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(Signature)

Department of Political Science

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

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Abstract

The successful implementation of the Canada/British Columbia Agreement to Enhance the Employability of Social Assistance Recipients (the "SAR", or "Four Corner" Agreement) can be explained by a revised version of Mazmanian and Sabatier's 1983 theory of implementation. This framework is also able to account for some of the limitations that the initiative faced. The analysis of the SAR Agreement is placed in the context of the on-going dilemma of work and welfare and in the evolving ideological climate in the B.C. welfare system from an ideology of redistribution, to one of liberal developmentalism, emphasizing opportunity before work.

The case-study provides a history of the implementation of the SAR Agreement in B.C. at both the policy-formulation and field levels of government, and gives an overview of the agreement and its results. This information is gained through reports, government documents and interviews with officials involved in the SAR Agreement. Application of the revised theory of implementation to the agreement illuminates the ingredients critical to the success of the SAR initiative in British Columbia. Among the most important determinants of success were the intensive cooperation between federal and provincial agencies, the amount of discretion given to local officials when combined with the expertise and resources of those officials, the correct causal theory underlying most project designs, and the flexibility of the agreement respond to past successes and failures. The agreement was limited by the lack of general guidelines to provide officials with a sense of direction, by the possibility of conflicting goals of outside agencies, and by problems with the invalid causal theory underlying a few programs.
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Preface

The roots of the Canada/British Columbia Agreement to Enhance the Employability of Social Assistance Recipients are well documented in scholarly literature and government documents. Similarly, the outcomes of this initiative are preserved in numbers, reports, and in the evolving SAR Agreement itself. It is the space between the design and outcome that is relatively uncharted. For this information I am heavily indebted to government officials and members of anti-poverty organizations, whose anonymity this thesis will respect.

During the months of July to September I conducted either in-person or telephone interviews with fifteen individuals involved in the SAR Agreement. They came from all "four-corners" of the Agreement -- Health and Welfare Canada, Employment and Immigration Canada, British Columbia's Ministry of Social Services, and British Columbia's new Ministry of Skills, Labour and Training -- and represented both policy-formulators and field-level workers. In addition, I heard the voice of the agreement's critics through the opinions of a Vancouver anti-poverty organization, and I gained a valuable national perspective from Professor Michael Prince. I am grateful to these individuals, all of whom were extremely generous with their time, and with their knowledge.

I would like to thank, particularly, my supervisor, Professor George Hoberg, for his financial support, his critical eye, his time, and his constant interest.
Introduction

In the mid-1980s the social assistance system in British Columbia, as in all of Canada, reached a critical point. It was no longer serving those for whom it was designed -- those unable to support themselves who turn to welfare as a last resort -- but had become a stopping place for those who were considered by the government to be "employable". Policy makers throughout Canada focused on two theories to explain this phenomenon. The first arose from the recognition that falling unemployment did not reduce the number of employables on welfare. Politicians concluded that the economy's labour needs were changing rapidly and that the skills of workers on social assistance were not able to meet these needs. Additional measures to help this group to overcome their barriers to employment were required. The second theory was that this welfare dependence was the result of a particular dilemma of work and welfare that had been created by the interaction of the rules of the welfare system and the reality of work conditions. Many workers in low-paying jobs with few benefits believed (correctly in many cases) that they would be better off on welfare, with its income and in-kind benefits, than working. This peculiar relationship between work and welfare created disincentives for welfare recipients to seek to become self-sufficient. Policy-makers knew that to address the problem of welfare dependence of employables they had to find ways to train social assistance recipients to meet the needs of the changing labour market and they had to provide incentives to encourage them to engage in this training.

The result of these imperatives was the Agreement to Enhance the Employability of Social Assistance Recipients, (the "SAR", or "Four corner" Agreement), agreed to by Canadian and provincial officials responsible for social services and labour in 1985 and signed by British Columbia in May of 1986. The SAR Agreement generated an extensive network of federal and provincial training programs in British Columbia.
tailored to serve social assistance recipients. Like other welfare-to-work schemes throughout North America, the SAR strategy for British Columbia mixed authority, incentive and capacity tools to create an environment in which welfare recipients would be motivated to become self-sufficient. However, unlike many previous welfare-to-work experiments in British Columbia and in other regions, the initiative was successful in meeting many of its objectives.

The success of the complex initiative, in which any of its many actors could have thwarted the implementation process, is intriguing. Examination of its particular features yields insights into the important features of policy and implementation design that influenced implementing officials and the target group to behave in conformity with the initiative's objectives.

In order to achieve the overall goal of identifying conditions for success of welfare-to-work initiatives, several preliminary inquiries are necessary. First, a credible theory of implementation must be found or developed which is appropriate for application both to the Canadian policy environment, and to the field of social policy. The first chapter of this thesis reviews a body of literature on policy implementation and extracts the important contributions of each author to create a more comprehensive theory of effective implementation.

Next, the intricacies of the policy problem must be understood. Chapter two provides a theoretical and practical background to the B.C. case-study by discussing the three contexts -- that of the public, of the policy-makers and of the social assistance recipient -- in which the welfare-to-work problem exists. The chapter examines the transformation in the ideology underlying the welfare system in Canada from redistribution to liberal developmentalism. Finally, it provides a summary of the findings of recent experiments in mixing welfare with work and confirms the existence of important goal trade-offs in this policy area.
The case-study of the implementation of the SAR Agreement in British Columbia makes up chapters three and four. Chapter three provides an account of history of the agreement in both Canada and British Columbia, describes implementation of the initiative at upper levels of government as well as at the field-level, and finally, considers different evaluations of the impact of the agreement, noting areas of weakness and failure in a package of programs that in general was a success.

Chapter four draws the three previous chapters together. In this chapter, the revised theory of implementation devised in the first chapter is applied to British Columbia's attempt to address its work/welfare dilemma through the SAR Agreement. The eight conditions of the revised theory are effective in explaining the outcome of the initiative and the successes and failures of its various components. Overall, the application of a theory of implementation suitable to Canadian social policy to the B.C. case-study helps to open up the secrets of effective welfare-to-work initiatives. These lessons might provide valuable guidance for future welfare-to-work reforms, as well as for problem-solving in other areas of social policy.
Chapter One

In Search of a Comprehensive Theory of Implementation

There is a great distance separating a paper agreement between politicians and the day-to-day reality of Canada's poorest citizens. Between the years of 1986 and 1988 ten provinces and the Northwest Territories signed an agreement with the federal government to enhance the employability of social assistance recipients by providing them with more opportunities for training. Since that date, many of the "employment enhancement" initiatives have led to increases in both employability and earnings for a large number of social assistance recipients, and have shifted the emphasis in social services from simply providing transfers to the poor, to providing them with opportunities for self-sufficiency. The ministers' agreement has, in fact, changed the landscape of social services for the poor and over time has led to modest gains for this population. The successful transformation of a legislative objective into a social and economic reality for the poor marks the effective implementation of a government's decision. The Federal/Provincial/Territorial Agreements to Enhance the Employability of Social Assistance Recipients (The SAR Agreement) was a significant achievement in a policy arena in which many visions of social reform have been shattered by the force of the social and economic obstacles that they must confront.

Policy, whether in the form of a bill, or in this case a signed agreement between governments, is born at the top levels of government. However, its life depends on the successive stages that follow its birth until it reaches and influences its target population. These stages constitute the implementation of a policy, a process with tremendous potential for variation and unpredictability. A well-designed policy with enthusiastic support may nonetheless fail to accomplish its objectives; the clue to this failure is to be found somewhere in the stages of
implementation. In order to design and enact effective policy, the various obstacles to effective implementation must be understood. The process of implementation should be structured, alongside other elements of policy design, in the policy formulation stage. The ability to connect intentions with results through application of a sound theory of implementation is certainly one key to competent governance. The potential power of such a theory has recently drawn many scholars to its pursuit.

Amid their shared claim that implementation is a field of study in its infancy, the various students of implementation have amassed a considerable body of knowledge about the fate of government policies once they leave the legislatures. From case-studies to more comprehensive theoretical frameworks, academics' quest for an understanding of policy has extended beyond the traditional subject of the forces at work in the policy-formulation and adoption process to the more cloudy area of the implementation stage. Answers to several key questions are sought in the literature, among them the questions of the true source of policy, whether the formulators or forces within the implementation process generate policy, and whether formulation and implementation can be regarded as separate processes. The paramount project, however, of the various researchers is practical; they are concerned with identifying the conditions which must be met in order for a policy to be implemented successfully.

A chronological account of several major pieces of research captures the breadth and diversity of the implementation debate. At the same time, the considerable overlap in the conclusions of the authors suggests that the key elements of successful policy implementation are not as elusive as an observer of government's disability in several arenas might have once thought. In fact, despite many researchers' assertions of the distinctiveness of their variables or approach, and the innovative vocabulary that they employ, the findings reveal that
implementation can be studied systematically and that an empirically testable implementation hypothesis is within reach. Implementation, initially defined by Pressman and Wildavsky as "a process of interaction between the setting of goals and actions geared to achieving them" (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973: xv), maintains its definition, in all of the research examined in this chapter, as a dynamic process in which policy results are rarely the mirrors of policy designs. During the last two decades the pressing debate between scholars of implementation is over which circumstances or factors are most significant in their impact on the fate of a policy.

Eight studies that have contributed new elements to the debate will be examined in this chapter. First, Pressman and Wildavsky's Implementation presents a hypothesis on the complexity of joint action and its relation to implementation process. Second, Eugene Bardach's The Implementation Game examines the influence that self-interested individuals exert on the process. Third, an article by Richard Elmore "Backward Mapping: Implementation Research and Policy Decisions" presents a bottom-up analysis of implementation. This perspective on implementation is explored further in a fourth work, Michael Lipsky's Street-Level Bureaucracy. A fifth work, Mazmanian and Sabatier's Implementation and Public Policy, advances a comprehensive, mostly top-down framework to explain policy successes and failures. Sixth, Goggin et al.'s Implementation Theory and Practice, tries to improve on Mazmanian and Sabatier's work by synthesizing top-down and bottom-up approaches and by making implementation analysis more "scientific". Seventh, Robert Stoker's Reluctant Partners retreats from the comprehensive perspective to deal with one element in the implementation process, that is, the cooperation between government and implementing agencies. Finally, in From Welfare to Work Judith M. Gueron and Edward Pauly outline a framework for understanding the impacts of welfare-to-work programs specifically, shedding light
on particular factors which influence the implementation of social policy. These eight works, taken together, testify to the progress made in this "new" field and the degree to which a substantial body of knowledge on implementation now exists. Even while the perspectives differ, at the end of two decades of research the findings are converging.

From these works a framework can be developed which combines now "conventional" implementation wisdom with the clever insights of particular authors to create a framework which is appropriate to both Canada and to the realm of social policy. This framework will provide the basis for examining the success of the SAR initiatives in British Columbia in later chapters.

*Laying the Foundation*

The work that is often cited as having been most responsible for the development of the field of implementation research is Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky’s *Implementation*. While examining the fate of a single policy -- the Economic Development Agency's employment initiative in Oakland California -- the authors developed a theory of implementation that has implications beyond their case study.

In their detailed five-year account of the government's initiative the authors question how a program on which all participants initially could agree could fail to be implemented successfully. Their focus is on the numerous and ever-changing players involved in implementation, on their varying goals and perspectives, on the passage of time, and on the consequent evolution of the policy throughout implementation. The conclusion that they reach is that the fate of a policy is determined by a number of complex forces, none of which are governed by a single participant in the implementation process.
The theory of implementation that they develop is "The Complexity of Joint Action". It is easily arrived at by their description and analysis of the Oakland project. Generally, it says that the more parties involved in implementation, the less chance that implementation will run smoothly. More specifically, they note that as participants change, so do the perspectives, goals and measures of success that they bring to the implementation process. As participants change, so do the understandings between them. They explain that "participants may agree with the substantive ends of a proposal and still oppose (or merely fail to facilitate) the means for effectuating it" (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973: 99), due to different preferences regarding the priority of various goals and the methods used to promote them. The more actors there are, the more clearances are necessary for any decision to be made, the more potential veto points exist. Decisions also take time. The more clearance points there are, the more potential there is for delay and for the priorities of actors to change, hindering the implementation process. According to Pressman and Wildavsky, the Oakland project was jeopardized by the vast number of agencies with conflicting priorities that were involved in its implementation.

Another significant contribution that the authors make is their recognition that the "separation of policy design from implementation is fatal" (ibid: xvii). They lament the fact that the formulators of the policy did not give the implementors sufficient guidance. "Congress may have written the language, but the administrators were doing the translating" (ibid: 75). If bills are too vague and details of policies are not worked out in advance then it is the various participants who must contend with one another to establish a bill's exact meaning. These kinds of struggles hinder implementation.

Further concerns of the researchers include resources and theoretical problems. Implementing agencies need sufficient funding and personnel to deal with unforeseen circumstances as well as the initial program requirements. There
must also be a sound theory underlying the policy. Pressman and Wildavsky attribute part of the failure of the Oakland project to a failure on the part of formulators to choose the means that most directly leads towards the desired ends.

*Implementation* is a "top-down" study. The authors begin with a bill and follow it through the chain of actors involved in "translating" and enacting it. Their focus is on how a policy is structured to control the implementation process. The "advice" that policy formulators are left with concerns elements of policy design: improve the clarity of the legislation, provide an adequate budget, minimize the number of agencies involved, promote unity at the local level and ensure consistency in the leadership (a "fixer" -- an individual or agency that stays with the project throughout implementation -- is key to program success). The authors recognize the power that local "street-level" officials exercise, since federal officials ultimately are dependent on them if federal objectives are to be achieved, and they therefore seek "federal modesty" (ibid: 146). However, rather than taking the "bottom-up" approach of suggesting that more local discretion and informal authority might help to deal with problems, Pressman and Wildavsky put their limited hope for improved implementation in improvements at the centre -- in the potential of a policy to create more favourable implementation conditions.

Four years after *Implementation* was published, Eugene Bardach responded with *The Implementation Game*. He commends Pressman and Wildavsky for their insight into the anatomy of delay and conflicting interests in policy implementation, and criticizes them only for not going far enough. Whereas Pressman and Wildavsky hold a somewhat benign view of the complexity of joint action -- implying that delays are a natural result of participants all working in their own ways to address a problem -- Bardach has a view of implementation participants that is distinctly suspicious and negative. In his view, actors or agencies are motivated solely by their own interests. He characterizes the implementation
process as "highly defensive. A great deal of energy goes into maneuvering to avoid responsibility, scrutiny, and blame" (Bardach 1977: 37). His theory of implementation suggests that a policy will fail unless the motives of individuals can either be forced to conform to the objectives of a policy, or if they are in conflict, can be suppressed.

Bardach provides a two-part definition of the "implementation process": "1. a process of assembling the elements required to produce a particular programmatic outcome, and 2. the playing out of a number of loosely interrelated games whereby these elements are withheld from or delivered to the program assembly process on particular terms" (ibid: 57-8). It is the second part of the definition that characterizes Bardach's distinctive perspective -- participants self-consciously manipulate the implementation process to further their own interests. Such unconstrained behaviour, described by Bardach as "games", impedes policy implementation in four ways.

First, four games have the effect of diverting resources away from those recipients designated by a policy. These include overcharging for sub-standard services, ("Easy Money"); performing only to meet the requirements of those controlling the budget, ("The Budget Game"); under-performance due to job security, ("Easy Life") and allocating funds based on political grounds, rather than out of concern for efficiency ("Pork Barrel").

A second set of three games serve to deflect the policy goals outlined in the original policy by adding on additional goals to the original ones outlined in the policy, ("Piling On"); by fashioning unclear elements of mandates to suit one's needs ("Up for Grabs"); and by attempting to recapture in implementation what was lost in policy formulation, ("Keeping the Peace").

Third, three games create the dilemmas of administration: the ability of implementors to use symbolic and inadequate gestures to quell demands
("Tokenism"); the ability of those opposed to a policy to resist together thereby making enforcement impossible ("Massive Resistance"); and the more impersonal factors of incompetence, variability and lack of coordination that weaken implementors' capacities ("Social Entropy").

Finally, participants engage in five games which have the effect of dissipating the energies of those involved in implementation. Participants may hold their positions until others give into their demands ("Tenacity"); they may compete for jurisdiction ("Territory"); they might shirk responsibility for the elements of programs assigned to them ("Not Our Problem"); they attempt to maintain their option for backing out should the costs seem too great for them ("Odd Man Out"); or they may act more out of concern for their own prestige than for the program itself ("Reputation").

All fifteen games are outlined by Bardach in detail in order to illustrate the negative force that participants (or "human nature", it seems at many points), unchecked, can exert on government initiatives. Bardach's solution is that government policies should be designed so as to constrain the behaviour of the various actors. Through use of authority and through foresight -- "risk assessment" -- on the part of policy formulators, the effect of the games of individual participants can be avoided. The possible range of behaviour would be determined before implementation and the proper incentives and rules integrated into the implementation process during the policy design phase in order to keep behaviour consistent with the goals of policy-makers. This is the ultimate in top-down prescription. Bardach would have a implementation arena in which all discretion is taken away from the local levels and centralized. He champions the notion of a powerful fixer -- an individual or organization in whose self-interest it is that implementation be successful.
The "game" metaphor used by Bardach is clever, and indeed it does describe the behaviour of many actors some of the time. However, it is shallow in its portrayal of the motivations of participants in the implementation process. Nowhere does he allow for true commitment to an issue inspired by anything other than self-interest. He ignores the notion of public good and service which pervades the policy arena. By failing to acknowledge that some participants will help to facilitate an implementation process even when it imposes costs on them he suggests that the only likely outcome for a controversial policy is failure.

Interestingly, almost as an afterthought, Bardach expands his vision. In a section in which he deals with "non-purposive delays", he acknowledges that factors apart from individual self-interest can interfere with program implementation. He bows to Pressman and Wildavsky in acknowledging the time-consuming nature of collective-decision making, regardless of the disposition of each participant. Similarly, only in the last pages of the book does he mention the need for a good theory underlying a chosen policy. Bardach offers a useful typology of the kinds of strategic behaviour engaged in by participants; his theory elaborates on the actual mechanics of the "complexity of joint action" that Pressman and Wildavsky describe. While his description of the selfish behaviour of some implementing officials is credible, he does little to convince the reader that this behaviour is pervasive. His theory of implementation has one overwhelming and narrow focus in its concern for the self-interested actions of implementors. By ignoring some of the unselfish motives of those engaged in public service he portrays a very stilted policy world. If the reader does not accept this view, the theory then serves only to explain a fraction of policy outcomes. In passing over consideration of further personal motivations and other impersonal factors affecting the policy process Bardach fails to provide a compelling theory.
While Bardach advocates constraining behaviour through centralizing formal authority in policy implementation, Richard Elmore seeks the opposite response to the problem of government's inability to achieve the results it seeks from its policies. In his article, "Backward Mapping: Implementation Research and Policy Decisions", Elmore explores the "bottom-up" approach to implementation analysis in which the focus is not the policy but the societal problem itself. The starting point is "the point at which administrative actions intersect private choices" (Elmore 1979: 604). Rather than examining what he terms the "command and control" concerns of top-down analysis, he advocates an approach that emphasizes local expertise and discretion, bargaining among actors, and incentive structures. His is a perspective that puts faith the capacity of "street-level" officials to solve a problem, as they are closer to its source. Rather than seeing the complexity of joint action as a impediment to successful implementation as Pressman and Wildavsky do, or sharing Bardach's distrust of the varying behaviours and motivations of participants, Elmore sees decentralization as a resource and suggests that by extending local discretion and informal authority, innovations in problem-solving can be nurtured.

Like Elmore, in Street-Level Bureaucracy Michael Lipsky argues that the actions of street-level bureaucrats are critical to the success or failure of a policy, since it is they who have the most contact with the target group whose behaviour a policy is designed to influence. Beyond their role in affecting the implementation of a policy, Lipsky suggests that they actually create the policy that is received by the client. He calls street-level bureaucrats "policy-makers" for two reasons. "They exercise wide discretion in decisions about citizens with whom they interact. Then, when taken in concert, their individual actions add up to agency behaviour" (Lipsky 1980: 13). The chief resources which street-level bureaucrats have at their disposal are discretion and "relative autonomy from organizational authority". These resources can be used either to further or to hinder policy objectives. Lipsky
Lipsky characterizes the street-level bureaucracy in terms of five conditions of work in addition to discretion, autonomy and a high degree of interaction with clients. These include chronically inadequate resources relative to performance demands; demand for service that exceeds the supply; goal expectations which are ambiguous or conflicting; performance goals which are difficult to measure, and clients who are non-voluntary (ibid: 27-28). In an institutional environment characterized by poor conditions of work, street-level bureaucrats need to find ways to adapt to these conditions, and to maintain their sense of the value of their own work. "Patterns of practice", as Lipsky calls these adaptations, tend to routinize the work of the bureaucrat and to lower their expectations of both their target group and of their own role in an organization in terms of the objectives they set out to achieve. These patterns of practice lead to impacts of a policy being implemented by officials that are far beneath the potential of the policy.

Lipsky's theory holds that street-level bureaucrats will continue to be policy-makers so long as discretion and relative autonomy is allowed. So long as inadequate working conditions prevail in their bureaucracies, street level bureaucrats will develop patterns of practice which will put limits on effective implementation. As such, more effective implementation can be expected when either discretion or autonomy is reduced or working conditions in street-level bureaucracies improved.

Building A Comprehensive Theory

It is Daniel Mazmanian and Paul Sabatier who manage to move beyond the case-study approach of Pressman and Wildavsky and the narrow theoretical focus of
Bardach to provide a comprehensive theory emphasizing several variables affecting implementation in order to apply them to a variety of case-studies. In *Implementation and Public Policy* they argue that "the basic components of policy implementation are the same across most policy areas and ... the effectiveness of their implementation results from the presence of more, or less, of the relevant factors" (Mazmanian and Sabatier 1983: 3). Mazmanian and Sabatier's book attempts to name and define these factors.

Theirs is a mostly top-down approach that seeks solutions in the creation of a policy environment that will facilitate implementation. However, their theory can be interpreted to incorporate some of Elmore and Lipsky's bottom-up concerns in relation to "critical linkages" affecting target group compliance. They define the key dependent variable, implementation itself, as a series if five stages. The first stage is the policy output or decision. This is followed by the compliance of the target groups. The next stage is the actual impact of the decisions, followed by the perceived impacts of the decisions. Finally, the initial decision is evaluated and revised. Unlike the bottom-up theorists and Bardach, Mazmanian and Sabatier maintain the distinction between policy formulation and implementation; this is possible through their use of the feedback loop to account for modifications (ibid: 9).

Mazmanian and Sabatier echo Bardach in their assertion that "the energizing force of the implementation process is the rational pursuit by individuals of their desires for power, security, and well-being" (ibid: 20). However, they differ from Bardach in recognizing that this "pursuit" occurs within "broad historical, cultural and economic conditions and organizational imperatives" (ibid). In other words, the context that shapes individuals' interests is the independent variable within Mazmanian and Sabatier's framework, whereas individuals' interests were portrayed as independent variables within Bardach's theory. That individuals'
interests are shaped by context is a possibility overlooked by Bardach who only saw context as dependent on interests.

Out of this understanding, Mazmanian and Sabatier develop an elaborate framework, and a corresponding simpler set of "six conditions of effective implementation". In their framework they divide the independent variables into three categories. The first concerns the "tractability of the problem". They posit that effective implementation is directly related to the tractability of the problem. Effective implementation becomes more likely as 1) the technical difficulty associated with solving a problem decreases; 2) the diversity of the proscribed behaviour decreases; 3) the size of the target population decreases; and 4) the extent of the behavioural change required decreases.

In a second category of variables, Mazmanian and Sabatier posit a series of relationships between effective implementation and the "ability of a policy decision to structure implementation". In this case they argue that the chance of successful implementation increases if 1) the statute contains clear and consistent objectives; 2a) the causal theory on which the policy is based is valid and b) the implementing officials have adequate jurisdiction over important linkages in the implementation process; 3) the level of funding is adequate; 4) "hierarchical integration" is ensured by a) minimizing the number of veto points, and b) providing incentives for those with a veto to agree to implement the policy; 5) the decision rules are unambiguous and facilitate the achievement of objectives; 6) Officials are committed to the goals outlined in the policy; and 7) Opportunities for public participation are biased in favour of the policy's supporters.

A final group of non-statutory variables influence implementation. Effective implementation can be attributed in part to 1) favourable local socio-economic conditions that cause the issue to have high salience; 2) positive public opinion and media attention; 3) favourable attitudes and and strong financial resources of
constituency groups; 4) support for the program from those who control the resources, (Mazmanian and Sabatier call this actor or group "sovereigns"); and 5) skilled leadership committed to the policy's objectives.

Mazmanian and Sabatier reduce their framework to six conditions that can be used to determine the chances of success of any given policy. The first condition is that the statute contain "clear and consistent" objectives. Second, the policy must be based on a sound causal theory and it must grant adequate jurisdiction to relevant agencies to pursue the objectives. (This is, in fact, two separate conditions which hereafter will be treated separately). Third, the implementation process must be structured in such a way as to "maximize the probability that implementing officials will perform as desired". For Mazmanian and Sabatier, this includes "assignment to sympathetic agencies with adequate hierarchical integration, supportive decision rules, sufficient financial resources and adequate access to supporters". (This variable is very similar to Pressman and Wildavsky's concern with minimizing the number of clearance points in decision making). A fourth condition is strong managerial and political skill and commitment in the leadership. Fifth, active support by key groups and legislatures, and neutral courts facilitates implementation. Finally, the priority of the policy's objectives must be maintained over time and must not be undermined by changes in socio-economic conditions "which weaken the statutes causal theory or political support" (Mazmanian and Sabatier 1983: 41-42).

By recognizing the various stages in the implementation process, Mazmanian and Sabatier are better able than previous researchers to identify the variety of forces that act on a policy at different times. For example, they note the equal importance of strong initial financial support as well as the necessity of sustained interest from constituents over the long-term. Their framework is convincing in the breadth of variables that it touches. As they apply their framework to several case-studies its
flexibility becomes apparent. Each policy area is influenced to a different degree by some or all of their conditions. However, their general hypotheses about the relationships between the variables and implementation appear to be valid.

The main weakness of Mazmanian and Sabatier's theory is that it does not give sufficient attention to local factors in implementation. Although they can be commended for their discussion of tractability issues insofar as they discuss the difficulty of changing behaviour, they do not address adequately the issue of incentives for the target population. In the case of social policy, the importance of the structuring of incentives in the policy and the perception of these incentives by target groups must not be overlooked, nor can it be lumped together under the "theoretical validity" or "adequate jurisdiction" variables, neither of which adequately addresses the interaction of policy with the target population. In view of this concern, an additional variable should be added to those related to tractability. This variable would help to predict the response of target population to incentive structures outlined in policies.

In addition, although the authors deal with the commitment and skills of implementing officials, their bias is toward agency officials closer to the policy rather than "street-level bureaucrats" closer to the target population. They neglect issues such as the competence, skill, concern and discretion of individuals at the local level in facilitating program implementation. The first three of these variables are not likely to be generated through the careful structuring of a statute, and yet they are instrumental to the faithful implementation of a policy. Mazmanian and Sabatier's theory could benefit from the addition of a condition relating to the capabilities of lower-level implementors.

Since Mazmanian and Sabatier's work was published, several further attempts to develop a theory of implementation have occurred and are worth noting. Malcolm Goggin et al.'s *Implementation Theory and Practice*, and Robert Stoker's
Reluctant Partners each claim to bring a new perspective to the inquiry. Goggin et al. claim to advance a more scientific approach than Mazmanian and Sabatier, to give operational definitions of variables with specifications for their measurement and to synthesize the top-down and bottom-up approaches. In his work, Stoker advocates a "regime paradigm" for implementation analysis that looks at differences among participants as a resource, rather than an obstacle to effective implementation.

Goggin et al.'s work needs only a few comments. Although they present a comprehensive theory of implementation with a wide range of variables, they have borrowed heavily from Mazmanian and Sabatier -- their variables often differ only in name -- and thus their theory seems more a rewriting of previous work than "the third generation" of implementation literature that they claim that it represents. Their primary independent variable categories are "federal level inducements and constraints", and "state and local inducements and constraints". Also influencing implementation is organizational structure and state capacity (both political and economic).

Their "communications model for intergovernmental implementation" is a vehicle for explaining the flow of decision-making as the sending of messages, and serves the same purpose as Mazmanian and Sabatier's feedback loop, which divides implementation into five stages. However, it is more successful than the feedback loop in acknowledging that messages flow up through the implementation process, as well as down. In fact, the strength of Goggin et al.'s work is that they include among their factors several of the bottom-up concerns that Mazmanian and Sabatier ignored. In particular, they argue that where administrative flexibility is needed in order for implementors to achieve policy objectives, the effectiveness of implementation might be directly proportional to the degree of decentralization. In
this case, complexity of joint action is a resource, generating "assistance structures", rather than a liability.

Robert Stoker responds more to Bardach than to Mazmanian and Sabatier. He agrees with Bardach that exchanges between actors cause policy to evolve during the implementation stage, and that a top-down approach of command and control can be used to constrain behaviour that deflects from the policy objectives. However, Stoker has a dramatically different view of the actions of actors. Rather than seeing them as self-interested, a view that suggests that individuals operate in a "moral vacuum", he recognizes that there is more at stake in policy implementation than the satisfaction of the participants in implementation. "In matters of policy, the welfare of others -- those who are the ostensible beneficiaries of the policy -- is, or ought to be, central" (Stoker 1991: 42). As such, conflict of interest is not something that is "politically illegitimate" that should be suppressed. Rather, Stoker views conflict of interest as arising out of a variety of legitimate and sincere approaches to an issue; different interests should be regarded an opportunity (ibid: 29). The proper response to conflict of interest is to seek cooperation rather than to seek to suppress one view in favour of another. Out of this assertion comes Stoker's view that implementation must not be judged based on how well it satisfies participants' interests. Rather, a good policy continually evolves based on the interaction between the public program and citizens.

Stoker identifies two parties involved in implementation in which he has a particular interest. It is the federal program sponsor who must convince an intermediary or "reluctant partner", (for instance, a state or province, or an agency that might have different objectives), to implement a program. Each party has the option either to cooperate or to defect. If both decide to defect, the result is policy stagnation. If the intermediary defects and the federal program sponsor cooperates, the program is co-opted by the intermediary. If the federal sponsor defects and the
intermediary cooperates the result is the compliance of the intermediary to federal imperatives. The ideal situation, mutual adaptation, results from the cooperation of both parties.

According to Stoker, formulators should strive to create a strategic and institutional context in which mutual adaptation can be achieved. In order to wish to cooperate, each party must prefer cooperation to defection, and there must be no benefit to a party in policy stagnation. Stoker asserts that implementation regimes can be designed so as to induce cooperation. An implementation regime is "an arrangement among implementation participants that identifies the values to be served during the implementation process and provides an organizational framework to promote these values" (ibid: 55). These regimes resolve a tension that he sees as implicit in the modern political system -- a tension between centralization and diffuse authority. Stoker identifies eight regime types, each of which embodies different values and thus generates a different type of policy.

The point of the regime framework is to demonstrate that cooperation can take many forms and that the central paradox of governance in a liberal, federal polity can be resolved. This paradox is that in order to achieve their objectives, governments must empower other agencies; however, once empowered these groups have the power to undermine the central government's initiatives. In structuring the the strategic and institutional context in which the policy is implemented, policy-makers can protect against this scenario by increasing the benefits of cooperation for the reluctant partner, and creating a set of rules or norms that governs the implementation process.

An insightful point that he makes, (neglected by previous research discussed), is that cooperation is most likely within the context of an ongoing relationship. When two parties have a history of cooperation, or when there is an expectation of future positive interaction, parties are less likely to defect than in the
absence of these circumstances. In the absence of such institutional context, several strategic tactics can induce cooperation. These include linking other issues of concern to a reluctant partner to the pressing issue; boosting the rewards of cooperation; dividing large, controversial programs into several smaller exchanges, making each more palatable; or using the commitment of one reluctant partner to influence the involvement of another. It is also important for the government to choose its implementation partners carefully, preferably involving itself with "participants whose interests reflect and reinforce the existing distribution of power" (ibid: 184).

In addition, a favourable institutional context can be created through attention to process, rules, standards of conduct, oversight of projects and information-sharing; through these mechanisms the behaviour of implementation partners can be controlled to a certain degree. "The regime may alter the costs of transactions, availability of information of level of uncertainty in the decision process; it may promote cooperation by making the relationship between participants more regular and predictable" (ibid: 55). The regime is thus a system of norms and values that governs the behaviour through incentives, (strategic context), and rules (institutional context).

In his work, Stoker does not attempt to develop a comprehensive theory of implementation. However, by seeking to determine how cooperation between the federal government and implementing agencies can be induced he develops and adds to Mazmanian and Sabatier's fourth variable concerning the ways in which the government can "maximize the probability that implementing officials will perform as desired". Stoker's "cooperation" focus is an important addition to the study of implementation, for it acknowledges the incentive structures acting upon agencies, as agencies, rather than as a collection of Bardach's self-interested individuals. It adds a new calculus: that of delayed reciprocity in policy decisions. Stoker's
understanding of established relationships between agencies helps to explain why agencies may cooperate even when the immediate costs of this decision are great. Similarly, Stoker's emphasis on standards of behaviour within the institutional context is important. Like partisanship, which was briefly discussed by Goggin et al., standards allow for predictable parameters of behaviour to emerge within which policy formulators can expect cooperation.

Stoker makes a strong case for the mingling of the realms of policy formulation and implementation, arguing that within the regime perspective, implementation is "part of the governing process and so is an arena in which policy must evolve to meet the legitimate concerns of participants" (ibid: 185). As such, he does not believe that improvements in policy design can altogether remove obstacles to implementation. Rather, some flexibility must be allowed within a broad implementation regime.

Policy Breeding Theory: Insights From Workfare Research

Finally, From Welfare To Work, an in-depth survey of the impacts of various U.S. "workfare" programs yields a framework to predict implementation outcomes that is more particular to social policy. In their summary of the findings of the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, Judith Gueron and Edward Pauly hypothesize that two sets of variables influence the likelihood of effective implementation of welfare-to-work programs.

First, a set of variables define "the external context in which the program intervention is implemented which determine[s] the underlying pattern of welfare dynamics" (Gueron and Pauly 1991: 60). These include the labour market conditions and area characteristics; characteristics of the welfare population; characteristics of the welfare program (that is, the way in which eligibility is determined and benefits allocated); and the other employment and training and support services that exist in
the community which could benefit the control group. These factors determine how susceptible welfare recipients will be to any program introduced to them, what incentives influence their behaviour, as well as how appropriate such programs are, given prevailing social and economic conditions in the region.

The second set of factors affecting implementation are those which define "the nature and strength of welfare-to-work interventions". These include the strength of a program's funding; the design and content of the program; the existence of other community employment and training services to which clients can be referred, thus increasing the size of the case-load that can be served; the existence of services, such as day care, in the community; the degree of mandatoriness of the program; case management and monitoring capacity; and the target population for the program.

The variables which Gueron and Pauly deem as important are those which deal with causal theory, that is, with assumptions about the source of the problem, and about how the target population, (both administrators and recipients), will respond to incentives within the policy. Extensive and accurate knowledge of the motivations and incentive structures of the lower-level players is therefore essential to the design of a successful policy. This factor is a key part of the bottom-up approach to implementation research. On the other hand, their concern with funding and the features of the program model reflects a top-down approach. Finally, they recognize that forces beyond the control of both the policy formulators and the target groups, such as labour market conditions and characteristics of the target population, can exert a powerful influence of implementation. A useful theory of implementation must respond to the particular insights gained through an extensive evaluation of a specific policy area. Although its conditions are too tied to a specific policy arena to be used as a comprehensive theory, Gueron and Pauly's work will help to complete Mazmanian and Sabatier's framework.
The Preferred Framework and Suggestions for Modification

Of the eight works, Mazmanian and Sabatier's study is most useful in its comprehensiveness, its simplicity and its breadth of coverage of all policy areas. Its three-part framework encompasses the concern for clarity in the statute, theoretical validity, and simplicity in organization introduced by Pressman and Wildavsky. In addition, it recognizes the importance of individual motivation, as Bardach and Stoker do. And, like Elmore and Lipsky, Mazmanian and Sabatier's theory leaves room for consideration of street-level players who influence the implementation process, although they do not give the attention to this perspective that Goggin et al. do. Finally, they include an entire category of variables which are absent from the analyses of the other authors. The issue of the tractability of the problem is barely touched upon by the other researchers with the exception of Gueron and Pauly. This is perhaps because it is beyond the control of those involved in the policy process, and therefore is not a problem that can be "solved" by the authors. Nevertheless, its relative absence as a set of predictive factors in the other works only yields inadequate portraits of the forces at work in the policy environment.

One factor not addressed by any of the authors is the importance of "learning" in policy-making. Although Mazmanian and Sabatier provide a "feedback loop" in their model, implying that policy-makers will change a policy when appropriate, in reality, such changes are extremely difficult to make formally, given the intense legislative activity which this would necessitate. A policy which is truly able to adapt is one in which the mechanisms for both learning which changes should be made, and then making the changes are included in the original policy design. In other words, a policy that has both a method of evaluation included in its design and the flexibility to allow periodic changes to its content is more likely to be adaptable and to respond to changing conditions or to past mistakes. Such a policy is more likely to meet with success than a policy without such attributes.
The application of Mazmanian and Sabatier's framework to Canada's policy environment requires that a few modifications be made to their conditions of effective implementation. In his paper "Public Policy Implementation: An Assessment of the Applicability to Canada of the Mazmanian-Sabatier Model" Stephen Phillips argues that the "comparative imperviousness of the Canadian state apparatus may offset to some degree the significance of such factors as the paucity of fixers in the implementation process and the lack of clearly stated statutory objectives and duties" (Phillips 1992: 13). Similarly, since outsiders have less access to participation in the process of policy implementation in Canada than in the United States, this variable can be eliminated from a Canadian framework. Finally, the relative autonomy of the provinces compared the states makes the federal task of achieving cooperation more difficult. This increases the relative importance of Mazmanian and Sabatier's variable concerned with "maximizing the probability that implementing officials will perform as desired" in cases requiring federal-provincial agreement.

A new framework, more appropriate to the Canadian environment and to social policy, adds two new categories of factors to Mazmanian and Sabatier's framework, eliminates one of their categories, splits their second category into two separate categories and changes slightly the content of other categories. A Canadian framework omits the importance of the access of supporters to the policy process, of the courts and of key legislators, and places political variables such as the support of constituency groups into Mazmanian and Sabatier's final category, "the relative priority of statutory objectives". In this category variables such as media support and conflicting policies would determine the place that the initiative would have on the government agenda and therefore the likelihood that its implementation would proceed with considerable support. To this category is also added Gueron's
"external" factors, including the characteristics of the target population and of the economic conditions prevailing in the region in which policy is implemented.

Three new perspectives complete a revised version of Mazmanian and Sabatier's framework. First, out of Robert Stoker's work, a history of cooperation or expectations of future cooperation, as well as favourable institutional context influence the probability that implementing officials will perform as desired. These variable are added to Mazmanian and Sabatier's fourth category concerned with fostering cooperation. Second, out of the work of the bottom-uppers, the variable "incentives for the target group to participate" is included in order for the theory to predict whether the legislation will be able to induce the target group to engage in the desired behaviour. This is separate from Mazmanian and Sabatier's category concerning "sufficient jurisdiction" which deals with organizational issues as opposed to how the needs of individuals are met by a policy. Also out of the work of Elmore and Lipsky, Mazmanian and Sabatier's category concerning the skill of the leaders of implementation is expanded to include the skills and attitudes of street-level workers. Finally, the framework includes a condition that the process of "learning" be facilitated by policy design. The revised framework reflects more completely the many forces involved in the implementation process than does Mazmanian and Sabatier's 1986 theory. The revisions and additions are in bold type:

1. The enabling legislation or other legal directive mandates policy objectives which are clear and consistent or at least provides substantive criteria for resolving goal conflicts.

2. The enabling legislation incorporates a sound theory identifying the principal factors and causal linkages affecting policy objectives.

3. The enabling legislation gives implementing officials sufficient jurisdiction over target groups and other points of leverage to attain, at least potentially, the desired goals.
4. The enabling legislation structures the implementation process so as to maximize the probability that implementing officials and target groups will perform as desired. This involves assignment to sympathetic agencies with adequate hierarchical integration, with a history of cooperation, or expectations of future cooperation, supportive decision rules, sufficient financial resources and adequate infrastructure.

5. The leaders and street-level workers of the implementing agency possess substantial managerial and political skill and are committed to statutory goals.

6. The relative priority of statutory objectives is not undermined over time by the emergence of conflicting public priorities, changes in constituency groups' support or by changes in the relative socio-economic conditions which weaken the statute's causal theory or political support. External conditions are conducive to the achievement of the policy's objectives.

7. The enabling legislation and the institutions and norms created by it provide the target group with sufficient incentives to engage in the desired behaviour, and remove any disincentives to target group compliance created by factors both "external" and political that define the experience of the target group.

8. The enabling legislation ensured that "learning" could take place and that the implementation process was flexible enough to incorporate past lessons.

Two decades after the Pressman and Wildavsky's study, implementation literature retains its earnest and yet detached character. There has emerged a greater sense of the process that follows policy formulation, as a complex whole involving many actors and socio-economic forces. Even the main division in the literature, between the top-down and the bottom-up approaches to implementation analysis, is disappearing as researchers forge a synthesis between the two by adopting elements from each type of framework in order to present a complete picture of the forces affecting public attempts to solve problems. The danger that these researchers face is in including too many variables; indeed, what is needed is not a descriptive study of implementation but a prescriptive theory -- one that can account for a broad range of policy consequences and can serve both policy-formulators and "street-level"
citizens to design and manage solutions that will be effective. Through the dialogue of a number of scholars such a theory begins to take shape.
Chapter Two

The Context of the Work/Welfare Problem

Implementation is the translation of a policy idea into results. Although theories and strategies abound, very few paper solutions manage to achieve their objectives in practice. Nowhere is this more evident than in the realm of social welfare policy, where for decades the "war on poverty" has been fought continuously with innovative attacks that have resulted in little more than superficial changes to the well-being of welfare recipients or to the financial burden of governments. These shallow forays into the deepening crisis of poverty have, if little else, yielded lessons about the complexity of the problem and have brought into focus the tangled web of influences acting upon low-income North Americans and upon the policy-makers trying to change the circumstances of the poor.

The implementation of a welfare initiative must be understood in terms of the context in which it occurs. As background to chapter three's case-study of a particular initiative to enhance the employability of welfare recipients in British Columbia, this chapter will outline the various contexts in which such a welfare-to-work initiative is implemented. Three contexts are particularly important. They each relate to the perspectives of one of the three key players in the social policy realm. First there is the context of public debate, relating to the balance of pervasive beliefs in society. Second is the context of the policy-makers, related to their need to achieve multiple, sometimes conflicting, objectives. A third context is that in which social assistance recipients operate, specifically related to their personal circumstances and to the incentive structures acting upon them through existing policies. Finally, the welfare-to-work issue must be seen as just one problem arising from the greater structural context of society that perpetuates conditions of poverty even for those working full-time in low-wage employment. This context is
too large, too entrenched and too expensive to change for the SAR Agreement to have any possibility of redefining it.

The interaction of the public, policy-maker's and social assistance recipient's context have led to numerous attempts to resolve the work/welfare dilemma. At the end of this chapter a brief overview of the past history of policy successes and failures in this field illuminates the issues with which policy-makers must inevitably wrestle, and foreshadows the examination of the B.C. initiatives in chapters 3 and 4.

*The Work/Welfare Debate: An Overview*

The social policy debate has always concerned the interaction of two groups within the population: those who earn an income and pay taxes which are transferred to others, and those who do not earn their income but receive transfers. The key difference between these two sets of players is the fact that for one group work is the norm, while for the other group it is not. Traditionally, such a split in roles was acceptable. The poor were considered to be "deserving", that is, comprised of widows, or handicapped individuals, who, through no choice of their own were incapable of supporting themselves. Over time, however, the characteristics of those on welfare have changed, and with them, the legitimacy of the notion of transfers without a reciprocal obligation from the recipient has been undermined.

Between 1980 and 1988 the percentage of the Canadian welfare case-load made up of "employable" individuals -- those under 65 years of age having neither physical impediments, nor sole responsibility for young children -- grew from 35 to 46 percent, even as unemployment fell throughout the 1980s (CLMPC 1990: 136). Increasingly, transfers were going from those who worked to those capable of working but who did not. As the case-load sizes grew so did the financial burden on taxpayers. Politicians began searching for ways to reduce the numbers of
"employables" on welfare; they soon found themselves embroiled in one of the most
tense debates in the domestic politics of Canada and the United States -- the
work/welfare dilemma. The controversy surrounds the new element that has been
added to the transfer bargain, that of reciprocal obligation. Employable social
assistance recipients are no longer regarded in some jurisdictions as being "entitled"
to benefits, without some effort on their part to move towards self-sufficiency.
Welfare-to-work programs are the vehicle that government has designed to facilitate
the fulfillment of reciprocal obligations, placing these programs in the eye of the
work/welfare storm.

Although the "welfare-to-work" program used to conjure up visions of
"workfare", (the tying of unpaid work to the receipt of welfare benefits), the phrase
has now come to be associated with any kind of work-related activity that makes a
social assistance recipient more job-ready. As such, job-search clubs, compulsory
education known as "learnfare", training, work experience and community work are
just a few examples of frequent attachments of work to welfare. Welfare-to-work
programs are variously voluntary or coercive depending on the features of policy
design. According to Patricia Evans, there are four elements of welfare-to-work
programs that determine the degree to which they impose an obligation on welfare
recipients. They can be summarized by the following four questions: Who is to be
targeted? What must they do? What is the extent of the monitoring? Are there
sanctions for non-compliance and will they be applied? (Evans 1993: 57). These
questions are central to the debate surrounding policy design, and are to be
answered in different ways, depending on which perspective one takes, whether
that of the public, the policy-makers, or the social assistance recipient.
Public Context: A Battle of Social Constructions and Ideologies

The facts of poverty are not hard to grapple with. That poverty has ill effects on the health and educational achievement of children is accepted. That poverty is common for certain groups -- for example, single parents throughout North America, and blacks and Hispanics in the United States -- is a matter of statistics. That social assistance benefit levels rarely lift recipients above the local poverty line is well-documented. Society agrees, in general, about the devastating effects of poverty on the individual and of welfare dependency on government's budget. However, in spite of this shared understanding of the effects of poverty there is much less consensus about its causes and therefore a tremendous debate over the appropriate policy initiatives to attack both dependence and poverty.

In the absence of a well-defined causal theory for poverty, support for various approaches to poverty-reduction and dependency-reduction are founded instead on the public's perception of the source of the problem. The public constructs their view of poverty issues based on their perceptions of the key players involved. In their work, Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram argue that target populations are either positively or negatively constructed. This social construction, as well as the strength of the group in terms of resources, determines the distribution of rewards and punishments that flows from governments to target groups (Schneider and Ingram 1993). The social construction also affects the types of policy tools that are perceived to be useful in influencing the behaviour of these socially constructed groups. Schneider and Ingram identify five different types of tools -- "authority", "incentive" and "capacity" tools which progressively replace control with opportunity in order to control behaviour; "symbolic and hortatory" tools which appeal to the target group's system of beliefs, and "learning" tools which allow for experimentation to determine the best policy approach to a problem (Schneider and Ingram 1990). Each of these tools has a place in welfare-to-work strategies.
The social construction of the poor in a particular policy environment has a significant effect on the choice of policy tools used to influence their behaviour. For instance, in the United States the poor are negatively constructed as inner-city black unwed mothers with no political resources. As a result they receive disproportionate punishment through tools of the "authority" type.

Part of the social construction of these groups is that they respond mainly to punishment....Persons in powerful groups are constructed as intelligent and able to make good choices. Powerless groups are not usually constructed this way but are viewed as needing direction (Schneider and Ingram: 1993: 340).

In Canada, by contrast, the poor population is not trapped in a stereotype to the same extent that American welfare recipients are. Canada's poor population is perceived as spanning all races, ages, regions and family types and both sexes. As a result, welfare recipients are constructed less negatively in Canada than in the United States, although they have traditionally been viewed as weak, politically. The result of a weak and relatively positive construction have for years been"Symbolic policies [that] permit elected officials to show great concern but relieve the need to allocate resources" (ibid: 338). As such, before the mid-1980s, policies emphasized financial and service incentives. However, they were often so poorly funded that they are of little value.

As the percentage of employables in the welfare case-load soared throughout the 1980s, the political imperative to reverse this trend grew and consequently the poor, by their sheer numbers, had a greater potential to cause political upheaval. The political strength of the poor, as a target group for policy, increased. Symbolic policies targeted at the poor would no longer pacify the public in their demands for either anti-dependence or anti-poverty measures. The government began to search for tools to direct at a stronger, slightly positively constructed target group in order
to change their behaviour. By mid-1980s, effective incentive and capacity tools were sought to address the work/welfare dilemma.

Policy tools are implemented within the context of broad public ideologies which interact with the social constructions described by Schneider and Ingram. Ideology both conditions, and is fashioned by, prevailing perceptions about groups in society. Several different ideologies prevail today in Canada and the United States. In "The Family Support Act of 1988: Federalism, Developmental Policy, and Welfare Reform", Mark Rom takes as his starting point the redistributive-developmental split in governments' orientation towards welfare:

Developmental policies attempt to enhance the economic competitiveness of a political jurisdiction, while redistributive policies focus government spending on some specific, typically needy, group. Redistributive policy takes from some and gives to others, while in developmental policy, those who pay the costs reap the benefits (Rom 1989: 61).

When the need for reciprocal obligation between government and welfare recipients was introduced in Canada, the country's long-time focus on redistributive policy was overshadowed by an emerging developmental emphasis.

Two notions of developmentalism now serve as the poles between which welfare-to-work initiatives are pulled in the work/welfare debates. Developmental policy is any government initiative which "emancipates recipients from the welfare rolls and brings them into the productive workfare so that they pay taxes, rather than receive tax dollars" (ibid: 62). However, developmentalism has a very different look depending on whether it is in the hands of conservatives or liberals. Developmental strategies are not merely administrative frameworks. They are complete philosophies about human nature and motivation.

Conservative developmentalists believe that individuals will not work unless they are forced to, and that the best strategy for reducing welfare dependence is to remove any benefits that the government provides, thus forcing individuals to
provide for themselves, or starve (ibid: 63). With such incentives, conservative
developmentalists claim, individuals will become self-sufficient, will have an
increased sense of dignity which arises from conforming to the Protestant Work
Ethic. In the long term, conservative developmentalists argue, reduced welfare
dependency will lead to reduced poverty since individuals will learn to hold even
low-wage, low-skill jobs whose wages exceed welfare benefits in most states (Morris
and Williamson 1987: 950). The flaw in this argument is that conservative
developmentalists do not take into account the value of non-cash benefits, such as
subsidized housing and medicaid, that social assistance recipients lose when they
leave welfare for low-wage employment, which is often without benefits. Such a
transition to work may in fact make recipients poorer.

Beyond the financial arguments, conservatives' concerns are ideological.
Mickey Kaus, in his controversial 1986 article "The Work Ethic State" claims that:

The long run savings, of course, would be huge if the welfare culture
were absorbed into the working, taxpaying culture. In the short run,
however, welfare savings would be less....The point isn't to save
money. The point is to enforce the work ethic (33).

Through the enforcement of the work ethic they envision that other social problems,
such as high illegitimacy rates among welfare mothers, will fade away.

On the other hand, liberal developmentalists promote anti-poverty measures
ahead of those emphasizing reduced dependence on welfare. They believe that
individuals want to work and that they merely face barriers, imposed by the
conditions of their poverty, to gaining and maintaining employment. Liberal
developmentalists "believe that providing incentives to welfare recipients is the best
policy, at least in the long run, to get people off welfare, save the government
money, and promote economic growth" (Rom 1989: 63). They are advocates of
generous education and training programs and of the provision of incentives to
work within the welfare benefit structure. They believe that it is society's
responsibility to build human capacity, and that reducing benefit levels without providing meaningful opportunities for individuals adequately to support themselves can only reduce human capacity and drive welfare recipients deeper into poverty, both economic and personal.

The two disparate ideologies have one area of agreement. In both strategies work and training opportunities can play a significant role in achieving the strategies' objectives. For both liberal and conservative developmentalists, work is the preferred state of affairs for individuals. Conservatives champion the reinforcement that work brings to the values of individualism and autonomy, whereas liberals prefer work for its power to integrate individuals into the community, to reduce stigmatization and to provide dignity. However, the content of these welfare-to-work initiatives, and degree to which work should be tied to welfare are tricky matters over which the two groups clash.

Conservatives and liberals disagree about which welfare-to-work activities are valuable. While liberals support initiatives to increase the capacity of individuals, through education, training experiences and job-preparedness classes, they adamantly oppose workfare of the "make-work" variety, in which the job provides the recipient with no useable skills and no sense of accomplishment. Conservatives, on the other hand, believe that it is the act of working itself, regardless of the quality of the work, that is important. Similarly, conservative and liberal developmentalists have very different views of the value of coercion. Each group favours certain policy tools based on their social construction of the poor. Conservatives favour "authority" tools to influence the poor to leave welfare. Such strategies include limiting eligibility for benefits, tying benefits to work, reducing benefit levels to force social assistance recipients to work and enforcing a penalty for non-compliance. Liberals tend to favour "incentive" and "capacity" tools. Incentive tools increase the financial incentives for social assistance recipients to work by
allowing them to keep more of their earnings, for example. Capacity tools are developed out of a recognition that welfare recipients face many severe obstacles to employment; they attempt to help them to overcome these obstacles through such programs as training and education, as well as day care and transitional supports. These programs serve to "encourage" welfare recipients to work through extending help without touching benefit levels.

In Canada, compulsion to do work in exchange for welfare benefits is illegal. The *Canada Assistance Plan* (CAP), the nation's principal welfare legislation, shares the cost of social assistance with the provinces provided that eligibility is based on need alone, and that "no person shall be denied assistance because he refuses or has refused to take part in a work activity project" (*Canada Assistance Plan*, article 15-3a). However, while unpaid work for welfare benefits is illegal, "CAP does not object to a requirement for work-seeking activities as a part of a process of determining need: a refusal to seek work may be taken as evidence that there is in fact no need" (ibid: 121). Canada's policy is thus a mixture of encouragement and with a small amount of coercion. The federal government's strict prohibition against funding "workfare" initiatives has kept policy-makers focused on creating incentive and capacity-building tools, responding to, and reinforcing the liberal developmentalist ideology in the country.

*The Policy-makers' Context: Political Constraints and Conflicting Goals*

Policy-makers are influenced by the ideology which is pervasive in their party, agency, or constituency. However, they are influenced even more strongly by a context which is particular to their roles as policy-makers, as those who define the problem to be solved and attempt to solve it by defining and pursuing goals. Deborah Stone argues that problem-definition, that which helps to create the particular context in which the policy-maker works, is an intensely political process:
In the polis...problem definition is never simply a matter of defining goals and measuring our distance from them. It is rather the strategic representation of situations. Problem definition is a matter of representation because there is no objective description of a situation; there can only be portrayals of people's experiences and interpretations. Problem definition is strategic because groups, individuals, and government agencies deliberately and consciously design portrayals so as to promote their favoured course of action (Stone 1988: 106).

Problem definition creates the context in which a policy maker functions. In the work/welfare debate, problem definition often flows from ideological orientation, but this is not always the case. Although liberals tend to define the work/welfare problem as one of poverty and structural barriers to employment, as policy-makers seeking re-election or promotion they must also be concerned with lessening government's burden through a reduction of dependence. In addition, through the legitimating power of work, they seek to improve popular support for welfare by ensuring the worthiness of the clientele (Evans 1992: 58). Conservatives see the problem more as one of excessive dependence on welfare, fiscal strain, and a poor work ethic in the target group. However, at the same time most moderate conservatives recognize the need for the government to finance welfare-to-work activities and transitional supports, involving an increase in spending, in order to achieve their goal of dependence reduction. Both conservatives and liberals share the goals of increasing overall employment, and of increasing the dignity of welfare recipients by bringing them into the mainstream (ibid).

The main split in goals, between dependence-reduction and poverty-reduction, results from different definitions of the work/welfare problem. This split is particularly troubling for policy-makers. Since most initiatives require broad support in order to be implemented, a welfare-to-work program must satisfy the goals of as many of the major players is possible. The goals of dependence-reduction and poverty-reduction are difficult to satisfy simultaneously and often
appear to stand in conflict with one another. For example, to reduce poverty in the short-term means to increase the benefits of training for social assistance recipients. Increased benefits reduce the incentives of social assistance recipients to leave welfare, since the rewards of work become less appealing. Similarly, generous benefits might attract the working poor to leave work for welfare. Anti-poverty measures thus could have the effect of increasing dependence (Weaver 1994: 19). On the other hand, measures to reduce dependence are those which decrease the rewards of welfare relative to work. These measures generally take the form of reduced benefits, deepening the poverty of the welfare recipient.

Dependence-reduction and poverty-reduction can be reconciled simultaneously in the long-term. Conservative developmentalists argue that if individuals are forced off of the welfare rolls they will become self-sufficient; as individuals become more disciplined and hard working they will lift themselves out of poverty. Liberal developmentalists, on a similar note of optimism, claim that if the government reduces the poverty of individuals it will remove many of the barriers to employment that these individuals face. As these people's life circumstances improve they will be better able to enter the workforce and to maintain employment. They will experience an increase in earnings which will decrease their dependence on welfare.

The main problem with pursuing either of these courses in view of the positive long-term results is the short-term consequences. The liberal developmentalist course would be enormously expensive. The conservative developmentalist strategy would deprive Canadians of any safety net and would leave the fate of the poor to the whim of charity. Neither option is politically feasible. As a result, policy-makers must attempt, as best they can, to reconcile two competing objectives, aware all the while that in the short-term one objective can generally only be achieved by sacrificing the other.
In addition, policy-makers cannot afford to wait for long-term successes. Policy-makers depend on others recognizing their achievements in order to secure their chance for re-election, for retaining their jobs, or for promotion. In general they do not have the job-security to wait for long-term results. They are under tremendous pressure to demonstrate early that their policies are effective. The negative consequence of this reality in the welfare-to-work field is that it can lead to pressures to "cream", that is, to spend resources on those who would be most likely to succeed on their own, in order to generate favourable statistics and thus keep program support high. A program in which creaming is taking place is unlikely to reach the target population that most needs the help it provides. That policy-makers must pursue short-term achievements limits their ability to develop effective welfare-to-work programs.

Finally, and most important to understanding their particular context, is the recognition that policy-makers are limited in terms of how they can define the work/welfare problem. They must attempt to keep the problem distinct from other problems which are beyond their jurisdiction, or their means, to influence. To be more specific, one promising way in which to reduce both poverty and dependence simultaneously is to define the work/welfare problem as "the inadequate conditions and rewards of low-wage work". In 1986, a welfare recipient with dependents would have had to earned an income of $8.00/hr, far above the provincial minimum wage, in order to be better off working than on welfare (Evans 1988: 132). This creates a "perverse incentive" for individuals to choose welfare over work (Weaver 1994: 19).

There is an invisible wall that welfare reform scales but is wary of surmounting. This wall, well-recognized by those policy-makers familiar with the way incentives within the welfare system influence behaviour, is the current state of low-paid work in Canada. The conditions of work include a low minimum wage,
few benefits provided to workers in the labour force and discrimination faced by many workers for reasons of gender, race, or physical disability. What is necessary in order to remove the perverse incentives of welfare is a complete reconstruction of the wall -- entailing a higher minimum wage, subsidized child care, health care and housing for the working poor and legislation that ensures pay equity for all workers - a far too expensive proposition for either Canadian or American governments to consider. So long as this is true, welfare reform will always have boundaries.

The social assistance recipients' context: the pushes and pulls of welfare rules

Welfare is more than a cash-transfer. It is a complete network with the potential to govern an individual's behaviour through the incentives that it provides. It is the "safety net" of last resort, meaning that it provides income to those who have exhausted all of the accepted means of supporting themselves. The primary feature of the system is therefore income. It is assumed that it is to individuals' benefit to have the greatest income possible and that individuals will respond to incentives in the welfare system which allow them to be financially better-off. The typical North American welfare system is made up of several components that influence the amount of income that individuals receive, as well as what the source of this income is, whether transfers or work. Governments manipulate these components in their attempts to influence the behaviour of social assistance recipients, through changing their incentives.

First, government decides who will be eligible for welfare based on the level of their assets. For example, in British Columbia, single individuals are not be eligible for welfare if their assets exceed $2500, and families are ineligible if their assets exceed $5000 plus $500 per dependent (G.A.I.N. Regulations 1993). Governments also determine whether or not welfare recipients will be expected to work. "Employables" are separated from "unemployable" persons. Unemployable
individuals in British Columbia are those over 65 years of age, individuals with a mental or physical infirmity that renders them incapable of accepting employment, and women who bear sole responsibility for young children. Those who are deemed "employable" generally receive lower welfare payments than "unemployables" and are subject to work-seeking requirements in British Columbia, meaning that if they fail to demonstrate that they are making "reasonable efforts to secure employment" their benefit level or eligibility might be affected (G.A.I.N. Act Section 18.4). This is a policy tool in the "restrictive" vein.

Manipulating this last element involves a particular moral dilemma. First, in determining eligibility, policy-makers are passing judgement on the worthiness of each individual to receive support. Handler and Hasenfeld write "The fundamental distinction between the deserving poor and the undeserving poor is whether a category is morally excused from work" (1991: 229). While the distinction is relatively simple when applied to persons with severe physical or mental disabilities, it becomes controversial when applied to single mothers, for example, who until recently have been regarded as worthy of society's support due to their role of raising children. As more women have entered the labour force it has become less clear why the state should continue to support some mothers and not others. As single mothers increasingly are regarded as undeserving they will be categorized as "employables" and thus find their benefits reduced in many cases, and the pressure on them to work, increased.

If a work requirement requires work experience, training or placement, an intervening force acting upon welfare recipients is the availability of such positions. The adequacy of the position, in terms of providing financial and in-kind benefits, influences the participants' willingness to comply with the requirement, as does the degree of monitoring and the likelihood and magnitude of the sanction for failing to participate.
Another common reform to encourage welfare recipients to work is to alter the rewards of work. This "incentive" strategy has three parts. First, an Earnings Exemption designates a fixed amount of earnings from work that a welfare recipient is allowed to keep. For example, previous to March 1992 British Columbia allowed single social assistance recipients to keep $50 of their earnings per month, whereas a family could keep $100. In 1992 these exemptions were doubled (Bailey 1994: 2). The more income from work that welfare recipients are allowed to keep without a reduction in their benefit levels, the more likely they will be to work. Second, the lower the tax-back rate, that is, the amount that the government takes of the income that social assistance recipients earn in excess of the flat rate, the more likely the individual will be to work. In 1986 British Columbia reduced its tax-back rate from 100% to 75%, meaning that instead of losing one dollar in benefits for every dollar earned through working, welfare recipients now can keep 25 cents out of every dollar earned above the flat-rate exemption. This is called the "enhanced" earning exemption. A third component in the financial strategy is the waiting period before these exemptions are applied. The shorter the waiting period, the more likely the social assistance recipient will be to work. In 1986 British Columbia reduced its waiting period from eight months to three, encouraging welfare recipients to work sooner. These three elements are continually manipulated by government in order to tempt welfare recipients to enter the workforce or to increase their hours of work.

Beyond cash transfers, the social assistance system also provides a variety of in-kind transfers, which vary from one jurisdiction to another but often include subsidized day care, medical and dental coverage, transportation and clothing allowances, and moving allowances. These transfers have no cash value but increase the well-being of welfare recipients. In-kind transfers provide a major disincentive to individuals considering leaving welfare to take a job since most low-paying, temporary or part-time jobs do not provide such benefits, thus transferring a
considerable and usually unmanageable expense to the income assistance recipient. This is especially the case for single parents whose day care expenses would likely consume more than the increased income that they would receive from working. In many jurisdictions, including British Columbia, policy-makers have tried to erase this disincentive by providing these services during the first year of transition into work. However, this reform merely delays inevitable costs for welfare recipients and thus does not change the work-or-welfare calculus for most recipients. A true "capacity" strategy with a real likelihood of success would ensure that essential services would be guaranteed in low-paying jobs.

A final force influencing individuals' decision to participate in a work-related activity is the capacity of the individuals themselves. For example, if some individuals lacks basic literacy skills, work skills, social skills, or even the confidence to meet with an employer or trainer, the incentives in the system will be meaningless with respect to whether welfare recipients are capable of executing the activities required of them in a job.

This last factor that has been receiving increasing attention in both Canada and the United States. As such, "workfare" has taken on its broader meaning as any activity that prepares a welfare recipient for work. Canadian provinces and American states have been experimenting with a variety of "capacity"-building approaches -- beyond their conventional authority and incentive strategies. These include training, education, and work experiences, designed to provide the welfare recipient with both the skills and the confidence to become self-sufficient, without threatening welfare benefits. These strategies are becoming commonplace in most welfare-to-work designs.
Welfare-to-Work Experiments: Modest Successes and Inevitable Trade-offs

Every jurisdiction with a welfare system has as part of its design a strategy to help recipients to leave the welfare rolls. A major component of these strategies are work-related activities, whether mandatory or voluntary, costly or inexpensive, targeted or broad-coverage. Relatively little is known about the design and effectiveness of Canadian programs. However, in the United States, work and training programs have been the subject of extensive study. Since the American experience can serve as a model for Canadian experiments, the American findings concerning the successes and failures of work and training programs provide a useful background for a study of the fate of Canadian implementation of such programs.

The most extensive American studies to date were conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) whose findings from its "multi-state field research project of State Work/Welfare Initiatives", are summarized by its president, Judith Gueron, along with its Senior Research Associate, Edward Pauly, in the book From Welfare to Work. The authors are generally positive yet modest in their assessment of the accomplishments of work/welfare initiatives in the 1980s, noting that there is a great variety in the design of programs, in the local context in which they are implemented and in their range of impacts. However, they are able to draw several overarching lessons from the experiences of the 1980s.

Gueron and Pauly reach a number of conclusions based on their evaluation of a large number of American welfare-to-work programs. They conclude that welfare/work programs, if adequately funded, are capable of reaching a large number of welfare recipients, and that participation rates are generally high in broad-coverage programs. Many programs result in both employment and earnings increases for social assistance recipients, the latter through increased hours,
rather than increased wages. Voluntary, selective, higher-cost programs do occasionally allow recipients to secure better jobs with higher pay. Those who are moderately disadvantaged experience the largest increase in earnings. However, the largest savings to government result from the increased work effort of the most severely disadvantaged recipients. There was no significant earnings or welfare savings impact produced by those who are most job-ready. Government's savings generally exceed their expenditures over the long-term, with public investment usually returned within five years, in terms of increased tax revenue and a reduction in welfare transfers. Finally, the researchers confirmed that the multiple goals of welfare-to-work programs -- providing earnings gains for participants, creating welfare savings for government, and reducing long-term dependence of welfare -- can often not be achieved simultaneously within a single program and therefore constitute a trade-off.

A continuous stream of innovative programs is being developed in both Canada and the United States in an attempt to arrive at the best mix of authority, incentive and capacity tools to influence social assistance recipients to leave the welfare rolls for work. Despite the considerable theoretical debate pervading Canadian literature on the place of work in welfare reform, there is actually very little empirical research of the type done in the United States to determine the success of the developmental strategy as it continues to evolve in its Canadian context. In the next chapter, the case of British Columbia's welfare-to-work programs will be examined, both to explore the transformation of the developmental ideal of the attachment of work to welfare in a nation in which the notion of entitlement still lingers, and to test several hypotheses about implementation in the Canadian policy environment.
Chapter Three

A Modest Success Story: The Canada/B.C. SAR Agreement

In both Canada and the United States the developmental strategy for welfare policy, both liberal and conservative, is being realized as welfare-to-work initiatives become central to federal and regional agendas. At the same time, the philosophical difference between the two countries is reflected in the tone of the programs. For the most part, welfare-to-work programs are voluntary in Canada, where work programs are sold as "opportunities" which should have no bearing on entitlement. In the United States, states frequently implement mandatory programs in which the recipients' "responsibility" to participate is tied to their entitlement to social assistance benefits. Nevertheless, three values ever-present in modern welfare debates, are paramount in two countries' growing reliance on welfare-to-work initiatives. They are outlined by Golding and Middleton in their description of the imagery of welfare:

Three key ideas formed the tripod on which public understanding of poverty and welfare rested. These were...the efficiency of the labour market and the economy; the morality of the work ethic and self sufficiency; and the pathology of individual inadequacy as the cause of poverty (Golding and Middleton 1982: 478).

Although the majority of Canadians cite "circumstances" as the primary cause of poverty, as opposed to the majority of Americans who cite "lack of effort" on the part of the poor, the tripod of values outlined by Golding and Middleton have a clear place in the Canadian welfare state's emerging liberal developmentalist ideology (Lightman 1991a: 13).

This chapter will address the ways in which these values have been expressed and modified in Canada's recent, and most ambitious welfare-to-work initiative, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Agreement to Enhance the Employability of Social Assistance
Recipients (The SAR Agreement). The context from which this initiative emerged, the design and implementation of the programs that flowed from the agreement, and their impact, all reflect the growing emphasis on developmental values over the strictly entitlement-based approach. In addition to providing an overview of the initiative at a national level, this chapter will focus on the implementation of the agreement in British Columbia -- the first jurisdiction to sign the accord -- to determine the factors relevant to the success of the program, and to the significant components of the design and policy climate which limit the effectiveness of the initiative.

The Roots of Reform

The need for measures to improve the employability of welfare recipients in Canada arose out of a convergence of economic factors in the early 1980s. Severe economic recession in 1982, rapidly changing labour market needs, soaring unemployment rates, and growing welfare case-loads warned the government of a need for dramatic reorientation of its labour market policy. As the recession eased, a period of "jobless" recovery failed to bring many of those who had lost their jobs back into the marketplace. Even as unemployment levels dropped, the percentage of "employable" individuals on welfare grew, demonstrating that measures beyond the cycling of the economy were necessary to reduce the dependence of "employable" individuals on social assistance.

The strategy adopted by the Conservative government to deal with the changing labour market was an example of what Mike Prince and James Rice have termed "supply side social policy". Rather than involving itself in creating a demand for jobs, the government's gamble in 1985 was that by increasing the quality of workers themselves the labour market would then be able to absorb these workers and meet the growing need for a skilled labour force in Canada. As opposed to
continuing the patchwork of job creation and training programs which had existed in the past, described by the Neilson Task Force as having "often been of the make-work nature and [having] been insufficiently coordinated with the private sector and the provinces" (1985: 19), the government sought a comprehensive strategy in which the variety of needs of workers, business and the regions could be both recognized and met.

Prince and Rice explain that the Mulroney government's strategy was a reflection of its four major priorities of national reconciliation, economic renewal, social justice and constructive internationalism. The Canadian Jobs Strategy, announced in June of 1985, reflected Mulroney's concern for national reconciliation in its emphasis on federal-provincial cooperation and respect for national diversity of needs. The second theme, economic renewal, could be seen in the government's emphasis on job creation in the private sector and its support for competition and entrepreneurship. Third, the social justice priority was reflected in the government's recognition that certain groups of the unemployed faced larger than average barriers to employment that had to be addressed through participation targets. Finally, the government was aware of the need for job creation and security in the face of international trade liberalization. The Canadian Jobs Strategy was seen as effective planning in the face of increased potential economic instability. (Prince and Rice 1988?: 249-50).

The Canadian Jobs Strategy (CJS) was heralded as a flexible, coordinated, regionally responsive strategy of programs that were simple to understand and fair to all groups. It consists of six programs, each targeting a different labour market need. Three had the potential to affect social assistance recipients. First, Job Entry/Re-entry is targeted at women and youth and is designed to help those who had been out of the workforce for a considerable period of time (3 years for women), or who had not worked before. It consists of classroom pre-employment
preparation as well as life-skills training and work experience. Second, Job Development, the most heavily funded of the CJS programs, frequently provides a subsidy or financial contribution to an employer or training host to provide a combination of training and work experience either on-site or off-site for the long-term unemployed. Third, Innovations is a program designed to finance creative pilot projects, designed to alleviate labour-market problems. In the first two of the CJS programs, the government set participation targets for women, the disabled, aboriginal peoples and visible minorities -- groups who are traditionally disadvantaged in the economy.

One group of employment disadvantaged citizens who were not included formally in the original CJS targets were social assistance recipients. Although "employable" social assistance recipients made up 30 percent of Canada's unemployed population (Health and Welfare Canada 1985), their particular training needs were not addressed in the CJS strategy. To ignore social assistance recipients as a distinct disadvantaged population is to fail to address the particular social and economic barriers which stand in the way of a considerable segment of society's reintegration into the mainstream. Without government intervention to remove these barriers "an ever-increasing number of individuals and families will become trapped in a costly, long-term cycle of poverty and welfare dependency" (Prince 1989: 5).

In order to ensure that social assistance recipients would not be denied the benefits of CJS, the federal and provincial ministers of social services met in April 1985 in Ottawa to discuss a strategy for improving the self-sufficiency of social assistance recipients. Each jurisdiction came to the table with its own history of training and employment services for social assistance recipients, which ranged from well-developed programs in Saskatchewan to the very few bare-bones and poorly funded programs of British Columbia (SP Research Associates 1988: 23). At
this meeting the ministers agreed to develop proposals to increase the coordination of the training efforts of various levels and departments of government and to develop creative funding mechanisms to increase the effectiveness of employment enhancement efforts nation-wide. In September of 1985 they met again and approved the *Minister's Agreement to Enhance the Employability of Social Assistance Recipients*. In subsequent months each province and the Northwest Territories negotiated its own Letter of Understanding with the Federal government in order to make the agreement appropriate to its particular regional context.

The Agreement

The SAR Agreement is essentially a framework whose content is fleshed out in the provincial Letters of Understanding. Nevertheless, the original agreement between National Health and Welfare, Employment and Immigration Canada and the provincial departments of social services and of labour, sets out as its general goal "to maximize the use of the Canadian Jobs Strategy, corresponding provincial training and employment programs, social services programs and the Canada Assistance Plan to help income assistance recipients to obtain and maintain employment" (Canada/B.C. SAR Agreement 1986). The agreement outlines seven points to the governments' new strategy to assist social assistance recipients to become self-sufficient:

1. Negotiate for each province and territory participation targets for social assistance recipients in the Canadian Jobs Strategy; these targets to become effective from April 1, 1986.

2. Make immediate changes to the Guidelines of the Canada Assistance Plan to encourage greater participation of social assistance recipients in training programs and employment; the impact of this initiative to be reviewed in three years.

3. Use a portion of the Innovations Program of the Canadian Jobs Strategy to support innovative initiatives for enhancing the employability of social assistance
recipients, with federal and provincial officials to prepare a specific set of proposals by the end of 1985, for review by the National Innovations Advisory Committee.

4. Initiate federal/provincial/territorial employment and training pilot projects under the Canada Assistance Plan. These projects will be designed to determine the effectiveness of experimental approaches to promoting self-sufficiency among social assistance recipients. Criteria for such projects will be developed by December 31, 1985.

5. In addition to item 1 above, expand opportunities for social assistance recipients to participate in training and employment by permitting provinces, who wish to do so, to refer social assistance recipients to Canadian Jobs Strategy programs or similar provincial programs, and also to transfer to those programs those funds that the province would have spent on social assistance payments to those programs. The federal government will then transfer an equal amount of money, which would have been paid under the Canada Assistance Plan as the federal share of the social assistance payment, to the programs involved.

The design, eligibility criteria, administrative requirements and evaluation methodology relating to these new arrangements will be developed by November 30, 1985, and the impact of this initiative will be reviewed in three years.

6. Cooperate in gathering the information needed to assess the benefits and costs of the program to enhance the employability of social assistance recipient; particularly those described in items 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this agreement.

7. Maintain the "four-cornered" collaboration among National Health and Welfare, Employment and Immigration Canada and provincial department with social services and labour market responsibilities in the implementation of the present agreement.

(Ministers' SAR Agreement, September 1985)

Two features of the SAR Agreement were particularly innovative. The first was the "four cornered" collaboration between the various ministries at two different levels of government. Departments which formerly had neither the information about, nor the interest in, the activities of other department came, through the agreement, to cooperate to establish a more effective array of programs which avoided unnecessary duplication or gaps in programming. Because of this renewed
federal-provincial cooperation, the agreement is often simply referred to as the "Four Cornered Agreement".

The second innovation was the particular funding mechanism for the employability initiatives. Due to the climate of fiscal restraint as Canada came out of the recession, there were few new funds to allocate to welfare-to-work programs. As such, governments were forced to make use of existing resources, but were encouraged to use them in more creative ways. At the same time, the governments agreed that neither the federal nor the provincial governments were allowed to reduce their efforts as a result of the increased efforts of the other party. The funding solution developed in SAR Agreement has become known as the Employability or Diversionary Fund. It allowed money which is normally spent on income assistance, through the Canada Assistance Plan and the provincial welfare legislation, to be spent instead on allowances and wages for training.

The Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) is the mechanism by which the federal and provincial governments share the cost of welfare. Welfare is administered provincially. The federal government matches dollar-for-dollar the funds that the province spends on income assistance and social services. (Recently three provinces, including B.C., have been denied full cost matching under a "cap" on CAP funds). The Canada Assistance Plan regulations had prohibited National Health and Welfare from sharing with the provinces the cost of wages for welfare recipients or subsidies for training. The 1986 SAR Agreement, as a temporary agreement that did not require a permanent change to CAP regulations, led to the extension of cost-sharing to welfare-to-work programs.

At the same time, the SAR Agreement attempted to protect social assistance recipients who chose to train from being worse-off financially as a result. It led to the extension of earnings exemptions under CAP to cover training allowances and income earned in these programs. It also led to the retention of non-cash benefits for
those who train during the first year that the trainee leaves social assistance

Through the Ministers' creative initiative, CAP became a vehicle more conducive to
the promotion of employability for welfare recipients.

Overall, $600 million dollars of income assistance funds over three years
became available to finance new federal and provincial training initiatives for social
assistance recipients in Canada. In addition to these initiatives, targets set for the
participation of social assistance recipients in CJS programs ensured that they
would not be shut out of mainstream training programs. In 1986, social assistance
recipients, a group that had been virtually invisible in training agendas, suddenly
was presented with what seemed in contrast to be a deluge of opportunities.

Like the Canadian Job Strategy, the national SAR Agreement, from which the
provincial Letters of Understanding emerged, embodies the principles of the welfare
state outlined by Golding and Middleton. First, it emphasizes the efficiency of the
labour market in its assumption that once individuals are properly trained, the
labour market will absorb these workers. Second, in Minister of Employment and
Immigration Flora MacDonald's address at the September meeting, she reinforced
Golding and Middleton's principle of the morality of the work effort by saying that
"not only are these problems [of high welfare case-loads] placing a heavy burden on
provincial and federal treasuries, they are also depriving individuals concerned of
the opportunity to achieve self-fulfillment through satisfying and productive work"
(Ottawa, Sept. 17, 1985). Finally, the nature of most of the programs initiated by the
SAR Agreement is to compensate for "individual inadequacy" — to make up for
deficits in their education and work-skills, rather than to combat structural factors
that might reduce their incentive to leave social assistance, such as low minimum
wage or a shortage of jobs.

In addition, the agreement embodies many principles reflecting the particular
needs of its target group. These include the recognition of the primary influence of
economic factors, such as earnings exemptions and in-kind benefits, on social assistance recipients' decisions to participate in welfare-to-work activities. Also, the agreement recognizes the importance of individual choice by mandating that programs be voluntary in accordance with CAP guidelines, and that programs be flexible, reflecting the diverse needs of social assistance recipients, businesses and regions. In this way, the Canadian welfare-to-work initiatives which were born in September of 1985 recognize the importance of circumstances in the phenomenon of poverty and seek client-sensitive ways to alleviate both dependency and poverty.

**British Columbia Implements the Agreement**

After the ministers consented to the agreement, the next crucial stage in the implementation of the principles was for the federal government to enter into negotiations with the provinces and territories to produce a more detailed Letter of Understanding which would provide the authority for employment enhancement initiatives in each province. There were several issues which had not raised any eyebrows in the initial agreement, but which at the negotiation stage were the subject of considerable debate and hindered smooth and rapid implementation of the agreement. These issues were identified and explored by SP Associates in its 1988 study of the first years of the Employment Enhancement Agreement. First, many of the features of the Agreement, especially that of fund diversion, were new to the provinces and so took a good deal of "selling" to be accepted. Second, the training arena was one of considerable tension in several jurisdictions, in which the social service and labour departments each wanted primary control over the initiative, and in which provincial authorities were unwilling to see their Income Assistance funds diverted to the federal Canadian Jobs Strategy programs.

A third, extremely controversial issue concerned the distribution of diverted money between federal and provincial programs. What was at issue was which
government's programs should have precedence in the province. The resolution to this debate in many provinces, including British Columbia came in the form of "cost-matching", in which each level of government diverts the same amount of income assistance funds to its own programs. The danger of "cost-matching" is that the cooperation championed by the original agreement is weakened since each level of government appears to be running its own programs with its own money, rather than seeking to share the costs of particular programs (SP Associates 1988).

While British Columbia was the second province to begin discussions to develop the province's Letter of Understanding, it was the first province to sign. It moved rapidly ahead to implement its programs while other regions were still negotiating the terms of their agreement.

British Columbia's experience with employment and training for welfare recipients was limited prior to the signing of its Letter of Understanding on May 29, 1986. The province has a long history of tying strict and punitive requirements for participation in work activities to welfare eligibility (Callahan et al 1990). Although never mandating that work be performed in exchange for welfare benefits, British Columbia has an increasingly stringent eligibility policy in which work-seeking activities and availability for and acceptance of a job are conditions upon which eligibility is maintained (GAIN Regulations, Section 3.0-9). It has continued to expand eligibility for welfare-to-work activities over time by adding new categories of individuals who are considered to be "employable" — a title which allows the province to reduce welfare benefits and to compel social assistance recipients to seek work. GAIN regulations allow this work-seeking requirement to be met through participation in employment-preparation programs (GAIN Regulations Section 3.2-3).

Prior to 1986, B.C.'s welfare-to-work policy was characterized by seasonal work projects in the 1960s in which "Picking berries in the Fraser Valley or fruit in the Okanagan, fire-fighting and tree planting were typical jobs that employables
receiving assistance had to accept in some areas and some seasons or be cut off welfare" (Callahan et al. 1990: 16). Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s work activity projects continued to be introduced as the categories of those who were "employable" grew. These programs, although introduced with strong words, notably Premier Vander Zalm's statement that he would provide social assistance recipients with "a shovel" and not a hand-out, had little impact on increasing the self-sufficiency of welfare recipients. Programs were only minimally funded and not part of any comprehensive strategy to help the recipients to overcome the barriers that they faced. In 1984-85, for example, only $637,00 was spent on "Work Activity Projects", and $315,000 on Joint Training Assistance with the Ministry of Labour (Ministry of Human Resources 1984-5: 27).

The agreement increased dramatically the resources allocated to training social assistance recipients in British Columbia. In the first year of the agreement, training received 15 times as much as it had in previous budgets. The SAR Agreement for British Columbia initiated a great surge in programming for this growing target group. In each of the three years of the initial agreement, $30 million was diverted from CAP and GAIN funds to support the federal and provincial governments' initiatives. The federal government funded and ran its own CJS programs in the province, alongside the province's initiatives, funded and administered by the provincial government.

In the first year the British Columbia government chose to spend $13 million of its diverted funds on a program called Forsar and $2 million of its funds on the JobTrac Employment Subsidy Program. Forsar was a forestry enhancement project administered by the Ministry of Forests and Lands in which that ministry hired a crew from among the social assistance recipients referred to them by the local ministry of Social Services and Housing, on behalf of a contracted forest company. These social assistance recipients trained in the forest industry while the government
paid a full wage subsidy to the employer out of the diverted funds. In the Jobtrac Employment Subsidy Program, private sector employers received a partial wage subsidy for hiring social assistance recipients and for providing them with job training.

For its part, the Federal government provided $15 million each of the three years of the agreement for Job Development and Job Entry/Re-entry projects in the province. The package of programs included a Severely Disadvantaged Option of Job Development (later transferred to Job-Entry) in which social assistance recipients experiencing "formidable" barriers to employment were paid a wage while receiving both in on-the-job experience and basic skills upgrading. Also under Job Development and Job Entry were Direct Purchase Option programs, in which the government purchased seats in a training classroom rather than providing on-site work experience. R.I.S.E. projects were added in later years, which focused on programming to meet the needs of a specific target group in a specific community. In addition, the federal government set participation target levels for social assistance recipients in mainstream CJS programming of 30% for Job Development and 35% for the Re-entry Option of the Job Entry program.

In the 1987/88 year, the province renamed and expanded its programs. Under the broad umbrella heading of "Jobtrac", the Ministry renamed Forsar "Forestry JobTrac" and added two new programs. "Community Jobtrac" provided a full subsidy to non-profit agencies for hiring and training social assistance recipients in community, tourism, sport, culture and heritage projects. Environment JobTrac provides funding, in the form of a full wage subsidy, to two non-profit organizations, the B.C. Conservation Foundation, and the Outdoor Recreation Foundation of B.C. "to hire and train social assistance recipients to deliver park enhancement and fish and wildlife projects" (SP Research Associates 1988: 72). The JobTrac Employment Subsidy Program remained the same. The province allocated
over $40 million to their programs for 1987-88 year, even though only $15 million of these funds would be cost-matched by the federal government. For administrative purposes, only portions Forestry JobTrac and the Employment Subsidy Program were declared under the agreement. That year marked the beginning of the province's commitment, far above and beyond the mandate of the SAR Agreement, to training welfare recipients.

Over time, the names of the provincial programs have changed, (the umbrella program called Jobtrac as later changed to "Employment Plus"), programs have been terminated, reinstated, and remodeled. A new program, Job Action, an intensive course on job-search skills, soon became part of the welfare-to-work mix, as did Regionally Initiated Special Employment Programs (R.I.S.E.), which allowed regions to identify a specific target group and to design projects to meet their particular needs. Over the past decade, SAR Programs have changed names, but the content is essentially the same. Below, the original programs are listed opposite their various incarnations.

Federal Programs
Job Development------------------Job Opportunities
Job Entry/Re-entry------------------Project-Based Training
Direct Purchase of Training

Provincial Programs
Jobtrac: Employment Subsidy Program----Employment Opportunity Program
Forsar-----------------------------Forest Enhancement Program
                                -Forest Worker Development Program
Community Jobtrac---------------Community Tourism Employment Program
Environment Jobtrac-------------Environment Youth Program
                                Environment Youth Corps
Regionally Initiated Special Employment Program (R.I.S.E.)
Job Action
Over time, British Columbia has shown an increasing commitment to fund employment enhancement initiatives. This commitment was not matched by an increase in funds on the federal side until the Minister's Agreement was actually renegotiated and resigned, in 1991, after having been extended at 1986 levels during the years of renegotiation. In the 1991 agreement the fund diversion for the Federal and British Columbia governments was $28 million apiece. The programs covered by the 1991 agreement are more numerous and varied than those covered in the earlier agreement. It is important to note, however, that while funds were increasing under the SAR Agreement, the federal commitment to mainstream programs from which social assistance recipients benefit was eroding.

*Implementation of the B.C. programs at the local level*

The objectives of the SAR Agreement are achieved through using program funds to deliver training projects in which individual social assistance recipients can participate. In both the federal and provincial training systems the funds that flow from the SAR Agreement are allocated to local offices, whether CJS operation centers or Canada Employment Centers (CECs) on the federal side, or Ministry of Social Services (MSS) offices on the provincial side. These funds are directed at certain broad programs, such as at Job Development or Wage Subsidy Programs. However, the content of these programs, that is, the individual projects, is the responsibility of the officials in the local offices. Their responsibilities range from approving applications from contractors or employers for projects, to helping in the design of projects that are responsive to the needs of target groups, to monitoring the progress of the trainees in the projects, to deciding whether to continue the relationship with the contractor or employer.

Local officials have considerable autonomy from the higher levels of government in choosing their projects. Since projects are generally small, serving
only a few clients at a time, their cost usually falls below the financial level at which local officials would have to seek approval for projects from higher level officials. In the federal training system, local officials are constrained by the fact that they must have the blessing of the local Member of Parliament. This approval is generally given. If it is withheld, local officials retain the option to over-rule this objection. However, the situation in which an MP rejects a project application that is supported by local officials does not often arise. There is no comparable role for MLAs in the provincial training system.

A unique feature of project administration that arose from the SAR Agreement was the evolution of joint planning between the federal and provincial ministries involved in training social assistance recipients. This happened at two levels. First, upper levels of government formed a management committee on which officials from the "four corners" involved in the SAR Agreement sat. As federal and provincial officials plan their yearly mix of programming, they consult with each other with the goal of avoiding gaps and duplication in programming in local areas in British Columbia. Second, at the local level, officials from the CEC and MSS offices are encouraged to communicate often, to share information about projects, to refer clients to the other government's programs, and to coordinate their efforts in order to best serve the social assistance population in their area.

Some of the most important stages of implementation occur once the funds are allocated and the welfare-to-work programs designed. The interaction between local officials and clients is critical. Local officials determine which clients will be allowed to participate in welfare-to-work programs. This means that they must assess the needs of clients and their capabilities in order to determine whether they would benefit from a particular project. At the same time the provincial field-level workers determine the level of benefits, in-kind transfers and transitional supports that the individual will receive. The tasks of local officials involve tremendous
discretion. The effectiveness of the referrals and of the income assistance decisions made is a function of the knowledge, sensitivity, intuition and experience of the individual caseworker.

In order for implementation to be effective, the client must have the incentive to participate in a program. In British Columbia the incentives that have been designed by the government to encourage clients to participate in either federal or provincial programs include the enhanced earnings exemption which, in conjunction with the October 1985 changes to the CAP guidelines, allows social assistance recipients to retain 25 percent of their earnings above a flat rate exemption, (either $100 or $200 depending on family size), while they train. Another incentive is the provision of the non-cash benefits, such as medical and day care subsidies, for those in training, and the compensation to income assistance recipients of the increased cost of training through clothing and transportation allowances. Although these incentives impose a large cost on government, officials administer these incentives in the belief that the savings to the government generated from the increased work effort of social assistance recipients will offset this cost.

The Impact of the SAR Agreement in British Columbia

The 1986 Canada-British Columbia Agreement To Enhance The Employability of Social Assistance Recipients was successful in meeting many of its objectives. First, it increased the priority and resources given to the issue of training social assistance recipients and helping them to overcome barriers to employment. In British Columbia the increase in the province's commitment to this issue was dramatic. Even without federal matching funds, the province increased its commitment to employment enhancement well-beyond the $15 million per year to which it had originally agreed, spending in excess of $40 million on programs in 1987/88.
The goal of maintaining "Four Cornered" collaboration was also attained in the province. SP Research Associates describes a high degree of cooperation and a "very good working relationship" between the four departments involved in the agreement (1988: 75). In fact, the collaboration on the social assistance recipients issue initiated further cooperation in other areas. "Officials from the four corners are using the committee to address a number of difficult issues troubling the two systems, including some unrelated to the Letter of Understanding" (ibid).

As a package the SAR Initiative represents true progress in government's attempts to address the needs of social assistance recipients and they must be judged as a success. However, the impacts are modest and not without limitations. Some individual programs within the SAR package have been judged to impose more costs than benefits on society. Moreover, although the majority of SAR projects approved at the local level had some positive impacts, within every program type are individual projects that fail, and within successful projects, some individual social assistance recipients whose experience with training is not positive. In considering the factors influencing the success of the implementation of SAR, it is equally important to understand why some programs, projects and social assistance recipients also fail to achieve their objectives.

For government, the ultimate measurement of the effectiveness of the employment enhancement initiatives is the direct impact on the earnings and welfare dependency of social assistance recipients, and on the savings to the governments providing training. Routes to Independence, a 1992 Ministry of Social Services study of the provincial initiatives in British Columbia, found a mixture of successes and failures, but overall had an optimistic tone about the potential of well-designed welfare-to-work initiatives. Evaluation of Employability Initiatives For Social Assistance Recipients in CJS, a 1994 Human Resources Development report on the fate of social assistance recipients in federal programs, was even more positive.
On the provincial side, the Employment Subsidy Program, (now the Employment Opportunity Program) produced the most markedly positive results. The program moved participants off of income assistance more quickly than non-participants. For two years following the completion of the program participants had a 10 to 15 percent lower rate of dependency on welfare than non-participants. The greatest impact in terms of dependence-reduction occurred for those social assistance recipients who had longer, rather than shorter, welfare histories. The initiative increased earnings through increasing the hours of labour force participation of social assistance recipients. However, the average wage of program participants was no higher than that of non-participants, indicating that there was likely no "training effect" of participation in the program which would have allowed participants to secure higher-paying employment after completing the program.

The benefits of the Employment Subsidy Program far exceeded its costs. For the provincial government, the dramatic decrease in welfare dependence resulting from the wage subsidy program resulted in substantial savings. Even though participation in the program was characterized by 15 to 20 percent greater dependence on the federal government's Unemployment Insurance program for the twelve months of Unemployment Insurance eligibility compared to non-participants, over the long term (65 months), there was still a net savings of $890 per participant to the governments (Ministry of Social Services 1992: 18). Similarly, although the displacement of current workers by subsidized social assistance recipients did occur, the Ministry concluded that there was a higher level of employment overall, since these displaced workers "would have found other jobs more easily than would the subsidized employees who replaced them" (ibid: 16). The Wage Subsidy Program was thus a very successful program element of the SAR Agreement.
The three on-the-job programs that involved training in public projects—the Community Tourism Employment Training Program (CTETP), the Forest Enhancement Program (FEP) and the Environment Youth Corps (EYC) — were judged by the Ministry to have been unsuccessful in meeting many of the crucial objectives of the SAR initiatives. Although they helped to reduce welfare dependence in the short-term, the programs had "little long-term impact". Rather, they increased Unemployment Insurance significantly, by 25 to 30 percentage points over non-participants. The projects, like the Employment Opportunity Program, did not have a training effect resulting in higher wages. Even when the value of the work that the social assistance recipients did was added to the welfare savings, program costs and increased Unemployment Insurance dependence exceeded the monetary benefits of the program to social assistance recipients and to government.

A final provincial program, Job Action, was evaluated by the Ministry as having been highly successful in reducing dependence and producing government savings. This intensive job-search course helped to get participants off of welfare more quickly than non-participants. The ministry calculated that Job Action saved them an average of $367 per participant, which, taken over a large case-load resulted in considerable savings to governments. Program benefits far exceeded costs.

The federal government evaluated its initiatives to enhance to employability of social assistance recipients nationally. Although impacts in B.C. are cited frequently, the federal results are more general than the provincial results, and therefore cannot necessarily always to taken to represent British Columbia. The federal government found that "participation of social assistance recipients in the Canadian Jobs Strategy provided substantial gains for participants and for the Canadian economy" (Human Resources Development Canada 1994: i). Assessing all of their CJS programs for social assistance recipients as a group, they report that the federal programs resulted in increases in employability, annualized earnings and,
for those who participated in mainstream CJS programming under the target rates, increases in wage rates. Social assistance recipients spent 24 percent more time employed following participation in CJS programs than non-participants.

Although the federal report does not present its quantitative results in as comprehensive a fashion as the provincial government report does, it does separate program impacts to some degree. Job Entry and Job Development were both considered to be very successful, in view of the numerous barriers to employment faced by the target population. Both programs are reported to have "significant and comparable" employability impacts and positive earning impacts. Participation in Job Development had a significant effect of reducing future social assistance dependence. The Direct Purchase Option had a "smaller and less significant employability impact" but a positive impact, nonetheless, in terms of earnings.

The federal report concludes that although, from a government accounting point of view, welfare-to-work programs are not cost-effective over the short term, such a method of analysis fails to take into account the benefits to the recipient of training. When all social benefits are weighed against costs, they calculate that the welfare-to-work programs for social assistance recipients that federal government has been running have a benefit-cost ratio of 2.0, and are quite successful in producing a positive impact on society.

Both the federal and provincial reports used comparison group data in order to determine what the employment and earning outcomes would have been for social assistance recipients had they not participated in welfare-to-work programs. The provincial report, with its more complete numerical portrayal of the impacts of programs, appears to be more credible in its assessment of program impacts. That it ignores qualitative measures of success, such as increased self-esteem for participants or a revitalization of a community, suggests that its evaluation errs on the side of portraying program impacts as less positive than was actually the case.
The federal report, by contrast, takes into account the criteria absent in the provincial report. Together, the reports provide a good discussion of a variety of impacts of welfare-to-work initiatives, from governments' point of view. Many of their findings are consistent with research done in other jurisdictions and compiled by Gueron and Pauly. This consistency increases the credibility of the federal and provincial results for B.C.

By qualitative measures, the Employment Enhancement Agreement was a success. Employment and training programs were found to both increase the self-confidence of income assistance recipients (NAPO 1989), to reduce the bias of employers against this target group, and to enhance communities through the contributions of this new portion of the labour force (SP Research Associates 1993). These impacts all have positive effects on the possibility of new initiatives reaching their objectives, since communities and employers will be more supportive of initiatives, and social assistance recipients more convinced of their own abilities and of the opportunities that employment enhancement programs can provide them.

Providing a counterweight to this optimism, anti-poverty groups warn that training programs pacify the public, thus serving the needs of the government, and maintain a supply of low-wage workers, serving the needs of business. While they would not dispute the governments' numbers or their contention that these programs improve the skills of social assistance recipients, critics point out that success should only be measured by the end result: are social assistance recipients better-off following training than they were before? This means, specifically, do they have a job that pays wages on which they can live with some degree of dignity? The problem with the SAR Agreement, according to those who measure success in this way, is that it fails to address the problems of few jobs and fewer well-paying jobs in British Columbia. It does not provide the training that would allow most social assistance recipients to qualify for the better-paying jobs. Moreover, they
contend that training is too narrow to allow trainees to pursue several different avenues in their search for a job (Interviews 1994).

The assessment of government and its critics together provides a balanced picture of the impact of the SAR Agreement in British Columbia. The Agreement was successful in bringing training opportunities to social assistance recipients. Many of the provincial programs and all of the federal program designs were effective in improving their employability and increasing their earnings. Within these successful programs some individual projects still failed. Some of the unsuccessful provincial programs or the unsuccessful projects within the successful program types were too limited in nature, too narrow in the training they provided or too unresponsive to the needs of clients and to the local economy to provide significant benefits to either social assistance recipients or to society in general. However, the majority of SAR programming was implemented effectively and met the objectives of the original agreement. That there were few decent jobs at the end of training has less to do with the implementation of SAR and more to do with the larger issues, beyond the purview of the agreement, of the structure of work in Canadian society.
Chapter Four

Explaining The Fate of British Columbia’s SAR Agreement

In choosing the SAR Agreements as their vehicle for improving the employment rates of social assistance recipients, for reducing welfare dependency and for alleviating poverty among this target group, the Ministers engaged in a gamble that a number of actors and circumstances would come together to produce the desired outcomes. The existence of a federal-provincial agreement to fund initiatives to increase the employability of social assistance recipients does not in itself bring about this goal. Rather, successful implementation of welfare-to-work programs is a process with many stages. In the broadest terms there are six stages, each of which has to be implemented effectively in order for the entire process to meet with success, defined in terms of increased earnings and employability for the social assistance recipient, and reduced expenditures for the state. Each of the stages attempts to answer a question crucial to implementation with a government response.

In the first stage the question, "what resources are provided?", is answered at the upper levels of government through the capacity of the governments that formulated the policy or initiative to provide the direction, guidelines and resources to enable the next level of implementors, in this case the local level officials within British Columbia, to carry out their jobs effectively. The second question, "how are the resources used?" is responded to at the local level, where the local MSS and CEC offices generate and support projects which are designed to meet the needs of social assistance recipients. "Who gets to use these resources?" is a third concern, which is addressed by the field-level workers who decide who will have access to training programs and support services. The soundness of rationales behind who is included and who is excluded from which programs will greatly affect the programs' ability
to achieve the agreement's objectives. Once referrals are made the new issue becomes "will these groups use these resources, and why?" At this stage the social assistance recipient makes the individual decision about whether to participate in, or complete, a given program. This decision has much to do with the client's perception of the program and of the effectiveness of the incentive structure of the program in addressing the client's needs. A fifth question is, "when they do participate, will the resources help these groups to achieve the important goals for which the resources were allocated to begin with?" This question is answered by the program design, which must provide the necessary elements for a client to become self-sufficient. After these five questions have been answered there remains one final one: "are all of the previous decisions meaningful in light of the external conditions in the implementation environment?" Even if all of the earlier stages facilitate the achievement of the agreement's objectives, successful implementation of the agreement can nevertheless be undermined by factors external to the implementation process. The environment in which all the decisions are made can make the decisions irrelevant. Thus, a final stage of implementation involves the trained social assistance recipient having access to employment opportunities in the current social and economic environment.

In addition to the six stages at which conditions conducive to implementation must prevail, the causal theory underlying the intervention, that is, the premises that form the basis of the SAR Agreement must be sound. A clear understanding of behaviour, and of the factors which can be manipulated so as to alter behaviour, is the basis for any policy intervention. Thus, if the original behavioural assumptions are invalid, effective implementation of the six stages will fail to resolve the policy problem.

An analysis according to the theory of the "complexity of joint action", advanced by Pressman and Wildavsky, would suggest that the federal-provincial
initiative was destined to fail, given the number of contingencies which had to be met in order for a social assistance recipient ultimately to become independent of welfare. Eugene Bardach's theory, similarly, would predict failure, given the many opportunities for implementation games to be played by implementing officials at the numerous points at which discretion is exercised. However, in spite of the complexity and relatively decentralized nature of the implementation process created by the SAR Agreement, it was, and continues to be, a notable success. For an explanation of the success of the initiative, it is helpful to turn instead to the revised version of Mazmanian and Sabatier's framework, outlined in Chapter one, which also takes into account the contributions of Elmore, Lipsky, Goggin et al., Stoker and Gueron and Pauly, all of whom recognize that complexity and discretion can in some cases facilitate effective implementation. The revised framework provides a key to understanding why the particular programs generated by the Canada/British Columbia SAR Agreement were generally successful in helping social assistance recipients to become more self-sufficient than they would have been in the absence of such programs. The same framework also suggests reasons for the failure of particular programs, and for the limitations that even the successful programs face.

Applying the Revised Theory of Implementation to the Case-study

While Mazmanian and Sabatier's theory acknowledges the importance of bottom-up factors to implementation, their original theory was biased in terms of the importance of top-down features of policy design and centralized control. The revised framework includes several distinctly bottom-up factors; in addition, in this analysis, each set of Mazmanian and Sabatier's original variables will be considered at the field, as well as at the policy-formulation, level.
The conditions of the revised framework are effective in explaining the generally successful implementation of the agreement, the particular mixture of successes and failures in the programs generated by it, and the limitations which the programs consistently faced. The importance of these conditions is verified by government and anti-poverty group reports on the implementation and outcomes of the SAR Agreement and by interviews with officials at the policy formulation and field levels in both the federal and provincial government.

1. The enabling legislation structures the implementation process so as to maximize the probability that implementing officials and target groups will perform as desired. This involves assignment to sympathetic agencies with adequate hierarchical integration, with a history of cooperation, or expectations of future cooperation, supportive decision rules, sufficient financial resources and adequate infrastructure.

The most common explanation for the success of the welfare-to-work programs developed through the SAR initiatives in British Columbia is that the initiative achieved an unprecedented level of cooperation between the various parties involved in training and income assistance in British Columbia. Before 1986, the interaction between Employment and Immigration Canada and the provincial ministries of Social Services and of Labour, (later Advanced Education and Training and now Skills, Labour and Training), had been haphazard. Each department had its own training agenda, and conducted its planning at the upper levels of government with little coordination with other departments. At the field level, coordination between local Canada Employment Centres and the field offices of the Ministry of Social Services was fairly common. However, this cooperation was based on the initiative taken by individual workers to seek out contacts with the other local office. Where cooperation was inadequate each office planned its projects separately, leaving gaps and duplication in programming. As a result, training resources were often not directed to where they were most needed.
The 1986 agreement set up a process in which federal-provincial cooperation was formally encouraged. This cooperation took place first at the upper levels of government in the negotiation process. Mulroney's support for the revitalization of federal-provincial relations imbued the negotiations with what participants remember as a "strong atmosphere of cooperation," in which participants saw themselves as partners, rather than as antagonists.

A management committee composed of representatives from both levels of government has remained active ever since the introduction of the SAR Agreement, engaging in joint planning and assessment of the effectiveness of programs in meeting the agreement's objectives.

One of the chief responsibilities of the committee in the first years of the agreement was to hold meetings in the various field level offices of both Employment and Immigration Canada and B.C.'s Social Services. These visits by the executive of the management of the SAR Agreement had two effects. First, they demonstrated to field workers that a united front existed at the upper levels of government and thus encouraged them to cooperate with their local sister office of the other level of government. Second, they ensured that all field-level workers would receive identical messages about the purpose of the SAR Agreement, uniting the field offices and the upper levels of governments. The management committee was reported to have been excellent at "selling" the objectives of the agreement.

Through the work of the management committee responsible for implementing the SAR Agreement, hierarchical integration, in the sense of shared values and orientation towards the initiative, was improved at both levels of government. This may be the key as to why Pressman and Wildavsky's "Complexity of Joint Action" was avoided. Following Mazmanian and Sabatier, this integration increases the possibility of effective implementation. The shared orientation towards the agreement decreased the likelihood that destructive implementation
games, of the types described by Bardach, would be played. At the same time, following Stoker, the emphasis, in both the original document and the actions of the management, on mutual adaptation, and on creating a "shadow of the future" in which cooperation is the key to both parties achieving their objectives, encouraged the development of an environment in which joint planning could be pursued in order to address the needs of clients most effectively. In addition, the decision rules created by the agreement mandated that the programs of one level of government be reviewed by the other level. These features of the implementation all emphasized cooperation in an environment in which previous to 1986 contact between agencies had been sporadic, at best.

Funding arrangements also helped to ensure that the various actors in the implementation process would "perform as desired". First, the generous funding levels for programs ensured that officials would be able to deliver what they promised, both at the executive and field levels of implementation. The agreement ensured that there were real opportunities for training for many social assistance recipients. Second, through the mechanism of "matched funding" federal and provincial governments had strong incentives to spend all of the money in their budgets on their own programs. If a government fell short of spending its $15 million per year it was required to compensate the other government for half of the amount that the other government surpassed it in spending. For example, if British Columbia only spent $10 million on its training programs in a given year, and the federal government spent its full $15 million on its CJS programs for social assistance recipients, the provincial government would owe the federal government $2.5 million. Rather than "subsidize" the other government's programs, each government had the incentive to spend all of its own resources on its own initiatives, thus maximizing the opportunity provided by the SAR Agreement.
In addition, the fact that the four departments involved in the SAR Agreement were agencies sympathetic to the goals of the agreement -- all committed to improving the life circumstances of social assistance recipients -- increased the likelihood that they would perform in ways which advanced the agreements' objectives. For example, all three of the departments involved in arranging contracts with job training hosts, that is, Employment and Immigration Canada, the B.C. Ministry of Social Services and B.C.'s Advanced Education and Training (formerly Labour), actively sought contractors who could provide social assistance recipients with the work and training experience that they would need to progress towards self-sufficiency. This commitment helped ensure that Job Entry and Job Development on the federal side, and the Wage Subsidy Program on the provincial side, would be successes.

The compatibility of agency goals could not be as assured for organizations other than the original "four corners" participants. In fact, consistent with the revised framework, program failures and limitations on the effectiveness of successful programs can be explained by the multiple and conflicting goals of different implementation partners. For example, the early Forestry programs for social assistance recipients were administered through the Ministry of Forests, rather than through social services. This ministry did not have as its primary objective meeting the needs of social assistance recipients and preparing them for future employment. As such, the programs that they administered were often not appropriate for their clients. They were make-work programs which did not provide trainees with a marketable skill, or with the increased self-respect that comes from doing valuable work. The different orientation of the ministry responsible for this program made it unlikely that their officials' behaviour would be in-line with that of the ministries from the "four corners".
Beyond accounting for program failures, the notion of incompatible goals also explains limitations on successful programs. Although in general the province's Wage Subsidy Program helped to reduce dependence and increase employability and income for social assistance recipients, many individual projects were not successful because the goals of the employer contracted to provide the training were at odds with those of the SAR Agreement. Field-workers reported a fair amount of abuse of the program on the part of employers, in which they took advantage of the opportunity for cheap labour without providing real training for the social assistance recipients. Similarly, employers sometimes displaced current workers in order to receive a subsidy for the trainees (Interviews 1994). This behaviour is difficult to constrain, given the lack of shared orientation and goals between the ministry of social services and some businesses. When conditions do not exist in which the probability is maximized that implementing officials "will perform as desired" the objectives of the SAR Agreement are often undermined and it impacts are less positive than they could be.

Finally, the absence of a key variable hindered implementation in several areas of B.C. in the early years of the agreement. The lack of adequate start-up time and the immaturity of the infrastructure necessary to implement the various programs initiated by the agreement was the cause of several early failures of federal programs to achieve positive results for clients. Reports of projects starting without the proper forms having been delivered to the field offices or without adequate staff briefing limited officials' ability to perform as desired. Over time, the necessary infrastructure was developed to handle the increased case-load and new programming, and implementing officials' behaviour became more in-line with what was desirable.

Successful implementation of the SAR Agreement was helped by those factors which took away from the "complexity of joint action". These included
hierarchical integration fashioned by a strong communication network between the upper and lower levels of an agency, fostering a shared orientation of major implementing actors towards helping social assistance recipients, cooperation on a horizontal level between different agencies, decision rules supportive of the initiative, adequate resources, and assignment to sympathetic agencies. Where these conditions did not exist the complexity of joint action again became a problem that hindered the effectiveness of the implementation, and limited the ability of the two governments to deliver the most programming possible using maximum funds.

2. The enabling legislation gives implementing officials sufficient jurisdiction over target groups and other points of leverage to attain, at least potentially, the desired goals.

The success of the agreement can be attributed to its ability to influence implementing officials to act in particular ways. At the same time, however, it also resulted from the agreement's ability to allow officials to act in a variety of ways, unconstrained by the reins of executive control. This seeming paradox of control versus discretion was actually a ingenious mix which was one of the strengths of the agreement. Although there was strong hierarchical integration in terms of shared values and orientation, the decision-making as to how the clients would be served by the agreement was left almost entirely to the field-level workers.

At the field level in the provincial system, and in the federal system increasingly over time, local officials at the Canada Employment Centres, (and CJS operation centres), and Ministry of Social Services offices were responsible for developing and monitoring the projects to which social assistance recipients were referred. Each area office had its own budget, the autonomy to approve projects with little involvement from higher levels of government and the discretion to refer whichever clients it deemed to be most suitable for these projects. This freedom gave street-level officials control over several of the key linkages in the implementation process. By being able to respond to the labour market needs of
their particular community, to the training needs of a specific target population, to the income assistance needs of individuals, and to past successes and failures in this arena, street-level officials were able to design and approve projects that had a greater chance of success than programs imposed upon a local area from higher levels of government. In this way, true to Lipsky's thesis, street-level bureaucrats actually created the policy with which the clients came into contact. Due to the amount of discretion given local officials, the policy that clients encountered could be carefully designed with them in mind, and thus had the greatest possibility of helping them to achieve self-sufficiency.

Discretion, mixed with inter-agency cooperation at a local level, had a positive effect on the implementation of the SAR Agreement. Field workers sought their guidance from the cooperative planning structures that they created at the local level more than from higher levels of government. Local discretion lent the cooperation at the local agency level a greater sense of importance, since field-workers truly had the capacity to influence their community, but could only do so effectively through making the most of the entire range of resources available to them in the community, including the knowledge, energy and resources of the other government office.

The problem with discretion, and with Mazmanian and Sabatier's "sufficient jurisdiction" condition is that it is meaningless to the implementation process if the officials who have jurisdiction over the important linkages -- the discretion to design and monitor programs, and to refer clients -- lack the expertise and commitment to do so. Thus, effective implementation depends on the satisfaction of this condition in conjunction with the satisfaction of the next condition. In the absence of skilled and committed staff discretion can be abused. In such a case "lack of discretion" could become an important condition for implementation success.
3. The leaders and street-level workers of the implementing agency possess substantial managerial and political skill and are committed to statutory goals.

In British Columbia, the wide discretion of street-level bureaucrats is a positive condition of implementation due to the fact that implementing officials at both the federal and provincial level and at the executive and at the field level possessed both the political and managerial know-how and the enthusiasm and commitment to facilitate the effective implementation of the SAR Agreement.

Officials at all levels are quick to point to the contagious enthusiasm of the original management committee in creating and maintaining the momentum to implement effectively a complex and often unwieldy set of initiatives. Members of the SAR Management Committee themselves note that the strong support of the political executive of their ministries or departments was a factor in the success of the first stages of implementation. While the upper level of management of the agreement was credited by most as being clever at handling political problems, its effect was mostly to remove obstacles which might have stood in the way of effective implementation of the agreement at lower levels of government. For example, in the early years the management committee responded to local workers' reports of a lack of sufficient supports to social assistance recipients during training by ensuring that child care subsidies, transportation allowances and clothing allowances would be available to those trainees for whom these costs posed a significant disincentive to their participation in employment enhancement activities. The fact that capable management guided the process both inspired street-level workers and facilitated their jobs.

It is at the "street level" that this condition of effective implementation became most meaningful. The wide discretion given to field workers allowed them to determine how the governments' policies would be experienced by clients. Street level workers recruited and accepted contracts for training from training hosts,
helped to determine the content of the projects, decided which clients would be referred to projects, monitored the training and then decided which training opportunities would continue to receive funds based on their perceptions of the projects' success. Although constrained by broad guidelines CEC officials and MSS officials were able in general to create their own training systems. For example, among provincial "street level" workers, there were no consistent criteria as to who would be referred for training from among those assessed as "employable". According to one provincial evaluation, of those exercising discretion 47 percent of financial assistance workers referred clients who already possessed good job skills, whereas 44 percent referred clients precisely because these skills were poor. Similarly, officials responsible for selecting contractors or job training hosts used a variety of criteria in making their decision, beyond the formal criteria of the province (DPA Group 1989). The success of the projects is thus based on the official's experience and intuition as to what works for whom. Over time, those involved in training social assistance recipients in British Columbia have developed a more mature understanding of the variety of impacts of welfare-to-work programs and have used their discretion more wisely.

In addition to having gained the skills which enable them to choose correct training hosts and make appropriate referrals, field level workers have demonstrated a tremendous commitment to the goals of the SAR Agreement. One provincial office manager described the reaction of officials to the new resources generated by the agreement. "We were always dealing with problems; for once we were dealing with opportunities" (Interview 1994). Most field level workers already had a real commitment to helping social assistance recipients become self-sufficient. The agreement finally removed some of the barriers that their clients and consequently, they as field workers, faced. A limitation to effective implementation arose in some areas when caseworkers became overwhelmed by the sheer increase
in the volume of their case-loads. However, most field-workers were extremely satisfied with the increased funds and training opportunities overall. A key ingredient in the success of the SAR Initiative was the degree of enthusiasm with which it was received from officials at all levels of government.

4. The enabling legislation incorporates a sound theory identifying the principal factors and causal linkages affecting policy objectives.

The SAR Agreement as it was implemented in British Columbia reflected the liberal developmental approach to work for welfare recipients elaborated in chapter 2. Rather than assuming that welfare recipients will only seek self-sufficiency when forced by utter destitution or administrative requirements, the agreement and the efforts of those involved in the agreement reflect a belief that welfare recipients would work if given the opportunity and if opportunities offered to them improve their circumstances instead of driving them further into poverty. This fundamental tenet is evident in the program designs emerging from the SAR Agreement. Many of the programs were successful because they helped participants to overcome multiple barriers to self-sufficiency. The causal theory underlying the initiative was that by addressing the particular needs of the clients governments can provide them with the resources to become self-sufficient.

First, British Columbia's federal and provincial programs are formally voluntary. Although some social assistance recipients felt pressure to participate in programs or lose their welfare eligibility (SP Research Associates 1993), demand for training exceeded supply in the province. Most field-workers referred to training and upgrading programs those clients who were motivated to participate, as these field-workers felt that these clients had higher success rates than those with less motivation (Interviews 1994).

Second, the projects that met with the greatest success in both the federal and provincial training streams in British Columbia were those that provided real job
experience in a field in which there was a demand for the learned skill, or provided training with an employer with whom there was a possibility of on-going employment after the training is complete. Federal Job Development and provincial Employment Subsidy programs included these elements.

For people who were less job-ready, a more integrated approach was needed to address the multiple barriers which most social assistance recipients face. One type of upgrading was often not enough to prepare the more severely employment disadvantaged people for employment. The most successful programs incorporated job experience, classroom training, life-skills training and counselling. These were the features of the federal Job Entry programs, including the Severely Employment Disadvantaged (SED) Option programs, which had a large social assistance base. These programs had a more incremental view of what constitutes a success and took a client gradually towards employability. Officials matched program designs to client's needs rather than the other way around; this more client-centred approach is credited with the success of these CJS options.

This "valid causal theory" condition of implementation is effective in explaining some of the failures in programming as well. Federal Direct Purchase Option (DPO) programs under Job Development provided only classroom training, with no assistance in finding the client a job. By failing to provide integrated training to address multiple aspects of job-readiness they failed to prepare workers for the real on-the-job challenges they would face. As a result, they were less successful in providing trainees with the confidence and skills they would need to acquire and maintain a job.

Similarly, the provincial public employment programs were less able than the Employment Subsidy Program to take people off of the welfare rolls by helping them to enter permanent employment. These programs often did not encompass a commitment to training individuals to perform real jobs. Thus, when the training
was over, the trainees had not developed marketable skills. For example, trainees might spend their training period clearing a trail under a public employment program. However, at the end of this training they would not have learned skills enough to qualify them for a job with another employer. The training was too narrow. Their original training hosts would not have the same capacity as the Employment Subsidy private employers to continue to employ the social assistance recipients after training, given that many of the organizations are non-profit and depend on the provincial wage subsidy for its staff funds. Once training was over, so was the job.

More recently, the various public employment training programs have been modified, in an attempt to make training more relevant to real work situations. For example, the Forest Worker Development Program now hires social assistance recipients for positions for which they would otherwise have to hire non-social assistance employees. These trainees perform meaningful work and are trained in a specific field for which there is labour market demand. This increases the morale of the individual worker, as well as the attitude of the contractor towards the work that is done by the trainee, since it is now of value to the contractor's enterprise. Other changes to this program include a mandate that trainees be selected from a local area for projects in that area, increasing the willingness of the employer to continue to employ the trainee once the government funding is terminated. A beneficial side-effect of this program is increased direct benefits to community resulting in enhanced community support for training initiatives for social assistance recipients (Interviews 1994).

Experience with welfare-to-work programs has shown that the more programs provide meaningful work experience in fields of labour market demand with the possibility of future employment, the more these program address the multiple barriers of social assistance recipients, the longer the duration of the
program and the more integrated an initiative is in terms of providing an array of programs and supports, the more likely it is that a welfare-to-work initiative will succeed. Through emphasizing many of these elements in its programs, B.C.'s liberal developmental approach is vindicated to some extent by the successes of initiatives that attempt to provide opportunities, not merely work.

On the other hand, the critics of the SAR Agreement contend that it is another facet of the causal theory that limits the true potential of government to help social assistance recipients. "Supply-side social policy" does little to affect the larger conditions in society that perpetuate poverty. One of the theories underlying the SAR Agreement is that social assistance recipients lack the necessary skills to get a job. Anti-poverty advocates argue that this viewpoint stigmatizes social assistance recipients by portraying them as deficient in some way, and deflects from the true problem, that is, the lack of decent jobs in society. In fact, the most commonly heard complaint from both social assistance recipients and field workers is that the trainees need a job after training (NAPO 1989). This job must not make them worse off than they were on welfare. Although it did result in an overall increase in employment, the SAR Agreement did not lead to an increase in the wage paid to individuals in low-paying work in the vast majority of cases. This desired "training" effect was virtually absent perhaps because of the short-term nature of most training. To prepare social assistance recipients for more skilled and highly-paid work would require training programs that are longer and more intensive.

The two causal theories underlying the SAR Agreement are implicit in its design. One theory, that by addressing the particular needs of income assistance recipients governments can help them to become self sufficient, seems valid. The other, "supply-side social policy" seems weaker: there simply are not jobs for all trained social assistance recipients.
5. The enabling legislation and the institutions and norms created by it provide the target group with sufficient incentives to engage in the desired behaviour, and remove any disincentives to target group compliance created by factors both "external" and political that define the experience of the target group.

Consistent with the liberal developmentalist approach, the framers of the SAR Agreement did not believe that social assistance recipients needed to be coerced into participating in employment enhancement activities. Rather, they saw the importance of removing significant disincentives to leaving welfare for work. The greatest disincentive experienced was child care. A federal report indicated that 40 per cent of mothers interviewed maintained that without support for child care they would not be able to participate in training and educational upgrading (Employment and Immigration 1993: 46). Other significant barriers faced were the increased costs of transportation to the training location, as well as the loss of medical and dental benefits that they would have received while on welfare. Over time as these disincentives were revealed to the SAR Management Committee by field workers, the committee increased the supports available to trainees and to individuals during the year of transition from welfare to work. The objective was to ensure that social assistance recipients would not be made worse-off by engaging in training. The Enhanced Earnings Exemption introduced by British Columbia allowed trainees to keep more of what they earned, and the 1991 Agreement was updated to explicitly provide that participants would receive "at a minimum, the equivalent of cash and non-cash benefits that they would have been eligible for on social assistance as well as contributions towards the increased costs associated with participation in a particular program" (SAR Agreement 1991, Section 5.01).

Federal research found that a large number of those who took part in training programs would have participated even if they had been made worse-off financially by it (Employment and Immigration 1989). In the SED option programs, 60 per cent of participants claimed that they would have engaged in training and upgrading in
the absence of a wage or allowance; 35 percent of Job Entry trainees claimed the same thing (Employment and Immigration 1993: 43; 1989: 106-7). This evidence indicates that the primary incentive to participate was not immediate financial gain. Federal and provincial officials were quick to point out that the greatest incentive was the real opportunity that these programs were perceived to provide. Officials believed that part of the reason for the success of the various SAR initiatives was the positive light in which upper management portrayed the program to "street-level" bureaucrats and in which they, in turn, portrayed them to their clients. The programs offered clients a chance to better themselves through increased self-confidence, employability and annual earnings, and at the same time removed some of the major disincentives to participating in training.

It is important to recognize, however, that the group asked about the incentives to participate in the programs were those who chose to engage in training. There is no way to determine how many potential trainees still do not have adequate incentives to participate. In fact, those with the most barriers may not be able to benefit from training since to move off of welfare would result in too many hardships. For example, for social assistance recipients with many dependents the wage earned through the Employment Subsidy Program would be significantly less than the income assistance levels provided for a large family, since wages do not vary according to family type. Incentives, thus, are sufficient to attract enough trainees to more than fill welfare-to-work programs, but they may not be sufficient to attract all of those for whom the SAR Agreement was originally intended.

6. The relative priority of statutory objectives is not undermined over time by the emergence of conflicting public priorities, changes in constituency groups' support or by changes in the relative socio-economic conditions which weaken the statute's causal theory or political support. External conditions are conducive to the achievement of the policy's objectives.
From the point of view of those not on income assistance there were strong incentives to support welfare-to-work training in British Columbia. Rapidly increasing welfare case-loads placed an increasingly great financial strain on taxpayers throughout the 1980s. The notion of giving welfare recipients "a shovel" and not "a hand-out" gained increasing salience for the population. As such, the SAR initiative was well met by British Columbia's politicians and quickly became a priority in the province, which has not been undermined by other priorities. In 1986, distinct from the SAR management committee, B.C. set up its own Employment Initiatives Projects to explore new possibilities in provincial programming. Rapid growth in provincial spending, from a few million to over $40 million by 1988, even though it was not matched by the federal government, demonstrates the provincial government's commitment to the principles of the SAR Agreement.

On the federal side, the commitment to assisting welfare recipients to gain independence was also strong, although funds did not flow as freely as those of the provincial government towards this target group. Nevertheless, the SAR budget was maintained throughout the first five years of the Agreement and then increased to $28 million from $15 million in 1991 even as mainstream CJS training funds declined over these years. Political support for the SAR Agreement was maintained during this period. At the local level, the approval of Members of Parliament was sought for federal CJS projects. In general this approval was easily won, since job-creation schemes in a Member's riding are popular politically. Only more recently is the political support wavering as Reform Party members challenge what they regard as "liberal" programs.

Finally, at the local level employment enhancement activities have lasting popularity. Training projects not only bring benefits to the job-training host and to the social assistance recipient, they often also provide direct benefits to the community through the fruits of the trainees' labour. For example, the revamped
Forest Worker Development Program has produced a more efficient corps of workers who often finish their contracted work before the training period is complete. The team manager then consults with the local community to decide on a project upon which the trainees can then embark. In the remaining days of their training period trainees thus produced tangible benefits, such as cleared trails or the construction of a shelter, for their communities.

The troubling socio-economic trend that prompted the original SAR Agreement --a trend towards the welfare case-load being composed of "employables" -- did not disappear over the past decade. The programs developed to combat this trend have met with a good deal of success. These two facts have secured the relative priority of welfare-to-work initiatives on the social policy agenda as well as their popularity in the communities into which they are introduced.

One possibility that should not be ignored is that the existence of external conditions conducive to the achievement of objectives of the SAR Agreement influenced its success. In spite of the agreement's ability to confirm many of the key hypotheses about effective policy implementation, the existence of several favourable external conditions casts some doubt as to whether the satisfaction of the other seven conditions of implementation in any jurisdiction would ensure the success of welfare-to-work initiatives. In fact, there are two conditions external to the policy process which might have accounted for the success of the B.C. SAR Agreement.

First, in order for the goal of self-sufficiency to be achieved by welfare recipients they must find permanent employment. In the absence of a relatively strong economy even a well-trained individual might not be able to find employment. In British Columbia, with one of the lowest unemployment rates and the strongest economies of the Canadian provinces, jobs have been relatively
plentiful. As such, the success rates of the programs in British Columbia may be a result of a strong economy rather than a particularly strong package of welfare-to-work programs. A study by Employment and Immigration Canada does suggest that this hypothesis is partly true. A comparison group of non-CJS social assistance recipients saw their employment prospects increased during the period of the experiment, but to a lesser extent than CJS participants on social assistance (Employment and Immigration Canada 1994).

The statistics from the federal study suggest another external factor that might have influenced the success of SAR in B.C. The target group referred to CJS programs in the province were generally more job-ready than the national average. Both the CJS participant group and the comparison group had an average of an extra year of education in comparison to the national average, a characteristic which might have led them to require less upgrading than other social assistance recipients in Canada before they were ready for employment and thus might have facilitated their transition from welfare to work. This characteristic of the welfare population might have resulted from the tremendous migration of workers into the province in the last decade. These workers might already have been fairly job-ready but turned to social assistance to ease their transition during the first year of their move. (This speculation is supported by the statistic that in-migrants are twice as likely to receive social assistance in the first year after moving as they are in the second.)

In general, then, the favourable external conditions in which the B.C. initiatives were implemented likely played some role in their success. However, the federal CJS analysis using comparison groups in the province suggests that within the province social assistance recipients who train still have an advantage over those who do not, regardless of the similar external circumstances affecting both groups (Employment and Immigration Canada 1994).
7. The enabling legislation ensured that "learning" could take place and that the implementation process was flexible enough to incorporate past lessons.

In addition to mandating increased activity to enhance the employability of social assistance recipients the Canada/British Columbia SAR Agreement also called for a program of evaluations to be set up to assess the impact of these programs. In a system in which so many unrelated activities are taking place at the local level a formal plan for evaluation and information-sharing was necessary to assess where money was being well spent, and where it was improperly targeted. Health and Welfare Canada provided support for a large portion of the evaluations; Employment and Immigration Canada conducted their own assessments of CJS.

The capacity of the evaluations to generate useful information about the effectiveness of employment enhancement initiatives was complemented by the flexibility of the initiatives to adapt to the lessons learned. Because the management committee met frequently and produced a new mix of programming every year, and because projects were approved and renewed frequently at a local level, the federal and provincial training programs in B.C. became better over time as a result of past experience. The evaluation component of the initial agreement was a feature new to most Canadian welfare-to-work schemes.

8. The enabling legislation or other legal directive mandates policy objectives which are clear and consistent or at least provides substantive criteria for resolving goal conflicts.

The need for clear guidelines and standards might appear at first to stand in conflict with the second condition of the revised framework which suggests that local discretion is one of the main reasons for the success of SAR. In fact, as was pointed out at the end of the discussion of the second condition, discretion is valuable if the staff has the expertise to make the appropriate decisions to advance the objectives of the agreement. In the absence of this expertise, discretion can actually work to undermine effective implementation, a danger against which clear
guidelines serve as a buffer. Guidelines can provide a general direction within which street-level bureaucrats can use their discretion.

The SAR Agreement was hurt by a lack of clear guidelines to provide field-level officials with a direction during the early years of implementation. The 1986 agreement was a rather vague document with few guidelines, open to many interpretations at the field level. The province maintained this ambiguity in laying out its own programs. The federal training system was far more regulated. Although the enormous discretion permitted by a lack of guidelines could be seen as an advantage in terms of allowing local offices the flexibility to design programs that were appropriate to their particular areas and target populations, federal officials claim that they did not feel constrained by their guidelines. Rather, they provided them with greater sense of the purpose of the SAR Agreement and allowed them to use the discretion that they did have more wisely (Interviews 1994). Where guidelines did not inform street-level officials of how best to make use of the SAR Agreement in their area there was an increased likelihood of waste, of misdirection of funds and poor targeting (SP Research Associates 1988: 88-90).

A significant disadvantage of a lack of clear guidelines and standards was that it resulted in inconsistency from one training area to the next. Whereas a social assistance recipient might have access to a variety of programs and supports in one office, if she moves to another town she might find that such services are not available or that she is not deemed eligible for those programs by the local criteria. This problem was cited more by provincial officials than by federal officials. Federal officials at the local level felt that their useful guidelines were a result of the maturity of the federal training apparatus. They felt that the guidelines allowed for accountability, and guided field workers in their decision-making, while still allowing them sufficient discretion to respond to local needs.
In the absence of guidelines at the provincial level, projects were approved periodically which lacked a genuine training component, and inappropriate clients were sometimes referred to projects. Field-level workers might be left to their own resources without a clear sense of direction in their decision-making. In addition, in the absence of standards, it is difficult to maintain accountability for the decisions that are made. In general, the potency of the SAR Agreement was watered down by the absence of guidelines and standards in the training system.

Explaining Individual Programs' Successes and Failures

The success of the SAR Agreement overall in promoting self-sufficiency for social assistance recipients must not overshadow the important lessons about the determinants of successes and failures of specific programs within the large package of programming that resulted from the agreement. The most successful programs, that is, Job Entry, Job Development and the Severely Employment Disadvantaged programs (SED) on the federal side and the Wage Subsidy programs, R.I.S.E. programs and Job Action on the provincial side demonstrate the importance of certain of the implementation variables. On the other hand, the less successful programs, that is, the three provincial public employment programs and the Federal Direct Purchase Option failed to meet several conditions critical to effective implementation.

Job Entry, SED programs and R.I.S.E. programs were successful largely because of the validity of the assumptions which underlay their designs. Their incremental and integrated approach to the upgrading of the individual through a variety of supports and services addressed effectively the multiple barriers faced by social assistance recipients. They were often small programs, designed for a particular target group, responsive more to individual than to local needs. A variety of supports gave social assistance recipients the incentives to enter one of these
programs. The programs were closely supervised by a field-level worker, and the contractors were carefully assessed before a project was accepted or renewed. The considerable discretion given to the local staff to approve, design and oversee projects led to creative approaches to addressing the needs of clients. Finally, realistic expectations about what constituted a success led to programs providing a variety of opportunities that were not strictly related to jobs. In some cases, counselling and life-skills instruction was added to more formal instruction and training and led to a more integrated approach to improving the situation of the individual social assistance recipient.

Job Development and the Employment Subsidy programs were similarly affected by a valid causal theory and skilled and committed field-level workers. On-the-job placements which included meaningful training in a field in which future employment was likely provided workers with marketable skills and increased confidence, increasing the likelihood that they could find another job. Field-level staff from CEC and MSS offices monitored the projects and formed valuable links with employers. The work that trainees did was valuable to the employers and in general employers were pleased with their productivity (Ministry of Social Services 1992). Since the job experiences were "real", the satisfaction level for all parties involved was higher than it would have been in make-work projects. Job Development and Employment Subsidy contracts were developed at the local level so that they could be most responsive to the needs of the target population as well as the labour market.

The danger to the wage subsidy programs is that the differing motivations of implementing actors might undermine the objectives. Projects which were unsuccessful were often ones in which the employer was not committed to providing training that would lead the social assistance recipient to future employment. Employers might be more interested in acquiring cheap labour than in
helping the social assistance recipient. In cases in which the orientations of actors are different it is a real challenge to avoid these kind of implementation games. It is up to the field-worker to assess the potential of the employer to behave as desired, and to try to foster a cooperative relationship in which behaviour will fall within predictable limits.

Although Job Action was a short program with limited resources, the attention it gave to assisting social assistance recipients to find work, rather than leaving them to their own resources, was valuable. Participants moved off of welfare into work faster than non-participants. This could be attributable to the increased confidence, contacts and support gained through this program, all of which were part of a program design flowing from a valid causal theory which states that given opportunities social assistance recipients will choose to pursue self-sufficiency.

The programs that were less successful were so in general because of the incorrect causal theory underlying the program and the fact that they were assigned to agencies whose behaviour could not be controlled through the intense cooperation of the four partners involved in the SAR Agreement. The three provincial public employment programs provided work without providing meaningful training in fields in which future employment could be expected. Those trained in the tourism or environmental fields, or in the early years of the forestry programs, for example, often performed tasks which were not in great demand in the labour market. The agencies which trained them did not have the funds to employ them after training to continue to use the narrow training that they received from the program. In addition, they were often given "make-work" which neither benefited the employer particularly nor did it give the trainee the sense of accomplishment that arises from performing meaningful work.
The private employment programs were overseen by ministries other than Social Services or Advanced Education and Training. The priorities of those ministries overseeing the public programs, including the Ministries of Forests, of Environment, and of Tourism, are different from those ministries whose primary concern is helping individuals to become self-sufficient. As such there was less understanding of the needs of social assistance recipients and less commitment to addressing their particular needs than would be the case in a program administered by the Ministry of Social Services. In addition, these ministries were not partners in the SAR Agreement, thus they did not have the same mandate for constant consultation and cooperation. There was little way of ensuring that officials and target group would behave in the desired manner.

Finally, the relatively low success rate of Direct Purchase Options can be explained by the same factors that explained the success of Job Entry options. Unlike Job Entry, DPO did not provide the integrated supports necessary for the social assistance recipient to become job-ready. It merely provided classroom training and then left social assistance recipients to fend for themselves. DPO programs were not as closely monitored by field workers as Job Entry Options, and they were more structured, in a strictly classroom environment, so programs were generally less able to respond to the individual needs of social assistance recipients than were other training options.

The variations of project successes within the larger program types can be explained by the presence or absence of any number of the eight conditions for effective implementation. For example, one region in B.C. might have more successful programs than another region with the same type of program because of better coordination between the local offices of both governments, because of the expertise of a few staff members or because the target population is more job-ready. With a seemingly infinitely divisible initiative such as the SAR Agreement, the
conditions which contribute to the success of the whole package at a provincial level also contribute to successes or failures at the interface between caseworker and client.

Conclusion

Mazmanian and Sabatier’s framework, with a few revisions and additions, is very effective at explaining the fate of the implementation of the SAR Agreement. It is most powerful when its conditions are expanded and interpreted to apply to field-level bureaucrats as well as to the higher-level officials who formulate policy. In fact, by integrating the lessons of Elmore and Lipsky -- the bottom-uppers -- Mazmanian and Sabatier's theory takes on a meaning that they did not intend. Policy is no longer made at the upper reaches of government but rather is shaped by the decisions of lower-level bureaucrats. Through the addition of a new variable, that of "learning" in policy, the theory no longer allows for the separation of policy formulation and implementation that Mazmanian and Sabatier had intended.

Rather than compromising the integrity of Mazmanian and Sabatier's model, the contributions of other authors to it make the model more widely applicable. For example, their model, concerned as it was with the "command and control" issues of policy formulation, does not deal with the realities of the implementation of social policies. It does not acknowledge the separate motivations acting upon two distinct target groups -- street-level bureaucrats, and the ultimate recipient of the policy's provisions who in this case-study are social assistance recipients. Social policy must create an environment in which street-level bureaucrats will want to carry-out the mandate of higher level officials. At the same time it must be designed to take advantage of the incentive structures acting on the ultimate target population in order to ensure that their behaviour can be made consistent with policy objectives.
This entails understanding the social and economic context in which the target group lives from day-to-day.

The revised framework can easily be applied to the Canadian policy environment when the United States-specific conditions are made more general. Mazmanian and Sabatier's concerns about the role of fixers and constituency groups can be captured within broader categories about the skill and commitment of implementing officials, and about the priority of statutory objectives, respectively. The new categories are broad enough to permit such additions, but discreet enough for the framework to be prescriptive, rather than merely descriptive.

Despite the complexity of the problem that it addressed, and the fact that many similar programs had failed before it in Canada and the United States, the SAR Agreement was responsible for measurable improvements in the employability and earnings of social assistance recipients, and for benefits to society as a whole. By applying the revised framework to the SAR case-study, a set of recommendations can be generated for the creation of successful welfare-to-work programs in Canada.

Successful welfare-to-work programs result from intensive cooperation between the various agencies and levels of government involved in training social assistance recipients. This cooperation maximizes the resources available, helps to avoid duplications and gaps in programming, and keeps the communication of information on individual projects and welfare recipients strong. Local discretion allowed by extensive decentralization also helps to generate successful programs, since officials very familiar with the needs of the target population, the trends in the local labour market, and the activity of other local agencies are able to design programs that are responsive to all of these variables. At the same time as providing them with discretion, a successful initiative provides officials with sufficient guidelines and standards to give them a clear sense of purpose, and of professional accountability. Standards also breed programs that treat clients with
consistency throughout the region. At the same time, the managerial and political skills and commitment of field-level workers influence the quality of the projects designed to serve social assistance recipients and the appropriateness of the referrals made by these workers to particular training projects. Successful programs are those that embody a valid causal theory in the design, by providing opportunities for clients that include work experience in fields in which there is a labour market demand and a chance of future employment, that are responsive to client needs, consist of an integrated array of training and upgrading activities, and that are sufficiently long in duration to upgrade the trainees skills. Successful programs provide a range of supports and transitional benefits that are sufficient to at least reduce the disincentives, if not actually provide incentives, to the target group to participate. Well-funded programs have more opportunities to achieve success. A program is more likely to meet with success if it includes in its design on-going evaluations, and if it is flexible enough to adapt to past lessons and thus improve over time. Finally, if the local economy is strong, and the target population more job ready, a program is more likely to achieve its objectives of moving social assistance recipients into the workforce.

Beyond these conditions for success lie further conditions, even more challenging to meet, and a definition of success which is beyond that provided in the SAR Agreement. True progress for social assistance recipients would mean the elimination of their poverty. However, the conditions that would satisfy this goal are not those that can be manipulated within the implementation process for the SAR Agreement. They include raising the minimum wage significantly, guaranteeing pay equity, reducing discrimination in the workforce, and providing free, quality child care. The realization of these goals would entail an enormous restructuring of the way Canadian society now functions, and a tremendous expense for the government. Given the virtual revolution that it would take to satisfy the
conditions as a package, it is wise to pursue these various goals individually, in conjunction with continuing the pursuit of the objectives of the SAR Agreement, an initiative that has carved out modest, but significant gains for the population that it was designed to serve.

Welfare-to-work initiatives are here to stay in British Columbia and in Canada. Given both governments' perceptions of the success of many of their programs, and the continuing phenomenon of tremendous welfare dependence for employable welfare recipients, training programs are a promising route out of bleak employment situation of the country. Programs will continue to evolve as governments examine the lessons of past successes and failures. Strategies will change as politicians confront new social and economic realities.

The British Columbia government has recently moved all of its training programs for social assistance programs out from under the wing of the Ministry of Social Services to the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour. This ministry is attempting to redesign the province's training system to provide a training and support system that is ongoing, that supports the social assistance recipient after training and into employment and that continues to emphasize "capacity" tools in its approach to the work/welfare dilemma. This will entail an even greater government investment, and will renew British Columbia's commitment to this target group.

The federal training system, similarly, will undergo restructuring. The concept of "mutual responsibility" between governments and social assistance recipients is becoming increasingly salient for Canadians. This restructuring will only serve to increase the importance of welfare-to-work initiatives, which embody this notion of responsibility. The precise content of reforms is as yet uncertain, but the direction is assured. In response to the success of some of the most innovative programs in social policy -- those crafted at the local
level and serving local needs -- decentralization will continue to characterize the training system. In addition, training will become even more central to the social assistance agenda and may even be tied to welfare benefits in the future, heralding the ultimate eclipse of the classic Canadian redistributive approach to welfare by the emerging liberal developmentalist ideology.
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