, the oil industry, and most of all in the consumer, the person who, a few years earlier, was so blythly driving gas-guzzling, inefficient, lead-spewing vehicles with such abandon. None of these institutional changes could have occurred without the re-education of the public in general, and the re-organization of priorities by several major industries, agencies, and organizations.

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which were tied to the institution of personal transportation in this country.

Some of our institutions originated in the eighteenth century. Others were initiated in the post-World War II era, established to save the "free world", and are serving us less well than some of those which date from two hundred years ago. "[W]e need to understand how much of our lives is lived in and through institutions, and how better institutions are essential if we are to lead better lives." It is fundamental to understand that institutions and organizations mediate the relations between self and the world. Bellah and his co-authors are proposing that no number of palliative programs is going to ease the numerous problems our society is faced with today because the problems themselves are generated by the very flaws which have been woven into the fabric of our social intercourse and thus repeatedly imparted to and inculcated in each rising generation. So this systemic dysfunction dooms us to continually experience and unsuccessfully seek respite from the same basic social ills over and over again.

As Bellah et al see the situation, the only way to surmount these deepening problems is through greater participation in the larger structures of the economy [as consumers], and the state, [as citizens]. In speaking of moral theories, Dewey points to Socrates as having made a great effort to determine just what the "real good" is. He sought "the true end of all the various institutions, customs, and procedures among men". Socrates looked at the lack of consistency in people's behavior; looked for an explanation for the conflict seen in human interests. He saw that different "would-be moral teachers" gave diverse reasons for these problems and did so because "they were ignorant of their own ends". Thus, we have to know our "good and proper function". If we apply this to the way our institutions or policies...
function we find that we must not lose sight of the ends we want to achieve. Sometimes ‘course corrections’ need to be effected so that the means do not come into conflict with the ends themselves. When institutions no longer fully serve those for whom they were originally intended, the theoretical “good” is obscured, and social demoralization follows!

Bellah, et al., believe that there is a sort of reductionism in the traditional way we think of society; if we do not find the problem with the individual, we then try to find it with the organization. Our pattern of thinking can hide the power of institutions from us as well as their tremendous potential for good and evil. For instance, if we have not been taught how to think critically, we can go through life without constructively questioning why it is that we do what we do, and whether or not what we do makes sense. Through our daily actions and words we continuously engage "in creating and recreating the institutions" and organizations that make life possible. This viewpoint is lacking in our ideas about society, and this process is always ethical and political because institutions, including our families, exist through ideas of right and wrong and notions of the good (whereas, by contrast, organizations exist through pre-designed structures which are often based on arbitrary rules designed by the owner or board of directors, and created through personal wealth and power). But we find, while we are creating institutions together with other individuals, that institutions are also creating us. They form and educate us, particularly by way of the socially performed "metaphors they give us, metaphors that provide normative interpretation of situations and actions. The metaphors may be appropriate or inappropriate, but they are inescapable." Thus a church congregation may define itself as a "family"; the CEO of a corporation could speak of employees as being "team players". "Democracy itself is not so much a specific institution as a metaphoric way
of thinking about an aspect of many institutions." Our way of life, then, can be seen as tapestry of interwoven themes, each representing a particular institution or organization; one thread, or theme, representing the public educational system; another depicting religious beliefs; a third symbolizing manufacturing production standards; a fourth standing for the current status of family-owned (non-corporate) farms; and so on. No one theme in itself can represent the entire American experience, just as no particular person can be totally representative of all Americans.

We can see that the notion that institutions are "objective mechanisms", separate from our lives, "is an ideology that exacts a high moral and political price". Even the concept of autonomy relies on a type of institutional structure and cannot be altogether seen as an escape from institutions. Autonomy is only one concept of virtue among other worthy concepts such as care and responsibility. For without institutions through which such virtues as care and responsibility can be exercised, "autonomy itself becomes[...] an empty form without substance". Given these insights, it is hardly surprising that ordinary citizens are confused by what they see, when political leaders, and well-educated experts and managers appear to be without an adequate public philosophy to guide them in assessment of facts and determination of goals. And this appears to be a missing element in the guidance of public policy once implementation has occurred. There seems to be a lack of mature insight as well as the awareness that we do not exist outside of these institutions, or these policies, but are very much an essential part of their success or failure.

Bellah, et al, state that when we think of applying our knowledge to our problems [through the policy process or organizational design] we defeat ourselves by separating ethics...
from technical expertise, thus rendering knowledge from a whole into a bifurcated and therefore limited process:

...just at the point when our citizens depend more and more on knowledge, we face a crisis about the purposes and meaning of that knowledge. [W]e have concentrated more on the technical effectiveness of knowledge than on its moral purpose.

There is a profound gap in our culture between technical reason, the knowledge with which we design computers or analyze the structure of DNA, and practical or moral reason, the ways we understand how we should live. As the power of our ability to manipulate the world grows, the poverty of our understanding of what to do with that knowledge becomes more apparent. Even when we see that the solution must have something to do with institutions, we once again look for a technical solution in some kind of ‘management science’ rather than in trying to understand the inherently moral nature of institutions themselves.69

Thus, we find that an essential ‘something or other’ is missing from our social calculations, and in searching for solutions we blindly miss what is right in front of us.

Moral Experience, Argument, and Beliefs

"By the fate it allots to its members who can no longer work, [a] society gives itself away - it has always looked upon them as so much material. Society turns away from the aged worker as though he belonged to another species."70 De Beauvoir believes that the way society treats its elderly "exposes the failure of our entire civilization". As long as a person is profitable, in some way, society will care about him or her. The young are aware of this and it causes them a certain amount of anxiety as they enter the social life course that, in its own way, corresponds to the anguish the old feel by being excluded from society. But between these two age groups the problem is hidden by daily routines71 of earning a living and raising families. We take no time to contemplate these problems.
In an ideal society there would be no need to discuss the problems of the elderly, for there would be no problems. But our society suffers from troubled institutions, as we have seen. Society is composed of different individuals, all with different social and economic backgrounds, different intelligence levels, and different degrees of sensitivity to the plights of the old, the ill, and the unfortunate among us. Aristotle points out to us that the family is what nature established for taking care of the every-day needs of people. But the community arose out of a need for cooperation among families for the benefit of their mutual protection. "Political society exists for the sake of noble actions, and not of mere companionship."

Morality, according to Dewey, is found in consequences that are "definite, observable facts which the individual can be made responsible for noting and for employing in the direction of his further behavior". But why is it that we do not often discern facts in this light, and more so, when we do, why is it that others are not convinced?

According to Sayre-McCord, the person who wants to change the world rather than just describe it is a moral instrumentalist. He sees moral language as the vehicle best suited to this end "because people have been conditioned to use and respond to moral utterances as commands and exhortation". The relevance of making moral claims is to create an influence rather than merely indicate facts. Moral language changes or intensifies the interests of individuals rather than just describing them. Rather than simply having moral reactions, people can use moral argument to discuss beliefs, because it is these moral beliefs and not moral reactions that can change people's attitudes and behavior. This is an important point. But some will argue that a statement of moral outrage will suffice. They believe that this is an adequate way to address such a topic, that since their opinion has been rendered, the problem
has been fully addressed. And they would leave it there without looking further into the derivation of the problem. They decline to discuss it, or their idea of discussion is a one-person diatribe about what is wrong with the world. If engaged in discussion by a rational person who wishes to air potential causes and solutions, this type of individual will react as if he or she has been attacked, or will refuse to take the time to listen to facts that would enhance the discussion. Many persons are simply unable to carry on a discussion about policy at this level without becoming defensive and argumentative. They are unable to reserve their opinions until the facts have been investigated, and seem interested only in expressing their opinions. Unfortunately, we all know or have met people like this. Thus, we see, even in so-called intelligent and educated individuals, a resistance to bilateral cooperation as the method by which to rationally conduct a problem-solving dialogue. Changing one's precepts or imaginatively looking at another's point of view is, for some reason, not easy for some to accept. They do not readily embrace change, even if it would benefit them. Their mind-set seems to be: "If it was good enough for my father..." This attitude creates an acknowledged roadblock in the path to reason.

Dewey describes yet another view - what he refers to as "the spectator view of knowledge" which "is a purely compensatory doctrine which men of an intellectual turn have built up to console themselves for the actual and social impotency of the calling to thought to which they are devoted." These people allow themselves the luxury of believing that their knowledge is "something too sublime to be contaminated by contact with things of change and practice". This is really due to a lack of courage and the conditions they have imposed on themselves. Dewey sees this as a transformation of "knowing into a morally irresponsible
estheticism". And he reinforces Annas' position when he declares that: "it still remains true that the troubles which men undergo are the forces that lead them to project pictures of a better state of things." But in order to have positive changes we need to have certain freedoms, as explained earlier in this chapter.

Kaplan tells us that what we judge is separate from "the fact of our judging it", in our moral experience. The process of judging itself is the result of a culmination of what we have become - via our experiences, but "whether we have judged well or ill is not determined by" the conditions that have contributed to what we are. An empirical scientific inquiry is, like all other social practices, conditioned by society. Consequently, the questions we ask are framed in and by the language of our culture. We find that "what is good for one man may not be good for another", but this fact "is indifferent to what either man may think to be good, whether for himself or for the other"[or how wise he is in so-judging]. Dewey addresses this in his own way: "It has been noted that human experience is made human through the existence of associations and recollections, which are strained through the mesh of imagination so as to suit the demands of the emotions." Both Kaplan and Dewey essentially agree on the issue of how the individual forms actions and judgments. Additionally, Johnson's assessment of how we use our imaginations to extend concepts through the use of metaphorical language is also in accord with these ideas.

Kaplan comments specifically on how morality is seen in our country: "Few people are more scrupulously righteous than we [Americans] when we recognize an issue as moral." Unfortunately, according to Kaplan, we rarely do! We use a basically utilitarian approach in daily governmental decisions in a way that becomes an isolation of value. "Ethics is thought
to bear on politics, not from within, but only at the edges. " Political morality is seen as a legalistic concept. If we see a law being violated it is then that we assume morality to be threatened. He goes on to explain:

For the mass of the citizenry, policy raises moral issues only when its adoption or administration involves bribery, corruption, or venality. If from the wholly legal workings of policy patent injustices result, we suppose morality to be served by acts of philanthropy or executive clemency. Morality demands mitigation of effects, correction of causes is not the domain of morals, but of hardheaded practicality. Alas, morality of this kind is a luxury product and will give way whenever we can no longer afford the philanthropies. It is easy for the rich to be generous and the powerful forgiving. 

What Kaplan highlights here is the fact that what is often perceived as being a moral action is, in actuality, nothing more than a method of assuaging guilt and pacifying outrage in many cases. Philanthropic actions and federal pardons do not automatically right a wrong nor accomplish more than temporarily alleviate the conditions that arise from deeper causes. These causes therefore need to be addressed from within rather than from without, recognizing these 'Band-Aid cures' for what they are: surface attempts to correct a problem that, in reality, requires major surgery, in metaphorical terms. Consequently, ongoing practices in our organizations and institutions which may be, and probably are, morally questionable, slide by, to be repeated again and again so that the same old malady continues to exist. Undoubtedly, under such conditions it is difficult to decide where to begin in attempting to make a crucial correction, but the basic framework of the institution must be re-built. And a major part of this process can be facilitated by well-trained policy implementors who are sensitive to the ways in which morality works as an ongoing part of the entire process, rather than being the occasion of putative and highly publicized events.
We find again, a concurring voice in MacIntyre, who states that "...we have - very largely - lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality". But we find that we are still utilizing the language and the appearance of morality even though its defining substance has been dissipated. Today we find that the language of morality is used primarily as a way to express disagreements. Consequently, we are using its form but not its substance.

According to Kaplan, many people mistakenly assume that when they have stated the problem they have also stated the solution. This perspective also has an underlying supposition that the answers to all of our moral problems are already known. Political morality is seen to be, in this view, merely "a matter of police action", calling for strenuous law enforcement rather than legislating it [in the first place] with wisdom. "Such wisdom has already been provided - by Moses and Solon, by the fathers of the church and of our country." Unfortunately, when we find problems with enforcement, we rarely ask if there might be something wrong with the law itself. Kaplan recognizes the importance of not being rigid in application when he states: "Policy itself becomes in a real sense unprincipled when it fails to recognize the contextualization of moral laws. For these, like scientific generalizations, have their conditions and limits ...requiring anchorage in the particular cases." Consequently, a particular decision is not correct simply because it agrees with law. Drawing an analogy, one can see that just because an implementor's decision is within the letter of the law does not make the decision morally right or good!

Williams expands this further, stating that moral law is more explanatory "than the law of an actual liberal republic, because it allows no emigration, but it is unequivocally just in its
ideas of responsibility." This is precisely what makes it just - the recognition, in the hands of a wise person, that there are no exemptions.

In this chapter we have looked at perceptions of morality and how these perceptions arise through the institutions of a society. The greatest emphasis has been from the Aristotelian point of view, supported mainly by observations from Dewey, who advises us to learn from our mistakes, but to learn also not to be afraid to continue developing new approaches, rather than relying on old concepts out of fear of failure.

Other voices are inserted as a background chorus - most voices in harmony with this prevailing viewpoint. Mark Johnson, one member of this 'chorus', has presented the case for realizing how our imaginations can play a vital role in restructuring the basic tenets of both the absolutist and the relativist so that they can be used to attain new solutions to be applied to current social problems.

Durkheim highlighted the importance of rules in a society, and their importance in relation to ethical conduct by the individual as well as the society at large. The contributions of Bellah, et al., are important for their outlook on how institutions and organizations work in our country, and how necessary it is to realize how pervasive these are in our everyday affairs. They point out that our institutions are failing us. Kaplan tells us that morality is seldom a process of applying an unquestioned principle to a problem that unquestionably falls under its scope. Johnson agrees, but believes that we must also alter our relativist points of view. Annas believes that we must always think in terms of consequences when we act.

What these voices and others have to impart are all variations on a common theme: moral problems are not solved by reapplication of the same old 'comfortable' solutions.
Actually, 'stopgaps' is a better word for such moves, since no solutions are forthcoming. A major reason for using old solutions might be because use of them sidesteps positive confrontation of the problem. Therefore, the 'comfort' is only in the individual's misperception that the problem has been handled. The mental and spiritual laziness of that individual, rather than freeing a society burdened by an ethical dilemma, has just added to it. Another major reason, of course, is simply ignorance which stems from the inability to use wisdom in judgment to identify problems accurately and formulate just solutions.

Where policy implementation is concerned we find that when good policies have been carefully designed and developed, in what I refer to as stage I of the policy process, their intent is often defeated by static moral and social concepts which render them inoperable, ineffective, or plainly dangerous after stage II, (implementation). They are often "managed" as if the implementors themselves stood above the process somehow rather than being integral parts of it.

A system of ethics cannot be wholly composed at one time, and then later impressed upon reality. We must first observe the reality and then deduce morality from it. Durkheim tells us that we "must grasp ethics in its many relations with the innumerable facts on which it is patterned and which it regulates in turn". If we separate ethics from these facts it becomes isolated from reality. It has no context. At this point it will become merely an abstract theory, a collection of empty concepts, dryly formulated. But when ethics remains a part of reality it becomes a complex and viable operation within "the social organism". Everything of importance which occurs in society elicits a response from, and is marked by, morality. By necessity then, morality, while affecting the life of a society, must also change when the
society changes. This makes ethics what Durkheim refers to as a "science of life", for it enables people to exist together. Schneider calls this "the art of life" and believes our existence will continue to be troubled unless and until we are morally educated and our consciences trained to be socially responsive and responsible. In light of this it is quite important that we apply ethics to the problems of the elderly within the context of the type of society we are currently experiencing. It is equally important that we not detach the elderly from the sphere of society when policies are made regarding them. Successful policies, it seems, will arise only through critical thinking so that they can function smoothly rather than to the detriment of the elderly or society.

Morality is not a set of conclusive and settled ethical ideas, but holds an entire range of ethical views. "Morality is so much with us that moral philosophy spends much of its time discussing the differences between those outlooks, rather than the difference between all of them and everything else." These differences lead us to step back and look at differences between people and cultures as well as at their central similarities, as we shall do in the next chapter.


3. Ibid., 191, 192.


6. Ibid., 217-220.

7. Ibid., 221-227.

8. Ibid., 231-232.


15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., 4.

17. Ibid., 6.


19. Ibid., 1276b-34.

20. Ibid., 1253a-35.

21. Ibid., 1252a-25.

23. Ibid., 313.
24. Ibid., 324.
25. Durkheim, 74.
26. Ibid., 75.
27. Ibid., 81.
28. Ibid., 110-111.
31. Ibid., 284.
33. Ibid., 4.
34. Dewey, Lectures, 16.
35. Bellah, et al., 7, 8, 9.
37. Ibid., 120.
38. Ibid., 122-123.
42. Dewey, Lectures, 16.
43. Durkheim, 4.
44. Ibid., 5.
45. Schneider, 8.
46. Ibid., 7.
47. Ibid., 9.
48. Ibid., 13.
49. Ibid., 20.
50. Ibid., 10.
51. Ibid., 28-29.
54. Ibid., x.
55. Ibid., 106.
58. Ibid., 391, 392.
60. Bellah, 10.
61. Ibid., 11.
62. Ibid., 5.
63. Ibid., 287.
64. Ibid., 6.
67. Ibid., 12.
68. Ibid., 38.
69. Ibid., 44.
70. de Beauvoir, 542.
71. Ibid., 543.
73. Ibid, 1281a-1.
76. Dewey, Reconstruction, 117.
77. Ibid., 118.
80. Kaplan, 40.
81. MacIntyre, 2.
82. Ibid., 5, 6.
83. Kaplan, 46.
84. Ibid.
86. Durkheim, 69, 70, 71.
87. Ibid., 174.
CHAPTER FIVE

CULTURAL COMPARISONS

According to Abraham Edel, morality needs to be understood in the context of its relation to the complexities of society and culture. Many anthropologists see morality more as a facet of life than as "a separate department with institutions of its own." So morality, whether it stems from religious or biological roots, or even both, can be found in any aspect of humankind. Consequently, we find a wide range of moral differences between various peoples. For "[t]o have enough to eat, to have sons, and to die in respected old age on one's own ancestral land, is the conscious goal of some people's striving, while others are concerned with wealth or glory or power, and will see such pursuits as the proper aim of a good life." So we see a great variety in the types of lives people have created for themselves. Yet "certain minimal standards must be met if these 'experiments' are to be successful at all", according to Edel and Edel. Each culture supplies templates of social relations, beliefs, motor habits, and knowledge in a way that allows people to exist within it. Therefore, each culture has put techniques in place for mating, earning a living, dealing with everyday problems, treating illness, coping with old age - and methods for learning these techniques.

Not surprisingly, then, we find cultural variation when defining who is, and who is not,
Although everybody grows older, the individual ways people age and the meanings they attach to their life course are not the same. Also, there are highly variable divisions within the life course itself. It may be a revelation to some Americans to find that, because we assume that particular characteristics make a person "old", other cultures do not share these same views. Even within our own culture we have seen that perceptions of what defines old age can shift from one historical period to the next, over time. One hundred years ago, individuals who had lived long enough to reach their eighties were a rarity. People who had reached their fifties back then were perceived as being elderly!

The more traditional societies, such as Japan, lean toward more positive attitudes about aging than does mainstream American culture. In Japan it is polite to inquire about an elder's age, for it is a source of pride and congratulations. By contrast with etiquette in the U. S., we consider it rude to ask an older person's age because we assume that they think it is a fact to be ashamed of or to deny. This is seen when, upon finding out the age of an older person in our country, the standard reply is inevitably: "You don't look that old". Translated, this really means: "You don't look as senile and decrepit as most people your age"!

Age and sex are used by all societies to classify their members, and each category holds a different expectation. Americans, however, have developed a set of discriminations and prejudices against the elderly that is probably unequaled by any other culture. These range from stereotypes that the majority are senile to the assumption that their need for sexual gratification is non-existent, and from forced retirement to elder abuse.

Since humans live in a world of symbols, age becomes more complicated. It is used by all of us as a means of differentiation. We name the divisions in the life cycle to reflect the
progression from infancy to old age. The term "age-grade" was coined by Radcliffe-Brown in 1929 as a means to refer to these age categories.\textsuperscript{10}

Age, although a cultural domain, is not a neatly classified realm. But in spite of a lack of well-bounded age distinctions there is a sort of order. Discontinuities occur which divide age into age grades or culturally significant segments. In itself, age is a significant aspect of group formation.\textsuperscript{11} Thus, we have age-defining boundaries in our country for membership in such diverse groups as Scouting and the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons).

The number of age strata, or grades, and their age-related boundaries, vary cross culturally as well as historically. Childhood, for instance, was not viewed as a discernable life period with special characteristics and requirements in Western Europe until around the seventeenth century. There was no awareness, in medieval times, that children were distinct from adults. They were a part of adult society as soon as they no longer required their mothers' continual care. The word "child" did not hold the same meanings it does today. There were three meaningful and clear distinctions in age strata: infancy, adulthood, and old age.\textsuperscript{12} Another, contemporary, view sees old age as a \textit{stage} within a life continuum with chronological boundaries that define it as a special time in life.\textsuperscript{13}

De Beauvoir, however, sees yet a different side of the contemporary view toward aging:

A striking fact...is that the standing of old age has been discredited. Modern technocratic society thinks that knowledge does not accumulate with the years, but grows out of date. Age brings disqualification with it: age is not an advantage. It is the values associated with youth that are esteemed.\textsuperscript{14}

Often in our country, however, we are seeing that there are no hard and fast rules or scales
for physically measuring age stages or where they begin or end, aside from the arbitrary
assignment of a particular year to the attainment of ‘old age’. Physical aging, for instance,
varies from individual to individual and depends on many factors for its rate of speed.
Environmental factors such as amount or lack of exercise, physical labor or ‘desk’ jobs, play
into the aging rate. Then there are social factors that contribute, such as amount of education,
financial status, and to a degree, social class. Additionally, the rate at which individuals age
can be further divided into internal and external categories. These categories need not
necessarily occur at the same speed and with the same individual. So one person at fifty may
have gray hair and wrinkles and be healthy, while the next person might appear to be ten years
younger yet not outwardly exhibit the fact that he or she is suffering from an ailment that
usually is not seen until the sixties or seventies. Genetic predisposition plays an important
role, as does mental alacrity and general psychological health, all influenced by lifestyle. Thus
aside from the assignment of an arbitrary number, the onset of ‘old age’ cannot be accurately
defined. (In the next chapter we will look at how arbitrarily lumping all people of a particular
age into the same category has caused chaos within the Social Security program.)

The Japanese View of Aging

An absolute chronological age usually marks the onset of old age in literate societies.
In the U. S. today this is frequently the sixty-fifth birthday. In traditional Japan the transition
to old age is a formal ceremony held on the sixty-first birthday. There, one puts on a bright
kimono which symbolizes a new freedom from mid-adulthood responsibilities.\(^15\)

Japan has an unprecedented number of elderly citizens. Since it is, like the U. S., an
industrialized society it seems reasonable that we would look at the policies it has put into place regarding the treatment and care of its elderly. Perhaps, by looking at these policies, we will be able to learn from Japan's successes as well as from its mistakes in initiating policies to deal with its burgeoning elderly population. We must, however, keep in mind that Japan is not, like the U. S., a culturally diverse society. Its social traditions as well as its religious background have resulted in a highly homogenous society that has rigorously adhered to a traditional outlook that permeates every aspect of its culture. Nevertheless, certain cross-cultural comparisons may emerge which we might perhaps utilize to deal more realistically with our own soon-aging society.

Japan is well-known for its group-centeredness and the hierarchical organization of its society. These particular features of its social organization are mainly unconscious, rooted deeply in its history, and pervade nearly all social behavior. Superficially, they are similar to features found in pre-industrial European countries. Often, these similarities have been taken as functional equivalents and thus described as "pre-industrial" or "traditional". But the corporate emphasis and the Confucian base of Japanese ethics determine these patterns of hierarchical social organization and group-centeredness to be more or less unique to Japan. This uniqueness is strengthened by the Japanese cultural homogeneity. The small island nation was ruled centrally by a rigid and powerful bureaucracy without contact with the outside world from 1603 to 1868. As a result, the language and customs as well as their view of the world is exceptionally uniform. Japanese behavior, according to Christine Kiefer, is based on perceptions of unstated uniform expectations far more than are Western cultures. Well-defined social roles and proper actions are the result of Confucian values at all levels of
society. The most important of all relationships is that of parent and child. Regardless of the ages of the generations in question the standards insist on respect, kindness, obedience, and support toward parents. Historically, this theory of ethics was inculcated, and then supported, in agrarian villages where all families were unified into large land units. Age-grading regulated authority as did a patrilineal kinship system or ie. The ie was a strong hierarchy of interrelated families in which seniority, the rights of the eldest, and male dominance typified formal authority. As Mears has stated: "The Japanese belongs to his personal family, which in turn, belongs to the natural family of which the Divine Emperor is the kind father".

In pre-modern Europe inheritance patterns gave the elders of landowning families some authority, but most peasants did not control land and this limited the influence of elders overall. By contrast, in Japan the lower peasantry were integrated into the landholding scheme, which reinforced the Confucian stress of universal esteem for their elders. These traditions resulted in modern Japanese customs and a deep structure of ethics, based in Confucianism, whereby it is necessary for social roles to be properly performed in order for social success to ensue. This is true for all classes regarding the roles of parent and child. This has superseded the tendency of economic values to override family values, as in most other industrial societies. Where the law is concerned, feudal origins, together with Confucian traditions, have resulted in the elderly receiving extensive rights in modern Japan. Edel and Edel, however, find similarities between the European medieval morality and that of the Japanese, where hierarchical social roles were designated and the relationship between God and man were structured.

American society, on the other hand, emphasizes rugged individualism associated with
the values of independence and freedom. One's morality is questioned and one's humanity reduced if one is not self-reliant. Independence means that the individual is able to give as well as keep a balance in a relationship while he or she also takes. Nonreciprocal taking, in contrast, is dependence\(^{21}\); and that is looked down on by Americans.

In Japan, heavy requirements of respect and care for the elderly are levied on the young by Confucianism and traditional society. However, (and interestingly) the old do not escape obligation under this structure. The individual must subordinate himself to the well-being of the group, regardless of his authority or formal office. Theoretically, households were ruled by the oldest active male, but often, decisions for the household were made by the most competent member. Punishment at the hands of the community awaited those who neglected the well-being of subordinates or used authority in an unfeeling fashion. This value regulates many social functions within organizations and communities in Japan today. The ideal form of decision-making is done by consensus, and this is referred to as the "corporate emphasis". To some extent, this separates power and prestige. In contrast, personal feelings are often assumed to supersede social conscience in the U. S., and there is a wider range of acceptable options to draw from in dealing with interpersonal behaviors.\(^{22}\) These options stem, in part, from the ethnic and racial heterogeneity exhibited by U. S. Citizens who, in contrast to the Japanese population, have been drawn here from all over the planet. And while we are not a "melting pot"\(^{\text{per se}}\), our differences are, with few exceptions, tolerated if not embraced.

In Japan, conscious personal choice is subjugated by group-centeredness and the homogeneity of values by a preponderance of widely shared cultural expectations. This lends
a stability to Japanese society. Rules do change, but they do so very slowly.23

Social changes which occurred in Japan due to contact with other cultures and Western societies were somewhat disruptive, but were modulated by the values of Confucian filial piety and the values of family solidarity. The civil code was revised in 1899 to require families to take care of their elderly. These policies had the effect of lending "a sense of jural entitlement" to the entrenched notion of respect for the aged. Relatives were charged with an added measure of responsibility. This situated the family into position as a "safety net" under the destitute, or at least that majority of destitute who were fortunate to have families. Today the modernization and industrialization of Japan have given rise to a population explosion. In just 130 years the population has quadrupled; the over-sixty-five segment has increased more quickly than the other segments of society, reaching 13 million in 1990 and representing 10.3% of the total population.24

Health and welfare programs tend to be the major focus of Japanese gerontologists, who seek to solve the problems created by the aging population.25 According to Kiefer, Japan's citizens are notable not only for their longevity, but also for the fact that the majority of its people over age sixty-five is healthy. They rarely express worries about dying, but tend to be troubled by thoughts that life may become meaningless long before death. This stems more from a desire to not become a burden to their children rather than from being tired of living.26

The norms giving responsibility for the care of the aged to their children substantially contribute to a feeling of material security for the elderly. Needless to say, this is not the case for those who are estranged from their children, or who have no children, or whose children
are poor. These cases contribute to the one-third of the over-sixty-five population who work. Most Japanese pensions are considerably below American levels. The typical retirement age has been fifty-five, leaving a five-year gap before government pensions begin. Half of those who retire at fifty-five take another job, and the majority of these "recycled workers" work at lower paying, less prestigious jobs than before. It is estimated that 42% of elderly Japanese receive welfare supplements. This indicates that their personal income is below $2,900 per month. 42.1% of Americans and 44.1% of Japanese over sixty say they must work for money. In Japan, 61.8% of those over sixty lived with their children in 1985, while in the U. S. the rate for this age level was 14%. 27 Ideally, in Japan as in the U. S., the best arrangements are for the two generations to live "close but separate".28

Senility is regarded in Japan as being an inevitable and natural part of life. Therefore, no "treatments" are sought. In an effort to interpret and communicate feelings, family members may even join the elder in his or her hallucinatory world. While not necessarily drawing the elder closer to the rest of the family, this seems to draw the family itself together, the good of the family being the ultimate goal. 29 While this practice can be seen as a condescending or humoring move on the part of family members, I imagine that its basis might also be found in the family wanting to join the elder where he or she is. Rather than bemoaning the fact of senility, or even Alzheimers then, the family would have adopted an attitude of "oh well, why not", and accepted the reality of the situation.

In contrast to most Western countries, the Japanese family remains the usual source of care giving for the severely impaired elderly. This accounts for three-fourths of the nursing care given to the disabled. And one-fourth of all primary care giving relatives are themselves
over sixty. This contributes to high stress levels within families. Yet without the free labor of these family members Japanese society would be even harder pressed to meet the basic necessities of its aging population. But, according to Welty it is becoming difficult to find adequate space in Japan for the nuclear family. Increasingly, it is primarily only the affluent who can afford to maintain homes spacious enough to include the extended, traditional family.

The progress of geriatric service development in Japan needs to be closely watched by the U. S., given the unusual willingness of the Japanese families to care for their aged members. But their ability to care for them at home is being eroded by increasing female employment, a falling birth rate, inflation, and continued urbanization. Meanwhile, the aged population continues to grow. And most developed societies are following the same route, although at a measurably slower rate.

Aging and Ethics in Other Societies

Turning away from Japan and industrial society, we find that for many young people in non-industrial societies, to attain old age is the ultimate lifetime achievement. For in many of these societies, certain advantages systematically inhere. Often, the young are envious and resentful of the elderly who are in control. This is the downside of attaining power and privilege in these societies, for the elderly often discover that a state of uneasy peace and occasionally open conflict mars their relations with the young. Nevertheless, this culturally-bound dichotomy appears always to be embraced by the aging young as they move into the advantageous positions once held by their elders, thus continuing and reinforcing the cycle.
So perhaps the system has, in a sense, a built-in goal - an impetus for the young - giving them something to strive for that is feasibly within their reach if they are patient and willing to work toward it.

Over the years, the elderly have accumulated religious lore and ritual experience which qualifies them to fill particular ritual roles. And the old are repositories of wisdom about everyday affairs as well in societies without writing. The elderly are perceived as important sources of information about the past and about how things should be done, because they have lived a long time.34

Our country is one where good intentions and “door-to-door-charity” no longer seem able to address the everyday problems that beset us. Other, more organized agencies for social insurance, family welfare, and other such programs are, while more reliable and efficient, strictly a compromise at best between the traditional values of society and the very real needs it feels. Our institutions reflect not only sympathy for the needs of others, but “the right of the individual to do what he likes with his own wealth”.35 However, other societies maintain other approaches.

Small-scale societies, according to George Silberbauer, tend to be more cohesive and inwardly focused than industrial societies, such as ours, which tend to maintain close external ties with each other. A smaller society often finds people connected to each other in more than one way. Family members are often also individuals with whom daily business transactions are conducted, resulting in more closely-knit and integrated social relationships than are found in our society. Consequently, we find that behavior limits in these societies are more narrowly defined than in our country, and must be continually fine-tuned,36 so that the
scales of order do not become unbalanced. For instance, it could be very easy to bruise or
damage a family relationship if, under these conditions, a business relationship involving a
relative were to become adversarial. Not only would this affect the family and the business,
but it would also have an impact on the community at large.

By necessity, institutions in these communities have to remain un-specialized and
flexible because they too will be called upon to serve many functions. But written laws are
seen as unrealistic and restrictive to such a society, for each social situation brings with it a
special and unique perspective. Instead, relationships are guided by values, and these cus­
toms, having evolved through generations of practical use, are internally generated rather than
being externally applied, as the application of written law would be.

The Australian hunter abides by strict mandatory rules when he divides his kill among
his family. The portions are not gifts, but rather what is matter-of-factly due to them. Thus,
by absolute right the hunter’s father, father-in-law, paternal uncle, and grandfather receive a
particular share of the kill. This would not happen, however, among the Eskimos for in­
stance, if game were scarce. But the Australian elders are supported by religion as well as law.
The hunters respect these sanctions because it is the elders who maintain the sacred myths as
well as the many features of ceremonies which are seen as necessary to the successful
proliferation of game. This symbiotic reliance on the sharing of sacred myths and the kill on
the part of both is the foundation for satisfying particular kinship responsibilities. According
to Silberbauer:

Whether a society has an ethical system can be recognized by its having a
mental construct of values which are expressed as principles to be invoked
and interpreted in guiding social behavior (i.e. that which has significance and
meaning for others) and in judging it in gradations of good or bad. All known societies, judged by this criterion, have ethical systems.\textsuperscript{40}

We have to understand here that just because a society is without \textit{written} laws this does not mean that it is an immoral or lawless society.

Many attitudes exist among various cultures regarding the degree of harmony required for a society to run smoothly. And universally, there does not seem to be any one particular type of killing which could be regarded as evil. Occasionally parricide and fratricide are sanctioned. But then the frame of reference must be carefully interpreted:

So, for example, when the Eskimo abandon their aged parents to die of starvation this is by no means callous murder. It is a bitterly regrettable necessity, which the old people accept and indeed, one is told, initiate and insist upon. It is not a wrong act, but a filial duty.\textsuperscript{41}

The reason for such behavior could be additionally supported because these people believe that it is better to die of exposure to the elements while one is still relatively healthy because one continues after death in the same condition in which one dies. So being decrepit is not seen as a viable or desirable alternative.\textsuperscript{42} But, in today's world, it is doubtful that this practice is now observed or tolerated. However, it is important to understand that such practices evolved initially from a very real necessity to conserve scarce resources. This solution appears to have been one which the entire culture agreed upon for the greater good of the majority: those who remained in good health and were able to withstand the rigors of a harsh environment.

The inequalities between young and old, and the tensions that typify their associations with each other, are not fixed or unchanging in non-industrial societies, and can undergo
important modifications. They have seen drastic changes in the last one-hundred years or so with the introduction of new governmental institutions, new technologies, new economic arrangements, and new religious and secular ideologies; all of which have emerged, first, as a result of colonialism, then because of improved world communications. The status of the old and the quality of their relations with the young have been profoundly affected. In this changing non-industrial sphere, the elderly are steadily losing their influence and privileges while the young continue to gain. During this time of change the young are challenging the authority as well as the values of their elderly. This is not to say that such changes are necessarily good for the small-scale society itself, but some changes have to be expected when external interaction with other, more technologically advanced, societies occurs. Cultural changes of this sort can be shattering to a society, and as with most social upheavals of this nature, it takes time for equilibrium to be re-established.

Among Native Americans the Zuni teach their ethical code as something “to be taught and learned like any other facts of the world”.

Thus, morality is expressed beautifully as a part of the greater whole, interwoven with and indistinguishable from any other facet of daily life. (One can only speculate as to what such a method of teaching contemporary American young would accomplish. I find it impossible to see negative results to such an approach - given, of course, that the approach itself would ever be accepted by mainstream society.)

Illness is a subjective classification in itself. One group may classify symptoms as pathological, while another might see them as a normal part of life. For example, the Omaha Indians saw their elders as having status based on their experience and knowledge, deferring to them long after physical weakness became apparent. These elders were not deterred in any
way from having active roles in their society. Yet in other societies, once the elderly became a burden and could not provide for their basic needs they lost their value. In Africa, the Hottentots left their infirm elderly in deserted huts; Laplanders bludgeoned the decrepit to death. These elderly were seen as having no part to play in their societies. Based on necessity, in the face of famine or even potential extinction, it can be seen that such ‘solutions’ seem harsh only to those who have been raised in a more benevolent climate or conditioned to a wealthier economy with surpluses.

Navajo moral discussions contain advice and encouragement as its essence. We have to look at these models realistically of course, in the context of their own cultural history. And we need to know who or what is the source of these exhortations or commands - parents, or the entire social framework. From there we need to be cognizant of how the training is supported or guided by the social structure of the community. Does it receive partial validation through religious authority? And if so, how does religion interface with other social institutions? Consequently, we find that each society has to fit its moral rules to its needs and goals. Our culture, for instance “has a fondness for the abstract and highly general”, as Edel and Edel point out, and as Johnson has shown us in describing our system of metaphorical understanding.

According to Ruth Benedict, the study of peoples who had not yet been touched “by the spread of a standardized worldwide civilization” was important because their “simpler” life styles provided the opportunity for isolated localized social forms to develop.

In the higher cultures the standardization of custom and belief over a couple of continents has given a false sense of the inevitability of the particular [social] forms that have gained currency, and we need to turn to a wider
survey in order to check the conclusions we hastily base upon this near-universality of familiar customs. Benedict believed that “modern” civilization, seen in this light, becomes an “entry in a long series of possible adjustments” to our social situations. She wondered how we can, with assurance, relegate certain behaviors into absolute categories of normal or abnormal. She states that certain traits that our culture has discarded, such as the ability to go into a trance, or homosexuality, function quite well in other cultures. Her conclusion in this regard is that “normality is culturally defined” because we are “shaped to the drives and standards” of our particular society.

Benedict makes an interesting point when she states that “[n]o one civilization can possibly utilize in its mores the whole potential range of human behavior”. We select, as a culture, from among all possible behavior traits, in a process that is “non-rational and subconscious”, occurs over great periods of time, and is conditioned by history. “Normality, in short, within a very wide range, is culturally defined.” She sees abnormality as being “a term for the segment that [any] particular civilization does not use”. So when we say a thing “is morally good” we are actually saying (whether we realize it or not) that it is habitual. Her belief is that the concept of “normal” is a variant of and derived from the concept of “good”. I believe that we have to take a ‘world view’ and realize that being judgmental can and often does arise from a lack of familiarity with the facts and conditions indigenous to each culture, and even to each situation within a culture. Benedict’s viewpoint can serve to remind us to keep an open and critical mind when regarding problems that require effective solutions. We have to maintain an awareness, especially during policy implementation, that acting solely
from habit because a particular solution seems 'comfortable' may lead to stagnation and con­sequently, ineffectiveness. Therefore implementors must continually reassess the ends of a policy as well as the means by which it operates to attain them.

Moral Implications

According to Fry, the symbolic medium through which we comprehend and navigate our world is culture. It is a cognitive or ideational code by which we guide our social behavior and evaluate, not only our own personal behavior, but that of others. With proper use of this guide we can come to know the "good life" and to express the qualities we wish to see in the world. Anthropologists refer to this as "ideal culture", and when contrasted with actual behavior that is what it remains. However, Johnson has shown us that the cultural medium is, in turn, reliant on other symbolic structures, such as how we use metaphors to express and relate or link one thought to another. Fry's observation, however supports the contention made in the previous chapter that the ideal life is always just beyond our grasp. While we may "come to know" it, that knowledge will only be an ideal. For an ideal is rarely ever captured or attained, but stands instead as the standard we would hope to reach, as a society, if we collectively could. It must be understood that "the ideal" usually represents the views of the majority within a society. And, as we have just seen, different societies present us with different conceptions of what would be ideal based on their history as well as on their current conditions. These conditions must then be seen as containing demographics based on such diverse things as the area encompassed by the society; whether their technology is based on industry, tourism, or subsistence; age distribution, and climate, just to name a few. When
ideals represent the views of a majority we necessarily have a minority who perceive some or all of them as foolish, empty, or even dangerous. In a diverse society such as ours this is often the case.

The diversity of our own subcultures may offer relevant suggestions to policy-makers through their varied ways of approaching the needs of their dependent elders. Their traditions generally end up being subsumed under our official government dogma, but they may contain possibilities for helping aging policy become more realistic in its application.

Each society, according to Benedict, contains individuals whose temperament types run counter to their culture’s expectations. However, “there is an ascertainable range of human behavior that is found wherever a sufficiently large series of individuals is observed”. But the vast majority of the individuals are “plastic to the moulding force of the society into which they are born”. So traits, such as the ability to go into a trance, might be valued in India while discounted here. And homosexuality is institutionalized in certain cultures while here it is considered by many to be unacceptable.55

In this fashion, Benedict defends moral relativism. One cannot argue against the examples she used to show how much we are all influenced by our own particular culture and subcultures. Perhaps cultural relativism, as presented here, was much more relevant in Benedict’s time, over a half century ago. Today, with virtually the entire planet linked electronically, there appears to be an overlaying culture that is slowly absorbing all peoples on what I would call a “public” level. This is especially seen in the U. S., in many ways, and in a microcosmic way with all the various cultures represented here. While habits derived from our parents’ or grandparents’ place of origin may hold sway in private, at home, most
of us understand in general and can navigate this outer, public culture that has been impressed on us from outside not only through but by the media, Madison Avenue, government policies, other national institutions, and our corporations.

While looking at other societies' ways of treating their elderly will not give us answers, it does prompt us to look within to seek the answers that most fit our individual problems. And the solution may be that there is more than one way to approach and deal with them. It seems that this may be the only way we will be able to progress along the (metaphoric) path or paths that will lead us toward our own "ideal" solutions.

And so our policies must be guided with wisdom and as much foresight as is possible to ensure that no segment of our society is needlessly hurt by inattention to potential policy 'fallout', or externalities. This is especially so when policies deal with our elderly citizens. Of the societies we have briefly looked at in this chapter, none have as much economic and industrial similarity to our way of life, overall, as does Japan. We might look to Confucian or traditional Japanese society, for instance, for re-introducing (or introducing) standards of respect and support toward aging relatives in our culture. The media play a big part in how the elderly are perceived, and I am not certain that they would want to trade the laughs they get for depicting them in a more positive light. However, our culture's emphasis on self-reliance is not wrong either. There are actually very few people, including most elderly, who would not prefer to be so. But when a person's physical and financial resources dwindle, self-reliance is not easy to maintain. Nor should we, as a society, scorn those who are no longer able to continue on as they once were. Since our corporate and political institutions reflect the values that are held in our society, might they not try to make an effort to convey a
different attitude toward aging? A good culture should want to project good attitudes. It seems to me that a good culture would promote policies that do not ‘type-cast’ a whole segment of the population just because it attained the arbitrarily determined age of sixty-five. The aging policy would look at need, not age, as a criterion for assistance. The practice of arbitrarily forcing funds to be withheld from one’s wages in the form of Social Security is unfair as well as unreliable as to its stated purpose. In practice, it does not work well. Many individuals could better invest the funds that the government currently withholds from their paychecks in private accounts for greater personal gain than Social Security ever yields for them. This will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

We have found, as in the case of the Zuni, that certain aspects in their moral codes are equal to or even superior to some ‘official’ standards adhered to in modern American society. Contrasts and comparisons with other countries and cultures, therefore, are a good way in which to help us to assess our progress in any particular policy area. Here, aging policy can benefit by the policy makers and implementers being aware of the differences between cultures and subcultures in how they assess the limits and value of their aged in relation to their societies. Makers of aging policy need to realize that aging policy has somehow missed its mark in our country and is not serving well those whom it should, and in some instances is serving those whom it should not, i.e. those who are not needy. What looking at other cultures can do is to not only allow us to explore alternative approaches in relation to helping the sick and/or needy U. S. elders, but it gives us a less parochial view by which to judge whether or not what we are doing is what we should be doing. For instance, comparisons between industrial and non-industrial societies let us see how impersonal our “services”
to the aged have become. A formula is applied to a person upon attainment of age 65. It is an arbitrary system that takes no account of state of health, personal need or lack of need, or financial status. Assumptions are made solely based on age without consideration that some elderly may be well enough off financially that assistance is unnecessary, while other persons may be in acute need of more assistance than is offered, while even other persons might require assistance while yet in their forties or fifties. Not weeding out those individuals capable of caring for themselves does a disservice to those whose needs are truly great.

Our look here at other cultures has shown that not only do we tend to depersonalize the aging individual in our country, but we often, in effect, take away the responsibility of the family for their aged members. We saw that the Japanese rely heavily on families. In comparison, we see that our government is being paternalistic. An attitude among many American citizens can be seen to have developed: Why bother, if someone else will do it? Government has insidiously, although perhaps well-meaningly, taken over and displaced a portion of the families' duties.

A second fact that falls out from all this is that the individual herself is lulled into a false sense of security regarding her future. If the government will do her saving for her, by payroll deductions for Social Security, it seems that she is relieved of worrying about her future and old age. This too is an insidious event. It was never openly advocated, but was implied that one's old age, through Social Security, was secure. But is it? Many seniors today can give testimony to the fact that indeed it is not. People need to be educated on how to take care of their own finances, and the importance of saving for their futures. Social Security going bankrupt due to inefficiency could mean a chaotic and miserable old age for our poor-
est seniors as well as those with modest savings to supplement their Social Security benefits. One can never be secure when placing one’s life and future in the care of another, especially an impersonal other, whether that other is a person or an institution or agency. Too many of our elderly really believed that Social Security would take care of them in their old age.

The next chapter will analyze and question how or if certain policies in our country discriminate for or against our aged citizens. We will look at current aging policies, their strengths and failures.

2. Ibid., 7.

3. Ibid., 9.

4. Ibid., 21.

5. Ibid., 30.


7. Ibid., 1.

8. Palmore, 34.


13. Ibid., 5.


15. Foner, 9.


17. Ibid., 156.


20. Edel and Edel, 134.


23. Ibid., 158.

24. Ibid., 159.
25. Ibid., 154.
26. Ibid., 160.
27. Ibid., 161.
28. Ibid., 162.
29. Ibid., 164.
30. Ibid., 167, 168.
32. Kiefer, 168.
33. Foner, 29.
34. Ibid., 37.
35. Edel and Edel, 73.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., 15.
40. Silberbauer, 17.
41. Edel and Edel, 55-56.
42. Ibid., 56.
44. Edel and Edel, 127.
45. Haber, 2.
46. Edel and Edel, 128.
47. Ibid., 127.
49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., 150.

51. Ibid., 153.

52. Ibid., 154.

53. Ibid.

54. Fry, "Toward an Anthropology of Aging", 17.

55. Benedict, 156.
CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSIS OF AGING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

This chapter will pull together three main areas that have been considered in prior chapters: 1) perceptions of aging in our society; 2) how more closely monitoring a policy during its ongoing implementation, or “stage two”, can better ensure its success and more readily determine its success or failure in the community at large; and 3) the components of ethical behavior and attitudes reflected by a community and its individual, corporate, and institutional aspects. Against this backdrop we will be examining the background and policies of the Social Security program - its goals, successes, and its failings - where the elderly are concerned. These three areas will be tightly interwoven with each other as well as with the recommendations for the Social Security program which will follow in Part Two.

All three of these, in and of themselves, encompass areas of serious concern. But here, each is being utilized to enhance the other. We have needed to take a serious look at all the facets of aging - how our society views it, how it is seen in other cultures - in order to provide a clear base for the next ingredient of this mosaic: the policy which has engendered the Social Security program. We shall explore how informed, judicious attention to details by insightful implementors can strengthen a policy, such as Social Security, or more quickly determine if
it should be severely altered or even terminated. The character of the implementer him- or herself, as we saw in chapter four, plays a major role in this.

Quite often we hear the human lifespan being metaphorically referred to as a "journey". As such, it is perceived as having a beginning, a middle, and an end, relating to childhood, the 'productive' years, and then a decline into old age. This perception is not necessarily accurate, nor is it flattering. One's 'usefulness' to society should not be tied solely to the work one does to earn a living, or in other terms, to the language of market forces. People also raise families, participate in community activities such as voting, church membership, observing laws, and so forth. But many people - often upon attaining a particular age - are forced to retire. And after almost a century of this kind of stereotyping, many accept this as the way things should be done.

Until recently many people have also accepted, without question, the fact that an ever increasing portion of their salary is "withheld" in the form of Social Security. (In 1996 a person will have to earn over $62,700 before he/she no longer has to "contribute" to Social Security.) These monies are then, as a rule, returned to the contributors in the form of a monthly check after they retire. By itself, this is hardly enough for one to barely survive without supplement, and those who have no means to supplement Social Security can barely subsist. Consequently, we see that this program is not a perfect solution to easing the 'declining' years of the working poor. For the majority, it is a supplement to life savings and private retirement programs or those offered now by many corporate employers. For some people, Social Security is not a necessity. The Social Security guidelines no longer seem to be fulfilling their original intent, partly due to inflation. Edward Boorstein quotes John Svahn,
Social Security Commissioner in 1982, who states that two billion dollars a year are lost in payroll tax revenues for every percentage point the unemployment rate rises. Consequently, if the payroll tax revenues fall, the system is unable to easily meet its commitments. Under private plans and/or personal investments a person receives back what she or he has put in and does not need to rely on collecting monies from future generations. According to Malcolm Morrison the retirement policy of our government "was to provide a period of leisure (or rest) after the conclusion of working life". But should the government even be attempting to do individuals' saving for them? What would be a good alternative? Could it be possible to educate people to save for themselves? What institutional changes would have to be initiated in order for this to be so? And how could the corporate world assist in initiating or incorporating proposed changes? In the spirit of rugged individualism, do we really need to have the state shepherd our savings and retirement through a general payroll deduction, or can we Americans, who are known for our ability to pioneer new frontiers, take more charge of our own lives and forego the paternalistic protection and "nannyism" that appears to be daily gaining more of a foothold in our lives?

PART ONE

Ageism

George Maddox states that ageism is the most important aspect of aging in our society, having emerged in third place after racism and sexism. It is important for 3 reasons:

1. It affects everyone, young and old.
2. It involves basic questions of social policy.
3. It influences federal expenditures that rival our military budget.
It seems that the government would be the first place to be free of such discrimination because of the laws Congress has passed against it. But the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1977) discovered that ageism was contained in ten different federal programs. In various ways, community health centers, social services to low-income individuals and families, legal services, vocational rehabilitation, vocational education, the Food Stamp Program, Medicaid, and employment and training services all were inclined to discriminate against older persons. Several states, for example, exclude the elderly from programs for vocational rehabilitation because they are not of "employable age". Unfortunately, there is also evidence that the elderly are discriminated against by their own families.\(^4\)

Thirty-seven states, as of 1986, required that neglect and abuse of elders be reported to government agencies. Four percent of all older people are abused every year, according to an official estimate. However, actual physical abuse is the least common form. Passive neglect, such as financial exploitation, verbal, and emotional abuse are far more common. But all forms of elder abuse are encouraged when the elderly are stereotyped as worthless, helpless, and repulsive.\(^5\)

Gerontological researchers have noted that considerable arbitrariness persists regarding a solely chronological approach to ageing. However, in large-scale bureaucracies the number of years that have passed since birth is a simple and exact indicator for decision-making in regard to clients or members. These encompass decisions such as when an individual may obtain certain benefits, be entitled to particular rights, begin working, and retire. But age alone is often not a reliable indicator of ability or lack thereof. Chronological absolutes can hide an unbelievable amount of variation.\(^6\)
In our country there is no clear-cut boundary which delineates old age. Although social researchers use sixty-five as the benchmark, administrative eligibility for pensions, retirement, and Social Security has been variously set from ages in the forties up to ages in the seventies. But in all cases where age boundaries are set the limits are set arbitrarily, and are then regarded as immutable.

We also find that in our country there is an intricate network of association between minority group status, poverty, ethnicity, and the various patterns of aging found within groups depicted by those three elements. Since age in urban locales is often compounded by and identified with poverty, this becomes particularly critical. Many poverty-stricken elderly are members of groups whose historical background differ greatly from the average Anglo-American population. They have most likely also experienced stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice throughout their lives. In spite of this, they have managed to compensate by utilizing strengths drawn from their respective cultures to withstand these inequities. As mentioned in the previous chapter, these subcultures may provide valuable insights for reforming our institutionalized ways of perceiving and acting toward the elderly.

Supporting the dependent elderly appears to irritate many of the young. They see it only as a one-way street where they are giving without receiving anything in return. Yet, according to Fry, nonreciprocity is tolerated in many other roles in society. These roles, however, are [often] strictly defined and include infancy, childhood, and illness. Chronic dependency, especially in our culture, is seen as bordering on freeloading, whether it is voluntary or involuntary. This in itself reduces "the prestige-generating components" of the elderly's status. They often see themselves, and are seen, as having little to give that is
regarded as worthwhile when they require the help of others. Their self-esteem and integrity is jeopardized because reciprocity is perceived as being out of balance. But does it need to be this way? Chapter Five showed us that the elderly are seen differently in certain other societies where they are valued for their experience and wisdom.

This insight into our almost subconscious social concept of reciprocity helps toward understanding how a pervasive resentment toward the aged can have arisen. But nevertheless it cannot be condoned, for it is not a valid basis for non-support, particularly of the disadvantaged elderly who are often at risk of "falling through the cracks" of our social networks. They should not be scorned by society because they are regarded as having no means by which to reciprocate. Often, they were born into disadvantaged circumstances and never found their way out, or perhaps were not allowed a way out, although one may have been perceived. Our social conscience must not become indifferent or numb to the suffering of those who are truly less fortunate.

As people's abilities and skills are utilized while interacting in the "real" world, compromises are made. But when these compromises are extreme, or different evaluative standards point in two different directions, value conflicts arise. The elderly often experience difficulty in carrying out the ideals of daily life, with this resulting in ambivalence on their part. As the positive and negative contrast, the expressed values become dualities. We attempt to incorporate the positive because it is good. And we find, rooted in the basis for reciprocity and exchange, that independency-dependency is a major value orientation in our society.

The practice of early retirement or retirement at a specific age is one that can be seen as a form of ageism. Advancing years is no actual disqualification in many occupations, for
the worker is not prevented from doing a job merely by his or her age. With some professions, such as physicians for instance, de Beauvoir tells us that age adds to their value for a certain length of time. Their years of experience are preferred to the relatively short term served by the neophyte. But even here, the picture changes further on when the physician becomes old. He is then perceived as being in biological decline, worn out, out of date, and unable to keep up with modern discoveries. People imagine that he has "lost" most of his ability. This type of prejudice "condemns" the elderly person, in almost every field of endeavor, to idleness. Violent political movements and revolutions, according to de Beauvoir, are never the undertakings of the elderly. But a certain few do continue serving in government into their later years. Adenauer was eighty-seven and Churchill eighty-one when they "retired".

Palmore sees elders as actually having made gains overall in terms of education, health, occupation, and income. Since 1961, according to a Health Interview Survey, relative to the young, older cohorts above age sixty-five showed decreasing measures of disability and illness. Palmore believes that this is due to cohort changes rather than to decreases in ageism. Cohorts born after 1920 are regarded as being better educated, healthier, and more affluent than are those cohorts born prior to 1920. He sees this as being due to "more fortunate life experiences". Being better educated, they did not suffer from financial loss and unemployment during the Depression, and received better health care as well as better nutrition. Consequently, as the older cohorts are replaced among those over sixty-five, the averages in the areas of health, education, and income improve. These remarkable improvements, combined with the many programs and services developed solely for elders, has resulted in criticism of the programs in favor of the aged, or what he sees as positive ageism.
ageism, then, is the polar opposite of discriminatory action. In this case, it is favorable treatment only for the aged minority.

Being old has advantages that are not usually thought about. Education, advertising, and a conscious public urging could counteract negative aging stereotypes. Society benefits from elders, according to Palmore, because:

1. they are more law-abiding;
2. they are better citizens, for they participate in the voting process more frequently, are interested and informed about public issues, contact public officials more often, and serve more often in public office;
3. they are involved in more voluntary activities;
4. they are better workers; and
5. due to the maturity arising from experience, they tend to be wiser.¹⁴

Palmore also points out that there are several advantages that primarily benefit the older person in our society:

1. In addition to being more law-abiding, elders are less often victims of crime. Contrary to popular opinion, persons over sixty-five have substantially lower victimization rates in nearly all categories of crimes.
2. The aged also suffer fewer accidents than any other age group.
3. The most important economic advantage of elders is Social Security and other government pensions. Their benefits automatically increase with the cost of living index.
5. Extra personal exemptions and tax benefits in the form of reduced property taxes, and [one time] exemption of capital gains from sale of personal residence.
6. Medicare, a form of national health insurance. And,
7. Free services and reduce rates for housing, medication, meals, transportation, entertainment, education, etc.¹⁵

Consequently, being old does not have to be seen in a negative light. Old age can be depicted in a positive fashion, not only to the young, but to the aging themselves, according to Palmore.
Additionally, Peter Uhlenberg suggests that there are reasons not to accept, as certain and final, the projections of statistics for our future elderly population. It has been presumed that "baby boomers", whose numbers are currently at 22 percent of the general population and twice that of the elderly population, will swell the ranks of the aged far beyond anything previously experienced. But, the ratio of expected increase could be higher or lower, depending on dramatic increases or decreases in mortality. So, uncertainty exists when projecting absolute future age distribution ratios. Epidemics and war, or scarcity of basic resources due to overpopulation, are just a couple of possible scenarios that could alter these projections. Nevertheless, we still need to be prepared for the probability that the predicted increases will develop, and adjust our policies accordingly.

Social Security

Since its inception Social Security has been regarded as the most successful anti-poverty program in our country. Millions of elderly have been kept by it from slipping into poverty. Every month more than one out of seven people in the U.S. receive a Social Security check. This translates into over 36 million people. Only three percent of citizens over sixty-five live in poverty, according to some experts. However, it has recently become more and more apparent that something is wrong with this assessment of its success, which seems to be a self-perpetuating myth. The poorest elderly poor have difficulty surviving just on Social Security alone, while a great percentage of the elderly have no desperate need for it, although they certainly have it coming insofar as they paid into the system during their employment period. But the system itself needs to be re-evaluated, updated, or perhaps even scrapped and

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replaced.

According to David Brodsky:

During the 1920s and 1930s, such factors as declining wages, rising unemployment, the loss of savings, and inadequate aggregate demand contributed to the Depression. The political system's response to these economic problems involved an expanded government role in the economy. The Social Security Act of 1935 served as a major element of this response, and although its component programs enhanced the economic security of retired persons and other individuals, the act focused on the twin problems of unemployment and inadequate demand for consumer products. Accordingly, its retirement and old-age assistance provisions sought to reduce unemployment by removing older workers from the labor force, thereby opening up jobs for younger workers... In sum, policy makers tailored Social Security to the economic circumstances of the 1930s.

There were eleven people working for each retiree when Social Security was begun. That ratio has fallen to approximately 3.3 to one today. By 2035, the ration will have lowered to only 1.9 to 1. The median life expectancy for men was fifty-eight years when Social Security was introduced. Today it is about seventy-two years. However, competing needs are causing politicians to struggle for a reconciliation, and to perhaps restructure this entitlement. Many citizens doubt that the government has the ability to find a solution. Today's young are not sure that they will ever see a return on the taxes they are now paying into the Social Security fund at rates much higher than ever paid in the past. Spending on Social Security has doubled since 1960. Some state that seniors are robbing their children's future, but others disagree, saying it is the rising deficit, due to poor policy choices from the seventies and eighties, which is the real culprit.

The image of the elderly as an economically disadvantaged group became increasingly obsolete during the years between 1959 and 1987. The proportion of elderly with incomes
below the poverty line dropped from 35% to 12% during that period. The "issue of how to meet the growing economic commitment of supporting the dependent older" generation must be faced as the population continues to age. The elderly are politically entitled to comparatively high levels of economic support from our government programs. But a problem is developing because taxes that are now paid by the working population to support the elderly have increased so sharply in the past three decades. Uhlenberg says that "it is clearly too simplistic to argue that increasing poverty among children is caused by the improved economic position of the elderly". However, it is noted that many older persons who are recipients of benefits from these programs are also politically powerful as well as affluent. Possibilities for dealing with this inequity will be addressed further on.

Lamm, et al., quotes Daniel Callahan who states that, "it is by no means evident why mere survival, the living of life through adulthood, in and of itself merits the bountiful social blessings of fully subsidized health care." In 1965, Medicare was set up as part of the Social Security system to aid elderly Americans in paying for health care. It was estimated, at that time, that by 1990 the program would cost $8.8 billion. By 1988 those costs had already risen to $89 billion, and the plan is currently flirting with bankruptcy. It is ironic that today the elderly are themselves paying proportionately more than they did in 1965 for health care.

Dewey suggests that the valuations which society has given to particular activities are those which actually originated under social conditions from past eras. The situations were different then, and do not now represent current conditions. We must look to "individual variation" as the means by which our current values are to be focused. Individual variation arises from environmental change. When one individual clings to the ideals of his forefathers,
and the next individual develops new habits based on changes seen around her, a clash results. Either one individual accepts the habit of the other, or a new habit is formed, or total reconstruction occurs. Co-existence and toleration also come into play where mutual interests are concerned. What usually arises is "the greatest good for the greatest number". Institutions are formed based on new statutes, as a result. This echoes Cicero, who declared: "In the calculus of duties, those involving society's interests come first, and within these there are gradations: duty to gods, country, parents, etc." The inclination of our society to dismiss the elderly segment, to render them invisible, goes against the grain of common sense and decency - for "we" too will be older some day.

In recent decades, incentives and opportunities for older persons to participate in productive society have declined. It is apparent that norms have not been developed which would encourage their continued contributions in the social realm. The growing emphasis on "leisure activities" for the aging gives the perception to some that the elderly are to be excused from societal responsibilities. But this may not necessarily follow. Because one has more time for leisure activities does not automatically preclude or assume that one's sense of community responsibility withers. If, through habit, one has been socially active, one will probably continue to be so, and perhaps even increase one's community involvement in lieu of leisure time. This follows from Cicero, quoted earlier. Many elderly are active today in their communities as members of Neighborhood Watch groups, or seen working at voting precincts during elections, for instance.

Aging policy in Japan was spurred by the speed with which their population has aged. This has resulted in a crisis for the health and welfare services to the elderly. In 1984, Japan
spent $75 billion on health care, of which $18 billion was spent on those over seventy. Almost one-fourth of the country's health cost was going to care for ten percent of its population. Since 1973, when free medical care was established, cost for care of the aged had increased eight-fold.\(^{28}\)

We can determine a parallel increase in expenses in the U.S., even before our percentage of elderly citizens reaches the Japanese proportions. Before this occurs we must look for alternate solutions to the heavy burden that will inevitably come.

In the U.S. young and middle-aged workers now pay most of the benefits of our growing retiree population, some of whom have larger incomes from pensions and Social Security than the contributing workers. According to Boorstein, "in 1980 the Social Security Administration published a report showing that only 12% of those sixty-five and over received" income from assets and other savings,\(^ {29}\) with three fifths of those sixty-five and over receiving more than half their income from Social Security.\(^ {30}\) According to Senator Bob Kerry, in 1995 there were only five workers paying taxes to support each retiree. And, the number of workers per retiree shrinks with each decade.\(^ {31}\)

It is impossible to differentiate between household income and disposable income when presenting relative income levels of various age cohorts. Child-rearing and educational expenses, and mortgage payments are often in the past for the elderly, so they can derive more from their gross income than can the young. In 1986 a Congressional Research Service study determined that a sixty-five year old retiree who had paid the maximum Social Security taxes during his or her working career would receive the total contribution in only twenty-one months! This means, according to Lamm, \textit{et al.}, that for most of a person's retirement the
benefits received were paid for by neither the employee nor the employer but by the diminishing base of contemporary workers. In 1990 the maximum contribution to Social Security was 2000% higher than it was in 1970. However, these statistics do not account for increases in the cost of living during that period, nor the interest that would have been earned on one’s total contributions during their working years had they been privately invested.

We cannot question that Social Security is an indispensable program for the aging poor, yet it has turned into a generous entitlement for the elderly wealthy and middle class segments. The elderly, over age sixty-five make up only 10% of the impoverished in this country. The decade between 1973 and 1983 saw the real wealth of people aged 65 to 69 climb from $169,366 to $321,562, while the group aged 25 to 34 saw a decrease from $59,624 to $49,046. Eighteen percent, or 4.4 million households, receiving Social Security benefits received an outside income of over $25,000 per year in 1986, according to the Congressional Research Service. The system is paying benefits not only to the aged poor, but to a great number of wealthy retired persons while taxing the working poor and middle class.

In order to keep the system intact and solvent, the Social Security Administration estimates that a 42 percent increase on taxable income would have to be put into place by 2029. Since this is an unrealistic solution it appears inevitable that changes in the system must occur.

If we look at the reasons these programs were enacted into law we find that the conditions which served their inception have changed enough that to just continue on as we are in this regard would be foolhardy.
Durkheim points out that law rests on both objective and subjective causes at the same time. We must look at demographics, the physical environment, and the climate as well as national culture, ideas, and preferences. Law is supposed to be changeable, and this is why it is required in one place and time and not in another. In other words, it should not be blindly imposed on everyone in all places and at all times and under all circumstances. This is not a matter of truth, for the law is neither true nor false. The law is not compromised by variations. He sees it as being "appropriate or inappropriate to the aim that is its raison d'être".35

As Social Security is currently structured, it compels middle-and low-income employees to pay Social Security tax on all or most of their earnings. The wealthy paid Social Security tax on approximately the first $62,000 earned in 1993. Those most likely to depend on Social Security benefits when they retire receive the smallest payments when it is time for them to collect. However, those whose earnings were higher, and who are not likely to require the benefit, receive the highest payments.36 It is, however, the very people who earned so little during their working lifetime who in fact need the most assistance. Under current guidelines, Social Security has not, nor never will, adequately help those it was supposed to help. Certainly, an unpublished, if not unforeseen, externality of this policy is that the well-to-do middle class have been able to use this as a sort of extra 'savings account'. But not even this portion of the retired population is benefiting as well as they could if they had been able to invest the withheld portion of their salaries themselves, or if the money had been put instead into a personal retirement fund. The middle-class recipient has had no say about whether or not a portion of their earnings could or should be withheld in such a fashion. And later I shall argue that this is wrong. The middle class could earmark a small percentage of
their wages to be given to a Social Security fund for the poorest retirees, and few would begrudge them that if they had the option to decide for themselves how to invest their own retirement monies.

As Durkheim has pointed out, it is almost always impossible to create social change with "methodical reflection", for most social actualities are too complex to be totally encompassed by even the widest human intellect. Most social and moral institutions come about, then, because of obscure causes, subconscious feeling, and "motives which have no relationship to the effects they produce and which, consequently, they cannot explain". The complexity of society forces us to realize that humans are not isolated from each other, for what affects one is eventually felt by the others. For this reason, we cannot say that what happens to the aged has no effect upon us, for we too will grow old soon enough. Ageism, and early retirement policies are our concern. Nor can we allow current inequities in the distribution of entitlements to continue without expecting to feel reactions in the form of protests, at the least, and bankruptcy of the programs themselves, at the most, due to imprudent implementation and distribution practices. The implementors themselves know it does not work well but are given no authority to alter anything within the policy.

While the individual aims to preserve him- or herself, society has the same goal - to ensure its continuity and its coordination. In each case a life process is involved, although each has different ends. "The individual's action will always be to maintain his life process, and any change in the economic conditions which threaten the life process would lead him to do things which are non-social." It is impossible, however, for society to be independent of the individual.
Since the positive morality of a society grows out of its established activities and the values that are attached to them,\textsuperscript{40} we must realize that society exists for the individual. The power that society derives comes from the individuals within it. It is the individual unit of the social structure that must initiate action in order for progress to be attained. Yet one does not exist entirely for society, but also for oneself. An individual can also exist without a society, albeit a lonely and difficult existence, but that is not an avenue to be explored here. According to Dewey, from a dynamic-organic point of view we see the individual from two standpoints. From one, society works through the individual; in the other, the individual is merely a part of society.\textsuperscript{41} A third standpoint could be that within a society the individual has the opportunity also to give to and receive from a few or many others. Rarely does the stream of benefits or contributions flow solely in one direction.

As Elizabeth Wolgast tells us, “the community is nothing without its members, they help constitute it. Therefore its actions cannot be dissociated from them even if it also cannot be reduced to actions of theirs”\textsuperscript{42}. This observation highlights an important point: that although we might, as individuals, have varying viewpoints regarding how we approach and meet our social problems, the solutions collectively agreed upon by the majority are reflective of the populace \textit{as a whole}. So while, as individuals, we may not all agree upon the course of action, the action that is collectively taken in representative government is the responsibility of us all. If the action works, that is good, but if, conversely, it is ineffective or even damaging we must all assume a portion of the responsibility for its failure.
Duties of State

We find, then, that when we have any association of individuals we also have authority to coordinate and control in order to maintain a plan of order. This is necessary. In a society this authority is the State, which "is the very organ of social thought", according to Durkheim. The State does not speculate or think for the sake of thought, as an individual might, but thinks toward practical ends, or to guide collective behavior. And since the State is just a collection of individuals, its aim should be the development of individuals.

Dewey calls this association of individuals "a consensus of consciousness". It guides the social mind. It is not totally uniform, but enough so that it can actually limit or control the individual along certain lines. It is a working organization of ideas and ideals. He sees the social mind as being as real as the individual mind, yet separate. He points out that social philosophers have been almost hypnotically influenced by this "political factor" which is perceived as direct control of the individual. This is an exaggeration, for the political aspect of society must be thought of as only one aspect of social operation. Other aspects, such as farming, and raising families are just as important to a society. This puts the concept of law in a clearer perspective, and allows one to remember that law is only an artifact of society.

Government, therefore, exists for a particular social aim. It is no more important to the social scheme than is any other social aspect. Its end is only one among many in the continually changing entity known as society. This being so, we should not be hesitant to effect changes, while at the same time remembering to be prudent in regard to the externalities, or far-reaching consequences, of those changes. The power of the State should not be feared or regarded as overpowering in our country, for, ultimately, its power resides...
with us.

Morality, as we have seen, is a function of society, and is pertinent to all the social facts from which it is derived as well as to economic facts. This being evident, the ways that the Social Security law is serving and not serving our society must be seriously scrutinized. It is the moral duty of society to do so.

"But", Wolgast cautions, "separating the justified demands of public service from unjustified ones requires a keen faculty of moral criticism, and that faculty is just what continued participation in an institution brings into jeopardy." By clinging to outmoded social policy we can actually do more harm than by squarely facing the challenge at hand, fashioning morally intelligent solutions, and making changes.

The law is a means to an end, not something which, in itself, is sacred. According to Durkheim: "It is only of value if it fills its function well, that is, if it assures the life of society". Morality too, functions to assure moral order. And like the law, it holds tenets that compel action if it is necessary. But this constraint has a more psychological and subtle characteristic, for it is not exercised by the State but by the entire community. There are no precise formulations, so morality is freer and more flexible than the law. Intrinsic differences exist in addition to the extrinsic, for morality reaches far beyond the law, which stands as "the minimal morality absolutely necessary for society to endure".

Wolgast pictures our government as an "artificial person", with all of its actions being done at a personal distance, and being somewhat indifferent to individual situations. This embodiment of government as an artificial person represents the citizens who are ultimately responsible for the actions of their representative. But a problem arises because the action
taken on the citizen’s behalf is impersonal, the citizen being involved only at a distance. Where policy is concerned, there is no single natural person who can be deemed accountable. This creates a moral problem, for no one person really assumes the responsibility, or is given a mandate to do so. This lack corrupts the moral integrity of the persons involved as well as the policy with which they are entrusted. Wolgast concludes that there is an underlying moral problem in all this because “the electorate is not fully responsible for the misdeeds of their representatives; they did not make [the representative’s] choices”. The moral dilemma occurs because “acting in someone else’s name, the representative, as a natural person, cannot take full responsibility as she would for private decisions”, but can take full responsibility as a public agent. As Wolgast sees it, lack of responsibility and lack of information “go hand in hand, and both are built into the organizational structure”. Wolgast believes that “treating corporations [or governments] like persons is morally hazardous. For the fiction of a person without any moral dimension is...an invitation to act without accountability”. From this we can see how easy it is for policies to become bogged down in bureaucracy. Nobody takes responsibility, and since those involved are acting in an impersonal way, as artificial persons, they do not feel that the responsibility is theirs. According to Wolgast “[a] difficult decision requires moral wisdom, not an institutional excuse”. But if it is a decision for all of us, then it requires an institutional channel.

Bellah, et al., point out that it seems as if many of our institutions stress individual advantage rather than the importance of combining resources for the common welfare. This is seen where governmental, educational, and economic agencies compete for resources. This takes away from the meaning in our lives, and fragments our resolve toward achievement; we
become sidetracked as we structure our lives in an endless competition for the consumer symbols that [supposedly] represent power, prestige, and money as promoted by those institutions. It is an undoubted certainty that these powerful institutions are unable to see the chaos that they engender, and are even blind to the fact that this is indeed the result of their manipulations. This lack of awareness lies in the fact that they have lost sight of their original purposes, if they ever had clearly-defined ones to begin with. They continue their existence in a spirit of self-fulfillment rather than a spirit of usefulness and service. They fail to question whether or not they have continued to fulfill their operational premises. Self-appraisal in terms of ends is lacking. Consequently, these institutions which were established in hopes of solving problems have become instead a part of the problem itself. Due to lack of insightful guidance they have slid into the morass and become out of focus in regard to their original goals. Undoubtedly, this slide is caused, in part, by a general lack of attention to the certainty that unforeseen problems, in regard to the relation of the policy to its target problem, will arise. It is as if the administrators often wear the metaphorical 'rose-colored glasses' while attending to their duties. There is not a comfortable familiarity with the absolute fact that an administrator will be faced with unforeseen challenges. When the inevitable does occur it is often met in surprising ways:

- by paralysis
- by panic
- by ignoring the obvious
- by anger
- by placing blame

These reactions by administrators are all non-productive as well as ultimately harmful and
demoralizing. Additionally, some corporations react in an altogether different direction by not allowing a new policy time enough to prove if it is worthy or not, to correctly collect supporting data, collate information, and etc. There is no wisdom evident, so the managers are beset with a constant bombardment of one policy replacing another, or worse - redundant plans that pile duplicate and unnecessary duties on already over-burdened managers. We thus find the policy unable to continue effectively on its course, due to the latest challenge or upset. Instead, progress is stymied - not by the problem, but by the chaos of a lack of preparedness - which should have been part of the integral make-up of the policy system as well as the policy implementors. Inevitably, this lack ends up contributing to the vicious circle of such common problems as increasing crime, unabated poverty, and an abysmal lack of education. This set of symptoms and reactions can be seen to happen in many institutional settings. The wealthy, the educated, and the ‘comfortable’ have no idea why these problems continue, even if they are concerned about them. And for some, as long as they are not “hassled”, ignorance is indeed bliss. The problems continue because those who could help are in the grip of institutions that reassure them that this is the way it has to be, that there is no other way.

Chapter Four looked at ethical considerations. In a parallel to Johnson’s discussion of the polarity between Relativism and Absolutism, Bellah, et al., propose a similar schism regarding Utilitarian Individualism and Moral Individualism. They found that neither view adequately provides an understanding of “the common good”. Often, the government seems to make decisions based on cost-benefit analyses rather than on moral leadership when deciding social priorities such as human health, welfare, and environmental issues. According
to the cost-benefit analysts, before government intervenes to save lives it must be decided "how much a life is worth" in order to come to a rational decision. Cost-benefit analysts feel that this is a democratic as well as moral method to assess government policies. In this fashion of assessment the analysts are dealing with statistical lives. Thus the value of a life is measured in market terms. This utilitarian approach to human life, although seemingly 'practical', comes across as cold and unfeeling, as indeed it is. An 'individual' comes to be represented as a composite unit made up of the sum of all individuals, but in reality represents no one individual in particular. We find quite often that this type of approach is taken by 'traditional' physicians who treat all patients based on an abstracted 'average' person, with no patience for those who do not fit into the center of the chart on a bell-curve. Thus, the minority of patients who appear at either end of the curve are often over- or under-medicated and left off in worse condition than when they sought treatment. This is a truly harmful result of not treating persons as individuals, but rather treating them by attempting to force them to fit a generalized and fictitious profile.

Applying this Utilitarian approach to government - that those who govern should be guided by the sum of the desires of the general population - one looks only at the desires and needs of current citizens. No consideration is given to a sense of responsibility to those yet to be born, nor the needs of the truly disadvantaged. Instead, what is decided as being good for society as a whole, by judging a sum of individual autonomous preferences, ends up by sharply straining the idea of what the whole itself is. The idea of "the whole" ends up being, in reality, another fiction. Consequently this outlook cuts the current generation off from its sense of responsibility to those of the future by maximizing their obligations to their own
welfare. Often, then, these policy applications are seen instead as reflecting people’s preferences rather than their needs. This brings to mind the argument between Socrates and Callicles (in Gorgias) regarding the difference between pastry-makers and physicians and which profession was the more beneficial for humankind. The confectioners, according to Socrates, catered to peoples’ desires while the physicians of the time tended to their needs.

As Schneider has pointed out, we must “attempt to discover general norms of responsibility valid for any type of association”. We must be able to base our decisions on how to respond to multiple circumstances by being “responsive to the actual demands of the real situation. And then, from the co-presence of these various responsibilities in their concrete meanings for the interests at stake, there emerges a conviction that ‘this one is the right action here and now’”. Schneider elaborates:

[R]eason can never answer such problems independently of art, nor conscience independently of experience. Responsibility is achieved as it is in all the arts by learning the various skills required. The road to acting responsibly is by learning the hard way. Short cuts to moral knowledge are perilous.

Schneider’s advice should be used in training all people who are in charge of managing or implementing policy. They must be aware that, realistically, a policy that cannot adapt to natural changes in the population it serves is no longer functional. Trying to fit people to the hard, inflexible rules of a policy, rather than giving the policy flexibility to begin with and allowing it to expand or contract with the actual needs of the population, simply prepares it for an inevitable failure. Legislators and implementors who are trained to look at their policies in this light should actually be able to anticipate problems and natural changes, and be able to alter the course of the policy to accommodate real needs. For it is the job of legislators,
implementors, and managers to imagine things before they happen! Recommendations for changing the current practices of the Social Security program will be offered and argued in the final section of this chapter.

**Realities and Possibilities**

"...when we are young or in our prime we do not think of ourselves as already being the dwelling place of our own future old age."  

De Beauvoir sagely counsels that our waiting future holds the meaning of our lives, and this will be in question unless we stop "cheating". "If we do not know what we are going to be, we cannot know what we are..."  

And if we cannot realize that the policies we put in place for the elderly now are, most likely, the policies that we inherit in our aging years, we shall in fact cheat ourselves.

In view of this, the individual needs to fashion his or her activities in a manner that will, in fulfilling personal aspirations, also serve community requirements. For some, it seems that there is a continual opposition between individual interests and social interests in the actions and the consciousness of the individual. A solution, therefore should be sought in existing moral principles. This schism is apparent in opposing relations between the progressive and the established sectors of society or, as Dewey puts it, "the relative dynamic factor and the relative static factor."  

We see this again in the relation of the moral to the legal sphere. One notion holds that only the outward manifestation of nonsocial, egoistic tendencies can be restrained by society. Another notion sees the social structure as needing to go beyond this and encourage action that expresses socializing motives and tendencies.
Callahan seems to be a proponent of this latter viewpoint when he expresses his belief that during "hard times" we must call upon or awaken our "moral resources". He is concerned that if we cling to the so called "values" of affluent times during the difficult periods, that we will find ourselves imbedded in moral chaos. "Hard times need a broad sense of duty toward others, especially those [others] out of sight..." Callahan asks if we can, in fact, determine the difference between public and private morality if we examine their relationship to each other; and he answers that we have to realize that this distinction is a cultural artifact. This emphasizes a point made earlier in this paper: that there are no private acts which do not eventually have public consequences. Attempting to separate the two will only harm our moral life. He believes that if we go on in this direction we will become an intolerable society and this will destroy private as well as public life. We have to be aware that the good of the individual (or the ethic of individualism) is not necessarily the good of society.

Adapting this concept to the question of how we treat our elders, we can see that what may work for a corporation (by insisting upon mandatory retirement at a certain age), does not work, overall, for the benefit of the many capable older workers who would like to continue working. When individuals are discriminated against due to forced retirement, regardless of health and/or ability, this eventually harms society. While this brings up the question of how we provide jobs for the young, that is not necessarily the problem it is said to be. For not everyone is enamored by the concept of working beyond their sixties; many would even prefer to retire from full-time work in their fifties if they could. Those who have been fortunate and are wise enough to have planned for such an early withdrawal from the work-force will do just that. And for those people of all ages who do work, their paychecks
would be more meaningful to them if there were not an arbitrary substantial amount deducted for Social Security and Medicare.

 Abilities are not suddenly lost at age sixty-five, nor is a general decline suffered. Some people do not experience even gradual loss until after ninety years of age. However, age-specific treatment does apply in certain groups. For example, age is fairly used for the calculation of benefits and costs of annuities and life insurance policies. Similarly, grouping athletes into age cohorts is sometimes an equitable policy when competition is involved.⁷⁰

 De Beauvoir points out that to a great extent the age at which one begins to physically decline depends on the social class to which one belongs. Manual laborers are often worn out by age fifty, while a person of privilege can easily reach eighty because the onset of decline has begun later in life without continual physical trauma.⁷¹

 While there are economic costs for ignoring the creative and productive capacities of older persons, there are also cultural and social costs for ignoring the resources, wisdom, and social support they have to offer. But there is rising concern about the billions of dollars annually spent on the health and welfare of elders. Some proposals call for the reduction of such services, but these have been bitterly resisted by organized efforts of [many] elderly, for they believe that they are entitled to these programs.⁷² Especially where the wealthy aged are concerned, according to Lamm, et al., it would not seem unreasonable to change Social Security laws to subject all earned income to taxes. This would ensure that the person who earns $250,000 per year pays [at least] the same percentage of taxes on income as does the person who earns $25,000 per year.⁷³ Some officials have suggested means-testing of the aging to determine if Social Security benefits should be paid to those who generate income
above a certain amount. However, if someone has paid into Social Security for forty years or so that is their money; it is something that has been counted on to be there upon retirement, an entitlement literally! The only way someone should not be given Social Security payments is if they had elected not to participate in that particular program - a government-run retirement plan - and had not paid into it at all.

Policy debates centered on population aging generally fit three major categories. The first encompasses a set of policies that would alter the aging of the population. Uhlenberg believes that this approach ameliorates any challenge related to an increasingly older population by lessening the future aging of the population. But he does not say how this will be achieved. Perhaps by having even more babies? This would be like trying to put out a fire by throwing gunpowder in it! The second category of policies emphasizes the potentiality for changing the ways people function during their later years. The final category of proposals addresses issues connected to the seating of responsibility for supporting the aged. The prevalent combination of responsibilities among the individual, the state, and the family could be varied or changed in several ways.

In the first category, policies to "alter the aging of the population", social policy could be used to change demographic behavior. It might be possible to affect demographic variables that directly impinge upon the structure of age by changing patterns of fertility, migration, and mortality. A concerted effort to increase the birth rate would slow or stop future population aging. This plan is referred by Uhlenberg as pro-natalism. It is obvious that Uhlenberg either did not really think this out too clearly, or he has a very wry sense of humor. However, he lists two objections against implementation of this policy. Firstly, if increased fertility occurs
among the lesser educated and lesser skilled segment of society more children will grow up in circumstances of poverty, thus placing these young at an immediate disadvantage for joining mainstream society and becoming productive. This cost to society would not be worth it. The second argument against this policy would be the obvious consequences of population growth in general; environmental quality would suffer because of a sustained population growth. This "cure" would surely kill the patient!76

Encouraging higher immigration as a strategy to reduce the aged population is not seen as a plan that merits much attention. It might be that increasing the number of young adults would increase the birth rate and add to the labor force, but then these people and their children would, soon enough, enter old age themselves.77 And in today's political climate, this suggestion would not be well-received by the public.

The growth of the oldest-old population, above eighty years of age, could be slowed if a policy were adopted to restrict life-extending resources to this segment. Rationing health care to the old is being debated, since the latest medical technology is so expensive.78 Somehow, this "solution" seems to be quite cold-blooded, although it is being looked at by some states as a method to control medical costs related to treatment for indigents in general.

A final policy proposal to change the aging of our society would be to change the chronological age at which one is deemed to be old. Reaching age sixty-five signals arbitrary retirement in most cases. This is a negative. But, on the positive side, it also entitles one to Medicare, full Social Security coverage, senior citizen discounts, and tax advantages. Changing this mandatory age-specific marker would reflect our increasing longevity and the evolving characteristics of the cohorts who are now approaching it. Sixty-five, in most cases,
is not really "old". This would not, of course, affect biological aging, but changing the age for access to entitlements could lighten the economic load of supporting an increasing dependent aging population. A change made to the Social Security Act in 1983 called for "gradually increasing the age for full Social Security benefits to sixty-seven by 2027". If this were extended to all of the old age entitlement programs, and if the age criterion would be advanced to seventy-two years, the economic effects of future population aging could be ameliorated even more. So, concurrent changes would have to be made. For instance, how would the near-old population be affected? Would they become more vulnerable? At least some of them might find that declining health would make waiting for later retirement a hardship. But, this does not address other aspects of the social structure, and it ignores my earlier argument regarding the importance of flexibility in a policy so that implementors have the ability to make discretionary judgments. Again, setting a rigid, arbitrary age for retirement makes no allowances for the many differences between persons in the rate they age and their state of health.

Brodsky argues against resetting retirement age by citing the opinion of Robert M. Ball, a former Social Security commissioner:

Ball...believe[s] that increasing the retirement age, as a practical matter, reduces the benefits for someone who planned to retire at age sixty-five with full benefits, but who would, if the retirement age were changed, retire at the same age with the reduced benefits paid to early retirees. Moreover, Ball believes that proposals to delay retirement fail to take into account the employment problems likely to face older workers, especially those trying to find rather than maintain employment after age sixty.

Since societies have become larger and more complex, diversity has also increased within them, according to Durkheim. Therefore, the State, also, must branch out and evolve...
if it is to fulfill its function. Furthermore, it is not possible to set limits on the course of progress - to sit back and state that something will be forever so. There is no way to measure the effects of moral activity on progress, and no reason to consider the work of progress to be at an end.

In wanting to know how the Japanese coped with the "problems" of the aged it was hoped that the answers they found would contribute to answering similar questions regarding our own aging society. However, two issues emerge which could lead to precarious assumptions. Firstly, there is the hazard of "false parallels". Although American and Japanese gerontologists can learn much from each other through asking many of the same questions, this is not necessarily comparable. For instance, there are the Japanese attitudes toward the unstable ambulatory elderly, and to wheelchairs. General attitudes in this respect are that those older people should stay out of the way; that they do not belong on crowded avenues and on rush-hour subways, for they slow down those with a 'purpose' in life, and get in their way. Secondly, we need to discern if differences found in Japan are related to their culture, or to other reasons. A difference may arise from cultural tradition, but again, it could come about because of technological or economic considerations. Do 60 percent of the aged Japanese live with their children mainly because "age-appropriate environments are so scarce there", and housing so expensive? Or is this because of tradition? The relative absence of services so the frail elderly can live independently, and the high cost of land are probably important factors that go into the age integration of the household. It is likely a matter of economics and tradition.

Displays of public respect toward the elderly in Japan are rewarded in the Confucian
tradition. National customs, such as Honor-the-Aged-Day, indicate this. But less formal rules apply to close kin and acquaintances in personal situations. There is no paucity of epithets among the Japanese. "Dried plum crone" and "old codger" are often used. When Palmore's "Facts on Aging Quiz" was given to comparable groups of Japanese and Americans, it was found that the Japanese hold more negative stereotypes about aging, and are less knowledgeable about the elderly, overall, than are their American counterparts. The explanation for this finding was that the influences of modernization on family economics is spurring a growing conflict between the generations. However, Kiefer is doubtful that this explains the finding. She believes it has to do with the Japanese not having a well-developed sense of responsibility to strangers. It "is a society dominated by face-to-face relationships". But in spite of this, the Japanese blame their elderly for the unacceptably high medical costs that arose after free health care for the aged began.85

On the surface it would appear that the policies developed by Japan to care for their elderly could serve as a model for our future programs for the aged. But when we delve beneath that surface it becomes apparent that in some respects there are some deep divisions between the two cultures that probably will preclude our taking such an easy path to find solutions. Most likely, we will find stronger solutions that are better adapted to our flexible and multi-cultural way of life. We are not a traditional society. This determination does not disparage the Japanese Confucian tradition, but rather, states the facts as they currently stand. The U. S. is a diverse society, religiously, racially, and ethnically. We are independent, and will undoubtedly be happiest, as a people, if our society finds its own solutions. It appears that much of Japan's problem in dealing with its elderly stems from tradition being challenged by

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the progress Japan has made in the world of modern technology. It has a lot of work to do in order for the two systems to be integrated. Apparently, the Japanese elders are currently caught between these two systems. Our national background allows us far more flexibility, which we still need to recognize and put to use.

PART TWO

Recommendations

Our life course is generally divided into three categories - education, work, and leisure. This division emerged when education and retirement became institutionalized. Uhlenberg believes that this stratification may actually be harmful to all stages of human development. For the youth are not exposed adequately to the realities of work while they are being prepared for it in school. The young and the middle-aged are loaded down with too many responsibilities and too much work; they could use more leisure. The elderly suddenly find that they are considered by society to be marginal, obsolete, and non-productive. He argues that we should adopt social policies that encourage a greater mixture of education, leisure, and work during the entire life span. As a benefit, this restructuring of the life course would potentially elevate "the productive contributions of the elderly to the society". These three facets of life are too rigidly defined in our society.

School is the time when the young should be preparing to meet the challenges of adulthood. Too much effort and expense, however, seems to be devoted to entertaining them, satisfying their wants instead of their needs. Youngsters often want many things, but do not yet have the wisdom to know what they need. This is why they have parents and teachers.
Both parents and teachers should be able to guide the young, to explain the workings of the world, and to instill values and an ethical sense. Sadly, in some or all of these areas many teachers believe that this all lies solely in the province of the parents. Or, if they try, some teachers are told that it is not within the realm of school policy. Often, fear of legal reprisals, particularly during the last quarter century, govern this reticence of teachers to become involved. Yet there are also some parents who want and even demand that the schools handle non-practical (in academic and business terms) subjects such as sex education, which should be in the domain of the family, a duty and responsibility of one or, ideally, both parents at the least, and at the most a responsibility only *shared* with the parents by educators.

This attitude of "passing the buck" for responsibility is transferred to children by example from the adults in their lives. More and more we see people actually giving up their power to an institutional entity.

Education should not stop with the end of childhood or early adulthood. If a positive attitude toward learning is engendered by teachers and augmented by parents one is more apt to develop a respect and reverence for the process and the deep personal fulfillment it brings to life. This type of learning, later in life, is an enhancement to "the daily grind". It is not necessarily formal and constant, but comes from experience, on-the-job-training, and observation.

However, early education is, by necessity, structured, should have a purpose, and point toward a goal or perhaps many goals. One of these goals should be to help the student become a self-sufficient person because of confidence that what has been taught will be useful. Yet many students today have their doubts about this. This is where one should begin...
to glimpse the world of adulthood, and to learn how to grasp the practical and mental tools that will lead to self-fulfillment, production, and self-satisfaction with whatever course one has chosen to take in life. This is where awareness of future responsibility - responsibility for oneself, and perhaps others - should begin. And a part of that future is, at the least, awareness of old age as a fact of life along with the inevitability of one’s own old age and the very real needs that will accompany it.

Here is where the old (but ‘tried and true’) values are important. It seems that many school systems in our country tried to “fix” something that was not “broke” when the virtues of kindness, truth-telling, diligence, patience, honesty, and saving “for a rainy day” were no longer an active part of the curricula. That society as a whole has ultimately suffered as a result of this omission is a given. If, beginning at an early age, people are taught to take responsibility for themselves, they will be less apt to sign away their rights to guide their own destiny. This, I believe, is where we must begin in order to effect a positive change in the way we see the individual in society and in old age. If we do not make this change we may soon see de Tocqueville’s dire prediction (as quoted in Chapter Four) for our society come true; we will become so self-centered as to exist only for ourselves and our pleasures, allowing the government to benevolently keep us “in perpetual childhood”. This is where we have to question the moral limits of policy.

The schools are where the changes to our Social Security system have to begin, with the children. The idea first has to be present, a way of life has to arise, driven by a philosophy of positive self-reliance, and then a more natural and realistic policy can be developed and implemented that will address the needs of the truly needy, while allowing those who have no
particular handicap or need to plan for and maintain control of their own futures. Grade school is where the habit of saving and the ideas of investment and earning interest should begin. Alexander Pope put it most succinctly, saying:

'Tis education forms the common mind:
Just as the twig is bent, the tree’s inclined.

Perceptions of aging. Corporations as well as government must realize that the way older citizens and employees are regarded and referred to by them eventually permeates all of society. As was highlighted in Chapter Two, certain age norms, such as the expectation of retirement at a particular age, can be construed as ageism. And as de Beauvoir has pointed out, these attitudes are short-sighted.

We have found that not all cultures respond to their aging members in such negative terms. In fact, often, the aged members of many societies are revered for their wisdom and abilities. It might be a positive factor toward further eliminating negative ageism for our business and government leaders to develop a more acute sensitivity to how their treatment and portrayal of aging individuals in our society can be either positive or detrimental to not only the elderly but society as a whole. One place to begin might be with television advertisements and programs that represent older people as doddering fools fit only to be the butt of jokes. Here, a basic lack of respect for this one segment of the population ultimately serves only to demean us all. Additionally, other options which concern the overall well-being of seniors relates to how they are treated and perceived in the workplace. The following recommendations might offer methods to consider which could lead to a more positive position for the aging in our society; the most important one being an entirely fresh and
innovative look at the current Social Security system.

In order to increase the economic productivity of the aged it would be necessary to not only invest in their education, but to allow them to have employment opportunities. It will be necessary to better enforce existing age discrimination policy which was put in place by the Employment Act of 1967 and designed for the protection of older worker's rights. Alternative work options could be opened and would benefit those close to "retirement age".

One policy solution could be "phased retirement", where the work schedule is gradually reduced along with salary and pension payment. Another possible adaptation, which would not require much corporate restructuring, in terms of policy, would be to create a pool of company retirees who would be available for temporary, full, or part-time assignments. This is done currently, by a few companies, on a restricted basis. These retirement options, if adopted, would have many socially beneficial side-effects. The older worker would not feel suddenly alienated upon retirement. If in good health, he or she would be able to make their own decision as to when to retire. There would also be continued ties with co-workers, and a feeling of continuity as a retiree who belonged to a company pool periodically recalled old skills. The positive results could be boundless. It could be argued that younger workers might be unable to find well-paying jobs if this policy became popular with companies, but since the cohorts of the future are estimated to be much smaller, the young worker should not be displaced. And if the future holds yet another population change, adaptations to these plans will have to be made.

Some might argue that taking away administration of Social Security from the Federal government and allowing it to be administered on the state level would make things simpler.
But actually, this would cause a nightmare for businesses which are based in several or all states. They would go crazy trying to keep up with a possible fifty sets of laws. And the state bureaucracies themselves would all swell with each state developing and administering its own set of rules and paperwork. Or perhaps some states would find the process too costly and time-consuming and decide that they could not regulate such a program. This would leave employees without any means of old-age provision.

Dewey cautions against generalizing our rules for dealing with moral problems within society. He reminds us that it is important, if humans are to flourish, that we not lose touch with our environment. We must pay attention to it, for "the function, or the life process, may be said to be maintained as the cooperation of the organism and the environment". By extending his illustration to the problem of Social Security, it could be said that the way our government-managed ‘pension’ is operating is totally out of touch with its environment. If the system is not to collapse under its own weight it is important that we deal with the problems that its continuation poses for current and future generations.

It is paramount that the first thing to be done is to look at need, and not age, to determine Social Security aging policy. Keep the system in place, but have it be utilized on a voluntary basis by those who wish to participate, while allowing others to opt for personal plans. The ultimate goal of the plan should be to gradually phase out the program as it is now run. This could be done in a series of changes beginning with making participation in the government-run Social Security program voluntary. One could elect to save for retirement through a private plan if one wished, or through the Social Security system. The important object here, however, is that participation in the government-run Social Security program
would no longer be mandatory. In this first stage the employers could make other pension and/or savings and retirement plans available to the employees, still matching their deductions for whichever plan they chose. But the amount withheld from the employee and matched by the employer could fall within a range of choices running from 3% to 15%, for instance. This would make it easier for those people starting at the bottom of a pay scale to have more take-home pay until tenure and/or merit increases brought their salary level up to a point where saving/investing would be easier. Every employee would have to elect a plan, but it would not necessarily have to be the government managed Social Security program.

Working under private retirement fund systems would allow many people to feel more in charge of their own destinies. As a result, they might be more inclined to designate a small portion of their gross pay to be given to Social Security or a similar fund - perhaps 2%, for instance - to aid the unemployed, underemployed, or indigent retiree. However, there are programs already in place to aid most of the unemployed while they seek work. Unemployment benefits or most aid programs can be supplemented with food stamps when a family is in need. While this is a real and necessary concern, the primary problem being addressed in this section is that of the regularly-employed “average” person who is the most affected, now and in old age, by the arbitrary Social Security tax policy now in force.

However, William Browne and Laura Katz Olson find that,

the combined financial and administrative resources of national, state, and local governments provide nearly all the assistance that older people receive. Non-profit associations and the private economic sector rely on rather than supplant [the] government. In reality, none of these other entities have the capacity or inclination to furnish the programmatic and financial support that the elderly need and have come to expect. While a small percentage of the aged live comfortably in retirement communities, others require more
substantial government funding than currently is available simply to escape poverty. Government’s task...becomes complicated by the diversity of the clientele within the group.\textsuperscript{89}

Browne and Olson further point out that by the late 1970's and 1980's programs serving the elderly had such good support that approximately 25% of the national government’s total annual expenditures went toward them.\textsuperscript{90} Federal, state, and local programs that serve the poverty-level population and a substantial portion of the elderly “include Medicaid, the Food Stamp Act, Title XX of the Social Security Act; various housing acts, especially section 8, and section 202 federally subsidized housing programs, and low-income energy assistance”.\textsuperscript{91} Consequently, my proposals do not in any way propose to delete or diminish the support to which this population segment has access.

**Monitoring aging policy implementation.** The government, as well as corporations, often becomes mired down in the workings of a policy itself to the point where no one can actually determine if the policy is working at maximum effectiveness for its intended target group. To this end it requires continual vigilance during implementation to see that aging policies - or any other type of social or corporate program - remain on track in order to benefit those for whom it was designed. While certain corporations have developed new strategies for allowing long-term employees to retire with good benefits, others have not. And the government has not appeared to give much serious consideration at all to working flexible alternatives into the Social Security Program. Government policy-makers should take a closer look at what some of these progressive businesses are doing. Perhaps it could be learned, while doing this, that government ‘intervention’ in dictating the way retirement monies should be saved and invested is not only obsolete but also no longer practical for many workers.
Some companies already utilize a matching funds type of withholding program for their employees that, at this point in time, allows employees to authorize deductions over and above those required by law for Social Security (such as 401K, and stock option plans), so a system is already in place that could easily be modified and expanded as needed to accommodate this idea. These additional investment/retirement plan deductions are already automatically recorded on the employees’ W-2 forms and reported to the government as “pre-taxable income”, so no additional types of paperwork or reporting system would have to be designed. And as the retirement/savings plans would be administered by private investment firms that are already regulated by existing laws it could only be a boon to the economy since investments would be made in the broad arena of the marketplace or in mutual funds, etc. Since the government would no longer collect the current monies from the payroll deductions of employees plus the matching employers’ contribution, it would not need to spend so much money on staffing and paperwork to administer and police compliance. In our capitalistic and competitive business world it is not without reason to imagine that companies would compete for employees by trying to outdo each other in offering a variety of plans from which the employee could choose. Meanwhile, managers of the Social Security program would find themselves with a smaller bureaucracy to manage, and one that might eventually be phased out over the years as current Social Security recipients die, and as the business sector of society worked with its employees to provide alternative ways to save for retirement.

According to David Brodsky, “any attempts to improve old-age policy will have to balance considerations of cost with a concern about need”. He believes that it is very
important for policy makers to consider alternative approaches in order to determine eligibility for income support as well as other social service programs. Basing eligibility on age rather than need has limited the ability of these programs “to serve effectively elderly individuals most in need”. Basing access to entitlements on need rather than age, however, gives several advantages:

1. It would more successfully direct scarce resources to those persons most in need.
2. Older persons would no longer be segregated by age as recipients of preferred treatment. And,
3. It would very likely stem the backlash against the elderly by other social segments who see themselves as unfairly bearing the costs of programs serving a relatively well-off elderly population.

Morrison argues that, “the traditional meaning of ‘retirement’ as a complete cessation from work “is being supplanted by an increased interest by some older people in employment alternatives. He believes that the future will require “a different social definition of aging” or a change in the meaning of “retirement” itself. He finds that retirement decisions come about due to personal priorities, economic status, health concerns “and public and private sector policies that have, over time, conditioned [individuals’] understanding of the choices actually available to them”. A change in any of these factors will affect the timing and content of both employment and retirement decisions. He points out that currently, “few government or private sector policies provide incentives for older persons to either remain at work after pension benefits become available or return to work after receiving benefits”. However, it is unlikely that businesses will focus on developing policies to attract older employees unless a serious labor shortage should occur.

Morrison finds the term “pension recipient” to be a more accurately descriptive title
for seniors than "retiree" because today more people continue some form of employment after pension benefits begin. This trend is breaking the link between pension and age, for when someone now begins to receive a pension it no longer indicates a cessation of work. But this and other trends will not be enough to cause "major changes in retirement behavior unless public and private policies, as well as the expectations and behavior or older persons themselves are modified". If and when the link between age and receiving a pension is broken, it will be a positive step away from negative ageism.

In this chapter we have examined the background and policies related to Social Security. One's "productive years" are found to be standardized or made static by preconceived perceptions of when old age begins. These perceptions have been reinforced by systematized rules governing when a person may or must retire. This has, in turn, created an atmosphere conducive to the stereotyping of elderly persons in negative terms, and has also restricted the options available to them for working or retiring at an age that is personally comfortable and appropriate to their individual circumstances. It has been suggested that a more fluid or dynamic attitude be adopted which would more adequately serve the needs as well as the desires or older Americans.

The Social Security system itself is seen here as limiting and curtailing options for many individuals as they work toward their retirement years. It is time that Social Security, as it is now known, be phased out as a mandatory system and be replaced or augmented with a more versatile system that allows the individual more personal control and autonomy over payroll deductions that are withheld for retirement purposes.

People should be encouraged and educated to be more responsible and involved in
where and how their payroll deductions for retirement benefits are held and invested. For the majority of employed individuals more freedom and personal control over how this is accomplished would result in more flexibility over when in their lives retirement could occur. Some could opt to retire in their forties or fifties while others might prefer to work until their eighties or beyond.

Medical advances have caused average life spans to increase beyond what they were when Social Security was initially introduced. When life spans dramatically increase, it follows that perceptions about lifestyles should also change. For instance, in Medieval times the typical lifespan was thirty years! In thinking back to when I was thirty, and the perceptions I held then, I realize that in a society where the average life-span is now approximately 74 years, a much different perspective must currently flavor the social matrix. Imagine being in your late twenties and facing the very probable fact that some dreaded disease could and probably would end your life at any time. Something as seemingly benign to us now as an abscessed tooth could, in those days, have a painful and tragic ending as the infection coursed through one's body. We have a difficult time now relating to such a close association with immanent death, and this is because our circumstances are such that so dreary a life is unthinkable. Thus, being old at the age of thirty would, by necessity, create an individual who had a far more fatalistic outlook on life than the thirty-year-old individual that I remember being. Today, being thirty is being on the threshold of life; seventy is a very realistic and attainable goal. Our outlooks have changed, our lifestyles have changed, all because our probability for acquiring many deadly diseases has greatly diminished or vanished. So we can see that given the increase in lifespan since the comparatively few years since the inception

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of Social Security, that we have more options now to explore and we should not be limited by rules that were set down in another era.

Responsible individuals, of whom I believe there are many, do not require the federal government to babysit them. In effect, the Social Security program is a mandatory savings account which has been set up for its employed citizens and residents by the government in the way a parent might dole out an allowance to a child and demand that a percentage of that allowance be put in a piggy bank rather than spent as the child desires. That type of treatment might be OK when teaching a child to be thrifty and to save for a "rainy day", etc. The point here, however, is that we are not children and do not need the government to tell us how much money should be saved toward a minimal retirement.

As was stated in Part One of this chapter, although Social Security may have initially been begun to alleviate poverty in old age and to assuage the economic effects generated by the Great Depression, these circumstances no longer prevail. Social Security may have once been an innovative and effective stopgap for a particular set of circumstances, but it has now become a burdensome monolith of an institution, one that has outlived its primary directive.

An externality involved with releasing workers from forcibly depositing their money with the government would be that far fewer government employees would be needed to administer the program. This can be looked upon either negatively or positively, depending on the direction from which it is viewed. On one hand, the number of people employed by the Social Security program, i.e. the government, would be reduced, thus reducing the government's own payroll. On the other hand, these out-of-work individuals would create an increase in unemployment statistics. It would be hoped that they could soon find employment.
in other areas.

Another externality is that there would be one less government intrusion into the private lives of individuals if mandatory Social Security deductions were to cease. Governing could become a bit less wieldy and focus more on governing rather than spreading itself thinly by making forays into areas where its presence is neither required nor welcomed.

**Ethical behavior and attitudes in the community.** In Chapter Four we saw that a community, as a whole, reflects the values held by its individual, corporate, and institutional segments. Kaplan pointed out that, for most residents of a community, issues are seen as being moral only if they raise questions about corruption, bribery, or other such sordid acts. However, this leaves an array of social injustices or oversights, if one prefers a less abrasive term, that nevertheless cause discomfort to certain classes or segments of a society. In my opinion, a government that is overly involved in the lives of its citizenry to the point where it dictates that a minimum amount of money *must* be withheld for retirement from earnings (while not in itself immoral) sets the stage for immorality because:

* a ponderous administrate bureaucracy is created, thus causing a drain on public funds in order to pay the salaries required;
* the wealthy and the poor (those at each end of the “benefits” scale) receive benefits disproportionate to their actual needs; and
* the funds collected are often put to non-related use.

Consequently, we find that even though the highest of moral values were being considered at the inception of the Social Security program, somewhere - perhaps many places - along its lifespan the (metaphorical) flow of benefits it dispenses along its meandering course has become polluted by misuse, and diluted by allowing it to wander off course due to inattention
by administrators. It has become instead a rushing floodpath which now mindlessly sweeps all who come near it (by earning wages) into its turbulent flow whether or not they wish to get wet. This is not morally defensible, for it does not allow people to think and decide for themselves whether or not they would maximally benefit by participating. Additionally, while this torrent speeds on it becomes clogged by unnecessarily collecting from and spewing forth benefits upon those who hardly notice its existence - high wage earners and the wealthy.

It is morally more respectful to treat individuals as if they are competent. Often, when they are treated as if they do not have enough sense to handle their own affairs, this cripples their initiative and they become dependent. I again refer back to my earlier quote from de Tocqueville when he warns that such behavior by government “renders the exercise of the free agency of man less useful and less frequent”... “and gradually robs a man of all the uses of himself”... It seems to me that we have the right and the freedom to demand that we be allowed, in this small instance, to take charge of our own destinies and to withdraw from mandatory Social Security participation. The structure of Social Security must be changed, must become flexible enough so that, at the least, participation is the result of an informed, voluntary choice.

The concept of allowing more freedom to individuals needs, however, to be extended to the area of policy implementation. While it is necessary that implementors operate within the standards of specific guidelines relating to their particular programs, they too should be allowed more freedom. A morally responsible implementor is not going to abuse ‘power’. And having the ability to avert problems and stem the flow of negative externalities at the moment they are discerned is necessary if a policy is to flow on its intended course. When
implementors have to go through a lengthy chain of command to receive permission for even the most trivial of adjustments, it is a time-consuming process that often wastes valuable time that could have been spent applying a minor yet effective solution. In the meantime, while awaiting direction from those highest on the command chain little problems often escalate to the point that when the long-awaited permission to act finally does arrive, the ‘solution’ no longer addresses the problem, for it has grown, mutated, or spawned dozens more problems. A never-ending cycle of problems can then ensue. Against this type of policy management, neither the best-designed policy nor the most technically adept and morally balanced implementor could prevail. Consequently, the need for flexibility at the implementation level is a rational and foregone conclusion.


4. Palmore, 27.

5. Ibid., 126.


7. Foner, 3.


10. Ibid., 17.

11. de Beauvoir, 385.


13. Palmore, 11.

14. Ibid., 147.

15. Ibid., 147-148.


20. Goad, Dallas Morning News, 10c.


22. Ibid., 461-462.

23. Lamm, et al., 19.

25. Ibid., 322.
27. Uhlenberg, 463.
30. Ibid., 169.
33. Ibid., 18.
34. Ibid., 19.
35. Durkheim, Ethics..., 82.
37. Durkheim, Ethics..., 73.
38. Ibid., 84.
40. Ibid., 316.
41. Ibid.
44. Durkheim, Professional..., 51.
45. Dewey, Lectures..., 436.
46. Ibid., 312.
47. Ibid.
48. Durkheim, Ethics..., 78.
49. Wolgast, 105.
50. Durkheim, Ethics..., 86-87.

51. Wolgast, 98.

52. Ibid., 99.

53. Ibid., 88.

54. Ibid., 95.

55. Ibid. 107.


57. Ibid., 115, 116.

58. Ibid., 118.

59. Ibid.

60. Schneider, 18.

61. Ibid., 19.

62. Ibid. 20.

63. de Beauvoir, 4.

64. Ibid., 5.


66. Ibid., 317.

67. Ibid., 318.


69. Ibid., 22-24.

70. Palmore, 5.

71 de Beauvoir, 541.

72. Palmore, 7.

73. Lamm, et al., 22.


75. Uhlenberg, 463.
76. Ibid., 464.
77. Ibid., 465.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., 466.
80. Brodsky, 226.
81. Durkheim, Professional..., 65-66.
82. Ibid., 68.
83. Kiefer, 168.
84. Ibid., 162.
85. Ibid., 164-165.
86. Uhlenberg, 466-467.
87. Ibid., 467-468.
90. Ibid., 5, 6.
91. Ibid., 8.
92. Brodsky, 225.
93. Ibid.
94. Morrison, 142.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid., 143.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid., 144.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This thesis has taken a carefully reasoned look at several diverse areas in an effort to lead to arguments for changing or eliminating our current Social Security policies. We first looked at the background upon which our perceptions of aging and the elderly have been framed.

Wherever and whenever individual aging occurs, it consists of a complex interaction among psychological aging, biological aging, and interchanges with the cultural and social environment. Social roles are frequently linked to age. The process of aging cannot be separated from the cultural, social, and historic processes that surround it, and it can best be understood in the dynamic terms that have been discussed. Aging has to be viewed from the socio-cultural pattern perspective of the variability that is found across societies as well as within societies.¹

Although the idea of aging has become richer with the passage of time on the biological, psychological, and social levels, negative stereotypes continue to be used. Even if they are contradictory, they are mindlessly repeated. De Beauvoir sees the later years as "an autumn filled with ripe fruit: it is also a barren winter, and we hear of its coldness, snow and
frost. It has the sweet gentleness of a lovely evening. But it is also associated with the dark sadness of twilight.²

No harm would come from negative prejudice, according to Palmore, if people would only keep it to themselves. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, and prejudice usually turns into discrimination.³ We can see where attempts to reduce negative ageism can result in a type of backlash, with young people reacting with a more intense manifestation of their prejudices and discriminations. And we also see where elders become defensive about their special benefits and privileges when these are questioned.⁴ However, we have also seen that ageism is nothing new to the human experience. We have looked at several examples of how elders have been treated in other cultures and across time, and have seen where ageism has been exhibited to lesser, as well as to greater, degrees.

During every period of American history, ambivalent conduct and attitudes toward the elderly have been characterized in one way or another. The past few centuries have brought many changes, many of which have led to a deterioration in the prestige and authority of the elderly. But it is naive and hazardous to social policy for changes in the situation of the elderly to be viewed as "manifest destiny" or a fall from grace from a remote point, according to Foner. The history of aging in the U. S. has contained too many exceptions, ironies, and surprises to state that the status of the elderly has shifted only in one direction, is inevitable, or uniform. In the latter case, there can be striking differences among the elderly across social and economic lines. We cannot simply state that the condition of our aged has become worse, or better, with the passage of time. In some cases it did become worse, and in others it improved. The situation of elders, far from steadily worsening, has improved in many ways.
in recent decades. As a result, increased government health and welfare measures, along with wider availability and size of retirement benefits, have improved their condition and given crucial services to the elderly even though some elderly still suffer serious problems. We found, then, that historical changes dictate that no one perception of aging can realistically prevail beyond a certain point in time. We also discovered that social changes can impact negatively as well as positively upon a society.

The second section presented a close-up of the implementation process in policy development. This is where we learned about the importance of externalities. We were shown how policy effects can also “trickle down” and “bubble up” and thereby directly affect the policy itself. Policy implementation is a process which is or can be affected by laws, congressional activity, bureaucratic rivalry and, of course, interest groups. Often however, the ends for which a policy is originally intended, somehow become lost. This is what we can see has happened to the Social Security program. Ends were not evaluated and re-evaluated, merely pursued. Old attitudes infringe upon new circumstances, and the fact that a policy has lived its lifespan is ignored. It is forced to totter on haltingly and crippled, doing less and less good. We tend to forget that policies too have their life-cycles, a beginning, a middle period, and an end like everything else. In this section the discussion on ends and how we evaluate and work toward them, points out that we must receive continual feedback from our actions - then wisely plan a response that will correct or adjust the course of the policy accordingly.

Thirdly, we delved into the area of morality and how it is sometimes formed, how perceptions of morality can and do differ, and how these perceptions can ultimately affect policy decisions and the institutions that create and promote them. We found that a society
sees a different view of morality than an individual, but that both are linked by the necessity of their involvement and dependence on each other. We noted how ethical codes can differ for various segments of the same society so that what may necessarily be ethical behavior for a soldier may not be ethical behavior for a clergyman, while a politician may utilize a code that clearly conflicts with that of an educator. The point here was to show that although we may differ in the particular codes we follow, according to our personal and professional needs and goals, this does not mean that we can label one social segment’s code ‘bad’ and another’s ‘good’. On the other hand, we have to realize that a professional code of ethics is ‘home grown’, as it were, to fit a specific need and designation indigenous to the particular group it governs and serves.

From this microcosmic viewpoint we went on to take an expanded look at the general sense of morality felt in common by almost all members of a community regarding morally responsible behavior. The many aspects of ‘freedom’ were investigated and discussed. This topic concluded with the finding that living in freedom encompasses and includes many conditions of life, but that in order for freedom to be maintained we must be properly equipped and trained so that we are able to support and maintain it. Thus, it is important that policy implementors are qualified and able, but in addition they must have the freedom to act so that they can aptly guide and correct a policy in the course of its objectives. Consequently, freedom demands responsibility in return for the boons it bestows.

This section also emphasized the importance of knowing how to think critically so that the individual can become able to judge well those moral challenges that are met in the course of life. In so doing, it was stressed that a law may not necessarily be a moral instrument.
Practical reality may demand that a law be rescinded in order to avert injustice or just plain stupidity. Thus, morally questionable practices must be challenged.

The most important idea to coalesce out of this section is the recognition that many individuals regard morality as a sort of fringe consideration seen on the edges of society but not actually part of its fiber. Ethical behavior is often seen as merely a theoretical precept, something separate from everyday life. This viewpoint can have a lot to do with how policies are carried out upon implementation. The notion of morality, it was found, contains a whole range of ethical views that mutate and recombine as the matrix of society reconfigures itself.

Consequently, rather than being a 'thing' separate from everyday life, implementors must realize that the exact opposite is true. Ethics are so much a part of our life as eating and sleeping; so much a part that it may be that some individuals have difficulty in seeing how integral a role ethics play. Childhood lessons, religious sermons, peer pressure, community standards, examples learned from responsible adults as well as (unfortunately) irresponsible adults, all play into how well or how poorly one's own actions turn out. All our actions are based upon considerations that have come into play during the development of our moral character. Thus, a morally weak implementor will not be able to recognize the danger implicit in ignoring signals that portend impending injustices or other negative externalities stemming from the policy or program he or she is supposed to be guiding; while an implementor who has a fully developed moral character can successfully guide a policy around or through areas of ethical dilemmas by being sensitive or attuned to potential weaknesses that may unfold.

The fourth section of this thesis devoted itself to similarities and differences between ourselves nationally, and also contrasted us with other cultures. Ultimately, this process led
to the fact that while we can look at other cultures for insight and even inspiration, we must
look to ourselves for answers on how to best care for our aging citizens. One of the best ways
is to train them to care for themselves, but this has to begin at a very early age and should
continue into mid-life. We must all become more self-sufficient and less reliant on government
when decisions affecting our personal lives are involved. To rely on government for those
tings will lead only to mediocrity in government itself, since it is not equipped to, nor should
it, handle such decisions. Such a course will lead to further losses of freedom for the
individual. We need to be more creative, as a people, in this area. Life is a process that
requires constant vigilance in order to be maintained in freedom and optimum condition. This
process requires a background of knowledge of what is in the personal realm and what is in
the realm of government and must be reinforced with ethical values.

It was necessary to lay these separate areas out first, then pull them together and
evaluate them in order to present the argument that Social Security policy has outlived its
function and needs to be either scrapped or totally rehabilitated.

Policy Limits

The title of this thesis invokes the question, “Is there a moral limit to policy?”. We
have looked at how policy is implemented, how it should be implemented, how morality is
perceived, aging policies in our country and various other cultures.

As indicated in Chapter Six, the moral limits of policy are called into question when
the citizens of this country begin to rely on government to direct their destinies and allow
government to take over aspects of personal lives that are better left in the hands of the
citizens themselves. These private functions that are best left in the autonomous control of individuals include such areas as when and how to save for retirement, and when to opt for retirement. The role of government is to govern, not to babysit, its citizens; to see that rules are enforced, to negotiate with other countries' governments, and to set up a structure in which a dynamic educational system can evolve and flourish. But where issues of morality are concerned, due to the very nature of its being, the government and the policies it engenders are not structured to legislate morality. This does not mean that the government is not obliged to act morally or use ethical guidelines within the scope of its functions.

According to Elizabeth Wolgast:

Moral predicates belong to individual people, not to roles or abstractions. Thus, government is an imperfect means of acting morally, even when it is used to do things that are well justified and commendable, considered as human actions.6

Wolgast suggests that we stop looking at the actions of governments in moral and human terms and instead, look at these as what they in fact are - government actions.7 She quotes Joseph Tussman who states that,

The government is a particular kind of entity, and its job is to govern, not to serve us. If we elect it, fine; but whether or not we do does not affect its function, which is to rule us. The theory of political representation ought therefore to conform itself to this reality and not try to characterize an impossible relationship of accountability.8

Consequently, we can become misled into surmising that politicians are morally accountable to us. Wolgast, however, tells us that:

[M]oral accountability doesn’t work that way; the concept of representation interferes and frustrates it. Moral censure of official actions, as opposed to private ones, often reflects our desire that government be our moral surrogate and responsible for what it does. The desire is understandable but futile. [I]t
is a continuing problem for citizens in democratic societies.9

De Tocqueville astutely noted that individuals in a democracy are often being buffeted by two conflicting desires: they want to be ‘free’, but they also want to be led. Unfortunately they try to satisfy both at the same time. This results in a see-saw type of existence. On one hand they have the freedom to elect those who govern them, but on the other, after the election is over, they are often content to once again be led.10 He cautions that:

It must not be forgotten that it is especially dangerous to enslave men in the minor details of life...I should be inclined to think freedom less necessary in the great things than in the little ones.11

And yet again de Tocqueville has stated my beliefs when he eloquently writes that:

Subjugation in minor affairs breaks out every day and is felt by the whole community indiscriminately. It does not drive men to resistance, but it crosses them at every turn, till they are led to surrender their own will. Thus their spirit is gradually broken and their character enervated...It is in vain to summon a people who have been rendered so dependent on the central power to choose from time to time the representatives of that power, this rare and brief exercise of their free choice, however important it may be, will not prevent them from gradually losing the facilities of thinking, feeling, and acting for themselves, and thus gradually falling below the level of humanity.12

When de Tocqueville refers to citizens without choice to govern the small details of their lives as “falling below the level of humanity” I believe he is using this phrase in lieu of saying that the people have lost their autonomy as individuals. They might as well be members of a bovine herd! Thus, although having the government plan and execute the Social Security program for enforced withholding from one’s wages toward retirement seems to be a minor detail in our daily lives, it is one of many unnecessary interferences that have slowly impinged on our personal sovereignty and taken away a portion of our abilities to plan for, act on and prepare to be responsible for our own retirement and old age. This is not a necessary or
ultimately helpful function of government, for it contributes to the individual forfeiting the right and the challenge to guide her own destiny in a way that she sees as fitted to the personal requirements and exigencies of life.

It could be argued here that one of the main motives for the creation of Social Security was to enhance consumer demands and increase sales. So if we are more free to choose we might consume more and save less, hurting our futures. Or, we might save more and consume less, shrinking the economy. These could be two possible negative outcomes. However, it is doubtful that a heavy tilt in either direction would necessarily follow. True, some individuals probably will slide in each direction, but I believe that the majority will be likely to follow a more moderate path, and continue to do what they have always done.

How can government policies that discourage self-sufficiency be seen as ethical? Policies that encourage discrimination based on age and age-specific guidelines that feed into business, industrial, and institutional practices are not morally redemptive. It does not matter that such practices and policies as those of mandatory retirement at age sixty-five, and enforced payroll withholding for Social Security may have been instituted for idealistic and high-minded reasons. The facts appear to be that they have actually spawned unpleasant side-effects or externalities. Moral actions have to be initiated by individuals, not governments. It is far more a moral act for an individual to responsibly orchestrate his or her own retirement options, thereby not placing any burden on society, than it can be considered ‘moral’ for a governmental entity to dictate what and how an autonomous, self-sufficient individual should be forced to ‘save’ toward retirement, as the federal Social Security program currently mandates.
Wolgast tells us that “others cannot be used as one’s surrogate without diminishing their autonomy, which is to say their moral status, and without diminishing one’s own claim to respect”.\textsuperscript{13} She finds that there is a “conceptual barrier” by which business [and government] separates itself from the humans within it. Thus, an amoral context develops regarding the way individuals are thought about. This context does not acknowledge such important areas as human obligations or relationships.\textsuperscript{14}

It becomes easy, then, to see that even though Social Security policy may deal with humans and strongly impact on their lives, most often the humans are treated as if they (rather than the bureaucracy) were the abstract entities. Instead of being regarded as living sentient beings composed of varying degrees of needs, all employed persons are lumped into one category.

This depersonalization, according to Wolgast, extends nationally into most institutions and corporations. Moral inferences are not a part of the language they use. Thus, we have a situation where “thanks to this framework, economics and social theory, albeit unwittingly, sanction the dehumanization of persons and the neglect of them as moral entities”.\textsuperscript{15} Consequently, although government agencies, private corporations, and institutions cannot, in and of themselves be considered to be moral, the individuals who operate them and implement their policies not only can, but must be morally responsible.

Wolgast concurs with ideas presented in earlier chapters which point out that it is not different institutions that are necessary, but different concepts within institutions that are needed to conform to our current social structure and institutions.\textsuperscript{16} “In evaluating institutions, we should consider not only their usefulness in producing wide social goods but
also their moral effects on individuals within them, particularly the attitudes they encourage in the name of their defined functions.” If institutions are more sensitive to the impact they have on society in general they can be positively utilized to effect new social concepts required to foster better savings and spending habits, for instance; or to foster less depersonalization and more caring toward those who are needy, but have that caring be on the local community level rather than left in the hands of the federal government. So while we cannot ascribe moral precepts to institutions, agencies, or policies, we certainly can hold them responsible for their morality in the effects they produce on society in general.

In a sense this entire work has been leading us toward the definition of “the moral limits of policy”, for, due to the complexity of the idea itself, there cannot be one all-encompassing or defining phrase. In particular, and building upon what I presented in Chapter Four regarding “perceptions of morality”, I believe that Wolgast’s contribution here clarifies and puts a cap on that multi-faceted definition.

Findings and Assumptions

This thesis has attempted to show a correlation between perceptions of aging and how they affect the policies we create; what, if any, effect individual and community moral stances have had upon perceptions; and how the policy implementation process can succeed or fail due to how the policy implementors are prepared and qualified to execute their responsibilities.

Ageism has been found to contain both negative and positive connotations. Its negative aspects include unjust and demeaning depictions of the elderly as physically and
mentally feeble, inept, ugly, unable to adapt, poverty-stricken, easily victimized, lonely, and irrationally irate, to name several. However, positive ageism portrays the aged as being the beneficiaries of many programs and services which have been tailored specifically for them in the areas of education, health, and recreation. Positive ageism also depicts the elderly as being more law-abiding, involved in public offices, more consistent and frequent voters, and active in donating their time and talents to voluntary service to the community. So while senior citizens have been unfairly discriminated against by negative and careless characterizations, we have found that this is somewhat offset by the positive characterizations just enumerated. Additionally, in our society, the elderly benefit by being recipients of tax reductions, Medicare, and free or reduced rates on such items as meals and housing. Many receive retirement pensions in addition to Social Security, and many others also rely on additional income received as the result of prudent investments made during their younger years.

A varying range of financial levels are seen among senior citizens, ranging from poverty to wealth. Consequently it is senseless to attempt to categorize this segment of the population by insisting on defining them as a homogenous group overall when we are attempting to devise ways to help only the segment which is in actual distress.

By not shaping aging policy, or any policy for that matter, to be flexible and able to adapt to shifting conditions, we run the probable risk of creating and maintaining institutions whose infrastructures become not only brittle but top-heavy and therefore overly burdensome to the society they purport to serve. This is what has happened with Social Security policy. Its lack of foresight has created an inflexible system that draws on the resources of employed
individuals without regard for whether or not they wish to participate. It has created some positive and generous spin-off agencies that do not even serve the elderly poor. One such service, for instance, gives monthly payments to drug addicts of any age. This outgrowth goes against what the public generally believes Social Security was created for. It puts an unnecessary drain on the general funds available for the upcoming pool of those destined to become eligible for future retirement benefits; thus it contributes to the resentment the younger generations feel about having to support a program that may soon be bankrupt and of no use to them. Consequently, many unforeseen externalities have been created, for the limits and benefits of Social Security have been extended further and further to include areas of social concern that need to be address in other ways and by different means.

We must be careful about the types of changes we put into place by attempting to chart out their long term consequences while, at the same time, casting these policy revisions so that they remain flexible to the social changes that will inevitably follow. For, as Aristotle has warned "...in many cases good things bring harmful results". Durkheim states that "Nothing is more flexible than ideas; they react to minor changes without difficulty and sometimes evolve with extreme rapidity". We should be sensitive to social changes, anticipate them as best we can, but also build in both flexibility of concept and a greater discretionary role to policy implementors than has been done so far. For even the morally responsible implementor will find it difficult if not impossible to make workable a policy which is iron-bound, and has restrictive regulations that are imposed by individuals or groups that are remote from the actual daily issues.

2. de Beauvoir, 211.


4. Ibid., 180.


7. Ibid., 112.

8. Ibid., 113.

9. Ibid.


11. Ibid., 320.

12. Ibid., 320-321.


14. Ibid., 129.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., 136.

17. Ibid., 146.


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