

# ADMINISTRATIVE CHALLENGES FACING NONPROFIT WORKSITES PROVIDING WORK OR WORK-LIKE EXPERIENCES FOR WELFARE RECIPIENTS

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**ABSTRACT:** *Over the last decade, neoliberal welfare policies expanded nonprofit organizations' role in the welfare state. This change resulted in the organizational emergence of numerous "welfare internships" (i.e., situations where welfare recipients engage in work experiences to fulfill work requirements for little or no pay), whose existence and impacts have been understudied. Using qualitative interviews with nonprofit directors, this article explores the bureaucratic face of neoliberal welfare policies through detailing how two types of welfare internships ("intermediary internships" and "client internships") develop, the motivations behind them, and the problems they present. This article examines the relevance of these impacts for the welfare-to-work and nonstandard employment literatures and describes potential implications for policymakers.*

**Keywords:** welfare reform, nonprofit organizations, internships, work experiences, welfare-to-work, neoliberalism

The 1996 federal welfare reform legislation (the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, or PRWORA) marked a significant shift in America's approach to the social safety net—one in which neoliberal principles that emphasize the efficiency of the private sector, the primacy of the market, and a scaled-down federal government held sway. The federal government devolved much of the authority for administering, shaping, and implementing welfare policies and rules to the states, who then further delegated responsibility for welfare services to local levels (to both public and private entities) via "second-order devolution" (Katz 2001; Poole, Ferguson, DiNitto, and Schwab 2002). It also replaced a model of social citizenship with a model of market citizenship, making receipt of welfare contingent on attachment to the labor market (Breitkreuz 2005).

Neoliberal welfare policies are enacted in organizations, yet we know relatively little about how such policies play out on the ground. The literature on

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neoliberalism often references devolution and privatization without paying attention to its “bureaucratic face” (Campbell and Pedersen 2001; Fourcade and Healy 2007; Mudge 2008). Moreover, research on private sector entities implicated in implementing and supporting welfare-to-work policies frequently focuses on how (and whether) they move welfare recipients into employment (Cooney and Weaver 2001; Kissane 2008; Lockhart 2005; Monsma 2006; Solomon 2001), not as part of a package of contradictory policy logics intended to shift state control and demonstrate the power of markets.

In this article, I detail nonprofit directors’ views of “welfare internships” (i.e., situations where welfare recipients engage in subsidized employment, work experience, or community service to meet work participation requirements)<sup>1</sup> to explore this bureaucratic face of neoliberal welfare policies. Understanding these arrangements and any resultant problems is critical to appreciate how welfare policies operate at ground level, the contours of this complex system of service delivery, and the consequences of neoliberal welfare policies for organizations. Thus, in this analysis, I examine the dynamics, motivations, and trade-offs present for nonprofit social service organizations (henceforth “NPs”) that provide or consider providing welfare internships.

The data analyzed here reveal two types of internship arrangements present at the NP worksites—what I call “client” and “intermediary” internships—that develop from slightly different service-driven motivations and raise differing levels of problems. Neoliberal principles rest, in part, on the notion that decision-makers will act rationally to optimize the efficiency of their organizations in a competitive environment. In line with this thinking, welfare interns are frequently sold as “free labor” to private sector worksites and, in particular, to NPs (Kirby, Hill, Pavetti, Jacobson, Derr, and Winston 2002). The expectation is that savvy executive directors would welcome such “free labor” to enhance the productivity of their organizations. Yet as I will demonstrate, NP directors do not typically enter into internship relationships for this reason. Instead, like other NPs that choose to offer welfare-related services, they do so for ideological reasons—they believe deeply in *helping* welfare recipients. Consequently, for welfare internships to function (in terms of finding willing worksites), the system requires that organizations operate according to service-driven rationales and not simple economic rationality. Such ideological motivations, however, ultimately fold under the pressure of the numerous problems associated with the internships. No longer willing to “work” tirelessly for interns who are supposed to work for them, agencies discontinue them. Thus, ironically, once the directors think “rationally” and prioritize the efficiency needs of their organizations over their desire to help welfare recipients, the system becomes untenable.

### WELFARE INTERNSHIPS IN AN ERA OF NEOLIBERAL REFORM

Estimates of the extent of welfare internships like those discussed in this article are difficult and vary significantly across the United States. Most states have at least some version of a work experience program in operation, and several (e.g., Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin) operate very large-scale programs

(Altstadt 2007).<sup>2</sup> Nationwide, Altstadt (2007), based on Office of Family Assistance (OFA) data, reports that approximately 17 percent of welfare recipients *who met their work requirements* did so by engaging in work-site activities during the first 6 years of welfare reform. While it is likely that this figure underestimates the amount of this kind of activity (as it only includes those instances where work requirements were met and officially reported), the figure still indicates that a sizeable minority of welfare recipients across the United States are engaging or have engaged in work experiences to remain compliant with welfare work requirements. Furthermore, the prevalence and scope of work experience programs have increased since welfare reform's implementation and will likely continue to do so as the economy worsens and welfare work participation requirements become more restrictive (Altstadt 2007; Baider and Frank 2006; Frank 2007).

Importantly, the United States has turned to publicly supported work experiences in the past (most notably under the New Deal), but work experiences under welfare reform differ in several ways from previous ventures into public service employment (PSE). New Deal PSE efforts largely aimed to reduce large-scale unemployment and provide a way for families to earn a living and avoid receiving welfare (what Ellwood and Welty 1999 refer to as a "countercyclical objective"). Under different economic circumstances, the understanding was that these workers (primarily men) would not need PSE. Work experiences under welfare reform, however, aim to provide welfare recipients (generally unmarried mothers who are hard to employ even in boom economies) with opportunities to develop hard and soft skills, gain work experience, and conquer employment barriers. Frequently, an additional aim is to ensure that welfare recipients who are reluctant or unable to work fulfill their "social obligation" to do so (Altstadt 2007). Because of the differing aims and assumptions regarding the workers, work experiences under welfare reform often (but not always) include additional supportive services to help workers deal with their personal problems and human capital deficits, while New Deal PSE did not (Altstadt 2007).

While New Deal PSE largely involved subsidized public sector jobs, work experiences under welfare reform tend to be located at NPs and, to a lesser extent, governmental offices. In fact, many policymakers and academics alike see NPs as particularly well-suited to provide such opportunities to welfare recipients for many of the same reasons that they promote their greater involvement in the social safety net more generally (Allard 2009; Katz 2001; Smith and Lipsky 1993). NPs often locate near where welfare recipients live and already provide services in welfare-related areas—factors that may allow them to better understand and serve interns. NP staffs with their "public-serving ethos" and greater concern for developing relationships with clients (Monsma 2006; Salamon and Abramson 1996) are also assumed to be more likely to take the time, exert the effort, and offer the compassion needed to mentor these often hard-to-serve interns successfully. Proponents of neoliberal welfare policies further assume that NPs are able to "customize programs to local conditions, mobilize resources around local needs, and rapidly implement service innovations at the local level" (Poole et al. 2002:262). NPs are supposed to be "in touch" and able to respond to local emerging needs more quickly and effectively than governmental authorities (Smith and Lipsky

1993). This presumed responsiveness and flexibility is thought to make such agencies particularly adept at dealing with the varied demands of the interns and the shifting dictates of welfare policy. Thus, in many ways, this study examines the scenario in which welfare internships may be the *most likely* to succeed.

Researchers, though, have not addressed in detail welfare internships from the vantage point of NPs that act as worksites. Recent work on transitional jobs programs (programs that typically combine wraparound services with subsidized work experiences at NP, for-profit, and governmental agencies) suggests that worksites might benefit from such arrangements (Baider and Frank 2006; Kirby et al. 2002). While only briefly examined in their study of six programs, Kirby et al. (2002) report that many worksite supervisors believed that transitional jobs program participants contributed positively to their agencies. Moreover, scholars speculate that such interns offer at least a partial answer to staffing deficiencies for some organizations. Baider and Frank (2006:3), for example, argue that agencies that supply work experiences “will often provide enhanced supervision and developmental opportunities for participants, and in exchange, receive employees that they might not usually be able to afford.” Thus, of the minimal research from the worksite perspective that exists, these internships are mentioned as promising.

The literature on NPs' increased involvement in the welfare system more generally after PRWORA, however, indicates that worksites would likely encounter difficulties when they employ welfare interns. For example, studies of government-sponsored welfare-to-work (WtW) programs (one key element of devolutionary welfare policies) demonstrate that the “bureaucratic face” of such neoliberal policies includes a host of implementation and operational challenges for those running them (Cooney and Weaver 2001; Hasenfeld and Powell 2004; Iversen 2000; Lockhart 2005; Monsma 2006; Mulroy and Tamburo 2004). Particularly problematic are interagency relations, as privatization and devolution of welfare systems result in fragmentation of responsibilities and authority across numerous public and private entities. For instance, Hasenfeld and Powell (2004:98), in a study of over 40 California NPs receiving WtW grants, find that few experienced a “good working relationship” with the welfare department, stalling their ability to maintain a steady flow of eligible participants and receive authorization for services being provided. Getting the welfare department to approve services as work-approved activities was notably difficult and susceptible to caseworker discretion and favoritism (Hasenfeld and Powell 2004). Likewise, Iversen (2000:141), in her study of four Philadelphia area WtW programs, finds “massive delays in program start-ups and strained program operations” arising in part from “inadequate coordination between and within funding, referral, program, and employer organizations.”

Complicating matters, WtW programs commonly are charged with training “hard-to-employ” welfare recipients—those with poor work histories, low skills and education levels, and other personal and familial work barriers (e.g., mental or physical health issues, domestic violence, and young children). Such individuals often do not fully participate or complete these programs (Kissane 2008) and demand large amounts of time, energy, and resources to instruct and monitor. They also earn less, remain on welfare for longer lengths of time, and are less likely to leave welfare for consistent, regular employment than more advantaged welfare

recipients (see Kissane and Krebs 2007 for review). As a result, the intern pool may disproportionately represent these hard-to-employ recipients, suggesting significant challenges await worksite staff and directors charged with supervising them. Notably, such trials will have to be met by NP staffs that already feel increasingly burdened and stressed, as their responsibilities shifted and demand for certain services grew after welfare reform (Abramovitz 2005; Bischoff and Reisch 2000). They also will have to work within a "work first" system that many see as restricting how they can serve their clients and which "stands in conflict with their dominant service ideology" (Cooney and Weaver 2001; Hasenfeld and Powell 2004:106). The expectation (or perhaps hope) is that worksites will be willing and able to "help" these demanding workers resolve their obstacles to employment despite such issues.

Lastly, based on nonstandard work research, one might expect that interns would produce negative work environments and be unproductive for reasons beyond their personal and familial obstacles. Like certain temporary work (cf. Broschak, Davis-Blake, and Block 2008), for-profit and NP labor market intermediaries regularly are partly or entirely responsible for recruiting, screening, overseeing, or paying the interns. These conditions may generate problems, as interns must heed the authority of organizations beyond the worksites. Moreover, internships, like other temporary work, are transitory by definition, which may contribute to contingent workers' performing poorly, committing weakly to their worksites and colleagues, and feeling marginalized (Garsten 1999; Pfeffer and Baron 1988; Rogers 1995; Tilly 1996). Regular staff may not invest personally or professionally in interns they know will leave shortly, and interns may not fully commit themselves to worksites where they see no future. Use of such workers may strain relationships between managers and standard employees and diminish the loyalty of standard workers as well (Davis-Blake, Broschak, and George 2003). Tensions between workers may also exist, as standard employees resent "having to work with and train lower-status temporary workers" (Broschak et al. 2008:18). All in all, these nonstandard work issues would seem to predict significant problems for intern worksites.

To sum, while some scholars of transitional jobs programs believe that benefits may accrue to NPs accepting welfare recipients as intern workers, the extant research on NPs' post-PRWORA involvement in the welfare system and nonstandard employment suggests otherwise. In this article, I extend these literatures by offering a detailed account of welfare internships from the organizational perspective, specifically from the perspective of NP worksites in Philadelphia. To date, research on this topic is oddly limited, despite the extensive research on welfare reform impacts. We know virtually nothing about the nuts and bolts of welfare internships, including how they arise, the organizational features conducive to their development, and NP directors' motivations for instituting them. While understanding these basics is important in its own right, such information also provides insight into how welfare internships compare to other types of nonstandard work arrangements and work-first programs and the contradictions inherent in the present welfare system in which NPs play an increasingly prominent role. Moreover, in recognition that organizations may draw on varied combinations of flexible staffing arrangements over time (Kalleberg, Reynolds, and Marsden 2003),

I analyze these internships over a several-year period. In the end, this longitudinal aspect allows for appreciating why some NP directors decide to weather welfare internships while others ultimately opt out.

I also hope to make a contribution by analyzing how these internships represent a type of marginalized labor that is ironic in being inspired by good intentions, while simultaneously leading to eventual adverse consequences for agencies. Typically, labor opportunities for the poor involve low-paying, undesirable working conditions in the formal sector and/or work in the underground economy. Here, the labor is state-mandated and done under the aegis of agencies that ostensibly have the best interests of the interns front and center. This article advances an exploratory understanding of this new territory of labor through the eyes of NP directors who are positioned at the key administrative point to identify the policy impacts that result from the influx of welfare interns into NPs. Overall, the results challenge decision-makers to think more deeply about the organizational problems that surface for NPs with the implementation of neoliberal federal and state welfare policies and the unintended consequences that shape and, perhaps, ultimately thwart the intent of such policy prescriptions.

### STUDYING WELFARE INTERNSHIPS

These analyses draw on data from 125 interviews collected between 1998 and 2002 at 34 NPs located in three Philadelphia neighborhoods. The majority of the interviews was collected as part of Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation's (MDRC) Project on Devolution and Urban Change, a multilayered, multi-city, longitudinal study of welfare reform and its effects (see Quint, Edin, Buck, Fink, Padilla, Simmons-Hewitt, and Valmont 1999 for details). The MDRC research team purposefully selected three high poverty neighborhoods in Philadelphia for intra- and inter-site comparison purposes. A sizeable white population resided in one of the three neighborhoods (Kensington), while African-Americans predominated in the other two (Germantown and North Central). All three of the neighborhoods had at least 30 percent of individuals living in poverty and at least 20 percent of families receiving welfare at the time of data collection (U.S. Census 2000).

After selecting the study sites, the team developed lists of NPs providing social services through extensive canvassing in and research on each of the neighborhoods. We then chose a sample of NPs that had operated for at least 2 years prior to PRWORA, catered to community residents, principally served those whom welfare reform might impact directly (e.g., poor mothers), and provided services to those participating in the ethnographic component of the Urban Change study. We also selected the group of agencies with the intention of obtaining information on the entire range of programs available in the neighborhoods. This process resulted in a sample of twenty-eight NPs, at which we conducted interviews at two points in time.

I also include in these analyses data I collected in Kensington for a topically related but separate study. As part of this research, I completed "third round" interviews at twelve of the thirteen MDRC agencies located in the Kensington neighborhood (one agency had closed). I also extended the sample to include six

additional Kensington NPs that catered to the large Hispanic population in the community, which the MDRC team purposefully did not select for study.<sup>3</sup>

The NP sample ( $N = 34$ ) is generally comprised of small- to medium-sized agencies, with 56 percent having less than five full-time paid staff and 62 percent having annual budgets at or under \$500,000. Additionally, over three-quarters (79 percent) provided services for over 10 years and more than one-third (38 percent) was "faith-related."<sup>4</sup> We did not focus on agencies providing formal WtW services, as we were interested in the effects of welfare reform for a diverse set of agencies. As such, the NPs offered a myriad of different services, including (but not limited to) youth and childcare services; basic needs assistance; housing and community development; education and computer classes; job readiness, occupational skills training, and job placement; case management; domestic violence services; physical and mental health services; and life skills and parenting classes. Most of the agencies were multi-service or focused on educational programs (38 percent), although others centered on basic needs services (29 percent), youth and childcare services (15 percent), or "other" services (18 percent) such as community beautification.

At each NP, we aimed to interview individuals at high-level positions, although we did talk with a handful of low-level staff ( $N = 5$ ). Because we interviewed these latter type of respondents so infrequently, I limit my examination here to those interviews conducted with upper-level organizational contacts ( $N = 125$ ). Of these respondents, 45 percent held a position equivalent to executive director and 55 percent comparable to program director.<sup>5</sup> The MDRC team (of which I was a part) conducted forty-two of the interviews from February through August 1998 (first round or baseline interviews) and forty-seven interviews from August 1999 through March 2000 (second round interviews). I conducted the remaining thirty-six interviews from October 2001 through April 2002 at agencies in the Kensington neighborhood (twenty-six of which were with respondents at agencies previously included in the MDRC study). The individual respondents were generally well-educated, with 72 percent holding a bachelor's degree or higher. Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) were female, and almost half (49 percent) of the sample was white.

At each round, we questioned respondents in a qualitative, open-ended manner about their agencies' programs, clientele, staffing, funding, and function as well as their views on various other topics, such as welfare reform. I gathered retrospective data on these areas for those respondents at agencies that were not in the original MDRC study. Thus, while not entirely comparable and more susceptible to memory biases, these data do provide substantial detail on the views and experiences of respondents at those agencies where earlier interviews are unavailable. Each of the interviews took from 45 minutes to 4 hours to complete.

We attempted to interview the same person at each round, but when a respondent no longer worked at an agency, we interviewed the person currently occupying his or her position.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, we interviewed more than one individual at some agencies, as particular respondents could not answer certain questions or could not provide sufficient detail on certain topics. We conducted more interviews at the larger agencies, since these executive directors frequently would refer us to

program directors to answer program-specific questions. As a result, this analysis may over-represent the views of individuals who work at larger agencies.

To analyze the interviews, I imported the transcripts into QSR NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. Then, I coded all the data into general codes (such as “welfare interns”) and looked for broad patterns across the data. Subsequently, I coded these large fields into various sub-codes (e.g., “bureaucratic hassles”) and analyzed the data for patterns across and within sub-codes and NP cases. I approached the analysis largely from an inductive stance, allowing the codes to emerge and develop from the interviews themselves rather than predetermined theories (see Strauss and Corbin 1990 for details on an inductive approach to data analyses).

## FINDINGS

### **The Basics: The Types of Internships and What Interns Do**

While most of the NPs included in this research never offered any kind of formal job program (only a quarter did), almost all (85 percent) had been approached about or had employed a welfare recipient as an “intern” at some point during the study period.<sup>7</sup> By and large, the directors described two different types of internship arrangements. In the first, most prevalent variety (“intermediary interns”—about 70 percent of the NPs with interns had employed this type), the welfare department or, more frequently, for-profit and NP labor market intermediaries referred welfare recipients to the NPs for internships. In these latter cases, the intermediaries usually were acting as WtW subcontractors and needed to find internships (usually described as “transitional employment” or “supported work experiences”) for their clients as part of their programs. At times, these intermediaries sporadically referred welfare recipients for internships, but other times, intermediaries (especially those with transitional jobs programs) established relationships with NP directors, so they could place steady streams of interns at worksites.

In the second variety (“client interns”—about 50 percent of NPs with interns had experienced this variety), the NPs employed their own clients as interns. In a few cases, the clients contacted directors or staff about interning, arguing that they needed “work activities” to remain welfare compliant. Usually, though, it was NP staff that suggested to particular clients that they meet welfare work requirements through interning at their agency. Since caseworkers in Philadelphia considered “community service” a last resort for welfare recipients (Michalopoulos, Edin, Fink, Landriscina, Polit, Polyne, Richburg-Hayes, Seith, and Verma 2003), getting such internships approved as work activities often posed problems and required that NP staffs advocate extensively for their client interns (see “Interagency Relations” section for more).

It is important to remind the reader that both intermediary and client interns were working at the agencies to fulfill welfare requirements, and thus, in this way, both types of internships were involuntary in nature. Additionally, the two groups of interns did not differ in the tasks they performed. Some directors and staff assigned the interns largely peripheral duties, such as maintenance and cleaning. Many other interns, however, found themselves responsible for core and key



supplementary activities at the worksites, such as watching children in daycare and after-school programs, working at the front desk answering phones, taking appointments, and receiving clients, and acting as administrative support for the organizations in other ways (e.g., filing and copying materials). Even though the client and intermediary interns did not differ in the tasks they performed, they typically received disparate compensation for the work they did. Intermediary interns frequently received minimum wage (from intermediaries) for the hours they worked and TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) benefits, while the client interns only received the latter.

### **The Motivation: An Extension of Service**

Unlike other employers of nonstandard workers (cf., Houseman 2001), the directors rarely asserted that the need to cut costs, increase flexibility, or otherwise meet staffing needs explained why they accepted interns. Indeed, respondents at only a handful of NPs ( $N = 3$ ), usually those that were small and under severe fiscal strain, expressed such motivations at all (for details, see “Ending Internships” section). As other NP organizational actors do (Eliasoph 2009), the directors in this study drew on standard service-oriented rationales to explain their employment of interns. The internships were about “helping,” “serving,” and “empowering” disadvantaged individuals, not about fortifying the worksites. Notably, though, the directors focused on their role as service providers when discussing motivations for accepting interns, yet, as will become apparent in forthcoming director statements, repeatedly highlighted their role as employers when discussing the problems with them. Thus, the directors moved between and struggled with competing discourses—one of civil service and public good and another oriented toward the market.

What “service” concretely meant, though, varied based on the type of interns being discussed. For intermediary interns, service was about providing a vehicle by which job-related skills (particularly soft skills) and work experience could be conveyed over a relatively short time period. Such experience and skills, like understanding how to work a fax machine or how to relate to others in a work environment, then would help “empower” interns to find jobs in the near future and succeed at work. One director, when asked why she initially allowed intermediary interns at her agency, voiced a sentiment similar to most when she simply replied, “If I can help somebody gain the skills they need to make it, I’m gonna do that to the best I can.”

How the directors interpreted serving the client interns, however, differed. While certainly many of the directors hoped that these interns would gain job-related skills and experiences, they focused primarily on two alternative service-related motivations. The first, immediate one was on keeping clients compliant with welfare so they could retain their benefits. In fact, many saw this as an extension of their overall commitment to advocate for their clients. Reflecting this, agencies that I coded as “high” in advocating for welfare-reliant individuals (i.e., those that pervasively and proactively sought to distribute and provide information on welfare reform, meet and call caseworkers to help clients, and protest and

lobby for changes in the welfare system) also were those that quickly adopted the internships. One respondent argued:

We have two main objectives [with our welfare clients]. One is we do want to educate them about their benefits, like what do they need to do so they don't get cut off from the benefits, and advocate [for] them if there's a language barrier with their case managers. That is the majority. The second part is, if it's appropriate, we refer them . . . to different staff within the agency to *serve* them, to give them the 20 hours to 25 hours a week [of internship work] in order to keep them on their rolls.

A secondary aim of the client internships was facilitating the use of NP services. More specifically, these internships provided a way to help welfare recipients attend programs in areas that caseworkers, operating under the work-first policy regime, deemed "low priorities," such as education, domestic violence, and parenting programs. For example, in welfare reform's aftermath, Philadelphia caseworkers encouraged TANF recipients to drop educational programs to pursue work or attend rapid attachment job programs (Kissane 2008; Weishaupt and Mentzer 2006). Reacting to decreased enrollments in non-work-first friendly programs (especially educational ones), NP directors created internships so clients could meet their work requirements within the confines of their agencies. Interestingly, such a motivation was both ideologically oriented (to help clients receive what they saw as needed services) and also structurally oriented (to maintain enrollments in a volatile environment). One director explained the situation:

We find that to keep them in the [education] program, we have to find them work activities around the agency. . . . It is really frustrating for a lot of our clients to have to work and go to school—it's easier for them to work here, then attend classes. They don't have to run outside the agency to a job and shuffle kids all around.

Likewise, another director explained that her staff attempt to make work activities available to clients because "that makes it easy for us, and I think a little easier for them." Thus, to *serve* clients in certain programs and maintain enrollments, directors felt compelled to *employ* them.

### **Organizational Factors Related to the Development of Internships**

As some of the previously reported findings hint, certain organizational features seemed to promote the early employment of welfare interns. Consistent with research on flexible staffing arrangements (Davis-Blake and Uzzi 1993; Harrison and Kelley 1993; Houseman 2001) and countering assumptions that staffing-poor organizations would jump at the "free labor" interns provided, larger organizations (as measured by budgetary and staffing resources) were more likely to adopt internships early in the study period than smaller agencies. Additionally, agencies that were multi-service or focused on educational or youth/daycare services were more likely to accept interns than those that focused on basic needs or other types of services. Lastly, secular agencies were more likely to have interns than

faith-related agencies; however, large faith-related agencies were as likely as similarly sized secular agencies to have interns.

Disentangling the relative importance of these organizational characteristics is unfeasible with the available data, as they tended to co-occur (e.g., the smaller NPs tended to be faith-related) and the sample is relatively small. Intersecting patterns in the qualitative data, however, allow for some theorizing on how organizational requirements of the NPs, welfare department, and intermediaries facilitated the early materialization of internships at large, secular, and faith-related agencies that were multi-service or that focused on education or youth/daycare services.

To start, multi-service and educationally focused NPs were the most likely to develop internships for their clients as a way to enhance enrollments in programs that they saw as being decimated by the state's work-first message and work requirements. Second, when faced with the daunting task of having to place welfare recipients in internships, labor market intermediaries and the welfare department likely turned to NPs with which they had established relationships or about which they already held some knowledge. As this study's large multi-service NPs (both faith-related and secular) were the most tied to other organizations and most well-known in the community, it is plausible that those searching for worksites first contacted them. Third, large multi-service and youth/daycare NPs could provide jobs (and more of them) in the areas often targeted for the internships, such as cleaning, childcare, and administrative support. Finally, internships, as will be detailed, consume a large amount of staff resources in terms of training, supervision, and administrative work. Most directors were at least somewhat cognizant of this and rarely considered interns "free labor." Consequently, directors of NPs with few staff anticipated that their organizations could not handle the internships and initially decided against them. As one director of a small agency explained, "having people come through, supervising . . . I just don't have the time to do that kind of stuff . . . I know organizations that have used [interns] but we're just not the right size, we're just too small." All in all, a confluence of these factors likely contributed to the varied prevalence of interns initially observed at the agencies.

### **Interns and the Ensuing Organizational Pitfalls**

As the existing research on NPs after welfare reform seemed to predict, the internships consistently presented a number of interrelated problems for the NPs, with no noticeable variation between secular and faith-related agencies or among agencies providing services across the different domains. While the directors typically related fewer difficulties with client interns than intermediary ones (see Table 1 for summary comparison), both types of internships added unpredictability to the daily functioning of the organizations, created administrative hassles, and placed unwelcomed demands and stress on regular NP employees.

Hence, by and large, the internships posed significant problems and tensions for the NPs—in fact, almost 80 percent of the NPs with internships related having a generally negative experience with them. In the end, most of the directors "solved" the intern problem by avoiding them. "Solving the problem" by retreating from internships is counterproductive in the larger picture of transitioning

**TABLE 1**  
Similarities and Differences between Client Interns and Intermediary Interns

	<i>Client Interns</i>	<i>Intermediary Interns</i>
Nature Entry	Compulsory to keep TANF Client or NP initiated	Compulsory to keep TANF Welfare department or welfare-related inter- mediary initiated
Jobs	Cleaning, maintenance, childcare, administrative support, and clerical jobs	Cleaning, maintenance, childcare, administrative support, and clerical jobs
Compensation	Welfare benefits	Minimum wage Welfare benefits
Primary Director Motivation(s)	Keep interns compliant with work requirement Help interns remain in other NP programs (especially those that are not "work-first friendly")	Help interns gain skills so they will get jobs and/or get ahead
Secondary Director Motivation(s)	Help interns gain skills so they will get jobs and/or get ahead	Keep interns compliant with work requirement
Problems for Organizations		
Inconsistency/low skills among interns	Moderate	Substantial
Interagency and bureaucratic hassles	Moderate to substantial	Substantial
Staff burdens	Moderate	Substantial
Role conflict	Moderate	Substantial

Note: NP = nonprofit social service organization; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

recipients to work but can be understood in the context of agency needs. It is vitally important for policymakers to appreciate that the adverse impacts of "helping" can override the best intentions, even among NPs in the business of service. This catch-22 makes what is a desirable neoliberal practice in theory very problematic once implemented.

***Unpredictability and Disappearing Interns.*** Studies demonstrate that NPs have experienced much turbulence in their organizations and within the larger environs since welfare reform (for review, see Mulroy and Tamburo 2004). Demonstrating this larger trend, the interns (especially the intermediary ones) introduced an element of unpredictability to those organizations that accepted them. In part, this was because the NP worksites, like many NPs offering work-first programs, were not responsible for screening some of those they were to serve, in this case the intermediary interns. Thus, they found that interns arriving for work on any given day could vary significantly from previous ones in skills, motivation, needs, and employment obstacles. One executive director expressed it this way:

Some of them [interns] are amazing. It's like they're the smartest, the brightest, the most motivated individuals that we could ever hope for or that we would ever want to work here. And then, the ones that are the more difficult . . . are usually complicated by other issues . . . a drug and alcohol issue or maybe domestic violence, and so you're employing them, but then at the same time they have so many other issues in their lives that it's hard for them even to hold onto a job—even sometimes a volunteer job [like the internship].

Adding to the unpredictability, many of the interns failed to show up for “work” at all or only did so inconsistently. In fact, some interns (again, particularly the intermediary ones) arrived for only one day or week without ever returning to the NPs. One respondent explained, “We had five [interns] that came through one day, and we never saw them since, and we never heard from anybody since.” Another director complained that the interns “were supposed to be putting in their 20 hours [of work a week], and *half* the time they didn't show up and didn't call.” A program director similarly revealed, “We tried them [the interns] in housekeeping, we tried them in childcare, and it didn't work. . . . They didn't show up, they weren't consistent.”

Some interns may have failed to show up consistently because of the nature of the jobs (e.g., they were temporary, poorly paid, and, perhaps, undesirable) or because they were not voluntarily sought, but the directors did not focus upon these factors in the interviews. Rather, they pointed to work-family issues and other personal obstacles as prime reasons for why intermediary and client interns did not arrive to work regularly—issues that welfare recipients themselves identify as contributing to their failure to complete WtW programs more generally (Kissane 2008). One director explained:

There was one [intern] that came three days. One day she called me, she couldn't make it. Then the following day, she didn't come at all. She said that her kid was trying to kill himself, and they put him into a hospital for people with problems or whatever. So what can I do? . . . [The interns] have tons of problems with their kids, DHS [Department of Human Services], you name it. . . . They lead depressing lives, it's unbelievable.

Another director commented that “a lot of them [the interns], I feel, have a lot of issues and, you know, things going along with having to work.” An executive director of a large education agency simply stated that for many of her interns “it's been too much on their plate.”

Additionally, the respondents clearly articulated that the system itself and particularly work-first rules and procedures contributed to what one director described as the “disappearing intern problem.” Like other temporary workers, the interns operate within “a triadic employment relationship” (Olsen 2006), wherein, here, they are linked to the welfare department and the worksite. Moreover, many times the employment relationship involves a fourth party—a labor market intermediary. Thus, the NPs fail to have the ultimate control over their interns, causing problems. According to the directors, caseworkers frequently compelled welfare recipients to search for employment while interning and to accept any available paid, unsubsidized job. “Career developers” at the intermediaries also required

that interns find “regular” employment once they became “job ready.” As such, interns, prioritizing these obligations over any to the worksites, regularly disappeared. One director, complaining about the turnover, explained:

We don’t do [internships] anymore. We tried to work with the city on that. We loved the people, but the requirements that they had didn’t meet our working requirements. . . . They weren’t around enough. As soon as they got trained, they left . . . the rules that they had, in order to move them off welfare as quickly as possible, they [the interns] weren’t really around for very long . . . they are required to be looking for work at the same time.

A different executive director raised similar points:

We’ve been a placement site for them [interns]. That has not worked well *at all*. That’s been a total disaster. Person after person, they either disappear after like a week or two, or they’re immediately going out on interviews, and they’re leaving within a couple weeks. So we’re training the person, investing resources, and the person disappears.

The directors’ criticisms of the short-term nature of the internships highlight the ambiguous position they occupied. As altruistic service providers, quickly training welfare recipients so they could obtain unsubsidized, paid employment was not only appropriate but required. But service-oriented good intentions soon met up with an organizational nightmare in which NPs invested time, energy, and resources in interns who disappeared as soon as they became “trained”—something that made little sense to the directors *as employers* trying to run their organizations smoothly and efficiently. In the end, the latter priority won out, and most directors discontinued the internships, resolving this organizational role conflict.

***Strained Interagency Relations and Bureaucratic Hassles.*** Neoliberal welfare policies emphasize decentralization and privatization of service delivery systems. To succeed, such policies require interplay among various entities, which the previously reviewed research on WtW subcontractors indicates is challenging. Consistent with this research, trying interagency dynamics accompanied the internships studied here. In particular, internships necessitated that NP staff interact repeatedly with the welfare department and, often, with welfare-related intermediaries. At times, these dealings were combative and exhausting. For example, because the welfare department frowned upon “community service” as a method of meeting the state’s requirements, getting client internships accepted as welfare-approved work activities entailed recurring fights with welfare staff. As one executive director explained:

It’s been hard to get welfare to see volunteering for the agency as legitimate [as a work activity]. . . . They’ve [the interns have] been getting sanctioned left and right. Had to go before the appeals process and argue that we are a legitimate organization that provides services. . . . [Our staff] really had to take on a fight. We’ve really had to.

Other interagency difficulties marred the client and intermediary internships. One director, whose agency employed about nine interns, explained that the

interns' "whole lives are totally beyond scrutinized [by welfare]. It's really bad." This scrutiny often led NP staff and directors to contact the welfare department and welfare-related intermediaries to advocate on behalf of those whom they saw as being mistreated. Like other NPs operating within the WtW system, it also required additional administrative tasks in order to keep all of the organizations involved apprised of interns' behavior, progress, and hours. The director quoted above argued, "There is lots of administrative stuff. There is a lot of paperwork. It's a bureaucratic nightmare." Another director, who refused to take interns because of the bureaucratic requirements, lamented, "They require you to go down and drop off their time sheets. . . . They don't make it easy [to take interns], they do not make it easy."

Communication amongst all of the parties involved in the internships, particularly with intermediary internships, also was an issue. As previously mentioned, interns disappeared with no word or explanation from the welfare department or intermediaries. Other times, the NPs received sparse information on the arrival and needs of the interns, and interns arrived with very little information on the worksites. Directors commented that the referral agencies often did not provide the basic parameters of the internships to welfare recipients, such as the internship hours and "what the commitment" of the internship entailed. Furthermore, the welfare department or intermediaries occasionally did not sufficiently screen interns (or if they did, they did not act on the information they gathered) and referred welfare recipients to inappropriate positions and worksites. One director of a youth-oriented agency, for example, disclosed that the intern sent to work for his agency not only resisted most types of work but actually told staff that he did not like working with children *at all*. When asked to supervise children in the agency's after-school homework program, the intern returned within 10 minutes to staff complaining. The director broke off the relationship, arguing that "you can't just have anybody working with your kids." All in all, these results serve to buttress previous research (Hasenfeld and Powell 2004; Iversen 2000) that identifies communication and referral problems as significant unresolved issues for NPs operating within the WtW system.

***Burdens on Staff.*** As welfare reform studies suggested (Kissane and Krebs 2007), the directors often found that the interns—particularly the intermediary ones whom they did not handpick—had few skills, multiple obstacles to work, and poor and ungrateful attitudes. All of this made the obligations of the regular employees charged with supervising them (or working alongside them) all the more taxing, time-consuming, and frustrating. One director reported that the employees faced many challenges, including having to deal with the interns' abusive boyfriends:

I can sit all day and talk about so many problems that these ladies have. They have guys that are super-jealous, they come and question her, whether they here, they doing their work, or what they do sometimes. They even stop in front of the building to see if they here. I have to tell her, "Please don't allow him to come over here. You come over here to work." There's one [intern] that is missing, she didn't come yesterday and a guy came looking for her, and they

think we covering up for her! I mean I don't even know where they get it. I know sometimes it causes more headache for us.

Another revealed that representatives from the welfare department initially tried to sell interns as "free labor" (a marketing strategy that generally failed to resonate with the directors) but soon thereafter acknowledged they were predominately hard-to-serve:

We were asked to [take interns]—it's funny because at the beginning they [welfare representatives] offered us these "free resources"—the young ladies who were on welfare that would come and do work here—and that we would train them, that they would be basically free labor. After a while, the tone changed to pleading, "Would you please" . . . it changed to, "because it's a lot of work—and they really have no skills, no sense of work, no discipline, no nothing."

The unpredictability associated with the interns created additional burdens for NP staff already feeling stressed and tired from the demands of welfare reform and their jobs. In the face of much volatility, directors remarked that they and their staff needed to remain flexible, while "always responding to changing crises." When the interns failed to come to work, they had to take time away from completing their own duties to try to "figure out why they disappeared" and schedule "make up hours" where appropriate. In addition, they had to fulfill the responsibilities delegated to the missing interns or accept that the work would be left undone. One exasperated director, stressing her role as an employer, explained about one of her interns:

She takes off whenever she feels like it. She doesn't call. She doesn't. Whenever her daughter is sick, she stays home. . . . She just comes in the next day, "Oh, my daughter was sick." Hey honey, it's fine, your daughter was sick, but I needed someone to cover this, and you wasn't there! . . . You have a responsibility of *a job*, your employer expects this [that you cover your work]. And sometimes excuses, no matter how justified they are to you, are not valid for your employer, you know?

Even those interns who performed ably and arrived to work consistently increased staffs' workloads because of the associated bureaucratic and interagency demands (see previous section). Moreover, both intermediary and client interns required a great deal of attention and supervision from NP staff—just as any untrained, temporary worker would. For example, the director of a large NP described her experiences with the interns as "varied" but contended *all* of them "take a lot of time and energy." Similarly, another director lamented that regardless of the "quality" of the interns, her employees "don't have a lot of time to mentor them, so that is difficult." Another director claimed that while the interns might provide "extra office support," the staff "had to spend a lot of time training the women which took away from their own responsibilities." Still another explained that her agency generally did not take interns because they needed "too much mentoring, coaching, supervision." The director of a large multi-service agency, which employed eight to twenty interns at any given time, succinctly summed up the situation when she claimed that the interns "often create as much work as they perform."



### Solving Organizational Problems by Ending (or Retaining) Internships<sup>8</sup>

Most (over 75 percent) of the NPs that once used interns (especially intermediary interns) either curtailed or eliminated this practice over time. Their variable quality, poor work habits, and complicated lives created organizational problems for staff. Negotiating welfare procedures and the related interagency associations were additional burdens. Also, as the research on the drawbacks of temporary employment predicted, the directors believed the internships damaged workplace morale and frustrated regular staff who worked alongside and trained them. Taken together, the internships were not worth the effort and posed a threat to the directors' ability to accomplish the core activities of their agencies and keep staff happy. One director explained:

We stopped [the internships] after a while because of the general consensus of the staff. And I kept pushing that people were entitled to a training, but since I don't train them, people [staff] were grumbling that it takes too much time, aggravation or arguments, fights, people [interns] being nasty to [our other] clients.

Another director, whose agency had sponsored about ten interns annually, claimed that while she and her staff really wanted to help TANF recipients, they refused to continue to incur their costs:

It's been over a year since we have had somebody [as an intern]. . . . People were inconsistent. They wouldn't show up. You know, we went into it knowing that it would require more time and energy on our part, and we were willing to do that. But it just started to get insane, just people not coming or not following through . . . it was frustrating because you have to put your money where your mouth is. If you want this [welfare reform] to work, you have to be willing to work with people and allow them the opportunity. I mean *we're a nonprofit* that got frustrated with it, and we're in this business, and it was really hard for us.

Another argued, "I'm sorry, my heart goes to them [the interns], and I wanted to have them. But I don't think they appreciate it, and it's not good for the agency." Still another asserted, "I [initially] beared with it. I'm understanding, but when you have people that are supposed to be doing things, and they're not doing them, you know, you can only take so much."

The small subset of directors who expressed that they accepted interns to offset staffing deficiencies, however, continued to employ them. Indeed, they reported the same problems with the internships as others, yet they chose to "grin and bear it" largely because they felt they had few other options. To illustrate, after losing most of its funding, one NP employed *no* paid staff at the end of the study—even the executive director received no compensation for her labor. She faced a no-win situation of needing staff desperately but only having hard-to-employ welfare recipients at her disposal through internships. She complained at length about this, highlighting many of the previously discussed problems with the interns:

These girls need to develop skills. When they come over here, you have to start from scratch and teach them computer skills, how to talk on the phone properly,

how to greet people when they come in. It's been a lot more problems, headaches for me, 'cause it take[s] me away from my other responsibilities. Sometimes they don't want to do the job. They say, "I'm going to go over there for clerical." They sign a form that's clerical, when they come here they don't want to do clerical . . . I am doing whatever I can, and I don't get paid, and I take it seriously. But these people who are getting paid, getting training for their own benefit so they can get a better paying job or whatever, I don't think they really take it seriously. And that bothers me. . . . Some are very rude, disrespectful . . . cursing this and that. . . . How could you go to an office and talk like that?

Despite all this, the director persevered with the internships. She explained:

I have considered [not having interns], but in order to do that I need some money [to hire staff] at least to help. When I'm not here, I need some staff at least. I have to struggle with that for now, until I get some funding. It's a lot. It's straining, very much.

Without the proper amount of resources, directors like this one continued to accept interns, even though they were unhappy about it and questioned the degree to which their agencies actually benefited. Reflecting this group's different motivation, the above respondent bemoaned, "The thing is they come over here to do a service to help over here, but I end up helping them more."

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

NPs provide a key site where neoliberal WtW policies in America are enacted. In this article, I have investigated the contours of one area of this system—internships at NPs that fulfill poor individuals' welfare-mandated work requirements—an area that is understudied but critically important to understand in order to appreciate the bureaucratic face of neoliberalism. All in all, the findings nicely dovetail with much of what we already know about NPs' increased involvement in the welfare system. In keeping with a service/public good orientation typical of NPs more generally, the vast majority of directors hired interns for the ideological reason that they valued helping others. What helping meant, however, varied based on the type of internship arrangement. Intermediary internships were marked by a desire to provide job-related tools and experiences through the internships themselves, and thus, NP motives were somewhat aligned with current welfare policies to attach welfare recipients to work quickly. Additional aims, however, often characterized the client internships. Directors hoped that these internships would prevent their clients from being sanctioned for noncompliance and present a way for them to gain access to services deemphasized in the present neoliberal policy environment. While these directors stressed wanting to help their clients, they also were trying to solve an organizational problem resulting from welfare reform—declining enrollments in some programs. As such, client internships may act as an unappreciated point of resistance, wherein NPs attempt to neutralize the negative effects of welfare reform, allow welfare recipients to gain access to programs not considered "work-first friendly," and furnish them with a way to stall finding paid employment or entering into "preferable" work activities.

This study's findings also build on the growing literature on the organizational challenges that face NPs that engage with the welfare system, since many of the same issues with which "work first" providers struggle posed problems for the internship worksites as well. Similar to work first providers that do not control the flow or "quality" of their referrals, the worksites here were forced to deal with much unpredictability, as they received interns of variable quality who often failed to show up to work and, at times, completely disappeared. Strained and inefficient relationships characterized their dealings with the welfare department and intermediaries and "work first" rules often ran counter to the needs of the organizations in ways reminiscent of what others have found among WtW providers (e.g., Hasenfeld and Powell 2004). These issues, along with having to deal with hard-to-serve interns with complicated lives, added to the demands placed on staff already feeling overburdened, ineffectual, and frustrated from policies enacted under welfare reform (Abramovitz 2005). Both client and intermediary internships created such problems, although the directors found the latter more challenging for reasons likely connected to their inability to select personally these interns and the more complicated interagency dynamics that often accompanied them. Also, that intermediary interns were often placed in internships without much choice or prior knowledge of the NPs may have made them less willing and committed workers than client interns who already maintained relationships with their internship worksites. As one director put it, the intermediary interns worked at NPs "not because they want to, but because they have to." Significant challenges will likely continue to arise for NP intern worksites (and NPs more generally) as they increasingly deal with welfare recipients who arrive under compulsion.

Complicating matters (and unlike that of other temporary work situations), NP directors experienced a type of organizational role conflict (Merton 1949), because they had to deal with the competing demands of being simultaneously service providers and employers. Roles seemed ill-defined and contradictory, with directors oscillating between discussing the interns as employees and clients. Interns were at once people in need of much guidance, support, and services (who should be "grateful" for the help they receive) *and* employees who should arrive to work consistently and on time, perform the work assigned to them acceptably, and follow other workplace norms. Acting predominately as service providers, many directors initially stepped forward to provide internships. Ultimately, however, it seems that the directors prioritized their responsibilities as employers and discontinued hiring any more of these problem-riddled workers. Given the organizational problems that arose with the internships, the fact that many of the NPs continued taking interns as long as they did is remarkable and may demonstrate how strong the mission to serve was within many of these NPs.

As NPs, welfare departments, and intermediaries collaborate more, communication and relations may improve, since some problems may be due to these entities' inexperience with working with one another (what Hasenfeld and Powell [2004:99] term the "liability of newness"). Additionally, though, some of the difficulties experienced by these NPs (and others working within the welfare system) could be lessened if the third-party intermediaries handling referrals (in this case

for interns) better understood the needs and wants of the welfare recipients *and* the NPs involved. In this case, for instance, improvements could be made in providing interns with adequate information on their roles at the worksites and matching interns with appropriate positions. Enhanced supports and case management for the interns also may help identify and resolve potential problems (such as domestic violence and familial issues) *before* interns arrive at the worksites or at least help them manage such obstacles once they begin the internships. Increased communication regarding intern status and following up on disappearing interns would also make NP staffs' lives easier. Changing some of the procedures surrounding the internships also seems advisable from the NP perspective. Having the interns remain at the agencies for longer time periods (instead of being pulled out as soon as they are "job ready") may allow the NPs to reap some benefits as employers from their investment in the interns and provide staff with an opportunity to see the results of their mentorship.

Undoubtedly, additional research is needed to corroborate the findings of this study in other locations, as devolution poses problems for generalizing results across states and locales. Although nonprofit social service organizations have taken on a greater share of the social safety net across the United States (Allard 2009; Katz 2001), the extent of their involvement in providing work-like experiences like those discussed in this article varies, in large part because what states consider to be "work activities," how locales implement programs to support welfare recipients' moving from welfare to work, and how stringent states are in enforcing work requirements differ substantially. Pennsylvania, while focusing a great deal on work in its welfare programs, falls somewhere along the middle to less harsh end of the work requirement continuum; though, Philadelphia has a relatively more established work experience system than some other locales (Wood and Wheeler 2006). Thus, the issues found at play for these Philadelphia agencies may apply differently to ones in areas where such internships are less prevalent, where different understandings and arrangements regarding work activities exist, or where different populations of welfare recipients live.

This study is also limited in that it cannot account for how director attitudes regarding poverty generally or welfare recipients in particular may have influenced their assessments of the interns and internships. For instance, while directors of social service agencies are not a monolithic group, many understand poverty as resulting from individual character flaws in ways reminiscent of common stereotypes (Reingold and Liu 2009). Moreover, it seems likely that nonprofit directors and their staff are not immune to popular conceptions of welfare recipients as unmotivated individuals who possess attitudes and behaviors at odds with being "good" employees, conceptions heavily informed by racial stereotypes (see Gilens 1999). Accordingly, directors and their staff may have entered into these internships expecting problems (especially if the interns differed ethnoracially from them), which could have affected how they interacted with them and how they experienced the internships. Studies that can explore the links between director attitudes (e.g., regarding the causes of poverty) and organizational behaviors are quite limited in general (see Reingold and Liu 2009 for a notable exception) and, therefore, represent an important area for future research.

Explorations into how for-profits, low-level staff, and the interns themselves experience internships are also sorely needed. For instance, without a strong service motivation, it seems likely that for-profits would be less willing than NPs to take on and endure these internships, as they also would likely encounter problems in the areas of intern quality and inconsistency, interagency relations, and staff burdens (though, they may be less apt to experience the role conflict). Moreover, previous studies suggest that temporary workers “adopt positive attitudes towards supervisors and peers and perform above expectations” when they perceive that opportunities for permanent employment exist at the worksite (Broschak et al. 2008:35). Research from the interns’ perspective that could specify whether the lack of mobility opportunities and short-term nature of the work contributed to their poor work performance, inconsistent attendance, and negative attitudes may help us understand not only the internships and how to improve them but also the effects of nonstandard work arrangements generally.

All in all, this study’s results suggest that for welfare internships to remain tenable, NP worksites must operate against their own organizational self-interests (and the interests of their larger clientele) and, instead, in line with the needs of the welfare interns, welfare department, and WtW intermediaries. In such a way, welfare internships are built on the back and at the expense of altruistically motivated service providers. Organizational interests in these cases diverge markedly from public policy ones, causing role conflict for agencies wanting both to fulfill their missions to serve the needy and to run their organizations smoothly. Those willing to continue the internships represent an exception where organizational interests (e.g., solving staffing deficiencies to remain open) converge with the needs of the system (e.g., finding intern placement sites). Yet these already overburdened, stressed, and tired directors may be those least likely to possess the time, resources, motivation, and patience needed to mentor these often hard-to-serve welfare recipients, leaving a chief policy intent of the internships unsatisfied.

Neoliberal welfare policies over the last decade increased NPs’ responsibility in the welfare state and, interestingly, the role of nonstandard employment as a stepping stone for welfare recipients. While the internships embodied some of the drawbacks of other temporary work arrangements (e.g., burdens and frustrations for regular staff), they failed to offer much of the assumed rewards (e.g., a flexible, cost-efficient workforce). If internships are to continue to provide a way for welfare recipients to meet their work requirements and move towards unsubsidized, paid employment, understanding the nature of the system, properly characterizing it, and seeing its dynamics clearly are critical. Otherwise, NPs and those they are trying to serve ultimately will be left dissatisfied, and any tinkering with policies will likely fail or, at best, have consequences that nobody wants.

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### NOTES

1. I use the term "internship" because this is a collective term that the nonprofit directors in the study frequently employed to describe these types of arrangements. Furthermore, welfare internships share many features with traditional internships that cater to other groups (e.g., college students). For example, both types of "internships" are temporary, provide "hands-on" work experience, offer a credential to bolster resumes, and facilitate "networking."
2. New York City's work experience program (WEP), for example, placed 32,000 clients a month in jobs at municipal agencies and nonprofits (Altstadt 2007; Ellwood and Welty 1999).
3. These NPs were not in the MDRC sample because we focused on selecting NPs that served the study's ethnographic participants (who were white in Kensington), and service utilization is ethnoracially segregated in the neighborhood (see Kissane 2010).
4. I use the term "faith-related" in a manner consistent with Smith and Sosin (2001). As such, these NPs varied in their level of religious ties and the influence of religion on the organizations.
5. Fourteen percent of those classified as executive directors held the title of "pastor."
6. When new individuals were interviewed, they typically did not differ from previous respondents in terms of basic characteristics (e.g., race, gender, and educational background).
7. We did not systematically collect data on how many interns each NP employed; however, some provided us with estimates over particular time frames (e.g., the last year) or at particular times (e.g., at the time of the interview). Based on these data, I can *conservatively* estimate that over 200 interns worked at the NPs over the study period. The data fail to provide for an estimate of the interns' race or ethnicity. The majority (as welfare recipients more generally) were women.
8. This section is based on the Kensington interviews where data exist for 2001 to 2002.

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