THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY

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Abstract

Strips of public events exist in a particular symbolic environment or culture. A variety of organizational sponsors offer interpretive packages that give meaning to these events as they unfold over time. In the summer of 1969, President Nixon introduced a major welfare reform proposal labeled a "Family Assistance Plan." Over the next few years, congressional hearings and other related events stimulated commentary in the mass media that displayed symbolic elements surrounding the social welfare issue with varying prominence. This paper begins the analysis of this political culture by examining the content of four competing packages on social welfare policy, labeled respectively, "Welfare Free-Loaders," "Working Poor," "Poverty Trap," and "Regulating the Poor". In particular, we suggest the characteristic elements of each package, called here its signature. Eight different symbolic devices are considered including metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases, depictions, visual images, roots, consequences, and appeals to principle.

The Political Culture of Social Welfare Policy

By 1969, welfare had become a major issue in American politics. The number of welfare recipients had doubled during the decade and welfare roles were rising at the rate of one million persons annually. Existing programs were under attack from those of many different political tendencies -- each, of course, emphasizing different interpretations of what was going on and why.

In the summer of 1969, the fledgling Nixon Administration, amidst great fanfare, announced a plan for sweeping welfare reform. This Family Assistance Plan (FAP) represented a classic Nixon ploy. Critics to the left were confounded by the inclusion of a guaranteed minimum income provision; conservative critics were lured by the promise of putting welfare recipients to work and dismantling welfare bureaucracy. Indeed, the initial reaction suggested that the Family Assistance Plan had found a broad consensus and would lead to the most sweeping welfare reform since the early New Deal.

In the next two years, this ball unraveled. The apparent consensus proved illusory, the FAP's chief backers within the Administration lost influence, and, ultimately, Nixon turned his attention elsewhere, letting welfare reform languish. There is an interesting story here but it is not the one that concerns us and it has been told elsewhere.[1]

The unfolding story of this aborted effort at welfare reform took place in a particular symbolic environment. Political discourse surrounding the welfare issue draws on a catalogue of available idea elements, and makes use of a variety of symbolic devices to express these ideas. This set of idea elements, organized and clustered in various ways, comprises the culture of an issue.

Events such as the introduction and defeat of the Family Assistance Plan provide an occasion for display of the culture of social welfare policy. Public

officials and their political opponents display it in their speeches and presentations, journalists display it in their commentary on these events. Hence, the strip of events concerning the Family Assistance Plan makes this culture visible and provides us with an opportunity to analyse it.

Clearly, an issue culture is rooted in time and space. We wouldn't expect the issue culture surrounding social welfare in the United States to be the same in 1970 as in 1935. Nor would we expect the culture of the welfare issue to be the same in Israel as in the United States. On the contrary, we would assume that differences in political and religious traditions would produce a different political culture for discourse about social welfare.

In the larger study of which this is a part, we examine a number of issues using the same approach. Hence, before turning to the welfare issue, we outline the general strategy and principle concepts needed for analysing issue cultures.

The Nature of Issue Cultures

The idea elements in a culture do not exist in isolation but are grouped into more or less harmonious clusters or interpretive packages. The different idea elements in a given package mutually support and reinforce each other. Frequently it is possible to suggest the package as a whole by the use of a single prominent element.

We begin our analysis of political culture by dividing these packages into two parts. The framing half deals with the gestalt or pattern-organizing nature of the political culture. A number of writers have employed similar concepts to analyse this framing process. Edelman (1964, 1971, 1977), for example, has sensitized us to the importance of political symbolism in providing meaning to political events. Bennett (1975) attempts to capture this idea with the concept of political scenario, inspired by the work of Burke (1969). He suggests that

political scenarios provide a "lay theoretical framework in which to organize the sense data of politics" (p. 65). He points to the use of paradigmatic or compelling examples to provide a highly abstract, symbolic container to deal with an unfolding reality.

The second half of the package deals with reasoning and justifications for positions. Where framing devices suggest integration and synthesis into wholes, reasoning devices emphasize analysis and differentiation into parts. A complex whole is broken down into discrete causes and consequences in temporal sequence. These devices are pieces of a potential argument that one might make in justifying or arguing for a particular position on an issue.

An interpretive package has a core consisting of an overall frame and position that defines it. The frame suggests a central organizing idea for understanding events related to the issue in question. For example, the Johnson Administration package on Vietnam offered a core frame in which the Vietnam struggle was to be understood as the United States attempting to meet the challenge of indirect aggression by a worldwide, Soviet-led communist adversary. This framework allows for some differences on the best way to meet this challenge -- through counter-insurgent special forces, airpower, or other means -- but the common position endorsed the necessity of making an effective military response in resisting the challenge.

One can display a package other than through directly invoking its core. Through political usage, we come to recognize the package as a whole by the use of a variety of symbolic devices[2] that display its characteristic elements. Every package has a <u>signature</u> -- a set of elements that suggest its core frame and position in a shorthand fashion. The falling domino metaphor is a good example for the Vietnam package described above.

These signature elements of a package are the condensing symbols by which it is displayed. As Willett suggests (1980), in discussing art in the Third Reich. "Style is

crucial, just as language is crucial; the Nazis so put their mark on them that a few words in a speech or article, a quick look at a building, statue or picture, could imply all the rest of the ideological package, and with it the measures to which that package led."

We divide our signature elements into framing and reasoning devices. The devices that suggest a framework within which to view the issue are metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases, depictions, and visual images. The devices that provide justifications or reasons for a general position are roots, consequences, and appeals to principle. Each of these requires a brief comment and example.

1. Metaphors. A metaphor always has two parts -- the principal subject that the metaphor is intended to illuminate and the associated subject that the metaphor evokes to enhance our understanding. The associated subject contains what Lakoff and Johnson (1979) call "entailments." These entailments are characteristics of the associated subject that, by implication, attach to the principal subject.

We distinguish two kinds of entailments -- attributes and relationships -- and this distinction suggests two kinds of metaphors. In <u>dynamic</u> metaphors, there are two or more entities in the associated subject, acting in relation to each other. In <u>single-valued</u> metaphors the focus is simply on the attributes of a single associated subject. Political cartoons are a rich source of dynamic metaphors and we will use them in illustrating packages on the welfare issue.

2. Exemplars. While metaphors rely on imagined events to frame the principal subject, real events of the past or present are frequently used for the same purpose. As with metaphors, exemplars may be dynamic or single-valued. The Korean War was probably the most important exemplar for the Vietnam example, with Munich receiving some play as well.

3. Catch-Phrases. Commentators on events frequently try to capture their essence in a

single theme statement, tag-line, title or slogan that is intended to suggest a general frame. Catch-phrases are attempted summary statements about the principal subject. "Invasion from the North" was the title of the State Department paper produced just prior to the Johnson Administration escalation of the Vietnam War in 1965. "If we don't stop them in Vietnam, we'll be fighting them on the beaches of Malibu" is another memorable catch-phrase for this package.

4. Depictions. Packages have certain principal subjects that they characterize in a particular fashion. They may do this through single-valued metaphors or exemplars or simply through some colorful string of modifiers. Lyndon Johnson depicted the critics of his Vietnam policy as "nervous nellies" and a later administration gave us "nattering nabobs of negativism".

5. Visual images. We include here icons and other visual images that suggest the core of a package. The American Flag is the most obvious icon associated with this Vietnam package but there are a number of visual images that suggest its frame -- for example, imagery underlining the Communist nature of the adversary in Vietnam.

6. Roots. A given package has a characteristic analysis of the causal dynamics underlying the strip of events. The packages may differ in the locus of this root -- that is, in the particular place in a funnel of causality to which the root calls attention. The root provided in the Vietnam package is that of a military attack by a Soviet proxy against a United States ally and independent country.

7. Consequences. A given package has a characteristic analysis of the consequences that will flow from different policies. Again, there may be differences in whether short or long term consequences are the focus. The signature consequences emphasized in the Vietnam illustration are the negative effects on American national security of a communist takeover of South Vietnam.

8. Appeals to principle. Packages rely on characteristic moral appeals and uphold certain general precepts. In the Vietnam example, the principles appealed to included the defense of the weak and innocent against unprovoked aggression and the honoring of one's word and commitment to friends.

One can summarize the culture of an issue in a signature matrix in which the rows represent the cores of different packages and the columns represent the eight different types of symbolic device. The cell entries in this matrix are the signature elements of the different packages -- for example, a characteristic exemplar of a given package.

Interpretive packages are produced in a complex process involving an interaction between sources and journalists. While this social process is not a direct focus in our research, our examination of cultural elements is organized in part on some assumptions about the social and political system.

Our view of the political system utilizes distinctions made by students of collective action (Tilly, 1978; McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Gamson, 1975). There is a bounded polity consisting of authorities and members who have vested interests and routine, low-cost access to authorities. Beyond the boundary, there are challengers or social movement organizations attempting to mobilize some constituency for collective action, directed toward influencing outcomes produced through the polity.

These actors -- authorities, members, and challengers -- utilize the cultural system in their efforts to achieve their goals. More specifically, they attempt to further the careers of particular interpretive packages and act as sponsor or organizational carriers for some of these packages. It is useful to identify packages with particular sponsors. For example, we expect to identify one or more official packages on an issue -- packages that reflect the frames and positions of public officials who are protagonists in the strip of events. The

opposition political party, or established interest groups, may be identified with other packages. Finally, there may be packages associated with challengers and, perhaps, found only in the publications which they control and direct to their own constituency.

These various actors in the symbolic arena frequently are organizations with media or public relations specialists. Such professionals maintain continuing relationships with journalists who cover their organization. Many have previously worked as journalists. To be effective, their present role requires that they become attuned to the news needs of the mass media representatives with whom they routinely must deal. In meeting these needs, they supply, with varying degrees of skill, the elements of interpetive packages about the issues that engage their interests. An apt metaphor or catch-phrase will be picked-up and amplified through the media -- serving the interest of both sources and journalists in presenting events in a context of meaning. Sources, then, are one major fount of cultural elements.

But journalists are themselves highly active in organizing such elements. Indeed, there are journalistic roles that emphasize precisely this task. Political cartoonists, political columnists, and editorial writers, for example, are evaluated by their fellow journalists and readers for their talent in this regard. Halberstam (1979) describes the admiration that his colleagues feel for Peter Lisagor of the Chicago Daily News as a coiner of succinct catch-phrases: "It was Lisagor--smart, quick, verbal--who always seemed to be able to define an event in a few words. Other reporters were always quoting Lisagor." Columnists with a light touch--Art Buchwald and Russell Baker, for example--are especially creative in generating extended, dynamic metaphors.

Constructing a signature matrix is only the first step in analysing the culture of an issue. This culture can then be measured systematically through

a content analysis of media materials. The signature matrix provides the categories used in this analysis. The study employs two measures of issue culture: (a) Prominence of display is based on a sample that includes television network coverage, the three major newsmagazines, and the metropolitan newspapers available in a particular locale. Each of these sources is weighted by circulation or audience figures. (b) Media usage is based on a sample of nationally syndicated columnists and cartoonists. Ultimately, we plan to integrate this analysis with a study of popular discourse about the same set of issues. Hence, we will be able to explore the complex relationship between media usage and prominence and popular usage and support.

This paper, then, is a first step in the analysis of the issue culture of social welfare policy. We suggest a signature matrix for the issue and, briefly, some of the resonances of these packages with cultural themes or counter themes.

The Culture of Welfare Policy

We will describe four packages on welfare by using their signature elements. We have gleaned these elements from sponsor materials, (that is, speeches, testimony, newsletters, pamphlets, and the like) books, journal articles and commentary on the welfare issue, supplemented by exemplars from our sample of media materials. These packages address the question of what provisions, if any, should be made for the welfare of the poor.

Welfare Freeloaders

A political cartoon is a compelling device and we will use one to introduce each package. A cartoon can draw on several different framing devices simultaneously--it presents a dynamic metaphor, particular visual imagery, and its caption can employ a catch-phrase.

Take the first cartoon, "Welfare--On the House," (Figure 1). The cartoonist shows a welfare bureaucrat and a bum, living it up on public funds. Note that

the principal subject, "welfare recipient" is depicted here as a rather piggy-looking but robust and able bodied male in the genteel hobo tradition. "On the house" and "welfare handouts" appear as catch-phrases.

The signature exemplars for this package include celebrated cases of welfare fraud or welfare recipients driving cadillacs. The lesson in either case is "Welfare recipients are playing us for suckers." "Workfare, not welfare" is a signature catch-phrase and its depictions include welfare recipients as free-loaders or chiselers who could work at regular jobs if they chose to.

What is the frame being suggested by these various elements? The core issue in the social welfare controversy is how to keep the country from going broke supporting a huge welfare bureaucracy and a lot of blacks and other minorities who are too lazy to work.

The root cause of the rapid rise of welfare roles lies in the personal failures of the welfare recipients who were either too profligate to acquire the necessary skills when they had a chance and/or too lazy to take available jobs when they can live on the dole. As for the consequences of the Family Assistance Plan, this package emphasizes the dangerous precedent of a guaranteed income, the level of which will inevitably be raised, and the likelihood of vigorous political attacks on the work incentive portion of the Plan. As Henry Hazlitt puts it, writing in the National Review, (1969), "Most certain of all, the whole program of trying to force people to work for their benefit payments will soon be denounced as a sort of slavery." The moral principle appealed to in this package is that of just deserts: people should not be rewarded unless they have earned it through honest, hard work.

The core policy position suggested by these justifications is one in which healthy adults should receive no form of welfare at all and the burden of proof is on the applicant. The less mean-spirited sponsors might exempt some

marginal categories such as mothers of pre-school children from the general work requirements. Specifying a more detailed position, one uncovers minor variations of these ideal-types.

Working Poor

This package shifts attention somewhat from the personal failures of the poor. The poor are assumed to be rational in the sense that they will welcome the ability to earn more through work but are discouraged in doing so by disincentives. As Milton Friedman puts it, "When you pay people to be poor, there are going to be plenty of poor people."

The second cartoon, (Figure 2), expresses it in the caption, "Brother, could you spare a job?" The poor person is represented as a man who prefers work to a handout. Its signature exemplars relate sad stories of people who have sought work, but who find that by working, they are worse off financially than they would be on welfare.

This package provides the official frame and justification for the Family Assistance Plan and it is not surprising that many of the key phrases are provided in Nixon's speech introducing the FAP. He speaks of "A way to independence through the dignity of work" and "The government's willingness to help the needy is linked to the willingness of the needy to help themselves." Its signature depictions focus less on the personal failures of the poor and more on the inadequacies of a welfare system that encourages dependency and penalizes those who would prefer to work.

The core issue in the welfare controversy is how to provide recipients with an incentive to work while providing adequate coverage for their basic needs. The root of this package recognizes the need for providing the poor with better job training and the discouraging effects of living in a culture of poverty, but assumes an underlying motivational structure in which individuals will choose

work if they can receive significant financial gain for doing so.

It's fundamental appeal to principle goes back to the Poor Laws: "No one should receive more for being idle than for working." Or, as Nixon puts it, "It is morally wrong for a family that is working to try to make ends meet to receive less than the non-working family across the street."

Within this basic package, there are a range of equally consistent positions on the value of the FAP. Administration officials argued that it achieved an appropriate balance by providing the poor with adequate minimum support while at the same time including requirements and incentives to work. Some critics of FAP challenged the balance on the grounds that the minimum support was not adequate and should be higher; other critics challenged the work incentive portion as too weak and ineffective. But within these variations, the core position provides a policy in which no one starves but there are clear advantages for those who work.

Poverty Trap

While the previous package contains some blame for the system, this one is more resolutely opposed to blaming the poor for their poverty. Ryan's (1976) catch-phrase "blaming the victim" is one of its signature elements. As figure 3 shows, the victim carries the burdens of the system -- lack of available jobs, poor schools, inflation, racial prejudice. One top of this, there is merely a false promise of prosperity if he should somehow make it up the steep cliff to the employment Hilton.

To put welfare recipients through the humiliation of a means test is, in this view, a bit like knocking someone down and then demanding he produce a doctor's certificate of injury before he can be treated. Its signature exemplars include the kind of universal family allowance program found in European welfare states and in Israel. The lesson of these exemplars is that universal

payment protects the dignity of the poor and makes sure that all can live adequately. Means-tests merely add insult to injury.

Poverty is depicted as a trap or a treadmill and the view of welfare recipients as able bodied is dismissed as self-serving myth. Poverty is fundamentally a lack of money and power. As Ryan puts, "The overwhelming majority of the poor are poor because they have, first, insufficient income; and second, no access to methods of increasing that income -- that is, no power" (1976, p. 140). All of these devices suggest a core frame in which the issue is one of how to help the victims of poverty out of a trap which is not of their own making.

The root cause of poverty in this view is the failure of the economic system to provide full employment. As George Meany put it, "It does not serve the nation or its people to train the unemployed for jobs that don't exist." The FAP is clearly inadequate in this view since (1) most welfare recipients are unable to work, and (2) it does nothing to provide jobs for that portion of the poor who can work. The moral principle to which appeal is made focuses on the right of all citizens to a life of dignity free of the despair wrought by poverty.

The core policy position in this package rests on income maintenance and universal family allowances combined with economic programs aimed at creating a full employment economy.

Regulating the Poor

Our fourth cartoon (Figure 4) suggests the frame for this package. It is the only package in which the welfare system is viewed as working as it is supposed to. In this package, welfare serves a dual function. On the one hand, it regulates and maintains a labor reserve or, to use one of the catch-phrases, "a reserve army of the unemployed." At the same time, relief functions to ameliorate discontent and assure quiescence and dependency in the "surplus population." In the cartoon, the business partner points out to his workers that there are unemployed waiting to take their jobs while the government partner provides a few welfare peanuts to the unemployed to keep them in line.

There is no clear exemplar for this package but "regulating the poor" is its signature catch-phrase. This phrase has the virtue of including both forms of regulation, each of which takes precedence at different stages. Welfare reform, in this view, "signals a shift in emphasis between the major functions of relief arrangements -- a shift from regulating disorder to regulating labor" (Piven and Cloward, 1971, p. 342). The poor in this package are depicted as a "surplus population" needed for capitalist accumulation (cf. Braverman, 1974, and O'Connor, 1973).

The core issue suggested by these framing devices is how to change an economic system in which poverty is a permanent feature and relief giving functions to regulate the poor both through maintaining a labor reserve and through cooling out rebellious collective action.

The root cause of poverty in this package is the capitalist organization of production. The FAP would serve the purpose of increasing the capacity for social control of the poor without moving them out of poverty. "The work requirement" as one editorial put it, "Will become an instrument for herding the needy into dead-end jobs at rock-bottom wages."[3] The appeal to principle in this package is the familiar one, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

The core position of this package rejects welfare reform within a capitalist framework. The only solution to poverty and welfare is to institute a socialist economy in which there is work for everyone who is able-bodied and adequate support for those who are not.

Table 1 summarizes these packages in a signature matrix.

Resonances with Cultural Themes

Beyond the issue culture, there is a larger political culture containing what are usually called ideologies or belief systems. These meta-packages contain more general idea elements with potential applicability to a range of

issues.

We deal with this level of analysis through the concept of cultural themes. These themes may be thought of in a manner similar to packages--that is, they contain a core frame and a set of signature elements that provide this frame in shorthand.

We view themes as existing in a dialectic relationship with counter themes. Expression of a counter theme has an adversarial quality; it is more common in the belief systems sponsored by challenging groups than in those of members. Themes, in contrast, have the status of pieties; one can safely intone them on ceremonial occasions with the assumption of general social approval, albeit some private cynicism.

The themes we focus on provide core frameworks for viewing politics in American society. They are analytically independent of one another but not mutually exclusive. Each of the themes and counter themes has a rich literature in which it is expressed or discussed but we will not attempt to do more than suggest it.

A. The technocratic theme. "American emphasis upon efficiency has consistently impressed outside observers," Williams (195) comments in his discussion of American values. "'Efficient' is a word of high praise in a society that has long emphasized adaptability, technological innovation, economic expansion, up-to-dateness, practicality, expediency, 'getting things done.'"

The inventor as cultural hero. Benjamin Franklin. Thomas Edison. Mastery over nature is the way to progress. Know-how. Problem-solving.

This theme can be reflected in a view of politics. How can we solve the problem, how much is it going to cost, and is it worth it? As an organizing framework for an issue, the question resonates with this theme. Overtly non-ideological, it presents itself as pragmatic, willing to try whatever is needed to do the job. Issues present technical problems to be solved and one ought to get

the best expertise available to help us overcome the problems that the country faces.

(a) The soft-path counter theme. American culture also contains a counter-theme, more skeptical of, or even hostile to, technology. Harmony with nature, rather than mastery over nature. We live on a "small planet." Our technology must be appropriate and in proper scale. There is an ecological balance to maintain. The more we try to control nature through our technology, the more we disrupt its natural order and threaten the quality of our lives.

Things are in the saddle, riding human beings. Chaplin's Modern Times. Huxley's Brave New World. Kubrick's 2001. Runaway technology, out of control, carried on in the name of progress. In the words of the Joni Mitchell song, "Paved paradise, put up a parking lot."

B. The pluralism theme. We draw again on Williams' (195) discussion of American values. "The theme of democracy was, concretely, an agreement upon procedure in distributing power in settling conflicts. Liberal democrary, American model, arose in reaction to an epoch in which the great threats to security and freedom were seen in strong, autocratic central government."

As a view of politics, it is reflected in what Lowi (196) calls "interest group liberalism." "The most important difference between liberals and conservatives, Republicans and Democrats--however they define themselves--is to be found in the interest groups they identify with. Congressmen are guided in their votes, Presidents in their programs, and administrators in their discretion, by whatever organized interests they have taken for themselves as the most legitimate; and that is the measure of the legitimacy of demands."

There are a lot of competing political groups in the United States and each group gets some of what it wants some of the time. If people don't like what's happening in the country, a majority can always change things by electing

different officials. A political group that thinks it isn't getting its fair share has plenty of opportunity to fight for a better share without breaking any rules.

America as a nation of minorities. The Federalist Papers. DeTocqueville's Democrary in America. Politics as the art of compromise. Half-a-loaf is better than none.

(b) The egalitarian counter theme. There is an anti-pluralist tradition that emphasizes the elitist nature of the American political system and its departure from a more egalitarian ideal. The contemporary version is reflected in Wolin's (1981) editorial in the opening issue of the new journal, Democracy A Journal of Political Renewal and Radical Change. "Every one of the country's primary institutions--the business corporation, the government bureaucracy, the trade union, the research and education industries, the mass propaganda and entertainment media, and the health and welfare system--is antidemocratic in spirit, design, and operation. Each is hierarchical in structure, authority oriented, opposed in principle to equal participation, unaccountable to the citizenry, elitist and managerial, and disposed to concentrate increasing power in the hands of the few and to reduce political life to administration."

Elections don't change anything since the people being elected don't have the real power. The rules of American politics favor the rich and powerful few at the expense of the many. Political groups that are not getting their fair share will never get anywhere unless they're willing to break some rules.

The people versus the interests. Mills' The Power Elite. The ruling class. The military-industrial complex. In earlier eras, "share the wealth," "every man a king." The robber barons. Citizen Paine.

C. The civic duty theme. "Ask not what your country can do for you what you can do for your country," President Kennedy told a responsive audience. Ordinary people have a duty to participate in the affairs of their local community--

at the very least, to vote. As Gans (1979) puts it, in describing values in the news, "Citizens should participate and 'grassroots activity' is one of the most complimentary terms in the vocabulary of the news."

In peace time, the role of citizen remains a relatively passive one--to pay taxes, obey the law, keep informed, and vote intelligently at election time. In times of war, disaster, or other crisis, the obligations of a citizen may expand and sacrifices may be required. At such times, the President has a special role in defining civic duty and what is expected of citizens.

"The news upholds the legitimacy of holders of formal authority," Gans (1979) suggests, "as long as they abide by the relevant enduring values, both in public and private realms." Let them depart from it, and they are fair game. Political machines, corruption, and bureaucratic malfunctioning are departures from an unstated ideal. Politics should "follow a course based on the public interest and public service" (Gans, 1979).

Everyone has a responsibility to vote even if he doesn't care much about the outcome. It is the duty of every citizen to obey the law no matter how much he may disagree with it. Every American traveling abroad is an ambassador for the United States.

(c) The rebellion counter theme. The counter theme emphasizes rebellion and the duty to disobey unjust authority. To quote Jefferson, "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure." It is the use of power to destroy liberty that is the primary problem, not the abuse of power for personal gain. The counter theme is distrustful of the claims of authority. "Don't tread on me."

The rebel as hero. It is the duty of every citizen to follow his conscience even if it means breaking the law. Obedience may lead to evil. Witness the good German carrying out his duty in the Third Reich. Witness My Lai. The hero resists, survives attack, triumphs in the end. Muhammad Ali. Jane Fonda.

D. The self reliance theme. Striving, risk-taking, achieving, independence. To try hard against difficult obstacles is creditable. To fail because of lack of effort when success is possible is reprehensible. Calculated risk-taking is frequently necessary to overcome obstacles and, indeed, is part of striving. One cannot expect everything to fall one's way and bad luck is simply an obstacle that one must overcome--not something to whine about.

Starting out poor is a special case of bad luck. The truly admirable are those who, by striving, were able to overcome the obstacles of humble birth and go on to fame and fortune. The self-made man embodies all of the above--a person who has pluck and resourcefulness, tries hard, makes use of the opportunities that come his way and isn't thrown off or demoralized by the bad luck he encounters, learns by his mistakes and improves, until he makes it. Horatio Alger.

"The 'success story' and the respect accorded to the self-made man are distinctly American, if anything is," writes Williams (195). "The ideal individual struggles successfully against adversity and overcomes more powerful forces...'Self-made' men and women remain attractive, as do people who overcome poverty or bureaucracy," writes Gans (1979).

The best thing that we can teach children is how to stand on their own two feet. The people to admire are those who start at the bottom and work hard to get ahead, relying on their own judgment and resources rather than on others.

(d) The mutuality counter theme. The counter theme emphasizes emotional bonding over self-reliance, and selflessness over individualism. The ideal is one of a community of intimates who are caring and sensitive and place the needs of others ahead of their own. Striving for success is an ego-trip.

The best thing we can teach children is to need and care about other people. The people to admire are those who are more concerned about being true to their friends than about getting ahead. One should try to understand and respect others' point of view even if it means reconsidering what one thinks.

Welfare Resonances. The various packages that comprise the culture of the welfare issue resonate in different ways with these broader themes and counter themes. These resonances, we argue, give the packages special appeal, amplifying them and increasing their media usage, prominence of display, and popular usage. Resonance with themes is more helpful, of course, than with counter themes. But even resonance with counter themes gives a package special appeal in various adversarial sub-cultures.

The four pairs of theme and counter theme define a four-dimensional space into which we can map the different welfare packages. A package may resonate with more than one theme or counter theme. To determine resonance, one compares the signature elements of each package with corresponding elements in the theme. A metaphor in one package, for example, may be similar to or identical with a characteristic metaphor of some theme or counter theme.

Applied to the welfare packages, we argue that both the welfare free loaders and working poor packages have a strong resonance with the self reliance theme, particularly the former. Rewards should be commensurate with effort. No one should receive more for being idle than for working. Welfare encourages dependence and laziness. One should help the needy to help themselves. Workfare, not welfare.

While it has a weaker resonance with the self-reliance theme, the working poor package also has a strong resonance with the technology theme. The core problem to be solved is simultaneously providing a minimum support level and a work incentive, a trade-off between two functions. Technical evaluations by economists and other professionals are required in executing the policies called for by this package. Hereis the package that comes closest to calling for a technofix.

Both the poverty trap and regulating the poor packages resonate with the egalitarian counter-theme. Poverty is a reflection on the unfulfilled democratic promise of equality of outcome, of a fair share for everyone. From each according to his ability, to each according to his need. Inequality of power lies behind

inequality of income. Poverty serves the interests of the rich and powerful and welfare functions as a means of social control.

In addition, the poverty trap package has some resonance with the mutuality counter theme. A fair share is an entitlement of citizenship. Family allowance and minimum income programs reflect a social responsibility for the needy that should be present in a decent society.

Conclusion

This paper has presented a general strategy for analysing the political culture of an issue. We have applied the first step to the social welfare issue. Ultimately, papers that present taxonomies and analytic schemes leave one up in the air. The question inevitably arises as to what one can do with it.

We have indicated our intention of measuring media usage and prominence of display of the different packages using a systematic sample of mass media materials. While this alone can enhance our understanding of political culture, charting the ebb and flow of prominence and media usage over time provides a more dymanic view. Thanks to such modern conveniences as video-tape and microfilm, we are able to follow a strip over a period of 20 or 30 years, charting the changes in our measures.

This analysis becomes more interesting still when we consider it jointly with popular usage and support. In the next phase of our research, we will assemble groups in which selected issues will be discussed among peers, using cartoons and other material from our signature matrix as the stimulus material for such discussions. From such discourse, we can explore the complex relationship between media usage and display, and popular usage and support.

Footnotes

1. See Heffernan (1974) and Marmor and Rein (1971) for useful accounts of this strip of events.

2. "Tropes" or "figures of speech" are other terms for these symbolic devices.

3. The source of this display of radicalism is, curiously, the good, gray New York Times (editorial, 8/15/69).

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Table 1

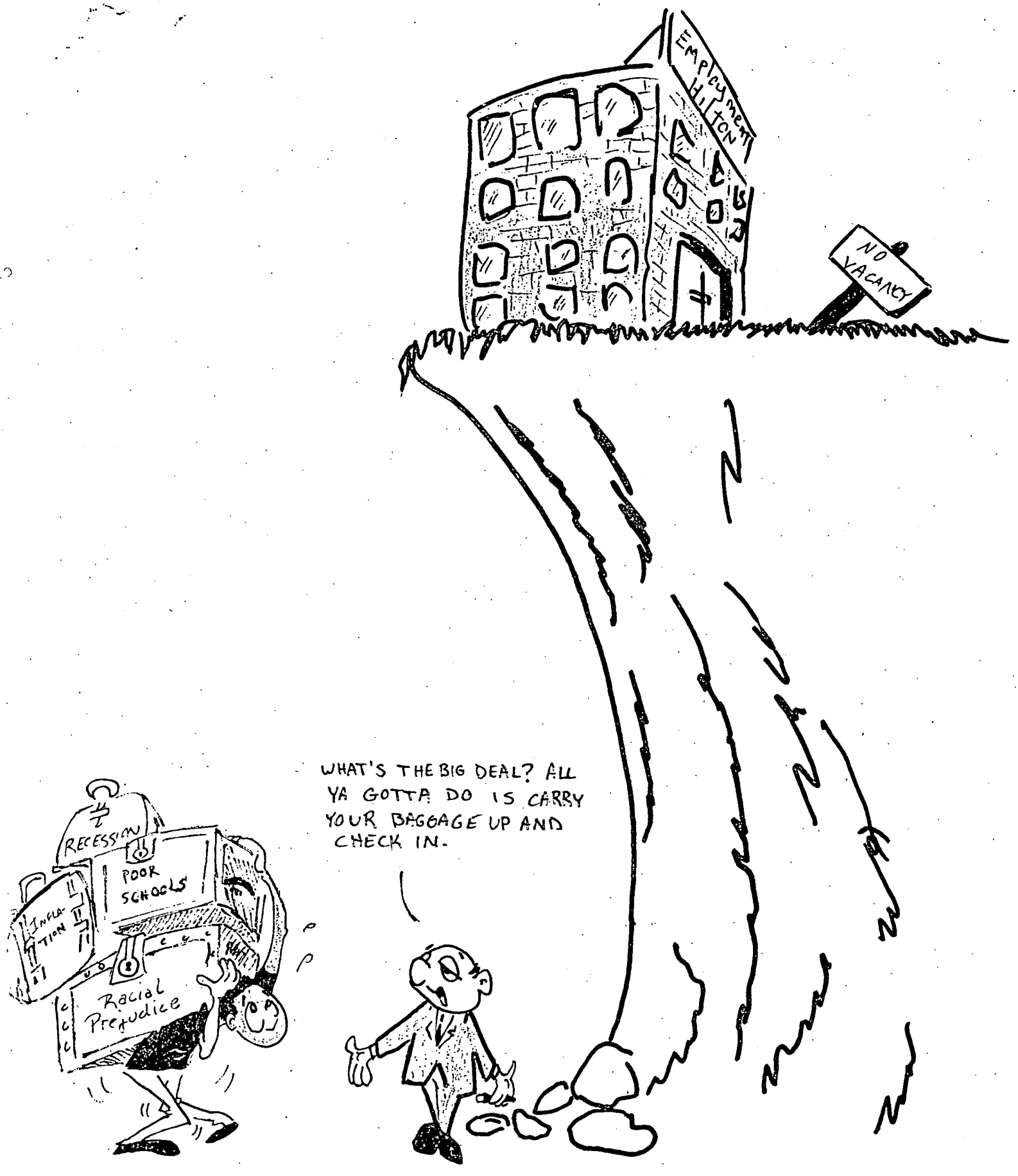
Signature Matrix for Social Welfare Issue

Package	Core Frame	Core Position	Metaphor
Welfare Freeloaders	The issue is how to keep the country from going broke supporting a huge welfare bureaucracy and a lot of blacks and other minorities who are too lazy to work.	Able-bodied people should not be given any money without requiring that they work for it.	A cartoon showing a gluttonous bureaucrat sharing a generous meal with a well-fed welfare bum at public expense.
Working Poor	The issue is how to provide recipients with an incentive to work while providing adequate coverage for their basic needs.	A minimum support level should be provided so that no one starves while at the same time, manpower training and extra rewards should be offered to encourage the able and willing to work.	A cartoon showing a poor person disdaining a handout while eagerly accepting an offer of honest work.
Poverty Trap	The issue is how to help the victims of poverty out of a trap that is not of their own making.	Welfare measures such as a universal family allowance, income maintenance, and unemployment insurance for the long term unemployed should be provided along with programs aimed at creating more jobs.	Requiring a dehumanizing means test is like knocking someone down and then demanding that he produce a doctor's certificate before he can be treated
Regulating the Poor	The issue is how to change an economic system in which poverty is a permanent feature, and relief giving serves to regulate the poor by maintaining a labor reserve and cooling out rebellious collective action	Poverty cannot be eliminated within a capitalist framework. The only solution is to institute a socialist economy in which there is work for everyone who is able-bodied and adequate support for those who are not.	Two fat capitalists, one facing a group of poor people, the other a group of factory workers. The workers are warned that others would like their jobs, and the poor are given a few crumbs and a vague promise of future work to keep them in line.

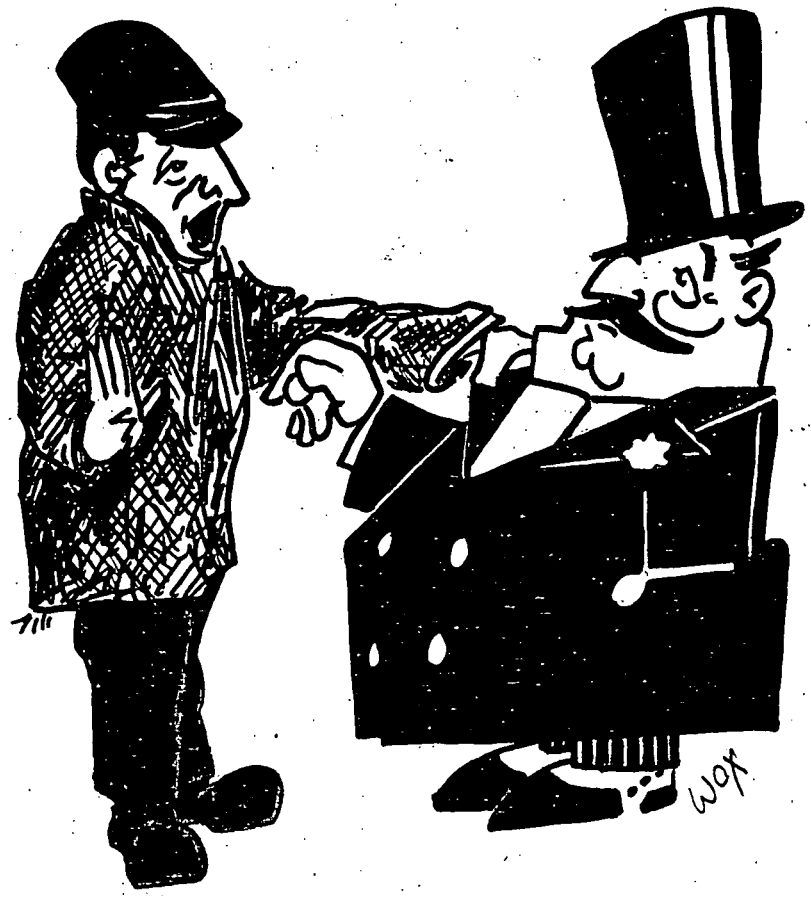
Package	Exemplars	Catch-phrases	Depictions
Welfare Freeloaders (cont.)	Stories of welfare fraud Welfare recipients driving Cadillacs. Lesson: Undeserving people are taking advantage of welfare.	Workfare, not welfare.	Welfare recipients as "freeloaders" "bums" "chiselers" Welfare payments as "handouts"
Working Poor (cont.)	Stories of deserving poor who choose work over the dole but find that they lose money by doing so. Lesson: Many on welfare would prefer to work given adequate incentives and skills.	A way to independence through the dignity of work. The government's willingness to help the needy is linked to the willingness of the needy to help themselves. When you pay people to be poor, there are going to be plenty of poor people.	Present welfare system as offering disincentives to work and degrading recipients by encouraging dependency.
Poverty Trap (cont.)	Family allowance programs in European welfare states. Lesson: A universal payment system protects the dignity of the poor and makes sure that all can live adequately.	Blaming the victim. Guaranteed income. The disillusioned poor, trapped in a prison of poverty and dispair. It does not serve the nation or its people to train the unemployed for jobs that don't exist.	Poverty as a trap; the welfare system as a treadmill; means tests as an affront to dignity or humiliating; the idea of welfare recipients as able bodied is false and a myth.
Regulating the Poor (cont.)		Regulating the poor. Surplus population. Reserve army of the unemployed.	Poverty as serving the interest of the rich and powerful; welfare and relief giving as means of social control.

Table 1 (cont., P. 3)

Package	Roots	Consequences of FAP	Appeals to Principle
Welfare Freeloaders (cont.)	Welfare rolls are inflated because of individual laziness and personal failure to acquire adequate work skills on the part of the recipient.	FAP would set a bad precedent since the support floor will inevitably be raised and the work incentive portion attacked as some sort of slavery or forced labor.	Rewards should be commensurate with effort. People should not be rewarded unless they have earned it through honest, hard work.
Working Poor (cont.)	Welfare roles are inflated because the poor lack adequate job skills, have poor motivation, and have been socialized into a self-perpetuating culture of poverty, and because the welfare system provides disincentives to work.	ProFAP: FAP achieves an appropriate balance by providing the poor with adequate minimum support plus the incentive to work. AntiFAP_1: The floor for minimum support is not high enough. AntiFAP_2: The work incentive is too weak and ineffective.	No one should receive more for being idle than for working. It is morally wrong for a family that is working to try to make ends meet, to receive less than the non-working family across the street.
Poverty Trap (cont.)	Economic policies that fail to provide full employment.	FAP is inadequate because most welfare recipients are unable to work and it fails to address the economic roots of poverty.	Every citizen has the right to a life of dignity, free of the despair wrought by poverty.
Regulating the Poor (cont.)	The root cause of poverty is the capitalist mode of production.	FAP would increase the capacity for social control of the poor but not move them out of poverty. The work requirement will become an instrument for herding the needy into dead-end jobs at rock-bottom wages.	From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.


EMPLOYMENT AGENCY
NO VACANCY
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? ALL YA GOTTA DO IS CARRY YOUR BAGGAGE UP AND CHECK IN.
RECESSION
POOR SCHOOLS
INFLATION
Racial Prejudice

WELFARE--ON THE HOUSE



"No, keep the dime. But Brother,
could you spare a job?"


Incentive Plan ~ WORK or be FIRED
EMPLOYEES' EXIT
GET TO WORK IN THERE! DON'T FORGET THERE ARE PEOPLE JUST DYING FOR YOUR KIND OF WAGES!
HERE'S SOMETHING FOR YOU AND YOUR LOVELY FAMILY. COME BACK IN A LITTLE WHILE AND WE JUST MAY HAVE A JOB FOR YOU!
WELFARE PEANUTS