Research & Reviews: Journal of Educational Studies

THEORETICAL BACKDROP FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING TO DEAL WITH HOMELESSNESS IN BROWARD COUNTY

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Review Article

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ABSTRACT

The situation of homelessness and the populations in urban settings cost taxpayers money in treatment and cause financial drain with unplanned series of events and responses. The use of theories such as feminism theory, post-modern theory and structuralism theory help one to understand the situation and offer some insights into planning a response to maximize the effectiveness of local government institutions in coping with the influx of individuals in need of basic necessities.

Community planning, engagement and leadership are urgent needs in the public administration of local governments as documented by Newell. The current state of homelessness and imprisonment of mentally ill persons who commit minor crimes creates an escalating revolving door through the prison system and area hospitals that costs the Florida taxpayers an average of $168 million per year [1]. Many of the homeless persons suffer from a variety of mental illnesses and co-occurring problems of mental illness and substance abuse [2]. Various combination of theories support engagement of the local community to work with the government to create viable solutions to these problems. Among these are feminism theory, post-modernism theory and structuralism theory.

The application of theory to the analysis and hope of a solution to the homelessness crisis in Florida, particularly, can gain much by looking at the perspectives offered by feminism theory as it relates to creating a situation of understanding the individuals trapped by homelessness. Secondly, post-modernism theory offers insights into how an alternative world views with respect to engaging in a relationship with the afflicted individual/s. Thirdly, Structuralism theory sheds light on how an organizational response could be crafted to respond to the situation and operate in the most efficient manner possible.

The conditions of homelessness and inadequate treatment centers for the mentally ill and homeless of South Florida have been an ongoing problem. Broward County and nearby counties house many of these citizens in the jail for lack of appropriate treatment elsewhere after the DE institutionalism of the 1960's under President Kennedy's administration [3]. In a 1997 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails, 10% indicated they had a mental or emotional problem with 10 % stating they had spent an overnight stay in a mental hospital or treatment center [4]. The two categories combined resulted in a compilation of 16 % or 283,800 inmates with designation as mentally ill. The costs for this treatment are enormous in that they do not solve the problem, can cause further problems and re-incarcerations resulting in an escalating system of costs.

Exhibit 1

Identifiable Funding for Homeless Services

Totaled $168 Million in Fiscal Year 2002-03

Funding Source

(Federal Fiscal Year 2003 and State Fiscal Year 2002-03)

Amount of Funding

Federal funds dedicated to homeless

Continuum of Care programs $ 51,396,280

Emergency Shelter Grants 6,977,570

Other homeless grants 28,980,993

Federal funds available for general population, but used to fund local homeless programs* 8,331,611

State funds dedicated to homeless -

Office on Homelessness State Grants $ 9,731,564

Florida Housing Finance Corporation 5,000,000

Other homeless grants 10,986,805 2

Local funds $46,464,496 2

Estimated Total $167,869,319

OPPAGA collected information for the time period that includes Federal Fiscal Year 2003 and State Fiscal Year 2002-03. Funding amounts were reported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, State Office on Homelessness, and local homeless coalitions. 2 Estimates of these funding amounts were provided by only nine homeless coalitions. Total funding is likely to be greater. Source: OPPAGA analysis of various funding data [1].

Exhibit 2

Florida received more than its Pro-Rata amount of

McKinney-Vento Act Funding From Federal

Fiscal Years 2001 to 2003 Federal Fiscal Year

2001 2002 2003

Award Amount $48,692,766 $41,239,338 $51,396,280

Pro Rata Amount 37,106,859 37,416,000 37,416,000

Difference $11,585,907 $ 3,823,338 $13,980,280

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

*Note: The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was passed in 1987. It provides funding to state and local groups through formula or competitive grants to assist communities to develop housing and provide services for the homeless.

The current conditions and lack of attention to treatment of cause for incarcerating mentally ill and homeless persons can be described with the term "muddling through" as described by Lindblom [5]. By simply imprisoning homeless and mentally ill persons, the local government response does not have an overall goal or policy approach with objectives and direction.

In contrast, McGregor (1997) in his article on "The Human Side of Enterprise" deals with a comprehensive plan to attend to the human needs of public administration management. He speaks of physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, ego needs, self-fulfillment needs and management/motivation [6]. Can the feminism theory lead the way to a revised approach by public administrators to treat the mentally ill and homeless population that better addresses the needs of this sub-population? Post-modernism engages the participant with a degree of reflection and questioning of current norms and standards of behavior. What light can this theory shed upon the current state of treatment of the mentally ill and homeless imprisoned in county jails? Systems theory deals with institutional structure and responses to organizational ecology. Can this lead us to innovative structures in the community to adequately treat the mentally ill and homeless prison populations?

CONSIDERATION OF FEMINISM THEORY APPLICATIONS

Feminism theory applied to the conditions leading to homelessness indicates that concerned citizens are called to speak up for the disadvantaged persons, listen to their unique problems and attempt to rectify conditions that perpetuate homelessness. Feminism theory addresses power relationships, engagement with the individuals being studied and advocacy on behalf of the underprivileged. Through the use of feminism theory, the researcher/advocate examines the complexity of the conditions contributing to homelessness, the ad-hoc treatment programs given to these individuals and seeks to create an equilibrium state whereby the homeless may engage in a life of dignity. The solution would need to empower the persons faced with lack of shelter and support to create a self-sustaining niche in society. Many times there may be family problems, mental health problems, physiological problems or poverty. All conditions contribute to a situation that places the individuals and families in jeopardy for housing and sustenance. According to feminism theory, the need for advocates exists to argue for a better living condition that can support and empower the individuals who are currently at the mercy of the jail system or homeless shelters.

Feminism theory addresses issues of power relationships. In particular, these are concerned with "the other", a term used to describe anyone that is different the other may be a minority or an obstacle to one's own situation that must be dealt with. Understanding is often limited about the psyche of the other, and what it would take to satisfy their needs. Typically, the dominant power broker would like to disregard the other and move forward with his or her life. However, the other exists and is in the realm of consideration, either because he or she is observed sleeping in the park, panhandling on the street or passing by with a shopping cart of life's possessions with an odor of weeks without showers. These other people are a blemish to the lifestyle of the working class who tend to dismiss the homeless as having a lack of ambition or just plain lazy.

Examination of the complexities of conditions is a hallmark of the feminism theory. This theory steps beyond the traditional dichotomies of black/white, positive or negative and up or down. The gray areas are explored in feminism theory to understand the complexities beyond intuitive assumptions to explore deeper causes and relationships. Furthermore, students of feminism theory engage the client or the other in a relationship with dialogue to give voice to the other. In the course of conversing with the client, the researcher becomes more highly aware of the unique features of conditions. Moreover, the researcher learns from the perspective of the client patient what has contributed to the problems, and what goals the patient client is actually seeking.

In this manner, the feminism theory provides a method for empowering the client by listening to the person, taking note of his or her needs. In addition, the researcher in the feminist tradition would make an effort to seek redress for his or her client. The feminist tradition seeks to confront power relationships, advocate for the underprivileged and pursue empowerment through redress to allow the client to pursue a life of peace and dignity.

By thorough investigation of conditions and problems, engagement with the client under study to allow them to have a voice and translating the knowledge gained into a political position of advocating on behalf of the client, the researcher in the feminist theory position does much to empower their client. By clearly focusing on power relationships, the feminist theory researcher challenges the patterns of dominance and disenfranchisement to attempt to create conditions of greater equality and participation.

POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS OF POST-MODERNISM THEORY

According to post-modernism theory, there is no single construction of truth and interpretation of reality. The individual engaged in society experiences life according to a unique interpretation and attaches subjective meaning to the behavior exhibited in the course of life. Much of the time, society presents the individual with "memes" or abbreviated expressions with connotations of meaning embedded in the fabric of life [7]. For instance, the term of homelessness tends to connote a person/s along the roadside at night without shelter, or food. The person may ask passers- by for money or food. He or she may smell from lack of shower facilities. The individual may be perceived as a danger, a nuisance or a lost individual. What are we to do when we see them sleeping under bridges? The law-abiding individuals who observe these homeless persons create a symbolic interpretation and social construction of the persons with a personal subjective meaning. It may be that the person with the nice suit, car or job may perceive the homeless as lazy, incompetent or a problem for society. The homeless person may be desperate for a good meal, human contact or conversation. Whereby, the law-abiding persons may feel that they are doing the right things by going to work, and dealing with relationships as effectively as possible, the homeless person may be unable to cope with relationships after returning from war, or experiencing devastating losses or shocks in their life. Are we to interpret one individual as better than another because one is doing the right things and another is homeless? Or should we see that the homeless person has done the best they can do with the situations that they have been dealt in life.

In the post-modernist tradition, a dialogue with the homeless person can help us to understand the situation and needs of the client through the process of deconstruction and critique of assumptions [8]. Through this process, belief systems of the client are pursued, where these broke down and what needs are to be addressed to rectify the situation. Consider the case of the returning veteran who is plagued with post-traumatic stress. He may have assumed that his family would accept him with open arms upon his return from war. He may find that he is difficult to live with, unable to find work and provide an income and thereby unwelcome in the family home. With a breakdown of relationships, the individual is on the street looking for answers that he or she

was unable to achieve through conventional methods. Through this process, the post-modernist researcher seeks to understand and construct truth as viewed from the members of the process.

In the political tradition of postmodernism, the followers of the theory seek to challenge status-quo assumptions and engage in the advocacy of a new order [8]. The postmodernists seek to raise doubts about our objective assumptions of reality and construction of relationships and order. The theory tends to be outside the mainstream assumptions of reality and seeks to uncover new truths and a re-ordering of relationships in society to correspond to the world order that corresponds to their subjective interpretation. Basic assumptions of order that are often taken for granted are challenged by the postmodernists who seek to examine the world and its structures from a critical perspective.

According to postmodernists, individuals in society are trained to respond in a certain manner by exposure to subjective interpretations of reality at an age as early as kindergarten. Dichotomies such as the animals and plants distinction are fundamental to our understanding of the world. Even the kindergartners are perceptive to these basic distinctions [9]. By challenging our assumptions and our understanding of reality through the socially constructed lenses of mainstream society, the postmodernists seek to discover a new truth outside of the tightly construed hierarchies of societal understanding. Given that postmodernists will not advocate that the new truth is a universal truth, but an alternative view worthy of thought and reflection.

According to Chan and Garrick, postmodernists have a distinct role to play in social theory and organizational theory. For instance, the social constructions of reification, language terminology and applications and pursuit of universal truth are believed to create conditions of domination and suppression within the mainstream society [10]. Through analysis of our everyday language and understanding of order, most individuals create a niche that replicates the social order of society and is inherently stable resulting in incremental change, not radical breaks. This is due to the social construction that relegates individual and group critical discussions to the counter culture and thereby seeks to undermine the power of alternative structures.

Post-modernism theory questions structures and current conditions to determine subjective meanings and underlying messages. If applied to the situation of the homeless population housed in county jails or emergency hospitals, one would question why persons with no home should be housed in jail or emergency mental health shelters. Are these persons considered dangerous, confused or incapable of holding a conversation? What about considerations such as the losses these persons may have experienced with an inability to cope? This interpretation would require the treating health practitioner to engage in more understanding and therapeutic manner. Examination of spoken and unspoken messages, questioning and challenging the status quo leads to development of solutions that can attempt to cure the structural solutions which do not solve the problems.

A common term in American society is "every man for himself" or the Marlboro cigarette image of the strong man/individual. If we accept these assumptions, there is no acceptance of responsibility of the vulnerable homeless individuals in a society of worker bees. A nebulous category of homeless individuals is constructed in the eyes of the public that these persons are worthless and blight to society. Members of society are socialized to accept this reality and feel little responsibility for intervention and concerted effort to change the situation.

Postmodernism theory seeks to rectify these social and organizational systems, by critiquing the dominant views in mainstream society and uncovering new ways of viewing reality. Through deconstruction and critiques of the reification, and the language used to apply value-laden labels, the postmodernists seek to provide alternatives to the current order and supporting logical constructionism. The development of alternative views and perspectives on world order and societal meanings is sought through exploring of critical analysis of assumptions and subjective meanings. By challenging the status quo and dominant ordering of society, the postmodernists seek to advocate for alternative perspectives that can lead to the way of a more holistic and inclusive view of the human condition.

APPLICATION OF STRUCTURALISM SCHOOLS

Through Structuralism theory, we examine changes in the institutional environment and how these changes affect ecological conditions. Furthermore, what institutional changes result from the ecological modifications [11]? In structural theory, we compare the organizational structure with the organizational environment to determine forms of fit [12]. Organizational structures can be categorized on a scale from simple to complex and organizational environment can be ranked according to its homogeneity features or heterogeneous nature. The purpose is to better understand the organizational structure as an institution and its performance within the environment it is situated. One seeks to maximize performance by understanding the organization within its environment, its adaptability and "fit" to accomplish its mission objectives. Considerations of survival and change are also examined for understanding to further the existence of institutional structure. Drazin and Van de Ven (1985) found that the correlation between institutional structure and contextual environment are more related for the higher performance organizations [12]. The high performance organization would be characterized by a complex structure and a heterogeneous environment.

How does one apply the systems approach to the design of a high performance organization? The design would need to take into account the environment, existing contingencies, alternative structures and the use of performance measurement criteria to construct an organization related to the needs of the situation. Contingencies affect the complexity of the organizational scope requirement of adaptability. By seeking a deeper understanding of the organizational environment and context, the appropriate

ecological institutional structure can be developed with a good fit for the community of study. It is through the ecological understanding that the interaction of structure and task process takes place. It is important to remember that grand designs don't play out in a universal mode, but are particularistic and enacted in a micro fashion at the local level [12].

Organizational systems can be understood by their properties. These properties consist of the concept of "class" of organization with corresponding characteristics [13]. An example would be commonalities among county police organizations. Through an understanding of the organizational class, certain assumptions can be made about the structure, hierarchy and behavior characteristics. Modifications are made to the broader category of class as the organization adapts to its environment and interacts with other actors. Thereby, organizations can be understood on their degrees of openness or closed characteristics.

Ashmos and Huber caution the reader as to the assumptions of open systems as being inherently better than closed systems. For instance, early theorists conceived as organizational structures as "loosely coupled" with the environment, thereby acknowledging the interaction of institutions with the corresponding local conditions [13].

What is needed, according to Ashmos and Huber, is a proper classification system of organizations to properly understand the characteristics of institutional structure. These consist of an "input transducer" who gathers information from the outside environment, an "internal transducer" who receives the information about other subsystem units in the organization and possible modifications in structure. Furthermore, there is a "channel and net" that communicates information throughout the system. The "decoder" interprets the information received from the input transducer into an understandable language for the organization. The next step is the "associator" who begins the learning process for the organization by making relationships among the information received. The "memory" component stores information through files and data modules. At the top is the "decider", who compiles the information fed to the organization and communicates "information outputs" throughout the organization that determine the policy and direction of the organization [13].

The size and complexity of the organization affect how many deciders there are in the organization, with large, complex systems having multiple deciders. Similarly, the "lower-level systems have single deciders" [14]. The effect of multiple deciders on organizational politics, conflict resolution and formation of sub-groups of interest results in an organizational complexity described as a "living system paradigm" [13]. This paradigm recognizes the importance of environment and ecological adaptation in the formation and modification over time of organizational structure.

On the other hand, the performance of the organization is a result of the interaction of the many components that make up the whole [13]. These components may arise from within the organization or its environment. The open systems model tends to ascribe the "importation of energy, matter and information" as a feature of the interaction with the environment [15,16]. If we consider that most events that occur are unrelated in origin and causal linkages are relatively uncommon, the term "loosely coupled" would bear relevance as to the relationship of the organization with its environment [17].

The open systems concept of "equifinality" describes the conditions whereby different contexts and inputs lead organizations to similar decision states. Furthermore, the organizations arriving at the similar states will attribute different reasons and courses of behavior to arrive at the state [18]. In common language, we could describe the concept of equifinality in the phrase of "an idea whose time has come."

The living systems paradigm as advanced by Ashmos and Huber offers promising possibilities in its utilization of classification categories of open systems described above [13]. Furthermore, the classification system encompasses systems typologies that can be useful tools for a framework of analysis. By following a pattern of classification in organizational analysis, the researcher can better understand the source of inputs to the institutional structure and future directions. Thereby, the categories described above can provide a useful method for understanding organizational characteristics.

Ultimately, the performance of the organization is the measurement of its success in achieving objectives defined by the decision makers and stakeholders. According to Drazin and Van de Ven, the performance of an organization depends upon its fit within the contingencies faced by environmental conditions. Four levels of performance are described: "the ideal type, the highest performing organization, the moderately performing organization and the lowest performing organization" [12]. Performance is affected by organizational structure and the context in which it performs. In analyzing organizational performance, an examination of "the fit" of reported data needs to be tested for "internal consistency." This is necessary due to the complexity of some organizations and the contingencies in the environment that affect outcomes. By examining on the basis of two factors: degree of fit between organizational structure and its method of process, and secondly, between the interaction with the environment, we draw conclusions about the behavior of the organization.

In consideration of forms of fit, Drazin and Van de Ven have come up with the "task-contingency theory of work-unit design." Within this model, the organizational work units will reflect "specialization, standardization and discretion." These "modes" reflect the complexity of the work difficulty and a method of systematically structuring the work in logical processes [12].

Natural selection plays a role in the organizational form and fit in that the range of forms are limited due to forces of "Darwinian selection" [7]. Organizational forms that are responsive to the environment are reified due to their enduring capabilities of survival while the less adaptive forms are cast aside. Thereby, there are recurring patterns that exhibit a form which fits within

the societal context. This organizational structure will exhibit command and integration of "structure and process variables" [12]. The managerial archetypes will reflect the capabilities of inculcating and disseminating the general broad policies and directives designed at the decision maker level to minimize and manage task uncertainty.

Singh and Lumsden reference organizational speciation or the creation of new organizational forms that coalescence after various organizational institution managers seek a new form of adaptation. Speciation is a unique adaptation to macro organizations in order to affect results at a micro-level in community settings. The organizational theory tends to be directed to populations, and with demographic change, there needs to be an "intraorganizational evolution". Furthermore, leading organizations in society that foresee the need to initiate change in organizational adaptation need to engage in a condition of "co-evolution" by developing "coupled, generally non-linear, demographic equations" [11].

APPLICATION OF THEORIES TO HOMELESSNESS POLICIES AND TREATMENT PRACTICES

The appearance of homeless persons, either singly or with a family of children generally results in environmental uncertainty. They are often found in public places and dealt with by public agencies such as police arrests, institutionalization in emergency treatment centers such as psychiatric centers or emergency medical rooms. The homeless are powerless without a voice. Good Samaritan centers run by church agencies and not for profit agencies share some of the public burden by providing shelters, counseling and meals. Centers such as the Miami Rescue Mission operating in Miami and Broward Counties, the Lamb Center in Fairfax, Virginia and Pathways centers nationwide along with others, aim to rehabilitate these people through counseling and training programs. It is the advocacy and empowerment of homeless persons that feminism theory supports.

Recently, there has been a growing awareness in the County management levels including the Broward Sheriff's Office that current methods of treatment are inadequate to deal with the problems of homeless and mentally ill prisoners adequately. A task force was initiated at the County level and a series of studies have been undertaken at the Sheriff's office to attempt to better manage the problem [19]. In the postmodernist tradition, there is a critical reflection of the issue of mentally ill and homeless persons being housed in jail along with other inmates. After contemplating alternative methods of treatment, and awareness rising, the Sheriff's Office is contemplating the construction of a forensic hospital to properly treat those persons needing medication, psychiatric and psychological treatment to cope in the world outside the institution of jail. The Sheriff has expressed a personal commitment to the completion of such an organization. Through interaction with the environment of county and community leaders and stakeholders, a more helpful institutional and organizational adaptation is being sought. County leaders and community stakeholders are joining forces to advocate for the homeless institutionalized veterans, and help them receive benefits from the Veteran's Benefits they deserve. County housing authorities are seeking new methods to construct low-cost housing in Broward County to provide a place for the rehabilitated persons and families to live once they have been released. The environment is complex and there is multiple decision makers involved.

On many levels, a state of equifinality has reached a conscious consensus. There needs to be a proper institutional and organizational response to the hazards of homelessness. Not only do the individuals suffer who lack comprehensive treatment, the state and county bear the costs of emergency care for these individuals. If a specialized setting is coordinated with a team of individuals to care for the patients (clients, if you will), with organizational coordination and support in terms of community planning to provide for job re-entry, housing and supportive, therapeutic counseling to assist the adjustment of persons into mainstream society, all concerned parties stand to gain.

Furthermore, with mobilization and break-downs of extended family in the modern society, it is possible to loose contact with family members. With the fast pace of modern society, it is not common for persons to persist in treatment and understanding of "problem individuals". With the advent of throwaway society, divorces increase and the bonds to long-term commitments of family members through thick and thin are weakened and the individual is free of family ties to roam as they see fit. As a result, many of these misfits find themselves unable to find money, housing, jobs and a sustainable lifestyle independent of the shelters operated by the public and charities. With the lack of community of support, finding a job and affordable housing may be a task of insurmountable difficulty. As a result, the vulnerable individuals and families may be institutionalized in emergency hospitals, jails and temporary shelters due to lack of ability to provide for themselves. There is a need for evolution of organization of a new form that addresses the need of at-risk individuals to cope with the realities of today's society.

As indicated by Drazin and Van de Ven, there is a need for an organizational fit to deal with the complexities of homelessness of the mentally ill, veterans and other lost souls [12]. The current conditions correspond to the organizational environment described as low performance organizations performing in a simple organizational structure. Treatment is applied ad-hoc through various shelters and prison medication prescriptions with therapeutic group programs.

Efforts have been made by Broward County planning organizations to move toward a high performance organizational structure with a complex organizational structure. By the establishment of a county-wide planning effort of coordination of stakeholders, the stakeholders in the community are moving toward a program of providing for the disadvantaged groups by taking steps to provide low-cost housing, special prisons to treat with mentally ill inmates (about 16% of total population) [4]. The number of veterans in homeless shelters has been documented by many authors [1].

With the level of task uncertainty of unplanned for visitors at homeless shelters or squatting at community parks, the county is making efforts to reduce task uncertainty by formulating a coordinated plan to properly care for and assist this disadvantaged group. With the backing of the Broward Sheriff, the proposed new psychiatric inmate hospital is envisioned to create a specialized center to adequately treat the mentally ill sub-population of the jail inmates. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the best practices of mental hospital treatments will be applied resulting in a degree of specialization in accordance with Drazin and Van de Ven [12]. The workers of these units will be experienced with these programs and specialists with training and knowledge.

County housing authorities are discussing methods of accommodating these individuals after treatment by building low-cost housing with tax-free bulk quantity materials purchases at the home improvement stores (Discussion with anonymous community housing authority, June 2005). The creation of a support system with a plan for post-treatment further institutionalizes the new structure of creating a viable living environment for recent inmates. The Sheriff has already begun a program of day re-entry programs whereby the inmates gradually re-enter the community through a series of responsibility assignments such as job interviews, counseling programs and other support mechanisms such as a budget to acquire clothes for the interview (employee newspaper dated April 2005).

If one considers the "living systems paradigm", the importance of environmental and ecological interaction and harmony are of utmost importance. This model includes the complexity of multiple decision makers to construct an institution capable of responding to a multiplicity of inputs to produce a cogent response. In a sense, this model corresponds to the community planning models that pay close attention to the application of policies at the local levels. Accounting for the processing of information through a large institution such as the Broward Sheriff's Office, through the input, internal transducers, channel and net, decoder, learning begins through the associate mechanism [13]. It is this feature that responds proactively to the environment to create a response by engaging in directed activity aimed at finding a solution to the given environmental problem. In this case, the persons of the BSO who participated in or helped found the community stakeholders planning meeting of Broward County to develop the 10 year plan were essential in negotiating future progress of the county. Indeed, a complexity of decision-makers was involved in this planning with a focus on plans and integration of various members of the community to create a local response to the conditions of homelessness. The OPPAGA Report indicates that homelessness costs Florida $168 million dollars per year [1]. With this cost, the phenomena are a crisis deserving special attention.

In recognition that performance of Broward County in response to this condition results from the combined activities of the many organizations that are affected, the actors in the community participated in planning and discussion sessions characterized by the open systems model. Through this dialogue, the benefits of the open model could be reaped, such as the "importation of energy, matter and information" [15,16]. If one accepts that the appearance of homeless persons in the environment is not causally linked to any one set of circumstances, then we can describe the condition as "loosely coupled". Thereby, the local government planners and responsible parties seek a coordinated organizational response that can effectively create an ecological fit in the county by dealing with the persons with no homes, no medical insurance and no money. Without treatment, it is found that the persons find themselves in emergency medical rooms causing further cost to the community and government.

It is acknowledgement of the importance of the local response in the application of a policy that has larger components that BSO has engaged with community stakeholders to develop. Grand theory and national problems are most effectively treated at the local level with development of an appropriate environmental fit to the problems needing attention. In this case, the BSO has taken the proactive role by actively engaging in planning for a local response to attempt to solve the problems of homelessness.

By socially constructing these individuals as persons who may have temporarily been dealt with overwhelming circumstances out of their control, not lazy or stupid, the community seeks to address the situation responsibly. With the backing of the community stakeholders and leaders to advance the plight of homeless individuals to create conditions whereby they can receive both physical and psychological treatment, assistance in finding low-cost housing and federal benefits to which they are entitled, the local leaders are behaving in accordance with the best parts of feminism theory. By addressing issues of powerlessness, listening and engaging in the client through therapy, and empowering these persons to find housing and jobs, the community applies feminism theory.

To arrive at this condition of community planning and development of local ecological institutional responses that fit within the community, the local planners had to develop and cultivate a critical logic to understand conditions of homeless. These thoughts would be counter to the prevalent logic that homeless persons are lazy and blight to society or that these are individuals lacking any worth. When dealing with the high costs of conventional treatment of homeless persons by governmental organizations, a new logic was needed. By engaging and creating alternative descriptions of the condition leading to alternative methods of social construction and treatment, post-modernism theory bore fruit.

In post-modernism theory, the academic would question the conditions giving rise to homelessness as did a series of interview reports with homeless persons in the Washington Post in the 1980's. With a new understanding of conditions giving rise to homelessness, such as loss of family, mental illness, economic conditions and more, the researcher begins to understand in more depth the nature of the social problem. By understanding the conditions more thoroughly outside of the mainstream social constructions, the researcher can create alternative logic patterns and a better fit of solution to problem. In the regard of

engagement of alternative views of world perspectives by interacting with the client or patient, however one sees it, the feminist and post-modernists approaches interplay and mutually reinforces the social construction of the problems under consideration. The critical view of post-modernists corresponds to the challenge of authority and power positions of the feminist perspectives.

The repertoire of possible institutional responses corresponds to the structural theories, and the environment, contingencies and appropriate fit. Interaction between environment and institutions, with the interplay of actors. Structures and compositions of institutions, as well as the nature of processing information and deciding what to do with it are characteristics of the structural organizational theories.

With an ultimate goal of creating a high performance organization that is ecologically appropriate and suited for the task, only a system of community planning stakeholders could create such a possible outcome. In order to develop a community plan to rehabilitate homeless and mentally ill persons requires commitment from the leaders in the community and operationalized through local institutional units. The support of a key player is the BSO organization. While most sheriff's offices are categorized in a certain mold as a law-enforcing organization, recent advances such as community policing and citizen involvement indicates that the sheriff's office is stepping outside of traditional social construction as punitive enforcers to a community supporter. With forward thinking members of such organizational classes who engage in post-modernism critical dialogue with members of community organizations, new models of organizational response at the local level are possible. Some of the persons at the local level may be engaging in the feminist theory of empowerment of the underprivileged, challenge of authority positions. The post modernists also correspond to the feminism theory adherents by challenging power structures and oppressive forms of organizational construction and implementation.

It takes a structuralism model that is capable of molding the divergent views and perspectives of the post-modernists and feminism theory advocates into an organizational structure by designing an institution capable of performing at the local level in an appropriate ecological fit. This would be accomplished through the blossoming of open systems of organizations capable of engaging in dialogue with a multiplicity of community actors in a complex, inclusive planning task force. This task force was focused on producing benefits for the community at the local county level. The purpose was to find a meaningful method of accommodating homeless persons so that they could be released to society and capable of stable employment and housing, given appropriate social and material support.

The task force developed a series of approaches to empower the homeless and mentally disabled persons who might be incarcerated or institutionalized. One of these is to assist these persons to receive benefits for which they are entitled such as social security and veterans benefits from the federal government. Furthermore, appropriate psychological and medical treatment is sought for them while in an institution. It is hoped that the treatments will enable these persons to return to normal functioning in society thus rendering them capable of holding a job and stable housing. Education is available for persons in jail such as the G.E.D. program. In addition, affordable housing is being investigated as a method of allowing the persons released from institutions for achieving a home address that they can make their own.

The structuralism theory implementation of a complex organizational planning mechanism targeted at the local community with a broad set of actors is the group that is capable of implementing the desires and directives that came out of the feminist and post-modernist approaches. Through the buy-in of key actors at the county level, such as the Sheriff's office, the ideas that came up through critical and empowering belief systems was able to come together in a unified policy agreement. It is the intention of the stakeholders involved to implement a proactive, empowering and alternative method of treatment to the homeless population that is capable of producing results for the public sector in terms of reduced recidivism and unfunded medical costs.

SUMMARY

Through the application of three public administration theories: feminism, post-modernism and structuralism theories, the Broward county has arrived at consensus and mutual agreement among the series of stakeholders who wish to make inroads into the serious problems of homelessness and ethical treatment of the mentally ill. The feminism and post-modernism theories were particularly apt in critiquing the status quo and challenging traditions of treatment methods. By advocating for the homeless clients and addressing oppressive treatment systems in the post-modernist style, the advocates on behalf of the homeless populations in Broward County were able to advance their cause. By proposing alternative methods of treatment that were elicited from listening to the homeless clients and engaging in conversation and dialogue, or to give a voice to the homeless population and promoting their causes to higher levels, the feminism theory principles worked effectively. The post-modern concepts of challenging status quo, critically evaluating current systems of order and proposing alternative treatment methods for homeless citizens advanced the alternatives and possible enhancements to current treatment systems. The structuralism theory with its elaborate systems, categories and analysis or organizational structure and form was useful in the design of an organizational response. By weaving the various theoretical analyses into the interpretation of confronting the homelessness public issues situation, they were able to incorporate an understanding of people, the power structure within the "constructs" of the organization and a flexible response in terms of institutional capacity to create a workable solution to cope. The group that formed to plan for the future of Broward County and took into consideration an ecological system with a fit in the county setting and was an effective alliance of concerned stakeholders to advance the effectiveness of a public policy problem, namely homelessness.

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