

Martin Abravanel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The role of broker or interpreter was seen by several people as crucial to the proper interpretation and application of research results. This role reportedly may be played by the chief analyst in a government agency, who speaks directly to a policy-making official, or by a scholar with access to a variety of policy makers as well as the media.

Rather than concentrating on what political scientists and other social scientists can give the policy maker, the discussion focused on the government as a consumer of social research.

Much of the debate was spurred by the ideas advanced by Peter Szanton of Hamilton, Rabinovitz, and Szanton, Inc. in his new book, *Not Well Advised*.



Future political scientist Seth Beneset with Anne Kampelman at the Child Care Center at the Annual Meeting.

A Report on the Plenary Session: Welfare State With Us Always?

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The welfare state may well vary in its generosity but "will not vary in its existence," according to Theodore Lowi, chair of the plenary session on The State of the Welfare State. Lowi argued that the welfare state is a permanent fixture, rooted in a fundamental political response to weakness in the capitalist system, embedded in our moral structure, and defended by a vested interest which is vastly bureaucratized. Consequently, the key question is not whether the welfare state will exist but rather how it will be changed.

Other panel participants, Frances Fox Piven of Boston College, Aaron Wildavsky of the University of California, Berkeley, and Leonard Silk of *The New York Times*, disagreed on how the Reagan Administration's actions in the welfare realm should be interpreted.

Economic vs. Political Rights

Piven saw the Reagan Administration as trying to revive a doctrine out of the American past—the separation of political rights from economic rights. According to this analysis, American history generally has not allowed for the use of political rights to alleviate economic situations; popular participation left people helpless and the promise of democracy was defeated. Despite this *laissez-faire* doctrine, capital always has turned to government, asking for tariffs, subsidies, loans, and other policies; the result was an "alliance of state and capital obscured by constitutionalism."

In Piven's view the welfare programs of the thirties and sixties represented the victory of popular struggle: "Political rights did indeed become the vehicle by which ordinary people sought economic rights against unemployment and destitution." Piven regards the Reagan Administration as committed to restricting the expansion of welfare and constricting popular political conflict. To illustrate the Administration's priorities, Piven stated that the Administration has shown a pre-

ference for sugar subsidies to food stamps in its negotiations with Congress over budget cuts. As Piven put it, "Nowhere is it [the Reagan Administration] proposing to reduce state intervention on behalf of capital."

Not End of World

In contrast Wildavsky emphasized that the Reagan Administration is intellectually committed to the original welfare state—the social insurance state—but is opposed to regulations and subsidies. Wildavsky raised the issue of whether the regulatory, subsidizing, and social insurance state are all necessary to one another.

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Noting that welfare spending is being reduced to 1979 levels and that one-twenty-fifth of the social insurance state was being taken away, Wildavsky downplayed the Administration's budget cuts. These reductions do not, in Wildavsky's view, mean "the end of the world," and can best be understood in the light of current economic conditions, including the principle that "when people's incomes are going down they are less disposed to give it away." Wildavsky defended the Reagan Administration against charges that its policies are "mean" by asserting that what has happened to social security is too much of a good thing and that it is unfair for social security to rise faster than the incomes of wage earners.

Silk took the position that the Reagan Administration was intensifying trends initiated earlier, since a marked slowdown in the growth of non-defense spending had occurred prior to Reagan's election. He characterized the Reagan Administration as both radical and intellectual, pointing to the presence of White House aide Martin Anderson, author of *Welfare: The Political Economy of Welfare Reform in the United States*, as an

example of conservative thinking on welfare issues. Silk took issue with Anderson's thesis that the War on Poverty had been won and wondered if the people in Bedford Stuyvesant had been so informed.

According to Silk, Anderson used programs like food stamps to demonstrate that poverty had been reduced but is unwilling to continue the programs that allegedly have won the war. In addition to discussing arguments advancing or attacking the welfare state, Silk raised questions concerning alternative definitions of the welfare state and the role of the state in an advanced, industrial society.

Too Many Subsidies?

With respect to the nature of the welfare state, Lowi called attention to its "inherent contradictions," to the contradictory demands or purposes of welfare. These include providing for economic security, buying loyalty or political support, reinforcing the work ethic, and others. According to Silk, there may be a built-in tendency for welfare to be too extensive in a democracy, for efforts to help the less fortunate to turn into efforts to provide subsidies for all.

Similarly, Wildavsky asserted that "Those who pay and those who receive look more and more alike"; while Lowi stated that "We may be going broke by trying to help everyone in order to help the poor." In light of the present fiscal crisis, Lowi concluded by suggesting that the contradictions inherent in the welfare state cannot be solved by reform and that the question is, "Which set of contradictions are you prepared to live with?"

Caucus for a New Political Science: Plenary Session Report

Feminist Strategies for the Eighties

The condition of women in society in recent years has worsened, yet women are