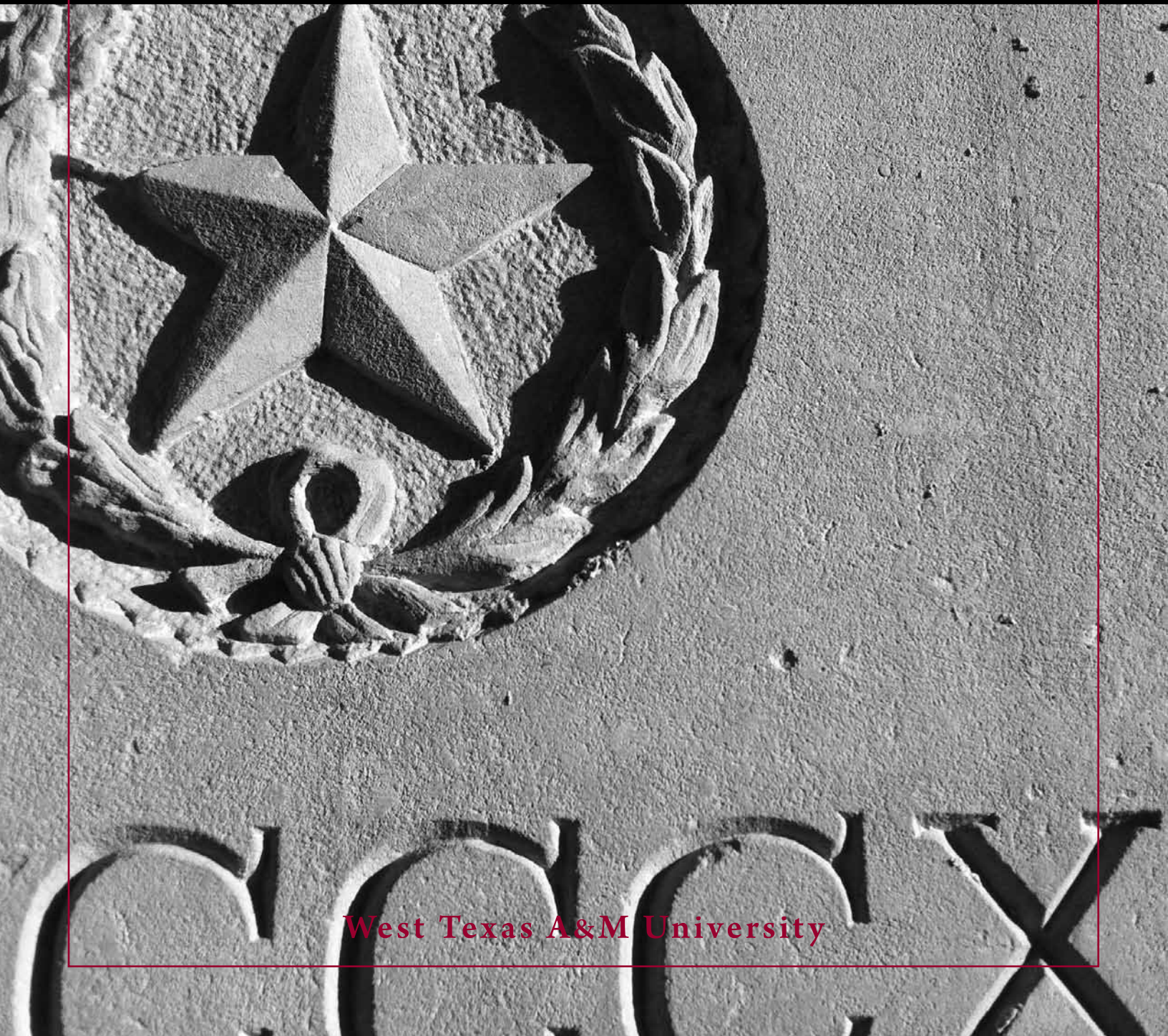


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# Searching in Vain: The Failed Attempt to Find Ronald Reagan in 2008

GREG JOHNSTON JR., WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

**ABSTRACT:** *This article provides an analysis of the Republican Party nomination for the presidential election of 2008 and discusses the result of the general election. It examines the campaigns of Mike Huckabee, Mitt Romney, Ron Paul, and John McCain as they battled their way through the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Florida primaries. Candidates' views on the issues, their financial support, and individual campaign strategies are considered and compared. The article concludes that the winner of the Republican nomination, McCain, struggled to invigorate the Republican Party and garner enough support to win in the general election. His performance in the campaign is measured and critiqued.*

The 2008 presidential election will be remembered as one of the most significant elections in the history of the United States. In the Democratic primary, a woman ran against an African American man for the nomination. Meanwhile the Republican Party attempted to find another Ronald Reagan-like nominee. Republican candidates strove to compare themselves with Reagan, yet no single candidate embodied Reaganite conservative values. The Gingrich Republican movement of the 1990s had morphed into Bush-fueled pessimism (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p.229). The low public approval of President George W. Bush—about 30% in 2008—created a general distaste for the Republican Party and further decreased the party's chances of winning the presidential election (Jones, 2009).

The search for a candidate in the mold of Ronald Reagan gathered a wide range of individuals across the ideological spectrum. On the left stood former New York City Mayor, Rudy Giuliani, a pro-choice, pro-gun control supporter of gay rights (OnTheIssues.org, 2008b). Despite these positions, Giuliani made a serious effort at a campaign, although he put very little effort into campaigning in Iowa and New Hampshire, focusing on winning the Florida primary and the "Super Tuesday" states (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p.266). On the right end of the ideological spectrum stood Ron Paul, a libertarian-leaning congressman from Texas, who was affectionately known as "Dr. No" because he voted against nearly every piece of legislation and federal policy he came across (Gwyne, 2001). Between these were several other contenders who represented slightly different views.

Part one of this paper explores the campaigns of the four top contenders for the nomination: Mike Huckabee,

Mitt Romney, Paul, and John McCain, focusing on the positive and negative aspects of their campaigns. Part two focuses on the winner of the nomination, John McCain, and his experiences in the general election, critiquing his strategy while acknowledging the historical context of the election.

## I. Finding the Nominee

### *Mike Huckabee*

Although Huckabee represents core conservative values, he shares something in common with Bill Clinton—and it's not enjoying cigars. Both men are from a small town in Arkansas called Hope. Huckabee's rural roots presented him with a huge challenge: nobody knew who he was. As Huckabee wrote in his book *Do the Right Thing*, "It was my challenge as a virtually unknown candidate to convince [conservatives] that they ought to give 'hope' one more chance," (2009, p. 7).

Despite the fact that Huckabee was an unknown candidate, he was far from inexperienced. After serving as a senior pastor in Baptist churches for 12 years, he won a special election for the lieutenant governorship in Arkansas (Huckabee, 2009, p. 48). Huckabee attempted to run for an open Senate seat in 1996, but changed his mind when the sitting governor Jim Tucker stepped down due to his involvement with the Whitewater scandal, and assumed the governorship of Arkansas (Smothers, 1996, & Sack, 1996). He governed the Natural State for ten and a half years. Concerning his experience, Huckabee (2009) wrote:

I was not some guy who stepped out of a pulpit one Sunday and decided to become president. I was a guy who had spent longer than any of the major contenders for the office in the executive position of actually running a government, with measurable results in education, health care, infrastructure, prison reform, and the like. (p. 49)

Huckabee brought his Christian-driven political views to the campaign for the presidential nomination in 2008. His political views also included an adamantly pro-life, anti-gun control, and a tough-on-crime platform (OnTheIssues.org, 2008a). Additionally, Huckabee supported a constitutional amendment defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman (Huckabee, p. 19). Huckabee also highly criticized the current income tax system, proposing to eliminate the IRS and implement what he called a “fair tax,” a federal sales tax (Huckabee, 2009, p. 152–169).

While Huckabee’s stance on these issues would likely have compelled the support of many conservatives, Americans were still unfamiliar with him. Huckabee’s strategy to promote his candidacy was to focus on winning enough support in Iowa to beat his opponents and win some name recognition. According to the authors of *The Battle for America 2008*, “Huckabee had a one state strategy: Iowa” (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p. 270). His message appealed to the religious right, and many pastors actively endorsed his candidacy (Huckabee, 2009, p. 2). To combat his lack of name recognition and money Huckabee turned to the debates to promote his candidacy (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p. 269). Indeed, Huckabee wrote, “The debates became a major avenue of our getting the attention of the people for the message” (p. 58).

As a little known candidate, securing the funding to win the nomination was one of Huckabee’s tallest hurdles. In Iowa, his main challenger was Romney, who had millions of dollars at his disposal. According to the website OpenSecrets.org, Huckabee raised only \$13 million for the entire campaign (OpenSecrets.org, 2008a). Although Huckabee won the Iowa caucus, he had no real plan of what to do next (Balz & Johnson, 2009). McCain was making a comeback and was focusing hard on New Hampshire, Giuliani was banking his entire campaign on winning Florida, and Fred Thompson presented a challenge in South Carolina among the religious right.

After the Iowa Caucus, Huckabee fought to hold on to the campaign as long as he could, but after Super Tuesday, it was clear that McCain would be the Republican candidate. Lack of funding and lack of name recognition

severely diminished his chances of winning, as did a divided Republican party.

### **Mitt Romney**

Huckabee wasn’t the only devout religious candidate running for the Republican nomination in 2008. Mitt Romney was raised in the Mormon Church and had served as a missionary in France for two years (*New York Times*, 2010). Romney was a successful businessman, father of five, and a Harvard graduate. He served as the governor of Massachusetts for four years.

While name recognition was an initial problem for Romney, he had enough money to pour into his own campaign to make sure he was noticed. In contrast to Huckabee’s \$13 million (none of which came from his own pocket), Romney raised about \$107 million total, 42% of it from his own wealth (OpenSecrets.org, 2008b). The top individual contributions were from groups that included Goldman Sachs (\$234,275), Citigroup (\$178,200), Merrill Lynch (\$173,025), and Lehman Brothers (\$144,100); all top financial institutions (OpenSecrets.org, 2009b). Romney’s goal, according to Balz and Johnson, was to “win early and run on momentum . . . focusing on Iowa and New Hampshire” (2009, p. 251). Additionally,

The Romney team assumed he would never move up dramatically in the national polls until he demonstrated support in the early states. By sinking millions into early ads, he began to be taken more seriously. With McCain hobbled by fund-raising problems and Giuliani following an uncertain strategy, Romney soon led the polls in both Iowa and New Hampshire. Romney’s media advisor [Alex] Castellanos said, “When you put Mitt Romney on TV, good things happen.” (p. 252)

Romney thought he could pour money into these early states and knock the other candidates out of the game. What he did not expect was for Huckabee to be successful in Iowa. Evangelical Christians composed 60% of the Iowa Caucus; out of these, Huckabee won almost 50%, and Romney won about 20% (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p. 239). Not only was Romney’s faith an issue with evangelical voters, but he had the reputation of supporting gay rights and abortion. Opponents accused Romney of being a “one term governor from one of the most liberal states in the nation,” and, as McCain emphasized, “an opportunist and a flip-flopper” (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p. 239).

Losing in Iowa broke the momentum Romney was depending on. In the New Hampshire debate Huckabee,

McCain, and Fred Thompson all teamed up on Romney, criticizing his support for a planned withdrawal of troops in Iraq based on a timetable, a step they saw as a concession of failure, and his change in ideology (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p.280). McCain engaged in a serious campaign in New Hampshire and, although he and Romney split the Republican votes, won the votes of the Independents, further diminishing Romney's chance of winning the nomination (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p. 281). McCain was a huge obstacle for Romney. His campaign depended on Rudy Giuliani to slow down McCain's momentum in Florida (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p.284). Unfortunately for Romney, Giuliani faced issues with scandals from his history as mayor of New York City and lost support in Florida, and Romney lost to McCain.

Although Romney preached a message that was clearly conservative, had enough money to fund a strong campaign, and had the knowledge and experience to be president, he had several things working against him. One of these was his Mormon faith. Although there are many similarities between Christians and Mormons, this religious schism prevents the majority of Christian evangelicals in particular from identifying with or understanding many Mormons. This was evident when Huckabee won the support of evangelicals in Iowa. Another issue that haunted Romney was his alleged support of gay marriage and abortion, even though Romney had clearly changed his stance on these issues. Finally, he depended on winning in Iowa and New Hampshire yet failed to do so.

### **Ron Paul**

Ron Paul graduated with a medical degree from Duke University and served as a flight surgeon in the U.S. Air Force (Who Is Ron Paul?). He spent a total of about seventeen years in Congress as a representative from Texas before the 2008 presidential run. His advantages were name recognition and a consistent, unique approach to politics. He garnered support through a comprehensive grassroots movement, utilizing the internet to spread a message that resonated with those who were displeased with the direction the country was taking. In a 2007 article in the New York Times, Christopher Caldwell wrote, "The main thing that [Paul's message] has done thus far is to serve as a clearinghouse for voters who feel unrepresented by mainstream Republicans and Democrats."

In 2004, Keith Poole, a political science professor at the University of California, conducted a study that measured how conservative or liberal congressmen and presidents were. Poole found that Paul was the most conservative member of Congress. His findings are not

only consistent with statistical evidence, but also correspond with the personalities and political views of those measured, especially in the case of Paul. In fact, Paul was so conservative that Leonard Liggio, the executive vice president of the Atlas Economic Research Foundation, suggested that Paul and the Libertarian Party had strikingly similar political positions (2008). Paul opposed the Iraq War in its entirety, desiring to bring the troops home as soon as possible. This was his top priority (Who Is Ron Paul?). Paul also supported extreme cuts in federal spending; in 2009, he published a book titled *End The Fed*.

Despite the support that Paul may have secured, he was contending directly with Huckabee and Romney in Iowa, and Romney and McCain in New Hampshire. By the time the South Carolina and Florida primaries were drawing to a close, McCain had effectively wiped the competition off of the board. Paul, however, did raise almost \$35 million for his campaign, 99% of it coming from individual contributions, and only \$18,332 from political action committees (OpenSecrets.org, 2008c). While Paul spread a message that may have resonated with many disaffected Americans, his campaign was weak and did not focus on winning over the demographics that mattered.

### **John McCain**

"I was tied up at the time," responded McCain at a debate in Florida (quoted in Balz & Johnson, 2009, p.265). The time he was referring to was the year the Woodstock Festival took place. He was not referring to a previous engagement; he was being literal. In 1967, while serving as a Navy pilot in the Vietnam War, McCain's airplane was shot down over Hanoi and he was forced to eject, breaking his right leg and both of his arms (McCain, 2008). He then spent the next five and a half years as a prisoner of war (McCain, 2008). After his release and rehabilitation, McCain continued his military service until his retirement in 1981 to pursue the 1st District of Arizona Congressional seat in the House of Representatives, which he won. He later ran for Senate, won in 1986, and served for over two decades.

McCain ran against Bush in the 2000 Republican presidential primary and lost, primarily due to Bush's large amount of support and heavy campaigning in South Carolina. He had learned valuable lessons in 2000 and campaigned in 2008 as a "commonsense conservative," emphasizing experience in Congress and a thorough knowledge of the ins and outs of the military (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p.245). He opposed pork-barrel spend-



ing and supported tax cuts as did the other Republican candidates. What set McCain apart was his support of the troop surge in Iraq (Balz & Johnson, 2009). His initial strategy to become the Republican Party candidate was a challenge. He had taken many positions opposing the general Republican Party platform (Balz & Johnson, 2009). Additionally, he needed to detach himself from the unpopular Bush and the general distaste of Washington politics.

While McCain certainly had experience and name recognition, his campaign lacked the funding to run an aggressive campaign in Iowa. In the first quarter of 2007, Romney raised \$21 million, Giuliani raised \$15 million, and McCain had only raised \$12.5 million (Balz & Johnson, 2009). McCain made some serious budget cuts, focused on running a lean campaign, and on winning in New Hampshire. However, in order to win, McCain needed to refine his message. Initially, he showed reluctant but firm support of the troop surge in Iraq. At the time the surge was opposed by nearly 61% of Americans (Balz & Johnson, 2009). His support of the troop surge associated him with President Bush (Balz & Johnson, 2009). To make matters worse, supporting the surge lost him support from many independent voters (Balz & Kornblut, 2007). This was discouraging news to McCain, especially coupled with his budget problems. In order to create a new campaign strategy, he enlisted the help of Charlie Black, who worked on Reagan's 1980 campaign. His new tactic was to "be the last man standing," while the other candidates wound up knocking each other out of the race (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p. 261).

McCain eventually used his strong views about the Iraq war as the centerpiece of his campaign. In a debate at the University of New Hampshire, he emphasized that the surge was working. According to Balz and Johnson, "McCain later pinpointed that debate as the beginning of his comeback" (2009, p. 265). McCain rebounded and spent a large amount of energy on winning New Hampshire, a state he won in the 2000 presidential primary. His greatest opponent was Romney, who was weakened from his defeat in Iowa. McCain's message began to resonate with more independent voters and he won a large percentage of their votes while splitting the Republican vote with Romney (Balz & Johnson, 2009). After losing Michigan to Romney, his next challenge was South Carolina, a state that he lost to Bush in 2000. According to Balz and Johnson, "he was the candidate of the disgruntled: he was winning voters who were least likely to approve of Bush's performance, least happy with the war in Iraq, and most pessimistic about the economy" (2009,

p. 283). He again encountered challenges from Romney, whose campaign was somewhat invigorated from the win in Michigan. Additionally, Huckabee, Giuliani, and the fast growing yet short lived Thompson presented obstacles to McCain's "Straight Talk Express." After winning South Carolina, McCain faced the Florida primary—the state that Giuliani was placing his chips on. A closed primary eliminated the independent voters that had tipped the scales for McCain in previous states. Romney was actively pouring money into his Florida campaign in an attempt to lure conservative voters with economic talking points (Balz & Johnson, 2009). McCain was in a tough position and needed the win in Florida to propel him through Super Tuesday. Giuliani's scandals decreased his threat to McCain. Thus, the technique that McCain opted for was to pull an ace out of his sleeve and show it to the Floridians. The ace was Romney's support of troop withdrawal from Iraq based on a timetable (Balz & Johnson, 2009). Whether the technique worked or not is subject to speculation; however, he secured endorsements from both Senator Mel Martinez and Governor Charlie Crist (Balz & Johnson, 2009).

By December 31, 2007, McCain had raised about \$37 million (*Federal Election Commission*). Although McCain's wins in key primaries fueled his victory on Super Tuesday, he would still struggle to secure campaign contributions. He was criticized for his support of amnesty programs (Balz & Johnson, 2009). He also struggled to appeal to conservative Republicans, which was compounded by his failure to attend CPAC (Balz & Johnson, 2009).

McCain won for several reasons. First, Romney's plan of early state domination was thwarted by an unexpected win by Huckabee in Iowa. Second, McCain's message resonated with independent voters in New Hampshire. Third, Giuliani's weakened campaign allowed McCain to reach out to moderate Republicans in Florida, while Romney appeared to support more liberal ideas about Iraq. While this is not an exhaustive list of the reasons that McCain won the Republican nomination, they represent a major part of his campaign successes.

## II. Going to the White House . . . or not

Independent voters were a key to McCain's nomination in the primaries. He began the general election with an advantage among independent voters (Balz & Johnson, 2009). In order to win in November 2008, he would have to maintain and increase this advantage. Additionally, he

would have to separate himself from the unpopular President Bush while attempting to reconcile with and reunite the Republican Party. For all of this to be accomplished, McCain would have to refine his message and be highly selective with his vice presidential pick. Even if he was successful in maintaining a clear message and reconciling with the Republican Party, he faced a divided nation and a young, energetic, and popular opponent.

McCain finished his nomination process in March, three months earlier than Democratic nominee Barack Obama; however, instead of focusing on an early campaign in key battleground states, he took a “biographical tour,” focusing on areas in the country that shaped his character (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p. 301). This proved to be an ineffective technique and bought him little attention with the media. His message emphasized national security, tax cuts, and ending pork-barrel spending. By mid April, McCain increased his support among average conservative voters to the level that Bush had in 2000; even Rush Limbaugh expressed some support for McCain (Kuhn, 2008).

Although McCain was gaining support from the Republican base, his campaign was not where it needed to be. Balz & Johnson (2009) offered the following analysis of the campaign:

McCain looked old and tired, in contrast to his youthful opponent... His campaign structure wasn't working. His message was inconsistent. McCain seemed angry rather than inspiring. He projected disdain rather than respect for his rival. Relations with the press deteriorated. (p. 302)

The attempted solution was to bring on Steve Schmidt to help the overworked campaign manager Rick Davis. It was apparent that the campaign organization was in disarray and needed an overhaul.

A series of polls conducted by the Obama campaign determined that the main issue on voters' minds was the economy. It also determined that McCain's status of “maverick” was not known among the voters; rather, they “worried that he would merely be an extension of Bush;” their research concluded that “McCain had failed to use the spring months to distance himself effectively from the president” (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p. 303). Additional polling was revealing: “Fewer Americans called themselves Republicans. Many independent voters acted more like Democrats. The nation's ever-shifting demographics were creating greater competition in some regions, particularly the Rocky Mountain West with its increasing Latino population” (Balz & Johnson, 2009,

p. 305). As the Democratic National Convention drew near, McCain's vice presidential selection became more critical. He would have to play his cards right to appeal to the independent voters.

Another obstacle McCain faced was gaining media attention during Obama's “citizen of the world” trip to several countries overseas. Obama took the trip to show voters he was capable of being a foreign policy leader, while McCain embarked on his campaign in the States. The McCain campaign devised a plan to knock Obama off of his topic and put him on the defensive. This plan involved a television commercial that compared Obama's celebrity status to that of Britney Spears and Paris Hilton, with the punch-line: “He's the biggest celebrity in the world, but is he ready to lead?” (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p. 313). While the commercial was obviously controversial, it accomplished its goal. In response to the commercial, the Obama campaign scaled back, giving McCain's campaign time, according to Balz and Johnson, to “regroup and devise a real plan to win the election” (2009, p. 313).

On the first day of the Democratic National Convention, Obama and McCain were tied in the polls (Balz & Johnson, 2009). At the convention, Hillary Clinton pledged to support Barack Obama and encouraged her supporters to follow her lead. Thus, women voters who might not have voted for Obama may have been persuaded to support him. With the media focused on the convention, McCain had an opportunity to finalize his vice presidential selection. He had many options, but the three most likely candidates were Romney, Joe Lieberman, and Tim Pawlenty. Although Romney became an avid supporter of McCain after losing the primary, choosing him would have created an elitist ticket (Balz & Johnson, 2009). Lieberman, the Democrat defector, was a great friend of McCain and the two agreed on many issues. However, Lieberman was pro-choice and supported increased gay rights (Balz & Johnson, 2009). Pawlenty was considered a safe choice due to his young age and probable lack of impact on the campaign (Balz & Johnson, 2009). Balz and Johnson (2009) provided this analysis of McCain's motivation behind the vice presidential selection process:

McCain believed he needed someone drastic to transform the presidential race . . . he needed to distance himself from the president . . . to cut into Obama's advantage among women voters . . . to energize the lethargic Republican base . . . to regain the one advantage he had always counted on: his identity as a reformer . . . Schmidt and

campaign manager Rick Davis believed McCain's only hope of winning was to make an out-of-the-box choice. (p. 326–327)

None of the popular picks would have been an out-of-the-box choice, except perhaps Lieberman. Although McCain was pro-life, having a pro-choice candidate on the ticket would've resulted in forty percent of his core supporters to be less likely to support him (Balz & Johnson, 2009).

The solution was Sarah Palin, the short-term reform-minded governor of Alaska who could help McCain regain support of women voters while emphasizing McCain's maverick credentials. Palin was a "down-to-earth mother of five, staunchly pro-life, pro-gun, an avid hunter, a runner, a beauty queen, a gutsy politician who championed limited government and individual liberty" (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p. 325). Additionally, she was what McCain needed to shift media attention away from Obama and to revitalize the Republican Party at the Republican National Convention. She was revealed to the public on August 29, the day after the Democratic National Convention. Obama had a six point lead in the polls after the convention, but Palin stole the attention of the media immediately. Retaliation however, was swift. The blogosphere became filled with rumors about her baby with Down syndrome, claiming that the baby really belonged to Palin's oldest daughter Bristol (Balz & Johnson, 2009). The McCain campaign responded by releasing information about Bristol's current pregnancy, rendering their claim an impossibility; additionally, members of the campaign staff became apprehensive about McCain's selection (Balz & Johnson, 2009). Would she be able to lead the nation if McCain died in office? Would she be able to handle the responsibilities of her job as vice president? McCain took a gamble by selecting Palin. However, one week after Palin's speech at the Republican National Convention, which "electrified the convention," it seemed like McCain had made the best choice. He had achieved a two point lead over Obama (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p. 342).

Soon Palin's honeymoon with the American public wore off. The financial crisis of September 2008 became the main concern of voters. Huge financial institutions were failing, adversely affecting the global economy. President Bush immediately called for legislation to provide \$700 billion to bolster these institutions and prevent a full economic collapse (Blodget, 2008). McCain's response was to suspend his campaign, cancel his first debate with Obama, and return to the Senate, an-

other gamble for his campaign (Balz & Johnson, 2009). The gamble did not pay off for McCain. Republicans in the House of Representatives initially voted against the bailout, resulting in financial turmoil, although the bill finally passed on October 3 (Balz & Johnson, 2009). The results were devastating to the economy and the Republican Party. In early October, Obama was winning the support of voters whose primary concern was the economy by a margin of fifteen points (Balz & Johnson, 2009).

A series of interviews Palin had with the CBS anchor, Katie Couric, further diminished the chances of a McCain victory in November. In these interviews, Palin could not produce an example of McCain's experience regulating the economy, failed to recall a single Supreme Court decision other than *Roe v. Wade* that she disagreed with, and neglected to mention a single newspaper or magazine that she read (Balz & Johnson, 2009). This amplified the idea that she was not prepared to lead the nation and was uneducated about politics, especially on a national scale. The polls showed that her support was decreasing, especially among swing voters (Balz & Johnson, 2009). Schmidt concluded that "the Couric interviews represented one of the worst performances ever by a candidate for a national office" (Balz & Johnson, 2009, p. 356). To compound McCain's problems, Colin Powell endorsed Obama, criticizing McCain's judgment in selecting Palin (Balz & Johnson, 2009). As the campaign drew to a close, Palin's support from independent and swing voters continued to dwindle (Balz & Johnson, 2009).

McCain lost the election for many reasons. First, the country was dissatisfied with President Bush's performance. This distaste developed into skepticism about voting for another Republican presidential candidate. In order to mitigate this, McCain had to focus on a clear message that distinguished himself from Bush, something he had tried to do, but which was ultimately ineffective. Second, McCain's opponent engaged in a highly organized campaign focused on winning states that were historically red, targeting key electoral votes to ensure a win in November. McCain embarked on a national campaign, focused not on winning key electoral votes, but rather on campaigning to the entire nation. Obama also focused on bringing young voters to the polls, which proved to be a viable technique. McCain, on the other hand, did not have the focus or the funding to accomplish such a task. Obama raised a total of \$745 million, more than doubling McCain's \$368 million (OpenSecrets.org, 2009a).

The Republican nominees fought over the chance to win in a year of a divided party and an informed yet uncertain electorate. Huckabee's appeal to the evangelical Christians and conservatives gave him a chance to win the nomination, but his lack of funding and unclear strategy after the Iowa caucuses resulted in his loss. On the other hand, Romney had the money to spend, but his Mormon faith disconnected him with the evangelical Christians and his change in ideological views in 2004 made him look like a flip-flopper. Paul struggled to run an actual campaign and instead focused on spreading a message. McCain's strategy of letting the other candidates fail on their own terms and being the last man standing won him the nomination.

The general election demonstrated that between a young and popular Democrat with a message of hope and change and a Republican war veteran with decades of experience in Washington politics, Americans preferred the former. Both candidates took advantage of the resources available to them, but Obama's clear strategy to dominate the electoral map and the funding to do so proved to be too much for McCain and his campaign.

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# Welfare Reform: A Continued Failure?

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**ABSTRACT:** *The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was signed in 1996, “ending welfare as we knew it” (Weaver, 2000, p. 2). This landmark piece of legislation was designed to decrease the roles of welfare and enable those in need of assistance to become self-sufficient in less time (Blank & Haskin, 2001). During the initial years of the PRWORA, the role of welfare dropped dramatically throughout the country, and policymakers on both sides of the political isle were quick to label the reform policy a success. However, a closer look at specific subgroups affected by the PRWORA shows a more accurate picture of the successes and failures. This article explores and evaluates specific sections of the PRWORA, challenges mainstream understanding of the ‘successes’ post-welfare, and proposes a program framework, based on critical analysis that will create more effective policy.*

Today, social welfare<sup>1</sup> is an enormous machine fueled by billions of federal and state dollars in the pursuit of a well-balanced, self-sufficient society. However, for decades this machine has been failing miserably. The failing system forced policymakers into the arena of reform in order to save a drowning population.

In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), “ending welfare as we knew it” (Weaver, 2000, p. 2). This landmark legislation was designed to decrease the role of welfare in people’s lives and enable those in need of assistance to become self sufficient. In 2002, the administration of President George W. Bush began work to reauthorize this bill. The revisions of the bill became law in 2006, creating more rigorous provisions for those trying to receive governmental assistance (Blank & Haskin, 2001). The PRWORA has been successful in decreasing the role of government in the area of welfare; but at what cost (Weaver, 2000)? The stringent provisions of the PROWRA have created an entire population lost in a sea of unemployment, debt, and illness. To address this growing problem new public policy must be introduced lengthening services, lessening provisions, creating new methods of service delivery, providing more education and training options, and the increasing minimum wage (Lein, Schexnayder, Douglas, & Schoeder, 2007).

## Theory

The standard model in public policy and economic analysis is the rational choice model. Rational choice theory suggests that individuals will examine available

options, evaluate the situation according to their values and beliefs, and then select the option that will bring the most social and economic income. With regard to welfare, rational choice emphasizes decisions people make on how or whether to use governmental assistance. The debate concerning welfare revolves around whether or not individuals become dependent on the welfare system. However, the notion of dependency has no weight in rational choice models (Bane & Ellwood, 1994). When society at large claims individuals become dependent on welfare it “thus implies either a change in values (preferences) as people acquire the ‘welfare habit’ and/or limited motivation in the first place” (Bane et al., p. 69). Choice models do not entertain these possibilities, but suggest a person will participate in an exchange (government assistance), after they have weighed out the costs and rewards of alternative options, and have chosen the one that will benefit them least (Wallace & Wolf, 2006). Rational choice suggests attitudes and beliefs have been internalized before making a cognitive decision. Rational choice fits America’s individualistic sentiment perfectly; we will choose the option that benefits most rather than what is good for the community as a whole.

In order to use the rational choice model effectively individuals must work full time, make more than minimum wage, day care cost must be affordable, and welfare benefits must be increased (Bane et al., 1994). With the economy in its current state this doesn’t seem likely. Considering all options, welfare benefits would seem the best choice to satisfy the needs of low-income families. This is the current reality of welfare in the United States.

## **History**

In order to understand the complexities of welfare and welfare reform, one must first familiarize oneself with the history of governmental assistance for needy citizens in this country. Social welfare has been a part of America's history since the mid-1600s, when the Plymouth Colony adopted the colonial poor laws. Following in the footsteps of their English ancestors the colonies decided it was the responsibility of taxpayers in each locality to care for the destitute (Trattner, 1994).

During the nation's infancy, government played an extremely small role in assisting needy families. If a family experienced some form of social or economic burden, families would seek assistance through relatives, churches, and other charities. The individualistic view of self reliance is a prominent thread woven into the fabric that makes up American culture and history. However, this view began to shift during the Civil War. The federal government began providing pensions to veterans, and state governments began to house the mentally ill, orphaned children, and impoverished elderly. These small steps towards governmental assistance for the needy shaped the history of welfare during most of the twentieth century (Herrick & Midgley, 2002).

Throughout the twentieth century the federal government's role had grown tremendously in the area of welfare. Two of the most significant eras during the twentieth century were the 1930s and 1980s. During the 1930s, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt introduced legislation into Congress; this landmark piece of legislation was called the New Deal. The New Deal was aimed at relief for the unemployed. Under the New Deal many new programs were created: The Old Age Assistance (OAA), which provided various assistance for destitute elderly; Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), which provided assistance to fatherless families; and the Social Security Act, which created a social insurance program which would be administered solely by the federal government. The Social Security Act would also provide resources for the blind, vocational rehabilitation, and maternal children's health.

From the 1950s to the beginning of the 1960s the social welfare rolls were increasing steadily. There was concern about the number of female-headed families receiving benefits from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), formally known as Aid to Dependent Children (ADC). During this time the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was created, and Social Security was amended to provide more financial sup-

port to the poor. During the 1960s the role of welfare nearly doubled with the creation of programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, and the Work Incentive Program (WIN) (Herrick et al., 2002). With the large increase in social welfare many families were receiving the assistance needed to become self-sufficient. However, many conservative politicians believed many of these needy families were becoming dependent on the system and pushed for change.

During the 1980s the level of governmental assistance for needy families began to decrease with the election of President Ronald Reagan, a conservative Republican. Soon after taking office, President Reagan began scaling back on social programs funded by the federal government. In 1981, congress approved more than 70 billion dollars in reductions for social programs that provided food, cash assistance, low-cost housing, and healthcare assistance to the poor and shifted responsibility to the states (Herrick et al., 2002). The federal government viewed the reform laws as a success because caseloads decreased throughout the country. However, "between 1981 and 1983 at least 400,000 working women lost AFDC benefits, forcing them to rely on charity or other means of survival" (Herrick et al., p. 203). In the fall of 1988, a piece of legislation titled the Family Support Act was passed. This piece of legislation was believed to be the most comprehensive welfare reform bill since the passage of the Social Security Act in the 1930s. The bill was designed to revise the AFDC, which emphasized education, child support, and job training to avoid governmental dependency. The Family Support Act proved to be a failure, so once again welfare reform was on the agenda in 1993 (Bane & Ellwood, 1994).

Comprehensive welfare reform initiatives from 1969 to 1995 also proved to be unsuccessful (Weaver, 2000). By 1994 welfare caseloads had reached an all time high with 5.1 million American families receiving assistance through the AFDC (Besharov, 2003). When President Clinton took office in 1993, there was little hope for the administration to gain any headway in the area of policy reform. Nevertheless, the Clinton Administration pressed on. The first three attempts of the Clinton Administration were never even voted on in Congress, and the two reform packages passed by the Republican-controlled Congress were vetoed by the president (Weaver, 2000). This was the result of an ongoing political battle between Republicans and Democrats that preoccupied Washington from September to the end of 2005 and eventually produced an unpopu-

lar government shutdown (Blank & Haskin, 2001). Although Republicans and Democrats continued to disagree on welfare reform, legislation was eventually passed in 1996 creating The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). The PRWORA replaced the AFDC with a block grant titled Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (Herrick et al., 2002). TANF promised to end dependency on governmental assistance, through mandating work and responsibility and encouraging two-parent families (Cato Institute, 2000).

### **Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act: An Overview**

When the PRWORA was passed the “law covered eight major programs or policy domains: TANF, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for children, child support enforcement, welfare for noncitizens, child protection, child care, child nutrition, and food stamps” (Blank et al., 2001 p.7). Additionally, the PRWORA produced funding designed to reduce pregnancy outside of marriage. The following provides a brief overview of most issues; however, because this article only discusses the most important provisions in the PRWORA, the review of the 1996 provisions is somewhat selective.

#### *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) was the most comprehensive welfare reform passed in the PRWORA. TANF replaced the AFDC program with a federal block grant giving states primary responsibility for designing their cash assistance programs. This allowed states to determine eligibility, enforced greater numbers of work and behavioral requirements, and provided states with financial incentives to help families become self-sufficient. Additionally, states were required to decrease caseloads by fifty-percent or have TANF recipients working thirty hours a week by 2002. States were also prohibited from providing TANF funds to families who had been receiving benefits for more than five years. If states failed to comply with any of the mandates they would risk having TANF funds reduced. This type of conservative policy forced states to create stricter guidelines for eligibility and renewal. The federal government considers this a success because of the decrease in caseloads. However, low-income families in the United States will be affected and will not receive needed assistance.

#### *Supplemental Security Income for Children (SSI)*

Supplemental Security Income for Children (SSI) experienced tightened restrictions as well. The Individualized Functional Assessment test used to assess eligibility was seen as too subjective and was prohibited. Policymakers developed a general definition of childhood disability; this would ensure only children with the most serious of disabilities were admitted to the SSI program.

#### *Child Support Enforcement*

Child Support Enforcement received extensive revision in the PRWORA. Almost every single piece of child support legislation was amended. The purpose of the reforms was to increase the number of children with paternity established at birth, to provide access to new sources of employment and financial information for state programs, to reform state programs by automating information and case processing as much as possible, and to provide additional child support payments to mothers who left welfare. The amendments were designed as a reimbursement for providing cash welfare assistance to low-income women.

#### *Welfare for Noncitizens*

Some of the most controversial provisions of the PRWORA were in the area of welfare for noncitizens. These provisions virtually ended all governmental assistance for noncitizens. The provisions were influenced by the Republican-controlled Congress. Republicans were able to eliminate all welfare for noncitizens for the first five years of the PRWORA and access was seriously restricted after the fifth year.

#### *Child Care and Development*

Childcare was the least controversial program in the PRWORA. Several of the programs that provided childcare services for children were merged. A single block grant was created, known as the Child Care and Development Block Grant. The block grant included all poor and low-income families, even those who were leaving welfare. The legislation increased funding for childcare by 4.5 billion dollars over five years.

#### *Food Stamps*

The Food Stamp program provisions gave each state most of the responsibility. The state responsibility included: expanded options, control of food stamps, and responsibility of sanctions and noncompliance. The provisions also included stricter eligibility guidelines for those 18 to 50 years of age without dependents, re-



stricted eligibility for aliens, and reduced basic food stamp benefits by 3%.

### ***Reducing Illegitimacy***

Programs to reduce illegitimacy were propagated throughout several laws in the 1996 version of the PRWORA. Conservatives pushed the notion that non-marital births was the most severe social problem the United States was facing and the cause of many other social problems the nation faced, such as juvenile delinquency, crime, welfare use, and poor school performance. The fundamental problem with this type of legislation is programs designed to lower non-marital births have consistently been shown not to work in the past (Blank et al., 2001).

### **State and Local Initiatives**

The TANF block grant provided a \$16.5 billion per year fixed federal funding stream to the states. The PRWORA incorporated maintenance of effort provisions which required states to maintain a large portion of their historic financial commitments to welfare initiatives (GAO, 2006). Maintenance of effort provisions ensured states would remain strong fiscal partners in the fight to end poverty. With the shift of power, states were now responsible for creating their own new welfare programs. These innovative programs were intended to pull low-income families, working poor, and the homeless out of the depths of poverty into self-sufficiency.

Larrison, Nackerud, Lane-Creu, and Dolley, (2005) examined innovative welfare programs in the state of Georgia, developed by the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). The results concluded only 6.4% of local DFCS offices in the state of Georgia were truly innovative, 37.6% were identified as developing innovation, and the other 56% were considered traditional. The programs considered traditional were found to only complete the state requirements of TANF, but did not move beyond these requirements. Additionally an examination of welfare programs both in the state of Georgia and around the nation showed that innovation did not occur. One of the primary goals of the PRWORA was to reinvigorate individual welfare programs in each state. The progressive programs were intended to be creative, original, and present new ideas to fight poverty. Instead recipients received mediocre programs similar to those of the past. The programs have proven un-

successful, yet as a whole our states continue to use the traditional model.

One of the major problems for states are the “harder to serve” populations such as those with substance abuse disorders, poor mental health, intimate partner violence, learning disabilities, and poor education. Recipients that possess any of these characteristics remain in state TANF caseloads for prolonged periods. Currently, there are an estimated 5.5 million “harder to serve” TANF recipients in the United States. Little is known about the relationship between substance abuse and long term welfare dependency. Since the enactment, the PRWORA has left the responsibility in terms of the assessment, evaluation, and treatment of substance abuse among welfare recipients up to the individual states.

Substance abuse by welfare recipients continues to plague the system with insurmountable barriers. Research has shown women with substance abuse problems are less likely to engage job training, work either part or full time, and have additional emotional and behavioral problem. Furthermore, those with substance abuse problems that have become “self-sufficient” are more likely to return to welfare as the dependence on alcohol/drugs makes it more difficult to be a productive member of society (Shinn & Choi, 2007).

A recent study was conducted exploring TANF initiatives of four states regarding substance abuse among women in four states’ welfare systems. The states contained 42% of the total TANF recipients and are considered to have the largest state TANF caseloads in the country. When researchers began to examine data from each state, they noticed one of the states, Texas, had no official procedures for assessment, evaluation, and treatment which contradicted the Fourth Annual Report to Congress. Consequently, the data for Texas had to be thrown out. With three states remaining, researchers found only one state had a mandatory screening process. The three remaining states relied on caseworker discretion, which was followed by a brief written test. This test was found to be extremely ineffective. In states such as these, clients are inadequately assessed and are unable to receive any sort of cash assistance. The PRWORA has adopted this “work first” mentality. This type of conservative doctrine creates impenetrable barriers for those who struggle with substance abuse disorders. Studies have shown that 39% of those receiving welfare have substance abuse disorders (Shin & Choi, 2007). In order to adequately serve these clients, states must adopt policies that adequately assess these disorders, guide recipients to

sobriety and recovery, and help them attain and maintain employment and self-sufficiency.

Policy initiatives regarding welfare reform vary from state to state. Recently, there has been a considerable amount of attention placed on the impact state welfare policies have on their neighbors. Rogers, Payne, and Chervachidze (2006) sought to explore whether or not states set policies that will protect them from becoming “welfare magnets.” A comprehensive body of research has validated these hypotheses and found “neighboring state policies do have an impact in policy design and generosity of benefits” (Rogers et al., pg. 665). Additionally, Rogers et. al. (2006) examined factors that best explained state poverty levels, including changes in poverty rates after the implementation of the PROWRA. Results of the study found states with the highest tax bases, highest per capita income, and least stringent TANF guidelines had low poverty rates. The PROWRA was found to have no effect in the poverty rates in each of these states. There was no indication state policies had any effect on the neighboring states. These findings suggest a strong economy plays the most predominate role in welfare participation.

### Self-Sufficiency

One of the largest components of the PROWRA is the “work first” perspective. Advocates of “work first” suggest education and training are not effective treatments for unemployed parents; the more effective approach is to employ the person immediately regardless of their job quality. Since the implementation of this approach welfare caseloads have declined dramatically, but most of the newly employed are in low-wage jobs and evidence suggests those who leave welfare are more likely to lose their jobs and have limited upward mobility (Strawn, Greenberg, & Savner, 2001). The National Governors Association summary of 1998 found 50 to 60% of former recipients found jobs; however, the average wage was between \$5.50 and \$7.00 an hour.

Getting welfare recipients off the backs of the government does not necessarily imply real “self-sufficiency.” In order to truly understand if former welfare recipients are becoming more self-reliant one must ask the question: to what extent do leavers rely on work and earnings to support themselves? A study conducted by the Cato Institute (2000) revealed in the first three months off welfare, two-thirds of those who had left reported using one or more of the following: Medicaid, emergency

aid, assistance with transportation, and assistance with meeting other work expenses. The range of supplemental benefits available for those who leave welfare suggests that policy has failed to create a country of self-reliant workers and created a working welfare state (Cato Institute, 2000).

At the state level the “work first” failure is even more apparent. Wisconsin, a state that aggressively pursued welfare reform, reported that although 63% of those who left welfare were working, 68% of those described themselves as “barley making it”. A second study conducted in the state found former recipients were financially better off when they left welfare because their wages were so low it did not cause any deductions in cash assistance and food stamps. In Oregon 35% of recipients who left welfare returned in 18 months, and in Maryland 23% returned within 12 months (Lens, 2002). The “work first” model is an ineffective approach to self-sufficiency. A person cannot truly rise out of poverty unless they are given adequate training, employment, and child care. This approach has only continued the cycle of poverty policymakers were trying to break when it became apparent the AFDC was a failed system.

### Immigrants

There has been much debate over the amount of governmental assistance immigrants should receive in the United States. Three related issues have dominated the discussion: anxiety over the increase of immigrant welfare recipients, the idea that generous governmental welfare programs are magnets for noncitizens, and the debate over whether immigrants “pay their way” in the welfare state. With the enactment of the PRWORA congress responded to many of these issues with a new set of rules for determining eligibility for immigrants. These new stringent guidelines denied many types of assistance to noncitizens who arrived after the passage of the PRWORA and limited those who were presently living in the country (Marchevsky & Theoharis, 2008).

A recent two year ethnographic study of welfare reform’s impact on Mexican immigrants was conducted in California. Researchers documented a pattern of heightened anti-immigrant sentiment and disenfranchisement within L.A. County’s welfare system. The study found a majority of eligible immigrants lost some or all of their cash assistance, food stamp benefits and were systematically denied work and support systems promised under welfare reform. Confusion and misinforma-

tion among welfare officials, coupled with pressure to decrease caseloads by any means necessary lead to the widespread removal of immigrants from the welfare systems. The most alarming finding indicated that all immigrants in the study were eligible for governmental assistance under the guidelines; however, many were told by state caseworkers that only citizens were eligible for TANF, and many faced significant reductions or termination. All of the participants in the study were channeled into poverty and unstable jobs. The burden of racial disparities such as these do not lie on the federal government but with the state. Evidence shows welfare participation among noncitizens dropped nearly 10% in states less generous and in states considered more generous it only dropped 5% (Marchevsky & Theoharis, 2008).

### **Women and Children**

Historically, welfare legislation has acknowledged the dependency of poor women in the United States. The federal government not only assumed women to be dependent, but needed them to be dependent to care for young children and stay out of the running for competitive jobs. The objective was to strengthen and maintain family life and to help mothers to maintain capability for maximum self-reliance and personal independence (Gatta & Deprez, 2008a).

The federal government has abandoned these old sentiments of dependency and adopted new ideology concerning women and welfare assistance. Currently, welfare reform has had a tremendous negative effect on women and children; making them more susceptible to hunger and homelessness (Lens, 2002). With the passage of the PRWORA and the implementation of the “work first” models, the federal government has removed any notion that welfare is an entitlement and severely restricted education and job training skills needed to become self-reliant. The most common theme among studies conducted on the effects welfare reform has had on women concluded that many women remain stuck in low-income jobs and their earnings are not enough to pull them out of poverty (Gatta & Deprez, 2008a). In Wisconsin, more than half of former recipients claimed to have a problem paying for rent and food. In food pantries across the country caseworkers and volunteers reported significant increases in people requesting food (Lens, 2002).

Feminization of poverty continues to be a reality in this country. The major predictor of poverty in the United States is the head of the family. Women-headed family units are seven times more likely to be poor than coupled families and only average two-thirds the income of men who head the family (Henslin, 2005). This is the true picture of welfare in the United States. If new innovative programs are not developed to fight this growing problem, more women and their children will experience the grueling cycle of poverty.

### **Welfare Fraud**

Americans have developed a negative perspective about welfare and its role in contemporary society. There is a common misconception among the public that most welfare recipients abuse the system. Since the aftermath of the PRWORA it has become important for those concerned with economic and social justice to examine the experiences of those affected by welfare reform.

In a study conducted in San Diego, researchers explored the reasons why women committed welfare fraud. Fraud occurred in most cases when they received some form of assistance not calculated into their determined aid. The quantitative analysis of the findings revealed most of those convicted of fraud were women of color, 35 years of age, had an average of two children, and received little or no child support. Most of the fraud convictions were for unreported monies of a median amount of \$2,423, which on average was only \$164 a month per household member. In contrast to popular assumptions, the case files revealed most committed fraud unknowingly or out of desperation. Many had been misinformed by their caseworkers about the method of reporting rules concerning secondary income and others felt they had to work in order to support their families. This is a more accurate picture of fraudulent welfare activity in the United States. Bureaucratic agencies designed to educate those on welfare are misinformed or confused about the rules and guidelines themselves, creating an even larger problem. Those recipients who do understand feel they have to “cheat the system” to support their families. Welfare fraud convictions carry fines, community service, jail time, and felony records create more barriers and make it difficult or impossible to provide for their families (Swan et al., 2008). More education on rules of reporting and consequences of fraud must be provided to

those receiving assistance or travesty's such as this will continue to happen.

### **Restructuring Welfare Policy: Recommendations for Effective Change**

The future of welfare is extremely unclear. The United States economy is in its worst condition in decades. With more Americans losing their jobs there will be an influx of individuals racing to government offices throughout the country seeking assistance. It is clear the current welfare system is extremely flawed and welfare reform has failed. Many states have experimented with welfare reform with some success. The creation of innovative programs must be developed and implemented across the country to fight this ever growing problem. The following is a blue-print for effective change in welfare policy.

First, policymakers must develop strategies that increase the pay of welfare workers and allow for flexibility in the workplace so parents will be able to balance the responsibility of being a parent and employee. When workers receive higher wages and achieve a sense of economic stability they are able to better provide for their families and feel empowered by their new found freedom.

Second, policy needs to provide destitute families with support and encourage employers to provide more expansive healthcare coverage. Policymakers have failed to realize TANF recipients receive inadequate or no healthcare at their places of employment. Welfare recipients live on a very limited budget and if someone were to become sick it would be difficult to pay for rent and

utilities. If transitional healthcare and child care were extended, it would allow TANF recipients to qualify for healthcare benefits at their new place employment or find adequate benefits bridging the gap between dependency and sustainability.

Third, tax law should be reviewed ensuring a progressive income ladder would be provided for low-income families. Education about existing tax laws that may benefit welfare recipients' overall income must be provided to those receiving assistance. Federal estimates suggest the expansion earned income tax credit lifted more the 4.7 million people out of poverty; 2.6 million of those were children. However, even with the dramatic decrease in poverty across the nation, those who leave welfare are still less likely to use this tax credit. This underutilization may occur because families are unaware of this tax credit or they did not file taxes. Recipients must be aware and be able to utilize every resource given to them to truly become self-sufficient.

Finally, welfare policy must reflect the reality that some recipients may need assistance for lengthier periods of time. There are many underlying factors affecting sustainably that need to be addressed. Many recipients struggle with a gamut of barriers to self-sufficiency such as substance abuse, mental illness, domestic violence, and learning disabilities. Recipients who possess risk factors such as these must be given the proper treatment and care so they may become productive citizens (Lien et al., 2007).

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### **Notes**

1. Social welfare can be defined as "organized public or private social services for the assistance of disadvantaged groups" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008).

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# Police Use of Force

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**ABSTRACT:** *This essay examines how and why police use force when encountering violent suspects. The essay describes several factors that contribute to the success or failure of officers involved in these encounters. These factors include: justification and the reasonableness of force, officer training in the use of force, department and officer liability in the use of force, why some officers are reluctant to use deadly force, and how reluctance to use deadly force may be changed. These factors can have a severe impact on officer safety and public perception of law enforcement officers and their departments. This essay attempts to describe why these factors have such an impact and how departments and officers can minimize the liability placed on them and risk to the officer's safety during a violent encounter.*

## Introduction

The use of force is inevitable in police work. In many situations the lives of officers or civilians can be taken by not using force when necessary or using it improperly. Many factors come into play when an officer decides to use force. These include: is the use of force justified, has the officer been properly trained to use force, and will the department be held liable if the force is used improperly?

After the Rodney King incident in the early nineties, law enforcement agencies across the country began to re-evaluate their use of force policies and training. Many officers had to change their belief about the treatment and mistreatment of suspects. A Gallup poll in March 1991 concerning mistreatment by police and the use of excessive force during contacts with the public, asked respondents if they had ever been abused or mistreated by the police. Of the respondents 5% of the total polled and 9% of minorities said they had been abused or mistreated. In addition, 20% said they knew someone who had been physically abused by the police (Alpert & Smith, 2001). These numbers indicate an alarming trend of mistreatment by police and the use of excessive force during civilian contacts. The public outcry over the 1991 Rodney King incident and others thrust police conduct regarding the use of force into the public view. Policy and training changes along with reaffirming when the use of force is justified had to be applied to protect the public, as well as officers and their departments.

## The justified use of force: when is force reasonable?

The justification of the use of force is the most important determination an officer must make before deciding to use force on a suspect. The Texas Code of Criminal Procedure states "in making an arrest, all reasonable means are permitted to be used to affect it. No greater force however, shall be resorted to than is necessary to secure the arrest and detention of the accused" (Texas Code of Criminal Procedure). In general, the use of force is justified when it is necessary to make an arrest, detain a suspect, or to protect an officer or a third party. In 1995 Attorney General Janet Reno approved a deadly force policy that applied to all law enforcement officers within the Department of Justice. The Department of the Treasury has since adopted the same policy (Hall, 1996). The policy states that a "law enforcement officer of the Department of Justice may use deadly force only when necessary, that is, when the officer has a reasonable belief that the subject of such force poses an imminent danger of death or serious physical injury to the officer or to another person" (Hall, 1996, p.25). The amount of force used cannot exceed what a reasonable person would deem necessary to make the arrest, detain the suspect, or protect an officer or third party.

The term reasonable, when used to justify the use of force, is sometimes difficult to interpret. A general definition of reasonable in relation to the use of force is any action that a reasonable and prudent person would believe to be necessary to complete the required task. According to most experienced officers, reasonableness can be easily determined. However, in a civil or criminal case, the

officer is not the one that has to determine if the force was reasonable, but rather, the citizens sitting on the jury will be tasked with determining the reasonableness of the force used by the officer. Police officers have to remember that the public perception of what is reasonable is extremely important.

Once the decision is made by an officer that the use of force is necessary, there is a broad range of force that can be deployed depending on the situation. In the past many police departments chose to use the *force continuum* method to determine the amount of force required. This force continuum was arranged from the least amount of force to the greatest as follows: mere presence, verbal commands, hands on techniques, impact weapons or oleoresin capsicum (O.C.) spray, and finally deadly force. However, departments have begun to do away with the term continuum and replace it with the term *options*. This is partly because the term continuum implies that the officer must always begin with the least amount of force in the continuum and progressively work upward until the actions of the offender are stopped. The problem with this approach is that the blind application of the force continuum from least to greatest without consideration of the specific situation or the sudden escalation of the offender may not be the appropriate response. For instance, if an officer is approached by a suspect armed with a weapon, it is unreasonable to think that the officer should start with mere presence and work his or her way up through the continuum before the option of deadly force is reached while the suspect is trying to cause them serious bodily injury or death. Force options allow the officer to immediately use the option that best suits the situation. Following the force options in the above scenario the officer would immediately use deadly force to handle the situation instead of working their way up the force continuum.

## Training

Teaching officers when it is appropriate to use force and which options are best suited for different situations can only be achieved through training. Use of force training must be accompanied by clear and concise department policy. The policy must outline when the use of force is permissible, what tools may be used, and what training methods will be used so that the officer is clear about what is expected of them.

The training must be twofold: the officer must be trained in how to assess a threat, as well as, how to coun-

ter a threat (Hall, 1996). Threat assessment can be done in a classroom setting beginning with instruction on policy and its interpretation. Scenario based instruction can be used to show the officers how the policy is practically implemented.

Practical application of the scenarios is completed following the classroom sessions. Scenarios involving all of the force options must be employed so that the officer is comfortable with each option and when the specific option should be used. The practical training must be completed in an environment that allows officers to become comfortable with the use of force techniques. In scenarios involving the use of deadly force, tools such as simulated ammunitions, or paint firing weapons can be used to simulate gunfire. These tools expose the officer to what it is like to be shot at, as well as what it is like to fire a weapon at a suspect. The psychological aspect of this deadly force training also allows the officer to experience what happens in an officer involved shooting.

## Liability and the use of force

Liability is always a major concern for law enforcement agencies, and agency administrators are always looking for ways to shield themselves from liability. Good policies and procedures, following legal mandates, maximizing performance, and the use of control documentation, help protect the department in the event of a civil suit. Here a policy is defined as “a definite course or method of action to guide and determine present and future decisions or a guide to decision making under a given set of circumstances within the framework of corporate objectives, goals, and management philosophies” (Kinnaird, 2007, p. 202); a procedure is often defined as “a particular or consistent way of doing something” (p. 203). Although both policies and procedures hold the department accountable for their actions, policies tend to be considered more legally significant (Kinnaird, 2007). For example, if an officer fails to follow a departmental policy, the officer and the department can be held civilly and criminally liable. However, if the same officer violates a given procedure, that violation may or may not hurt the officer.

A study of the San Francisco Police Department 1998 identified the worst and best police policy practices (Kinnaird, 2007). Among the worst practices were:

- policy is formulated strictly at the top of the organization, with little or no input from those who must implement the policy;
- policy statements are vague or poorly written;
- there is no clear, concise reason for the policy;
- policy statements were written for the wrong reason, resulting in a detraction from effectiveness rather than the facilitating of achieving agency objectives;
- policy statements are a product of evolution; each administrator adds to the policy without subtracting anything (Kinnaird 2007, 203).

Some of the best practices were:

- policy that was the product of thoughtful analysis;
- policy statements that provide goals and guidance for the officers;
- policies that are designed by using the same guidelines for setting priorities as those used in the design of training programs;
- policies that were short, general guidelines;
- policies that are accurate statements of the organization's values and philosophies;
- policy that understands that there is a limitation on human memory;
- policies that were the result of standardization or accreditation (Kinnaird 2007, 203).

Along with establishing effective policies and procedures, updating the officer's knowledge of legal mandates related to training will also protect a department from liability. Most states, including Texas, have established mandates pertaining to the number of training hours the officer must receive every cycle. Many of these courses involve required training in the use of force. For example, before an officer can carry or use O.C. spray, the officer must show a proficiency in its use and be certified by an approved instructor. The officer must also complete a required amount of training every two years in the use of O.C. spray. An officer failing to meet these and other mandates could lose his or her state certification and that might be severely detrimental to the department and the officer. The officer and the department could be held liable for the lack of training should force be applied inappropriately.

Maximizing performance refers to preparing officers with better judgment and discretionary capabilities (Kinnaird, 2007). Being well prepared for situations which could call for the use of force helps officers make the right decisions more quickly and keeps the officer

from second guessing his or her actions. Maximum performance is best accomplished through training. Repetitive training makes use of force techniques second nature and gives officers more confidence in their ability.

Control documentation can give administrators early warning of possible officer misconduct. If an administrator can identify an officer that has tendencies to improperly use force, he can correct the officer's behavior by retraining, counseling, or using disciplinary action. Some forms of control documentation that can be used to identify these traits in officers are incident reports, performance evaluations, use of force reports, background checks, statistics, and employee assistance programs (Kinnaird, 2007).

A department's willingness to establish guidelines, prepare their officers with training and legal updates, use maximum performance to instill confidence in their officers, and be observant of the warning signs that an officer's actions are inappropriate can save a department from civil and criminal liability. Preparing and supporting the department employees can also keep the officers from becoming reluctant to use force, putting a risk on officer safety.

### **Why are officers reluctant to use deadly force?**

Every officer knows there is always the possibility he or she will have to use deadly force during the course of their duties. Most officers go through their entire career and never have to use deadly force. However, some officers are faced with life threatening situations where the only answer is the use of deadly force to protect themselves or someone else. Some officers are reluctant to use deadly force when their life is threatened. Reasons for this reluctance have been studied at length. We now know that these behaviors can be changed through training.

Studies of combat concluded there is an innate reluctance among human beings to take the life of another human (Williams, 1999). Research conducted by the U.S. Army shows that only 15% to 20% of military soldiers fired their weapons at exposed enemy soldiers (Williams, 1999). Most soldiers feared having to kill an enemy soldier more than they feared being injured or killed themselves. Some who refused to fire on the enemy would still expose themselves to enemy fire to save another soldier, however they would not participate in taking another's life. By changing their training methods, the U.S. military increased the number of sol-



diers who would actively participate in combat to more than 95%.

### **How do we change the officer's reluctance to use deadly force?**

The military used the Pavlovian and operant conditioning methods to effectively change the behavior of their soldiers during combat (Williams, 1999). Law enforcement uses the same methods to condition their officers to overcome their natural reluctance to use deadly force (Williams, 1999).

In a law enforcement setting, conditioning of officers begins early in their training. Desensitization techniques are used to dehumanize suspects. Instructors refer to suspects as "dirtbags" or other derogatory terms conditioning officers to think of suspects as less than human, giving their life less meaning. The reward for officers in training was respect from their commanding officers and more experienced colleagues (Williams, 1999). Although this type of conditioning may not always be intentional it is necessary for officers to become able to use force. In fact, without desensitization officers may not be able to use any type of force that might cause injury to another human being (Williams, 1999).

Law enforcement agencies also use a technique referred to as operant conditioning (Williams, 1999). This technique reprograms the officer's reflexes to provide the correct response in a given situation. In the use of force instruction we refer to this as building muscle memory. Through repetition the body begins to react properly to the situation. Whatever technique being taught becomes instinctual. These repetitive responses are stored in the midbrain. The midbrain is the primitive area of the brain and is capable of only one of two responses, fight or flight. Once the officer is conditioned to the desired response, it simply becomes a matter of stimulus-response or threat-fire (Williams, 1999).

During firearms training a variety of methods are used to develop operant conditioning. Reactionary targets such as moving targets, shoot/don't shoot targets, and shoot houses are a few of the many options available to firearms instructors. Using these tools teaches the officer to perform under stressful situations and gives the officer much needed confidence in their abilities. The approval of the instructors provides the positive reward needed to complete the conditioning.

### **Conclusion**

To police officers, use of force is a necessary part of the job. No officer knows if or when the use of force must be applied until the situation presents itself. Preparing the officers through training in department policy and procedures and classroom instruction and practical training in the use of force reduces criminal and civil liability on the officer and department in use of force cases. Maximizing performance and utilizing legal mandates can prepare officers to use force appropriately. Control documentation allows a department to determine if an officer is engaging in misconduct early so that the behavior can be corrected through re-training, counseling, or disciplinary action.

By following these principles law enforcement agencies can protect themselves and their officers from the many problems that can arise from the use of force. As long as agencies strive to prepare their officers for incidents involving the use of force, the amount of civil and criminal liability will decline. It will also begin to sway the public's opinion of officers in relation to the use of force.

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# Texas Community Colleges’ Developmental Education Mission

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**ABSTRACT:** *This article explores the developmental education missions of public Texas community colleges in response to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s mandated requirement to provide compensatory education. This descriptive qualitative study identified and coded Texas community colleges’ publicly stated developmental goals. The review of the literature illuminates the importance, organization, and challenges of post-secondary developmental education.*

Defining the missions of community colleges is a challenging endeavor since each college characterizes itself and defines its own purpose. “The most commonly accepted typology of missions is based primarily on curriculum” (Bailey & Morest, 2004, p. 5). These missions may include academic transfer, vocational-technical education, continuing education, developmental education, community service, and general education (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). However, these are only broad categories, and specific educational implementation may differ dramatically from one institution to another. As stated so frequently in the literature, the mission expansion of community colleges is a movement toward “being all things to all people.” Thomas Bailey, Director of Community College Research Center (CRCC), confirms that the trend is for colleges to increase the number of missions to which they are committed (Perin, 2002). So, why are colleges becoming increasingly comprehensive? Succinctly, the diversity of students’ educational goals is expanding the role that community colleges play in meeting the students’ and the community’s needs. These multifaceted missions emphasize the diversity of today’s community college function and their complex nature in terms of their constituents and stakeholders. Good intentions notwithstanding, two-year colleges need to solidify their goals based on strategic planning of all college missions with focus on core college functions with respect to their individual internal and external environments. Such environments may include, but are not limited to, economic, sociological, technical, and political forces. Furthermore, Townsend and Dougherty (2006) state that “changing demographic, economic, and social pressures repeatedly splinter and reform individual community colleges’ emphases on different institutional missions” (p. 1). In-

ternal environments, such as organizational design and performance must be understood in terms of the institution’s strengths and weaknesses to formulate strategies that support the missions (Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence, 1997). The purpose of this paper is to examine critically the Texas community college mission of developmental education with respect to mandated and publicly stated missions of curricular function; the developmental mission’s place among other college missions; the organizational approaches of mainstreaming vs. centralization; developmental education’s perceived negative view; and the positive outcome of developmental mission “buy-in.”

## **The Purpose of Community Colleges Defined by Texas Education Code**

Texas Education Code §130.003(e) defines the purpose of public community colleges and mandates they provide technical programs up to two years in length leading to associate degrees or certificates; vocational programs leading directly to employment in semi skilled and skilled occupations; freshman and sophomore courses in arts and sciences; continuing adult education programs for occupational or cultural upgrading; compensatory education programs designed to fulfill the commitment of an admissions policy allowing the enrollment of disadvantaged students; a continuing program of counseling and guidance designed to assist students in achieving their individual educational goals; work force development programs designed to meet local and statewide needs; adult literacy and other basic skills programs for adults; and such other purposes as may be prescribed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board or

local governing boards in the best interest of post-secondary education in Texas. (<http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/docs/ED/content/htm/ed.003.00.000130.00.htm#130.003.00>)

Compensatory education, also known as developmental, remedial or preparatory education may be defined as courses in reading, writing, and mathematics for students lacking skills necessary to perform work at the level required by the institution (Merisotis & Phipps, 2000). “Regardless of the name, courses that prepare students to enter college-level courses are an important part of community college’s offerings” (Vaughan, 2000, p. 10). Furthermore, due to open admissions policies and the increasing enrollments at community colleges, the need for developmental education to assist underprepared students is greater than ever. Post-secondary education is now essential for upgrading workforce skills and qualifications (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007). Also, by successfully preparing students for college-level work, they have the opportunity to succeed in higher education and improve their quality of life through better employment and higher incomes.

### **Do Texas Community Colleges Publicly State Their Developmental Mission?**

The preceding section quotes the Texas Education Code, but what about community colleges themselves? How do Texas community colleges characterize their mission, and do they publicly include developmental education? One way to “ascertain the community college’s missions . . . [is] to rely on public statements by authoritative policymakers and community college leaders” (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006, p. 6). To address these questions, I choose to review the online mission and purpose statements of the fifty Texas community college districts. I chose online missions and purpose statements to examine because they are easily accessible, and, following Hartley (2006), mission statements communicate the college’s function and willingness to serve. Furthermore, Evans (1990) states that college mission statements are guided by four areas: characteristics of students; characteristics of faculty; characteristics of setting; and characteristics of content. Based on the literature reviewed, mission statements characterize the significant operations of the community colleges.

*Purpose Statement:* The purpose of this descriptive study is to determine the percentage of mission or pur-

pose statements of Texas community college districts that specifically include developmental education.

*Research Question:* Do community college districts include developmental education in their college mission or purpose statements?

*Assumption:* Publicly stated goals are considered central by the institution.

*Results:* Appendix A lists the 50 Texas community college districts and the responses to the research question. Of the 50 districts, four districts’ mission and purpose statements were not available online. Of the community colleges, 69.6% include developmental education in their mission or purpose statements, and 30.4% did not.

*Significance:* The results of the data collected support the literature reviewed pertaining to the importance of the community colleges’ developmental mission as a curricular function. When characterized in mission and purpose statements, the curricular missions are “strategic expressions of institutional distinctiveness” (Morphew & Hartley, 2006, p. 459).

### **Developmental Education is Rarely an End to Itself**

Developmental education is one of the central curricular functions of community colleges along with vocational or technical training, transfer preparation, continuing education, and community service (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; McCabe & Day, 1998; Merisotis & Phipps, 2000; Odenhoven, 2002; Spann, 2000). However, developmental education “differs fundamentally from these other curricular missions” (Kozeracki & Brooks, 2006, p. 63). Students primarily enroll in community colleges for transfer or vocational programs of study and rarely for the sole purpose of improving basic academic skills. For most students, the developmental mission supports the other student outcome curricular missions. As a supporting role, developmental missions should work in an inclusive way in terms of faculty, departments, and student integration into the college community. However, when community colleges identify the developmental mission as a separate college mission, curricular organization may lead to centralization of their developmental programs. The next section offers an explanation of developmental mainstreaming and centralization highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the potential effectiveness in terms of educational components.

**Table 1.** Relative potential effectiveness of centralized and mainstreamed structures.

Educational Component	Centralized Model	Mainstreamed Model
Quality of instruction	–	+
Ancillary support services	+	–
Teacher motivation and experiences	+	–
Student reactions	–	+
Reputation of developmental education	–	+

Source: Perin, 2002, p. 37.

### Developmental Organizational Approaches: Mainstreaming vs. Centralization

*Mainstreaming* is the integration of development courses into regular departments; *centralization* is the locating of courses in separate organizational unity. The organization of developmental education is important for community colleges because it can have direct impact on the students' academic success. When developmental education is mainstreamed, developmental courses are offered in many academic departments, such as English or mathematics, whose main purpose is to offer college-level courses applicable to Associate's degrees or certificates. "Courses are numbered as part of a sequence that begins with noncredit, remedial-level instruction and continues through advanced associate-level preparation" (Perin, 2002, p.28). Instructors of the developmental courses are all considered faculty of the department and are paid through its budget (Perin, 2002). Working in close proximity in a departmental framework permits developmental education instructors to associate and collaborate with colleagues who teach college-level courses. Usually, faculty members teach both developmental and for-credit courses simultaneously. However, when developmental education is centralized, the developmental courses are offered in a separate department whose sole function is to offer pre-college-level courses. "Course numbers reflect the separateness of the department, and the faculty may communicate more often with each other than with

instructors from [other] academic departments" (Perin, 2002, p.28).

Based on Perin's (2002) review of the literature, Table 1 illustrates a summary comparing the two organizational approaches of mainstreaming and centralization in terms of critical education components.

The strengths of mainstreaming developmental education consist of *quality of instruction*, *student reactions*, and *reputation of development education*. *Quality of instruction* is assessed in terms of its alignment with the college level curriculum. "From a cognitive perspective, close alignment of developmental and college-level instruction should promote students' generalization of learning beyond remediation to the college-level classroom" (Perin, 2002, p.32). Furthermore, *student reactions* refer to the shame attached to developmental education. Although, the *reputation of developmental education* in academic departments may be unfavorable "centralizing remediation may be worse by stigmatizing remediation in the whole college" (Perin, 2002, p.37).

Kozeracki and Brooks' (2006) article addresses the issue that developmental education is a "collegewide responsibility that needs to be fully integrated with the college's broader curriculum and varied missions" (p.63). The authors' focus on the structure of community college developmental education programs, their evolving role within the curriculum, and strategies to foster student success. With approximately 98–100% of surveyed community colleges offering developmental courses and more than 40% of entering freshman taking at least one developmental course, this definitely supports the developmental mission of colleges (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Students take developmental courses to move to college-level courses where they can transfer to 4-year colleges and receive Associate's or vocational degrees. With such potential benefits to students and society as a whole, the evidence suggests that college administrators, faculty members from all disciplines, and supporting personnel should structure and support developmental education programs by working together with a mainstream approach to help underprepared incoming students succeed.

### The Perceived Negative View of Developmental Education

From a policy perspective, Merisotis and Phipps (2000) address the "increased scrutiny... [of] offering coursework below college level in higher education institutions"

(p.67). Many state legislators are attempting to limit remediation courses, or, similar to Florida, move nearly all remediation to community colleges. Additionally, some states register concerns over using tax dollars to fund college courses that should be taught in high school. Based on a survey of state legislators, “there is little consensus and understanding about what developmental education is, whom it serves, and who should provide it, and how much it costs” (p.68). The intent of the article is to clarify policy discussions by addressing developmental education’s core function, its “current status” at the college level, the costs of not providing developmental education, and recommendations “intended to reduce the need for remediation while also enhancing its effectiveness” (p.68).

Conversely, Hawthorne (1997) makes the case that “the students who come to an institution shape its curriculum . . . [and] institutions develop special curriculum to serve selected student groups” (i.e. remediation) (p.34). Students who take developmental courses are not outliers but are a significant part of the student population, and as such, college curriculum should reflect developmental education as a significant, inclusive component. Developmental education does not lower the academic integrity of the institution, but rather supports student access to higher education. State education codes and colleges set the standards for college-level classes, and the aim of the developmental mission is to bring students up to that level.

### **The Developmental Learning Environment**

Grubb and Cox (2005) affirm that there has not been adequate improvement in the learning environment of developmental education at community colleges. Due to the increasing amount of students entering higher education underprepared for college-level courses, developmental education “is one of the most difficult challenges our entire education system has to face” (p.102). Student drop-out rates and dissatisfaction in developmental courses is high. Additionally, students who take developmental coursework complete their programs slower than students who do not take developmental courses. Grubb and Cox (2005) identify four elements that “contribute to a classroom’s success or failure as a learning environment: student needs, instructor approach, course content, and institutional setting” (p.93). By “aligning” the sequence of developmental courses and college-level courses, the curricular coherence will be improved. Additionally, by requiring the participation of all faculty, those teaching developmental and college-level courses, the “trajectory”

of developmental learning outcomes may meet college-level entrance expectations.

### **An Innovative Example of Developmental Mission “Buy-in”**

Raftery’s (2005) article is based on a case study of Metropolitan Community College’s (MCC) implementation of an innovative developmental learning community initiative named the Academic Improvement for Success program (AIM). AIM is intended to provide “assistance to students with multiple academic deficiencies by offering a level of support beyond what a student taking stand-alone developmental course receives” (Raftery, 2005, p. 64). The advantages of AIM include block scheduling to facilitate student cohort groups of students who enroll in two or more developmental courses; academic and counseling support services; diagnostic testing (placement testing is not mandatory); extracurricular activities; and partnerships by faculty and counselor teams who meet regularly to discuss individual student progress.

The most significant component in the program’s success is the support of AIM by faculty and the college’s support to faculty. The main goal of the program is designed to help students improve basic skills, expand valuable learning strategies, and foster students’ self confidence through a supportive learning community. The college’s leadership maintains the commitment to ensure that faculty and instructors are aware of the needs of developmental students by providing faculty and staff with professional development, top-level administrator support, and monetary stipends to “acknowledge the extra time and effort required to develop a new interdisciplinary learning experience for students” (Raftery, 2005, p.65).

### **Conclusion**

Developmental education is one of the most important programs that community colleges offer since it directly supports the cornerstone of their mission—access and comprehensiveness (Vaughan, 2005). Currently, more than 40% of all students entering community college enroll in at least one developmental course (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). With enrollments continuing to expand and increasing by access to more diverse populations, the need for developmental education will continue to grow. Developmental courses require more personal support and resources than standard college-

level courses, and unfortunately, developmental programs are frequently given low priority by both legislatures and colleges and are typically underfunded by both. McCabe (2001) fittingly states, "Our nation's future depends upon everyone recognizing the importance of developmental education and raising it to the priority it needs and deserves. America has no one to waste" (p. 6).

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**Appendix A.** Percentages of Texas Community College Districts that include developmental education in their mission or purpose statement.

Community College	Yes	No	N/A
Alamo Colleges	•		
Northeast Lakeview College			
Northwest Vista College			
Palo Alto College			
San Antonio College			
St. Philip's College			
Alvin Community College			•
Amarillo College		•	
Angelina College	•		
Austin Community College		•	
Blinn College	•		
Brazosport College		•	
Central Texas College	•		
Cisco Junior College	•		
Clarendon College	•		
Coastal Bend College	•		
College of the Mainland	•		
Collin County Community College	•		
Dallas County Community College District	•		
Brookhaven College			
Cedar Valley College			
Eastfield College			
El Centro College			
Mountain View College			
North Lake College			
Richland College			
Del Mar College	•		
El Paso Community College		•	
Frank Phillips College	•		
Galveston College			•
Grayson County College	•		
Hill College		•	
Houston Community College System	•		
Howard College		•	
Kilgore College		•	
Laredo Community College		•	
Lee College		•	
McLennan Community College		•	
Midland College	•		

<b>Community College</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Navarro College	•		
North Central Texas College	•		
Lone Star College System	•		
Cy-Fair College			
Kingwood College			
Montgomery College			
North Harris College			
Tomball College			
Northeast Texas Community College	•		
Odessa College	•		
Panola College	•		
Paris Junior College			•
Ranger College	•		
San Jacinto College (District)	•		
Central Campus			
North Campus			
South Campus			
South Plains College	•		
South Texas College	•		
Southwest Texas Junior College (District)	•		
Tarrant County College		•	
Northeast Campus			
Northwest Campus			
South Campus			
Southeast Campus			
Temple College	•		
Texarkana College			•
Texas Southmost College		•	
Trinity Valley Community College		•	
Tyler Junior College	•		
Vernon College	•		
(The) Victoria College	•		
Weatherford College		•	
Western Texas College	•		
Wharton County Junior College	•		
<b>Total (50 community college districts)</b>	<b>32 (Y)</b>	<b>14 (N)</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>% of CC district from the available Web sites</b>	<b>69.6</b>	<b>30.4</b>	

Source: Texas Community College Districts' list retrieved from the Texas Association of Community Colleges from <http://www.tacc.org/>