

PRICE: \$15.00

1997

Volume 78  
Number 2



FAMILIES INTERNATIONAL, INC.

Publishing in association  
with  
Family Service America

# FAMILIES *in* SOCIETY

*The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*

M A R C H — A P R I L

## Community Development: A Special Focus

A 21st-Century Map for Healthy Communities and

Families / J. L. McKnight • Community-Centered Family

Service / M. Sviridoff & W. Ryan • Families and Schools

Together (FAST): Integrating Community Development

With Clinical Strategies / L. McDonald, S. Billingham, T.

Conrad, A. Morgan, N. O, & E. Payton • From Parent

Training to Community Building / C. Webster-Stratton •

Head Start and Social Work / A. J. Frankel • From Child

Development to Community Development: One

Agency's Journey / R. J. Feikema, J. H. Segalavich, & S. H.

Jeffries • Reweaving the Social Fabric / E. Cortés, Jr. •

Assessing Client Strengths / S. McQuaide & J. H. Ehrenreich

• Policy Update

---

John L. McKnight

---

## A 21st-Century Map for Healthy Communities and Families

### ABSTRACT

Social policymakers traditionally focus on systems and individuals and tend to ignore local communities and associations. However, these local structures are vital components of any process that seeks to address social problems successfully. A social policy that attempts to deal with the modern condition of families and their children will necessarily include local community structures as well as systems. Understanding the function of these local structures will require a paradigm shift in policy assumptions. Systems will assume a secondary support role and policy will primarily address the basic associational community that is the primary family environment.

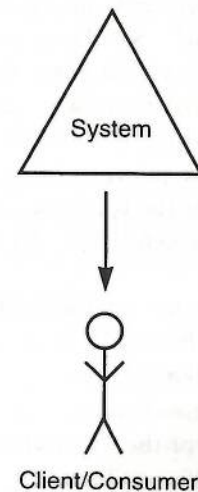
*John L. McKnight is Director of Community Studies, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. This article is based on an address delivered at the North American Conference on Families, October 19–22, 1995, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, cosponsored by Family Service America and Family Service Canada. Used with permission.*

Each of us creates a map of the world around us. Our map, like all maps, is not the territory it portrays. It is merely an approximation. And it can be a map that inaccurately portrays the territory that surrounds us. We all know of the European mapmakers who described a flat earth without a Western Hemisphere. Their inaccurate map shaped the policies, plans, and actions of mariners, kings, nations, and communities. As we plan to set sail into the 21st century, it is appropriate to reexamine the map that is used in most of our current policymaking in order to see whether it will show the way to safe, wise, and healthful communities.

By listening carefully to the proposals of our current social policymakers, we can construct a map of the territory where they believe they operate. This territory has two principal areas. The first area consists of systems. Policymakers view systems or institutions as the principal tool for the work of society.

Therefore, their policies and programs are about system design, system planning, delivery systems, and system reform. The second area in their map is filled with clients and consumers, who serve as the objects of the systems. (See Figure 1.)

FIG. 1.



To understand more clearly the dynamics of the territory called a system, it is important to describe both its nature and its relationship to the client/consumer beneficiaries.

## The Nature of Systems

The nature of a system can be clarified by a detailed map of its structure. Most policymakers view systems as tools that organize people into relationships (see Figure 2). Although there are numerous ways to organize people to perform various tasks, the structure shown in Figure 2 has several special features and purposes.

First, the structure is designed primarily to permit a few people to control many people. Its hierarchical order is basically a means to create control. Of course, a control system has many advantages. For example, it allows the few who conceive a new automobile to ensure that the thousands who produce it will uniformly manufacture the same vehicle. Similarly, this structure is essential to the effective functioning of a modern airliner, whereby we want one person, the pilot, to be in control and at the top of a clearly defined descending order of authority.

A second characteristic of a system is its ability to produce many of the same thing, whether goods or services. The hallmark of the hierarchical system is mass production.

The third characteristic of a system flows from the first two. If we are to create structures of control to produce great quantities of the same thing, the proliferation of the product requires more consumers to purchase the goods or services. System users

are called clients or consumers and they constitute the second territory of the current policy map. It should be noted that the word client is especially appropriate for one who is the object of a system, because the Latin root for *client* means one who is controlled—dependent. Therefore, system growth or efficiency necessarily creates more consumption or clienthood, and a consumer society emerges as systems grow.

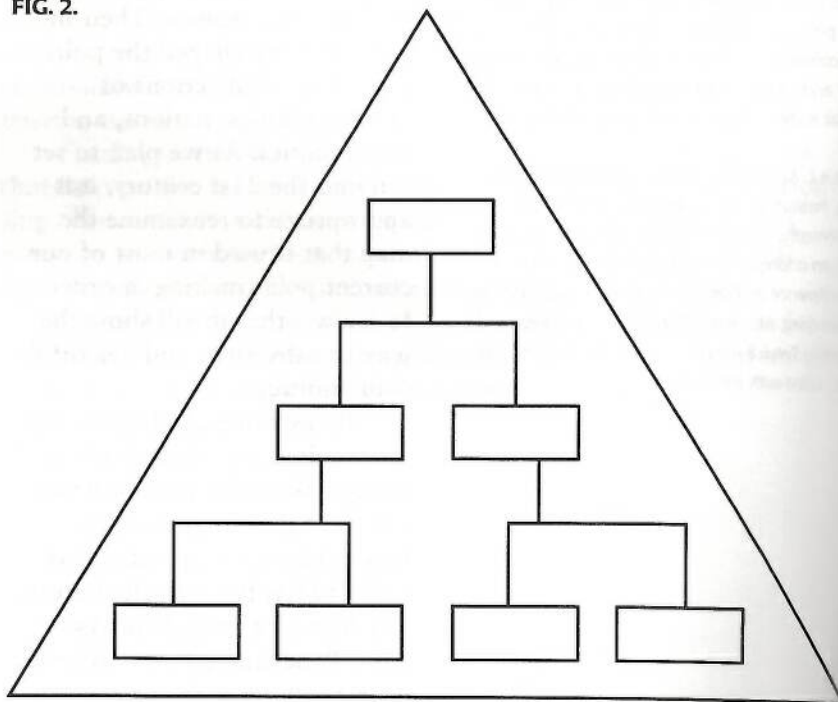
In summary, the prevailing policy map depicts the methods of organizational control whereby systems generate uniform goods and services and increase the client and consumer activities of individuals.

There are at least two obvious limits of this system tool. The first is its lack of capacity

for producing individualized outputs rather than mass standardized products. Therefore, policymakers who try to use this tool to create unique or individualized outputs, programs, or services do not understand the nature or function of their own structure. This is why so many systems fail to meet individualized needs and their workers "burn out" in frustration.

A second limit is that the power of the system is measured by the number of its clients and their consumption of services. This necessarily creates increased client dependency upon systems. Policymakers who attempt to use systems to empower people usually fail because they misunderstand the nature and function of structures they operate in.

FIG. 2.



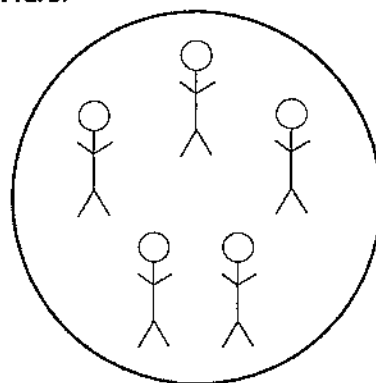
Now that we have explored the nature of the current policy-making map involving systems and clients/consumers, we can examine its relationship to the territory it purports to describe. Although the map may not appear to be inaccurate, it is clearly incomplete because a space called "community" does not appear in it. In this regard, the current map is reminiscent of early maps that did not include the Western Hemisphere.

### The Nature of Communities

If we were to include community in our map, where would it be located and what would its functions be? Here, we have a historical figure—Alexis de Toqueville—to help us answer the question. Toqueville (1945) wrote the classic description of local American communities following his trip throughout the United States in 1831. His map of our communities is described in *Democracy in America*.

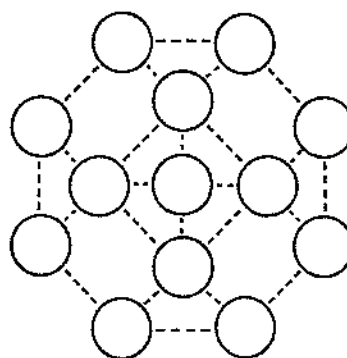
Toqueville described unique forms of local social and political structures and relationships that he observed in his travels throughout the United States. In Europe, he noted, decisions were made by elected officials, bureaucrats, nobility, professors, doctors, lawyers, engineers, and so forth. In the United States, however, he found critical decisions being made at the local level by the common people.

FIG. 3.



It was not, however, their individual decision making that he found unique. Rather, it was that they came together in small self-appointed groups to solve problems, create new approaches to production, and to celebrate the local society. It was he who named these groups "associations" (see Figure 3). The associations were small-scale, face-to-face groups in which the members did the work. For Toqueville, the members were not individuals, clients, or consumers. Rather, they were citizens who, acting together, were powerful tools of social and economic production.

FIG. 4.



Toqueville noted that associations involved citizens in three processes:

- Deciding what is a problem
- Deciding how to solve the problem
- Organizing themselves and others to implement the solution

As citizens engaged in these associational processes, they created the power to build their local communities. It was the social space occupied by these associations that Toqueville first mapped as the center of our communities. Today, this space is frequently called civil society or the domain of mediating structures. Regardless of the term, it was this new structure of local relationships that created the New World settlements and cities (see Figure 4). This informal network of groups of citizens creates and maintains the center of society. It is also a tool, like systems, that performs vital functions.

### Comparing Systems And Associational Communities

To understand the nature of the community tool, we can compare it with the system tool. The system tool is a mechanism of control, whereas the community of associations depends on willing consent because it has neither money nor grades to use to control people. The community of associations is the territory where people express their free choice to contribute their

unique gifts, skills, and talents in amplifying concert with their neighbors.

The system tool is designed for mass production of goods and services. The community of associations is not designed to produce services. Rather, it provides a context in which care is manifested. Care, unlike service, cannot be produced. Care is the consenting commitment of one person for another; it is freely given. Care cannot be mandated, managed, or produced as a service can. Indeed, one of the great errors in most policymaking maps is the false assumption that systems can produce care. Care resides in the domain of the associational community. Where care is valued or necessary to achieve a societal goal, the appropriate tool to accomplish it is the community.

The system tool demands clients and consumers. The associational community requires citizens. Here, the critical difference is that "citizen" is the word for the most powerful person in a democracy. In contrast, the client is controlled by the system. If we seek empowerment, the associational community is the appropriate tool. When we purport to empower clients, we are necessarily caught in a paradox whereby our best efforts will be no better than dependence on a more responsive system.

In summary, systems provide control, mass production, consumption, and clienthood. Associational communities depend on consent and allow

choice, care, and citizen power.

One other distinction between these two tools is critical to understanding social policies affecting communities and the families they encompass. Systems and the services they produce depend on a basic raw material: the deficiency, inadequacy, brokenness, or disease of people. When people have these attributes, they become eligible clients or consumers. The general term for these attributes is "need." For the system tool to be productive, it needs need. Therefore, systems create incentives and economies that focus people on their potential roles as clients and consumers.

In contrast, associational communities depend on the capacities, abilities, skills, and gifts of people. Therefore, they represent the critical incentive system for manifesting capacity rather than need. This fact is clarified when we recognize that a local person may have a missing leg yet have good carpentry skills. A needs-needing system values his missing leg. The association that is building a community center values his carpentry skills. In the symbolic example of the glass filled to the middle with liquid, the system needs the empty half whereas the com-

munity needs the full half. The service system needs a client.

The community needs a citizen.

When we recognize this difference, it becomes clear that communities are built through structures that mobilize the gifts and capacities of local citizens. Associational communities are the principal tool that identifies and mobilizes the gifts and capacities of citizens.

### Relationship Between Systems And Communities

Having understood the distinctive nature and functions of the two tools, we can now map their potential relationships with each other. When policymakers recognize the existence of a community territory, their map usually looks like the one shown in Figure 5. This map is commonly described as a partnership. It suggests that each is an equal owner of or participant in an activity. However, the recent history of actual system-community relationships suggests that the real territory is quite different. At least three kinds of alternative relationships are present in most cases.

FIG. 5.

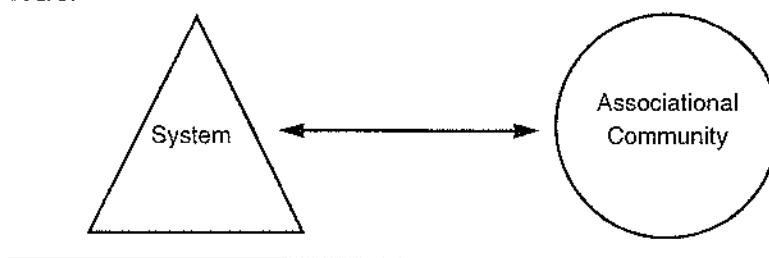
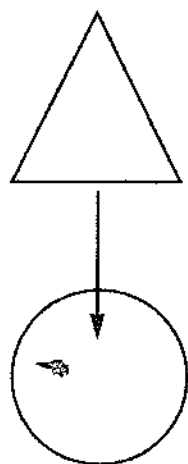


FIG. 6.



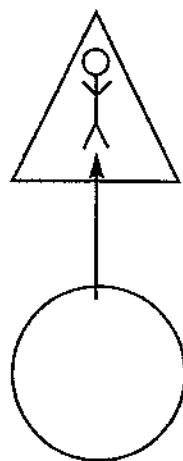
The first alternative (Figure 6) describes a subsidiary of a system located within the community to ensure access to local need. This relationship can be most accurately described as *system outreach* rather than as partnership.

The second form of relationship (Figure 7) depicts the community as a source of unpaid workers for systems. The accurate name for this relationship is *volunteerism* rather than partnership.

The third common relationship (Figure 8) is that of a citizen(s) chosen by a system to react to a system's plans. The citizen does not have authority or a vote but serves as an advisor. The correct name for this relationship is a *citizen advisory group* rather than a partnership.

A genuine partnership is a relationship of equal power between two parties with distinctive interests. Each preserves its authority, distinct capacity, and integrity but gains power through the partnership. It is dif-

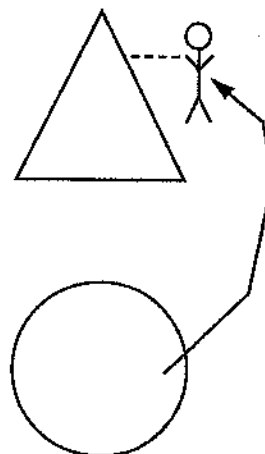
FIG. 7.



ficult to find many examples of authentic partnerships of this nature between systems and associations. Instead, the actual power relationship is most often a system using a community of associations to foster its own ends.

Indeed, 20th-century relationships between systems and associations highlight the ascent of the system and the decline of the community of associations. Figure 9 presents a map of our era charting this relationship chronologically. According to this map, systems have moved from a position of equality to dominance and then have eclipsed or pushed out associations and their functions as they

FIG. 8.

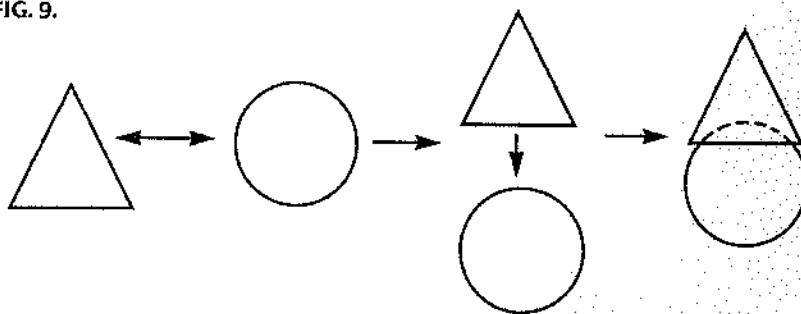


have commanded more authority, professional dominance, technology, and public and private dollars. The term *consumer society* is another name for this dominance. It produces an unprecedented belief system and culture of its own.

## Comprehensive System Services

Central to this belief system is the proposition embodied in the social-policymaking map with which we began (see Figure 1). That map indicates that systems produce our sense of well-

FIG. 9.



## ANOTHER VIEW

## Tools to Build Healthy Communities

At the core of McKnight's theory is the profound belief that everyone has abilities, talents, and skills that are essential to the overall health and well-being of all communities. Community associations, as described by McKnight, are the bedrock of healthy neighborhoods. Through these associations, individual's abilities and skills are valued, and people are afforded the opportunity to contribute to the well-being of their community. This complementary relationship of being valued and giving back to the community creates a context for good citizenship, an essential ingredient for a healthy neighborhood.

In our work with small neighborhood communities in Atlanta, community members come together around common concerns and discover the leadership and power among themselves to address these issues. Our experience has been that the creation of community associations can become contagious. One successful association sparks the creation of another, and success generates a "we can do" spirit.

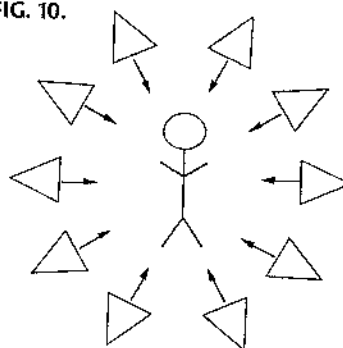
McKnight makes a good argument that social policymakers need to change their "map view" from systems and clients to community associations and individuals with skills and abilities. He proposes that these "community tools" be used to create the framework for a new model that places the associational community between systems and individual. This model, I believe, favors small communities and neighborhoods and would be less successful when applied on a larger scale in cities. For example, in the case of the Atlanta Project, 20 cluster communities, each consisting of many neighborhoods whose only common characteristic was that their children went to the same high school, were designated. However, it was very difficult to engage the residents' personal involvement or commitment when their community's boundaries were contrived by an outside group and did not arise out of the neighborhood's sense of identity. Through small contiguous neighborhoods people create a sense of communal identity, allowing skills and talents to be acknowledged and used by the community. At this level, the individual has the highest level of personal interest in the social and economic issues of the community.

Also, in small communities, even in apartment complexes, associations can be co-opted by leaders who are more interested in creating a power base for their own self-interest. Such situations are extremely destructive, frequently eroding residents' sense of community as well as their power.

McKnight gives us an excellent road map. His "community tools" serve as important principals upon which healthy communities can be built.

Robert M. Weaver  
Executive Director  
Families First  
Atlanta, Georgia

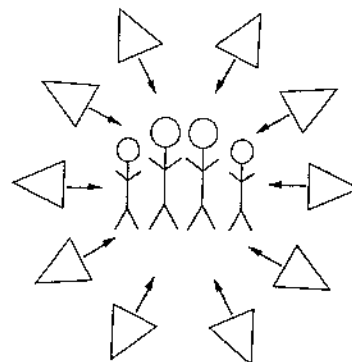
FIG. 10.



being. We understand that our health resides in a medical system. Our safety in a criminal-justice system. Our security in a pension system. Our learning in a school system. Our mental stability in a mental health system. Our family stability in a family-service system. And so forth. Figure 10 illustrates what happens when this belief system becomes the dominant social construction. One way to describe this map is as a comprehensive, coordinated, wrap-around, interprofessional, multi-service system.

Based upon this belief system, Figure 11 shows the most desirable map for strengthening families. Policymakers who believe in this map urge that its

FIG. 11.



ability to produce increased well-being for its client families depends on two factors: (a) more money for the system and (b) better administration of the system. If such changes occur, the resulting "systems reform" will effectively and comprehensively target families, and our current social problems will be greatly diminished. This proposition and the map upon which it is based are what we are asked to use in navigating the 21st century.

### **Powerful Service Systems and Social Disarray**

As magnificent as this map is, its accuracy is widely questioned. In this century we have greatly expanded the proportion of our gross national product for services such as medicine, social work, education, mental health, youth services, family therapy, legal services, recreational services, and the like. We have greatly increased the number of clients seeking services. Yet all measures point to the fact that social pathology is growing relentlessly. We need not rehearse again the social disarray that our media, professionals, and social scientists document and lament daily.

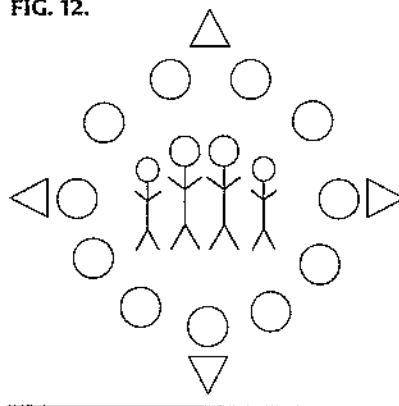
The obvious question being asked at all levels of society is whether more dollars, resources, professionals, training, and technology for systems will stem the tide of social disarray. Clearly, the public has become skeptical of this proposition. Increasingly, research scholars and foundation experimentalists are lending less support for the policy map of a

family surrounded by expanding services. Some are even raising disturbing questions as to whether the systems might not actually be one cause of the current social disarray rather than its principal solution.

### **Redrawing the Policymaker's Map**

The principal policy issue today is whether we can draw a more accurate map that would show us a more effective way to proceed into the 21st century. We can begin by recalling the associational tools described by Toqueville. We can correct the inaccurate social policymakers' map by placing the associational community in the great void between systems and individuals (see Figure 12). In this map, families are at the center. They are further extended through kinship relationships. A circle of informal and formal associations provides a context for them to act through consent, care, and citizen empowerment. Finally, they are able to utilize system services when they will be benefited by control systems of mass production.

FIG. 12.



In many communities the system territory is very large, while the associational community has been crowded into a very small space. As a result, the functions and capacities of associations are often underutilized or dormant. When this occurs we consistently observe the parallel growth of systems and social disarray.

### **The Capacities of Associations**

This apparent paradox can be untangled by examining the special capacities of associations. First, the associational community provides a network of care and mutual support that enables effective citizens to negotiate everyday life. More important, however, these networks provide support in times of crisis and stress.

This leads to the second associational capacity: the potential for a rapid response to local problems. Free of the time-consuming limits of bureaucratic regulation and protocol, local citizens are renowned for their ability to act in emergencies.

The third capacity is the individualization that is inherent in associational communities. This occurs when the community responds to the crisis of a particular individual in a particular way. It also occurs when each individual in an association contributes his or her unique ability or gift to the or-

## ANOTHER VIEW

## Systems vs. Associations: It's not Either/Or

John McKnight provocatively contrasts the functions and strengths of two types of social structures in American society: what he calls "systems" and "group associations." His analysis supports two conclusions: (a) systems cannot deal with the profound and growing chaos that is occurring in families and communities and (b) group associations are capable of recognizing and effectively using the talents and skills of individual community members. Regrettably missing from his exposition, however, are those intermediate structures in society whose special task is to develop such talents and skills.

For example, the section on policies for youth has no mention of schools. This omission is consistent with the author's unduly optimistic claim that "every young person has a gift, talent, knowledge, or skill ready to be given, contributed, or marketed now" and that a primary task of the community is "to seek and use the capacity of youth in the productive centers of the society." Does the responsibility for developing competence and character fall to families, which occupy a prominent place in his exposition? If so, how are they to accomplish this task?

The principal focus of McKnight's policy recommendations is the reallocation of economic resources away from service systems to local associations. Desirable as such an economic reorientation may be, it rests on the assumption that the local groups and individuals will have the knowledge, know-how, and motivation to use the newly acquired financial resources in ways that will in fact be effective in reducing, let alone reversing, the mounting social disarray that confronts our nation. Moreover, as my colleagues and I (Bronfenbrenner et al., 1996) have shown, financial forces are not sufficient in themselves either to account for the growing chaos in the lives of children, youth, and families or to counteract the prevailing disruptive trends. What we need is a working model that in fact violates one of McKnight's basic assumptions: "We are in competition between association and system. For one to win, the other must lose."

In contrast to this position, a growing body of theoretical and empirical work within the field of developmental science indicates that each of McKnight's two, presumed, antithetical social structures can in fact be reorganized and interconnected to their mutual advantage. The defining properties of the evolving model in its most recent form, along with corresponding research findings, are specified elsewhere (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, in press). Perhaps the best known example is still Head Start, with which I have been involved from its conception more than 30 years ago. However, since that time, the understanding of the processes and conditions that drive and sustain human development—not only in childhood, but through the life course—has advanced significantly. Moreover, as has been documented (Bronfenbrenner et al., 1996), these very processes and conditions are being undermined and even destroyed by the growing chaos in the lives of children, youth, and families. To reverse this destructive trend we need to muster the new knowledge and experience we have gained over recent decades to develop programs and policies based on the untapped constructive potential that can be released by restructuring and linking McKnight's still separated worlds.

Urie Bronfenbrenner  
Professor of Human Development and Family Studies  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, New York

Bronfenbrenner, U., McClelland P., Wethington, E., Moen, P., & Ceci, S. J. (1996). *The state of Americans: This generation and the next*. New York: The Free Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (in press). The ecology of developmental processes. In R. M. Lerner (Ed.), *Theory, Vol. 1 of Handbook of Child Psychology* (5th ed.). New York: Wiley.

ganization's work. Thus, the associational community is focused on the dilemma or gift of a particular individual and is able to tailor a response that is beyond the capacity of the mass-production system.

The fourth capacity of associations is their ability to recognize and utilize the unique gifts of each member. This provides a context for creativity that is critical to innovation in local problem solving. Indeed, America's social innovation was generated primarily at the associational level of society, and most American institutions were spawned by associations.

The fifth special function of associations is to give citizens the experience and opportunity to take responsibility for society. In systems, people ultimately fulfill the responsibility of a manager. In communities, people are able to *define* and fulfill actions of their own design. This function is at the core of the empowering function of associational life.

Related to this function is the sixth opportunity provided by associational life. The associational sector is often labeled civil society because it is the arena where the citizen function can be performed. A secondary aspect of this citizen function is voting. Its primary manifestation, as Toqueville noted, is the collective problem-solving activity of local associations taking responsibility for the common good.

The seventh function of the associational community is

the diverse and numerous contexts provided for leadership. Whereas hierarchical systems are designed to provide definitional leadership to a few, the proliferation of associations provides a seedbed for multiplying leadership experiences and abilities.

Eighth, the network of local associations has also been historically a seedbed for the growth of local enterprise. We misunderstand economic development if we believe it grows from programs involving the creation of business plans. The soil that has nurtured enterprise and a burgeoning economy is the experiences, relationships, and culture of a rich local associational life.

Finally, the community association is the powerful engine for mobilizing the capacities of local people and is the basic structural unit of an effective society. Its power depends on focusing on strengths and ignoring needs as resources. Its strength comes from its ability to mobilize a person with a missing leg to use his carpentry skills to build a community center.

In summary, an associational community provides the context for:

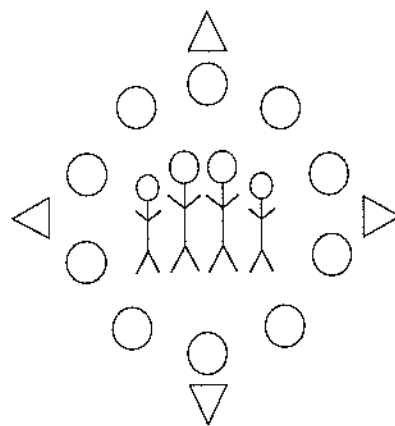
- Care and mutual support
- Rapid response to local problems
- Individualized response and mobilization
- Creative social innovation
- Empowering responsibility
- Citizenship functions
- Leadership development

- Enterprise development
- Capacity mobilization

These functions, in combination, represent the unique role of the community understood as a network of local informal and formal associations. Where these functions atrophy, the resulting social disarray cannot be corrected by systems and their services or interventions. The reasons are those we have already explored; that is, systems and associations are distinctive tools with unique capacities and neither can substitute for the other. Because the dominant social policy map does not recognize the associational community, it is a fatal guide to the 21st century. It will lead us to shipwreck on the shoals of a serviced society surrounded by a sea of social failure.

Rather, the map we need to navigate our future focuses on the importance of kinship, association, and enterprise and the secondary role of systems and their inputs (see Figure 13).

FIG. 13.



## Creating a Climate For Change

We are faced, however, with a critical dilemma. Is it possible to grow the community center while the world of systems continues to expand? Or will growing service systems crowd out and replace associational communities?

This is a historical question and its most searching exploration has been done by two great social historians. Jacques Ellul's (1964) *Technological Society* and Karl Polanyi's (1944) *The Great Transformation* each describe from different perspectives how modernization in western society is a manifestation of the contraction of communal relations resulting from the growth of systems and their related tools. Their work suggests that we are in a competition between association and system. For one to win, the other must lose. It is essentially a zero sum game.

If this history is predictive, then the basic shift necessary for an effective 21st-century map is contraction of service systems in order to provide the territory and incentives for community structures to expand. Such change does not constitute system reform. Rather, it presents a different map, it allows for a paradigm shift. To use this new map, policymakers will need to move in a different direction. To reach their destination, they will need to enhance community power while diminishing system authority.

### Family-Friendly Policies

At least three basic principles can guide policymakers toward a future in which families and communities will flourish and social problems will diminish (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1993).

First, funding priorities must shift. Over the past 50 years we have increased significantly the dollars committed to the vulnerable and disadvantaged. However, the increase has been largely allocated to service systems so that more than half of all the funds for the poor now go to systems rather than to those with inadequate incomes. The navigating principle here is making income and enterprise the primary goals for enhancing individuals and communities and placing them in the center of the map. Under this scenario, resources will be diverted from service systems to provide adequate income for individuals who are especially vulnerable. The prepurchase of services will become a policy investment of last resort. At the same time, other policy investments will be focused primarily on enhancing and expanding the enterprise capabilities of local associations and individuals. Community economic development, rather than remedial or compensatory services, will receive priority.

The second principle will be to recognize the nature of associational space, remove barriers to its functions, and provide incentives for community structures to assume new economic

and social functions. The emerging associational map will chart the complex, diverse, interrelated array of local informal and formal associations. The purpose of the map will *not* be to seek associational assistance or advice to systems. Nor will it be to create partnerships. Rather the map will be needed to understand better the center of local neighborhoods, civil society, and the mediating structures of locality. A set of enabling policies that remove barriers and provide support and incentives will be derived from this new map. Although some may be tempted to prescribe these policies, their basic priorities and design must be developed in concert by local associations. The associational community should not be expected to assume new authority and power through the powerful directives of systems. Rather, the power must grow as their territory is recognized, barriers are removed, and appropriate support is provided.

The third principle will be a legislative and planning focus that sees the community territory as the principal asset for investment. This will require a shift from focusing primarily on needs. A new compass will point toward the capacities of individuals and families and the resources of local communities and their associations as the primary beneficiary of system authority and resources.

An asset-focused family policy will be especially important in the new directions for policy-

makers. The principal family-policy questions will be:

- What economic resources are needed for a productive family?
- How can the local community of associations support the family's productivity?
- What uncontributed gifts, capacities, skills, and abilities do the family and its members have to offer the community?
- How can service systems support families so they can make these social and economic contributions?

### Policies for Youth

These new principles will understand youth as assets rather than as people "at risk" or in special need or as individuals preparing to be members of society. The practices growing from the 21st-century map will assume that:

- Every young person has a gift, talent, knowledge, or skill ready to be given, contributed, or marketed *now*.
- Every community is *in need* of these capacities if it is to be a healthful place to live.
- The primary method to meet this youthful need is for a local community to be organized to seek and use the capacities of youth in the productive center of society.
- To be in the productive center, youth will be systematically connected to the productive work of adults and the associations at the center of society. In this way they will become the beneficiaries of all of the functions of the association.

al community described earlier. Most important, they will be at the center of care, capacity, and citizenship rather than at the artificial and ineffective community substitute called service.

For these four landmarks to guide us toward a community of productive, useful, empowered young people, we will need to change a basic practice of most youth-serving systems. We will end the age-segregated bias of "youth programs" that isolate young people from the productive adults and associations at society's center. Instead, we will seek continuing local connection of citizens of all ages in common daily experiences of productive social, civic, and economic activity.

## Conclusion

We have explored the nature of systems, clients, and consumers. We have rediscovered the capacities of individuals and the associations that mobilize their abilities. We have seen the distinctive role that each must play in an effective community. We have envisioned a new map that incorporates all the known territory of the social universe. And we have charted the new family and children's policies necessary to travel through the 21st-century territory.

We should proceed, however, with a few cautions. The associational community, like systems, is a means—a tool. It has no inherent values. Therefore, as

was seen in Germany when the Nazis turned systems toward their evil purposes, Bosnia and Burundi present examples of local communities and their associations turning toward evil purposes. It is critical that we continue to struggle for a culture of civility.

Also, our 21st-century map does not include an explicit space for spirituality. Nonetheless, communities with mechanistic or individualistic cultures miss out on this foundational resource. The result is an arid space lacking the soul to lift citizens to a higher vision.

Finally, we must emphasize again that the local economic capacity for choice and sustenance is the threshold policy issue. We have economically abandoned too many communities and left at sea those citizens who have remained. These fellow citizens and their economic dilemmas are the first policy issue to be confronted in the 21st century. We need these fellow citizens to contribute if our communities are to become powerful once again.

## References

- Ellul, J. (1964). *The technological society*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- McKnight, J., & Kretzmann, J. (1993). *Building communities from the inside out*. Chicago: ACTA Publications.
- Polanyi, K. (1944). *The great transformation*. New York: Farrar and Rinehart.
- Toqueville, A., de. (1945). *Democracy in America*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

## LOOK WHAT'S NEW!

### ■ Program Outcome Evaluation: A Step-by-Step Handbook by Kristine L. Mika

This practical, hands-on volume is perfect for those who must conduct outcome evaluations. An excellent tool for program evaluators.

112 pgs Order #286 \$13.95

### ■ Marketing & Profit!

by Richard Steckel

This audiocassette from the author of *Filthy Rich and Other Nonprofit Fantasies* will help agencies apply innovative marketing concepts into everyday activities.

3 tapes Order #817 \$29.95

### ■ New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood

by James A. Levine with Edward W. Pitt

This timely book offers a new way of thinking and acting to help promote responsible fatherhood. An excellent resource guide for agencies.

234 pgs Order #820 \$22.00

For more information, call our publications department at 800-852-1944 or send us an email message to [publications@fsanet.org](mailto:publications@fsanet.org). Ask for our FREE catalog!



Families International, Inc.  
publishing in association with



Family Service America, Inc.