



Harold S. Goldman
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Deinstitutionalizing Delinquent Youth. By Michael Fabricant. Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1980. Pp. 222. \$15.50 (cloth); \$9.95 (paper).

Fabricant begins his book by describing the ideological and empirical foundations for deinstitutionalization as a strategy that dominated the imagination of social justice reformers in the child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice arenas during the 1960s and 1970s. Fabricant has a simpler, saner ambition than trying to unravel the quagmire of argument, rebuttal, and counterrebuttal that constitutes the empirical base of the deinstitutionalization position. His goal is to describe the implementation problems at the local community level that occurred with the deinstitutionalization of the youth corrections system in the state of Massachusetts.

What makes this book unique and valuable is Fabricant's utilization of the interactionist method as the basis for analyzing this implementation process. This method facilitates a multidimensional analysis of inter- and intrainstitutional tensions that occur within bureaucratic systems undergoing change. It also

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allows for a description of how these institutional changes affect the client and how the client adapts to them. This approach differs from traditional implementation studies, which tend to focus on power motivations of political and bureaucratic leadership as it seeks to accommodate, expedite, or impede public policy changes that affect them.

The juvenile justice system Fabricant describes contains the Department of Youth Services (DYS), police, juvenile court, probation staff, and group home. Taken as a whole, his description and analysis of these institutions as they react to change is quite good. The reader comes away with an understanding of how a shift in philosophy in one segment of the system (DYS) causes realignments among all others.

For example, as DYS implemented its new philosophy, it exerted its power to determine which youth would be admitted to its facilities. This diluted the court's power to commit delinquents to specific DYS institutions. The court was reduced to committing a delinquent to the DYS and then sitting back and watching as DYS exercised its discretion to place the youth in a community or an institutional setting. This realignment in dispositional power reverberated throughout the juvenile justice system. The heretofore amicable relationship between police and court began to show signs of strain. The police interpreted the court's loss of control over delinquents as an attack on their own credibility. Fabricant argues that the police reacted to this perception by bringing to court only the most serious offenders and trying to buttress those cases with the strongest possible evidence. He contends that the net result of the police attempt to establish stronger cases was an increase in the number of youth who had their civil rights violated and a consequent increase in tension between police and youth.

The rest of Fabricant's book follows in the same vein, documenting in successive chapters that deinstitutionalization changed the pattern of relations and increased tensions among the DYS, probation staff, group home, and youth.

The weakness in this book lies not in the framework for analysis but in an apparent partiality shown in two chapters. Fabricant's interpretation of the police reaction to deinstitutionalization (an increase in the violation of civil rights of youth) strikes me as being inadequately supported by the evidence. The documentation could also be read as self-serving statements by police about their prior behavior. His chapter on the court's probation staff appears to me to be romantic. Probation officers are not uniformly good guys working long and hard to win the confidence of their charges. They are, like most public servants, a mixed bag of good, bad, and indifferent employees.

Fabricant's policy recommendation for increased communication and coordination among the institutional players is of course laudable. But I take exception to his recommendation for an external advocacy mechanism to protect the "rights" of youth. Given Fabricant's complex description of the juvenile justice system, coordination with one more player, and really an extra player at that, is not necessary.

Besides the danger of increased fragmentation, external advocacy systems pose a more insidious problem. Many social service personnel who toil in public bureaucracies feel overworked and unsupported. In fact, many perceive themselves to be prime victims of the system. To create a system that focuses additional criticism on them will only exacerbate this problem. I am of the opinion that public money would be better spent in learning how to transform human service bureaucrats into advocates. The place for client accountability and advocacy is inside public bureaucracies, not outside them.

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My criticism of this book should not detract the reader from its merits. For the person interested in understanding the complexity of public policy implementation, Fabricant's utilization of an interactionist perspective to explain both the inter- and intrainstitutional tensions created by implementing public policy is a welcome addition to the literature. It helps one to understand the underlying pressures that lead to the bureaucratic game playing that so often confounds the implementation process.

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