Case Study for Community Organization
Community and Urban Area

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Theoretical Rationale:

While this proposal is clearly one that has grown out of our practice as indicated by the Taylor Street and Pocket programs, it is necessary to define certain basic theoretical concepts that underly our approach. We will try to create a picture of how we view the situations in which we hope to intervene and define some of the reasons for its existence.

There is concern for the ever-changing urban social setting. The increasing mobility of the more informed, better educated, and financially secure middle class has caused a pilgrimage to the suburbs which has left the city with a wide gap between the haves and the have-nots. The haves being those people who choose to live within the city because of the artistic and cultural advantages it offers, living in luxury apartments, and more often than not being well off financially. The have-nots are generally noted to be groups in poverty or those who suffer from discrimination, we would include in this group, however, those people who stay because of their traditions and familiarity with the area, who need to stay because of fear of change and would avoid change with vigor but who at root hate their existence within urban society. They decry its filth, fear for their safety, and project their discontent and hostility upon minority groups. The have-nots as a group are traditionalist, pragmatist, with an ever diminishing circle of ethnocentricism.
They are at various levels of withdrawal into themselves. Those who have achieved this withdrawal can clearly be defined as “alienated”.

Does the individual families reach out to societies institutions for help/Does the individual family involve itself in schools, clinics etc., community activities? Church, PTA, civic association, Lodges, etc.?

Does the individual family involve itself in its cultural heritage?

Italian/American Afro/American etc.

Do they involve themselves with neighbors as friends? Are they involved and concerned with the broad family? fathers, aunts, uncles, etc.

Are they really concerned and in their primary family relationships?

Or are they, at last, totally unsure of even themselves?

While these questions certainly could not be construed as a scale for tallying a degree of alienation, they do imply the type of evolution that takes place. The alienated resist change, are suspicious of outsiders, and protect their own. They are increasingly distressed and threatened by broad community institutions. “Society is they, not we”. They don’t like other groups and fear being overpowered. Their personal involvements if any, are superficial and are located at place of business, enjoyment (tavern or bingo) or other places of escape.

Not only is it not unusual to not know the neighbors on the street or to project the cause of your troubles upon them, there is an increasing breakdown in the family. Father works out of the neighborhood and is separated from what goes on. He does not discipline the children, help plan their activities, deal with problems at school, and when put in the position of needing to do so (Child goes to court) projects the problem onto mother, child or police, disclaiming any knowledge or responsibility for it. Or the father does not work at all and has no real role in the family. He does not provide the paycheck, therefore often his right to be the figurehead of the family is not accepted. He finds other ways to regain his manliness, mainly through drinking, fighting, and sexual prowess.

The mother, feels the tremendous burden of being isolated in a hostile environment, charged with the responsibility of raising and supervising the children, often just too many, whom she does not understand. She feels her control is weakened by outsider institutions, yet is afraid to approach them. She recognizes unclean streets, bad housing,
lack of police protection, bad schools as the responsibility of the "other society" over which she has no control. She has little support from her husband and either join him in his escapism or being frustrated with a problem thrust it without warning upon him, washing her hands of the issue. Increasingly she projects her problems outside of herself, and justifies her inadequacy by defining no role for herself in her ability to control these outside influences. While many of these projections upon society and its institutions may have some base in reality, there must be help so that the alienated can begin to see that they are in fact a reflection of the people who are involved with them and can be affected and controlled by them. A major goal is to get these people to feel adequate enough within themselves to effect change.

How then do people become alienated? Several issues might be looked at. Obviously the lack of relationship in a full and significant manner is important, but the lack of these relationships is only a clue to the alienation and in no way implies the reason that they do not exist. Neither does poor upbringing, poverty, getthos, or broken homes offer any reasons. We all know of or can find people with some or all of these conditions who are far from alienated, even though we recognize that these conditions can have their effects.

We would suggest several other areas:

Psychological need: Poverty in primitive societies was a way of life of the majority. The needs of those in poverty was defined in terms of basics; food, clothing, and shelter. A man with these in sufficient supply was wealthy indeed. As societies progressed, discoveries and inventions developed new needs. Only as something existed did it become needed. Aboriginal tribes do not need television. But with the industrial revolution and atomic age evolved great needs developed. Not only must one have a car, telephone, or television, his food must be nutritious. Certainly this progress is important, but it creates a specific gap between those who have and those who do not. It creates in those who do not have, feelings of disdain for what he has. It also, because of the vastness of gimmickry and luxury, create a lucky of ability to define what it is that he wants. An automobile amidst loses its importance as a means of transportation, as it takes on importance of status and luxury, therefore a small, economical car does not really fulfill the need. To need, seek, and strive are assets of humanity, but when met with unfathomable goals
bound in intricate maze of miragas, there can only be a questioning of self and values. The answers are inadequacy and importance, when continued over a span of time. Thus while the need survives, the seeking and striving become weaker and non-directional. Escape is sought, but unattainable. Money does not escape. Money in many cases only points up the inadequacy. Frustration and isolation. Lack of function: For man to survive, he not only needs, but must be needed. When alone, he is needed by himself, He must do whatever is necessary to survive and to satisfy his desires. Within the presence of another, he is immediately set upon to prove his value and desireability. He must create the other need for him, or he becomes an object or nonentity. If not needed, he would rather be rejected. Hostility showered upon him at least recognizes his existence.

Given groups of people, the problem multiplies. He must have a function, be rejected, or withdraw. Given groups of people with the avenues for withdrawal eliminated, as happens in urban society, he can become nothing. In our time the functions, of the uneducated, unskilled have become virtually non-existent. Our welfare programs, as necessary as they are, eliminate in many ways the ability to earn even rejection, let alone function. His basic: home, food and shelter are supplied, but through his lack of adequacy rather than his adequacy. Given the opportunity, he would rather starve on his own than accept adole, but his instincts for survival, plus his caring for survival of others for whom he is supposed to provide for will not allow him to starve. But he is not providing; he is not functioning; he is not accepted; but not rejected; he is a non-entity; grouped with non-entities. And the people we are talking about are the children of the children of the people who first faced this problem. Small wonder he does not accept school, work, training, law and order as away of life. His life is that of a non-entity; totally drab and boring, so he escapes into alcohol, sex, fighting; some small semblance of being.

Cultural dissassociation: Culture is a very complexing thing. “It is the composite of the specific ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, which differentiates one group from another.” It is modified, molded, or changed only as it meets with a situation with which it is not equipped to deal. These situations or crises demand new utilizations, innovations, or withdrawals in order to maintain some segments of the original goals. Consistant withdrawal because of inappropriate or inadequate ability to alter or utilize in a different way the thoughts, feelings or actions leads to disintegration or social disorganization as well as
confusion as to goals or directions. The individual within this process feels confused and inadequate. He tends to insulate himself from relationships to which he cannot react. He retreats to pragmatism and projection. The attacks upon cultures of all varities in this country have come fast and furious. Mainliness through physical strength and the work it can produce, the sexual revolution, the atomic bomb, etc. have worked their chaos upon traditional cultures. The responses have been many. One response, seems to be disassociation. If one retreats ultimately back into oneself, and finds himself to be inadequate, without goals, without values, except impulsive or pragmatic ones, is he in fact a member of a culture of all others who have found the same. Maybe there is no “lower class” culture in this country only because a culture is a moving, dynamic thing, changing and reacting, no matter how imperceptably, seeking goals and maintaining values. These people are alike only in the absence of these things.

Communication gap: The sophistication of language has contributed its share to the existence of alienation. Those alienated resort to basic non-verbal communications, utilizing limited vocabularies to indicate broad ranges of nuances, differentiated for the only by inflection, gestures and situations. They find it very difficult to be understood and understand even less. This, of course, is a quite difficult position to be in. It is made even more difficult, by the fact, that, that they are consistently thrown into situations where they are the ones who stand to lose by the misunderstanding. The child must understand the teacher. (Obviously it is not the teacher who does not understand) The parents must understand the boss, the judge, the social worker, etc. A misunderstanding among poors quickly moves into a non-verbal, physical conflict. But the one thing the alienated do understand is that this door is closed to them by the authorities. They have no recourse except brooding hostility.

Summary:

While these four concepts (psychological needs, lack of function, cultural disassociation, and communication gap) do not, in all probability provide the full spectrum of explanations for alienation, they do provide a backdrop for understanding the resultant symptomology; poverty, violence, filth, apparent lack of values and ambition, hostility, suspicion, etc., described oftentimes and well by present day authors. The major question now, is “How does this lead us to our proposal as a solution”? 
METHODOLOGY:

In examining the variety of welfare services within urban societies we recognize that there are many specified services (child guidance, family service, etc.) and many broad community services (community organization efforts, recreational programs, etc.) but very little in between. Psychiatric workers recognizes the importance of a "therapeutic medic" for their clients and the rapid deterioration at the client who must return to an unchanged and now hostile environment. The Workers in massive programs recognize, or should recognize, that he is dealing with a more active, moremobile, more adequate group, no matter how unsophisticated they may seem, by the very nature of their involvement. Their attempt is to change the society to fit the people and the people's need. This is a valid and important procedure, but is also slow and tedious as it must were it way through an established path with difficulty in determining what should be explored, when and how. But project would emphasis adjustment to the society; creation of a "therapeutic medic" if you will utilizing it to its fullest, with the expectation of change in the process. We define the neighborhood as an area with an ethnocentric identity, defined geography, and an opportunity for psychic interaction (face to face relationships) on some level with major segments the population. Because of the physical structures in South Philadelphia there is a tendency for this to become one block. The pressure of the physical structure would hinder the organized, adequate block less, of course, than it would the disorganized block. Because of the physical structures and the psychological state inhibiting mobility, most of the neighborhoods in which we work are one block. We see the neighborhood, or the creation of a neighborhood, as a key fact in enabling alienated people to over come the four previously mentioned conditions and others, that keep them bound in their own inadequacy. Within any definable geographic area where there are face to face relationships within some segment of the resident there develops a set of sanctioned mores and behavior patterns that are the culmination of, but different than the mores of the individual within the group. There is also the development of a status order or hierarchy within the group, with those at the top viewed as leaders, and respected for their opinions on given actions. Where the sanctioned mores of the group are perceived by the broader society as positive; the leadership is usually acceptable and
related to society in a positive manner. This connection allows the area to move towards utilizing more fully those institutions for its own purposes as well as to help redefine and reach the goals of the institution. This area, in fact, becomes involved in the democratic process. Our goal would be to dissolve the psychological barriers which inhibit development, with the process itself fulfilling the role of defining goals, values, and mores, and supplying a function and success.

Paraphrased from Dr. Irene Joselyn—"The Family".

In order to do this we must start a process which will both boister the changes and adequacies of the individual, as provide a milieu in which he can garner new responses. The worker must start with the individual's ideas, advice, thoughts and concerns. Both supporting these, while demanding and expecting movement. He allows projections upon others, but brings the individual together with others. He supplies methodes to reach the "other society" and its institutions, but limits "grandiose" actions, in favor of those within the realm of possible "success". He documents the approval and acceptance of others. He plays a balancing role with a group, who like adolescents need to test out themselves, feel enough like others to be secure, and who need demands and limitations against which to grow.

There is a curious struggle between independence and dependence. Both the need to prove and the desire to withdraw and be protected. The independence is demonstrated by spurts of rebellion, from authority, need for excitement, and action. The dependant aspect develops as impulsivenses and confusion and avoidanced of dealing with problems although the problems are clearly seen. The worker need to channel the independence and energy through the group, and place expectations which do not allow the degree of dependence desired and point towards dealing with problems. Relationship are unsure and passionate, varing in intensity between love and hate. There is an underlying knowledge that you cannot "count on the other" when the going gets rough. The group with worker support can begin to ease this. Thought and behavior may vary to the point of complete contradiction. At one point the advocation of ideals, and of the highest code of conduct. At the next protesting and decrying these same ideals. Can one who is "bad", inadequate, and unsure really think and behave "ideally" and will the milieu
allowit. The structure of the group, with its development of standards places expectations to live up to ideals. Secretiveness and unsureness about self combined with difficulty in expressing feelings cause distortions in verbal pictures of what the feelingare. It is common to think out a problem, before asking advice, and judge the adequacy or inadequacy of the advisor in terms of how well the advice fits the already made decision. Can the group communicate and think out together in such a way as to develop channels for real expression of feelings and ideals? The worker must support, demand, and work with the milieu. The success of (the) program does not rest alone on its work with (individual problems.) It is rather on act extent to which the residents achieve sufficient unity of purpose to act cooperatively on matters of vital concern to the welfare of the neighborhood. This can only happen when brought together in a way that allows for the inadequacies of the past, with expectations for the adequacies of the future. The key issue here is the creation of an organized order that can foster conditions for adjustmental development without condonation of abberant behavior, without lack of opportunity, and without deliquent association. This order or “milieu” is as vital to the resolution of problem as the specific treatment. Without it treatment is negated. Without it, massive change in societal structure do not reflect the character of those most at odds with the system.

Scope:

We propose to work in a nine-square block area. The unit would be so structured as to contain four disorganized blocks. These are defined as geographic regions having a tack of face to face relationships which would allow for the development of cored mores or behavior patterns. They would be characterized by social problems (poor housing, deliquancy, dirty streets, suspicion, fear and projection, which inhibit any joint effort to resolve problems.)

The other blockcs within the unit would be relatively well organized and would supply the local strength and leadership to which the disorganized blocks might first moved and seek help. One social group worker would be hired to work intensively with each two disorganized blocks, while together relating to the whole unit.

One case worker would work in the total unit with particular emphasis in the four
disorganized blocks.

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