Reducing "Unnecessary Incarceration":

The Strategy of the Clark Foundation's State Centered Program

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I.   Introduction

From the late-eighties to the mid-nineties, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation's Justice Program operated an ambitious reform program – the State Centered Program. Its goal was "to reduce unnecessary incarceration" in a few, specially selected states. While the primary focus was on reducing prison populations in the client states, the State Centered Program also sought broader effects. They sought to pioneer techniques, and show results that would demonstrate to other states that they, too, could assure justice, control crime, and save money by adopting techniques pioneered by the State Centered Program (SCP).

Certainly in retrospect and even in prospect, the goal of "reducing unnecessary incarceration" was an exceptionally ambitious one. After all, the state sanctioning systems that were the object of reform efforts were highly politicized. Worse, the political tides were running strongly against the goal of the program. Indeed, these tides were so powerful that nearly all the officials from the states with whom the SCP worked felt obligated to deny that there was any "unnecessary incarceration" in their states! They also pled with the Foundation to recast its goal in other terms that made it easier for them to associate themselves with the Foundation's initiative.

The effort was further handicapped by the fact that the sanctioning systems were also highly complex and decentralized. They were structured to some degree, of course, by the body of criminal statutes in states that defined criminal offenses, and established criminal sanctions (either mandated or available) for judges to use in responding to convicted offenders. But the criminal laws and sentencing statutes could and were frequently changed by legislators. Moreover, the sanctioning systems were typically shot through with broad discretion granted to many different actors spread across branches and levels of government. As previously noted, Legislators, operating at state levels, could propose new crimes and new sentencing schemes at will. They could also authorize different forms of punishment for different categories of offenders, and appropriate different amounts of money to give effect to their proposed sanctioning options. Prosecutors, operating at local or county levels, could use their discretion in deciding which cases to charge, at what level, and how tough to be in plea negotiations. Judges, operating under guidance from legislatures, could use what remained of their discretion to sentence offenders as they saw fit, subject to the availability of specific types of sanctions. Officials in correctional and probation agencies could shape how offenders did their time by creating more or less finely graded "ladders of punishment," and by spreading offenders across different sanctions through "classification decisions." In some states, offenders could be released early by parole decisions made by independent parole boards.

The complexity and decentralization provided some advantages to reformers, of course. For one thing, it allowed many different points of access. The systems were sufficiently flexible and amorphous to allow pockets of reform to develop even if the system as a whole remained resistant. Still, if the SCP goal was not to produce some small innovations but instead to produce a major, system-wide change in levels of unnecessary incarceration, it was difficult to find a sufficiently powerful point of leverage in the system.

So, the question facing the Clark Foundation's State Centered Program was how it could possibly gain some purchase on the highly politicized, complex, and decentralized systems they sought to transform. Gradually, a theory developed about how such systems might be affected. This theory was embodied in a strategy of change and reform. A managerial system for implementing these strategies in the SCP also evolved. That was embodied in a particular managerial structure and mode of operations within the Foundation. The purpose of this brief paper is to explicate the strategies and the managerial systems that were developed.

Nota Bene: our aim is not to claim that this approach was necessarily effective; nor to claim that it ought to be replicated. The point, instead, is to encourage a process of reflection and learning by setting out a specific theory of action that was seriously developed and tested. This ought to be of use to others with equally ambitious and unpopular goals.

II.   A Strategy of Change:

The Clark Foundation's Justice Program has long been convinced that the nation relies far too much on jail and imprisonment as a response to crime and criminal offending. Kenneth Schoen, the Director of the Justice Program, has written:

> Our approach is premised on the belief that the size of the incarcerated population in most states is excessive (i.e., not necessary to achieve the purposes of punishing offenders or controlling crime). The cost of building and operating prisons is high, and increasingly displaces other important state obligations. Intermediate sanctions that offer treatment for problems that commonly plague offenders—chemical abuse, poor education, sexual deviance, etc.—are underdeveloped. This unnecessary confinement of large numbers of offenders is unjust and inhumane.

A. The Fundamental Goal

These beliefs justify the fundamental goals and objectives of the State Centered Program: to reduce unnecessary incarceration. (See discussion below) In addition, an important objective is to forge a broad social consensus that imprisonment and simple probation should not be the nation's only responses to crime and criminal offenders.

B. A Three Pronged Strategy

The basic strategy for achieving that ambitious goal was three-pronged. One prong targeted the policy level of the state government. This level includes key officials in the legislature (such as chairs of the judiciary or corrections committees in upper and lower houses), in the executive (such as governors, legal counsels to governor, criminal justice planning agencies, commissioners of departments of corrections, and directors of parole boards), and in the judiciary (such as chief justices, the directors of administrative office of the courts, a nd leading judges). The goal is to persuade them that: 1) incarceration is expensive; 2) much current incarceration is unnecessary either to control

crime or do justice; 3) other forms of punishment are cheaper, equally effective in controlling crime and doing justice, and less destructive of prospects for rehabilitation; and 4) the public will support the use of these intermediate forms of punishment once they understand them.

The second prong targets operational levels of state government -- the agencies that build and operate the institutions and programs to which offenders are sent, or that make decide dispositions affecting individual offenders,. This includes, for example, the leaders, and managers of criminal justice agencies such as the department of correction, the probation and parole authorities, state planning agencies, and the administrative office of the courts. It also includes individual judges, and private community agencies that are involved in providing services to offenders. With respect to these institutions, the aim is to improve their ability to analyze their own operations, present important policy choices to policy-makers, and develop improved operational responses in their own organizations to the problem of unnecessary incarceration.

The third prong is generally targeted on the state's political environment, or officials' perceptions of that environment. The aim is to widen public awareness of the costs of imprisonment, broaden tolerance for the use of intermediate forms of punishment, and blunt political movements that reflexively rely on increased imprisonment to deal with crime and fear of crime. It is also to help mobilize community volunteers to staff and support different kinds of intermediate punishments. And it is to make officials at all levels of government more aware of the community's tolerance of initiative and innovation in the development of intermediate punishments.

C. Key Assumptions

This strategy rests on several key assumptions that are worth explicating and testing -- logically and empirically.

1. Reaching "Up To Policy"

One of the most important assumptions in the design of the State-Centered Program is that significant, long-term effects on unnecessary incarceration can be produced only by reaching "up to policy." This idea represents a potentially important shift in the Justice Program's previous approaches to reducing unnecessary incarceration.

The previous strategy relied heavily on "demonstration projects" to test programs and to show that the programs could produce results that equaled or bettered the performance of jail, imprisonment, or probation. These programs were often successful in producing the particular intended results. They were also often continued. Sometimes they were expanded within the jurisdictions in which they were launched, and spread outward to other jurisdictions. And they stood nationally as powerful evidence that things could be different than they now were in the criminal justice system; that alternatives worked. As such, they provided an essential part of the Foundation's current confidence in pressing its agenda.

Yet, for all its strengths, this approach had some important limitations when measured against the standard of making a large, demonstrable impact on levels of unnecessary incarceration. They did not grow large enough, or spread widely enough to

profoundly affect even the state level problem, let alone the national problem. Nor did they seem to work a profound change in the way that society or policy-makers in powerful positions thought about the problem. In short, they fell short of altering the political and institutional commitments to the existing system. To get these larger effects, it seemed that one had to do something in addition to the demonstration projects -- one had to engage the policy levels of government and their perceptions of the political context in which they were operating as well as the operational levels.

A corollary of this observation gives additional justification for reaching "up to policy": if the policy levels of state government can be engaged in achieving the goal of reducing unnecessary incarceration, not only will there be a receptive audience for ideas about how to achieve this goal, but the odds are better that any new ideas will be sustained, widened, and used as a platform for the next round of innovations. Thus, succeeding in going "up to policy" creates a context in which the state may make continuing progress toward achieving the goal of reducing unnecessary incarceration through an ongoing process of innovation, not simply through the tolerance of some isolated "demonstration projects".

The devices that could be used to "reach up to policy" included:

1) using the SCP's recognized expertise and control over knowledge and discretionary resources to provide high level access to SCP in the state;

2) developing policy analyses and reports that focus attention on problems and facilitate planning to deal with them;

3) convening meetings among key policy makers to discuss these analyses and to communicate information about what other states were doing to deal with the problems; and

4) commissioning and presenting studies of what public attitudes supported.

In short, there were ways that the Foundation could gain and hold the attention of high level policymakers on the issues that interested it.

2. Technical Assistance and Demonstration Programs

The "up to policy" assumption did not imply that operational-level programs were to be abandoned. Indeed, interventions at the operational level continued to be important for two different reasons.

First, they were important in themselves for the same reasons that such interventions have always been important. If a department of probation can be persuaded to use a new risk assessment instrument, if a judge can be persuaded to rely on client-specific planning, if a Corrections Department can be persuaded to establish a day-reporting center, then some unnecessary incarceration may be reduced.

Second, it was also apparent that such programs were essential in being able to reach up to policy levels. It is unlikely t hat the policy levels of state government can be engaged without developing leadership capabilities and commitment at the operational levels in the state. The policy levels will inevitably rely on their own operational agencies

to tell them about current conditions and about what is possible. Unless the analyses of operating agency officials show there is unnecessary incarceration, and unless they say it is both desirable and possible to create and rely on intermediate punishments, officials at policy levels are unlikely to go along. Thus, there is a need to build capacity for analysis and innovation at the operational levels as well as at the policy levels.

Instruments available to achieve results at the operational levels were the familiar ones of technical assistance and support of demonstration projects.

3. Across a Broad Front at Operational Levels

The third key assumption in the design of the State-Centered Program is that it was valuable, even necessary, to influence t he operational levels of the state government across a broad front. The reason is that the operational system that produces unnecessary incarceration runs across many different bureaucratic agencies including prosecutors, courts, probation agencies, sheriff's departments, and departments of corrections. Because decisions or programmatic innovations made in one part of the system can be nullified by the decisions or adaptations at other parts, it is necessary to stay at least somewhat attentive to and engaged with all parts of the system.

4. A Catalyst for Change

The fourth key assumption is that the SCP can be a catalyst for change rather than a guarantor or director of change. Its intervention will be neither as large, nor as long-lived, as commitments made by others in the state. It has to obtain leverage to be successful. It has to find partners who can become leaders. It has to have an entry and an exit strategy. Its timing has to be appropriate to the rhythms of change in the state, though not wholly subservient to them.

5. Different States, Different Strategies

The fifth key assumption is that, to a significant degree, each state will be different-or at least perceive itself to be different. Of course, at some level of abstraction, states will look alike. Most states, on examination, have some unnecessary level of incarceration. Most states have made inadequate investments in intermediate punishments, and have poorly developed policy networks for managing the state's response to convicted criminal offenders. In most states, the solutions to these problems will involve stimulating legislators to be more restrained in their zeal for punishing, helping judges and probation departments become more creative in developing alternative sanctions for individual offenders, and developing improved risk assessment and classification instruments to show overburdened corrections departments which offenders can be safely supervised and properly punished in programs other than prisons and jails.

What will differ from state to state, however, is exactly which piece of the system is the one that now accounts for most of the unnecessary incarceration, and is the easiest to change. Even more important, what will differ from state to state is which particular individuals or organizations are in motion trying to solve the problems, and what they need to be most effective.

Since, in the end, the SCP will succeed or fail as a function of how skilled it is in picking points of intervention and partners who can become local leaders, it is inevitable that the SCP's strategy and operations will be at least a little different in each state.

Note that even if it were not true that each state differed in important ways, it might be important for the SCP to operate as though that were true for the simple reason that most states think of themselves as being different. It has long been considered important to avoid "re-inventing the wheel." A great deal of research on the diffusion of innovations teaches a contrary lesson: it is crucial that people be allowed to "re-invent the wheel" for their own purposes. They have to know that something works. But they also have to be allowed to work with it, tailor it to their own purposes, and come to own it as their own invention. Thus, it is important to be able to say in each state that what was developed as the best local response to unnecessary incarceration was locally designed and invented.

D. Operational Implications

It is worth pausing a moment to contemplate the operational implications of these assumptions. Taken together, they create formidable management challenges. Specifically, the put enormous pressure on SCP's decision-making and design capacities. They require an intensive and active style of management and improvisation.

1. The Problem of Focus

Consider, first, the implications of operating at political, policy, and operational levels across the broad array of institutions whose decisions and operations affect levels of unnecessary incarceration. This creates an enormous problem of focus. There are so many possible points of intervention that it can become difficult to decide exactly where the Foundation should concentrate its efforts. Moreover, because things can change quickly, and because many decisions are relatively close calls, most decisions are vulnerable to reconsideration. The net result is that the management team has to spend a great deal of time thinking and strategizing as well as doing and executing.

One solution to this problem, of course, is to develop a "plan" or "model" of how to intervene in a state. The model could provide a consistent focus to the Foundation's efforts. The difficulty, however, is that that approach is inconsistent with the idea that each state might be different. It also makes it difficult to adapt to changing circumstances in a state. To remain alive to the idiosyncrasies of each state, and to the changes that occur, it may be important to remain flexible, even at the expense of losing a clear, consistent focus.

A second solution is to learn enough about the state's political culture, administrative structure, and operational systems to be able to make reliable calculations about maximally effective points of leverage and intervention quickly and confidently. In short, the goal is to speed up and improve the SCP decision-making processes that must be used so intensively to execute the current strategy. The problem here is that that knowledge is difficult to obtain. It requires a long apprenticeship period. And the knowledge obtained may be short-lived. Unexpected events can change conditions. Personnel changes can affect opportunities for leadership. And even if

neither of these things happens, it is hard to keep the big picture in view while being pulled in many different directions.

The difficulty of retaining a focus in such a complex situation requires constant rethinking against the backdrop of prior beliefs. The SCP approach is intensive in its appetite for information, and in its demands for strategizing and improvisation. That is why there are so many meetings and why the operational strategy seems to change so often: the strategy changes in response to new information or changing circumstances in the state.

2. The Need for Innovations

The second operational challenge associated with the assumption that it is necessary to attack across a broad front is that the SCP must invent new ways of reaching parts of the system with which it has limited prior experience. Thus, the program must be an innovator and an inventor as well as a deployer of well-known technologies.

Generally speaking, foundations have limited devices to influence conditions in the world. They can sponsor studies that re veal the size and nature of an urgent social problem. They can support and publicize "model programs" that are effective in dealing with some widely recognized problem. They can try to educate or develop leaders. And they can convene meetings to focus the attention of key policymakers to problems that need to be addressed.

What the SCP is doing in its efforts to achieve a large, long-term change in a complex system is not only inventing particular versions of these general approaches for dealing with the particular problem of unnecessary incarceration, but it is also trying to use the _combination_ of all of these devices to accomplish its goals. It funds studies to show the costs of unnecessary incarceration. It funds exemplary intermediate punishments to show that they can be successful in dealing with certain populations. It seeks to develop leaders in the state through educational programs and close involvement in the studies and the demonstration programs. It tries to keep high-level attention focused on the problem by convening meetings, or involving itself in decision processes when important policy choices are being debated. And it relies on different forms of public education and involvement to help create a political climate favorable to the policy and operational changes that are envisioned.

Within each of these categories of effort, some innovations have occurred. For example, the Public Agenda Foundation survey is a novel device for affecting the perceived political climate within a state. Similarly, client-specific planning is a novel invention for helping judges feel comfortable with sentences other than to jail. But the most important innovation of the SCP is trying to use _all_ these familiar instruments simultaneously in a particular state to achieve a very complex result.

It would be hard to manage the challenge of either attacking on a broad front or developing new methods of intervention. To do both simultaneously taxes the imagination and decision-making capabilities of even the most skillful leaders. So, the design of the SCP has heavy demands for active, imaginative management built into it.

E. Assets of the State-Centered Program

In seeking to reduce unnecessary incarcerations, the SCP has several assets it can deploy. These include:

1) recognized expertise in the areas of crime, prisons, and intermediate punishments;

2) access to national expertise that can be deployed to deal with local problems;

3) discretionary funding;

4) wide access/freedom of movement in consulting with officials in a given state;

5) the power to convene meetings to which state officials can be persuaded to come;

6) access to national audiences;

7) a point of view and a purpose.

Taken together, these assets give the SCP an opportunity to exercise some important functions of leadership. SCP staff can: 1) focus people's attention on a problem; 2) "wire" people together who were not previously connected and develop a new network of capability; 3) recommend solutions, equip individuals and groups to find their own solutions, celebrate and publicize successes, and so on. In short, SCP staff can make something happen.

But it is also worth noting that in using these assets to exercise leadership, the SCP is also vulnerable to attack. Indeed, to those opposed to its purposes, everything that seems like an asset can be turned to a liability. SCP personnel can be painted as outsiders with their own agendas and little knowledge of or commitment to the states in which they are operating. As is always the case in exercising leadership, the problem is to challenge the current system deeply enough to move the system towards desired ends, but without undermining the relationships that continue to legitimate the efforts. (See the extended discussion of goals presented below.)

F. How Assets are Deployed

The SCP uses these assets in a particular way to maximize their effect. First, the program is actively and creatively managed by the Director of the Foundation's Justice Program. As a program director at the Clark Foundation, the Director's involvement signals a large, long-term commitment by the Clark Foundation to the State-Centered Program. Similarly, his knowledge and expertise, along with his strong personality and passion for the cause he pursues, ensures effective advocacy for the SCP's goals with state government officials.

The SCP also has a "stable" of expert consultants who can be deployed to deal more or less imaginatively and helpfully with local issues. Some are expert in analyzing prison populations to determine how much unnecessary incarceration exists. Others are expert in developing classification systems or risk assessment instruments to be used by corrections departments or probation departments in deciding who can be released to

lower levels of supervision. Still others are experts in developing intermediate punishments. These people are mobilized and made available to localities through broad Foundation grants that keep them on tap and available for deployment.

Between the states that are the focus of the SCP, and the Director of the Program and the consultants, are the "state coordinators." In the current operation, state co-ordinators seem to have three slightly different roles.

First, they act like "forward observers" in artillery units who keep track of what is going on in the state, identify where SCP resources could be usefully aimed to achieve the desired results, and report back on the effects of the various strikes that were launched.

Second, they often act as the "sharp point" of particular attacks or interventions -- pressing state officials to take steps they have promised to take to deal with the problem of unnecessary incarceration, or making sure that state-level officials stay in touch with one another and with the consultants.

Third, they are responsible for developing, strengthening, and sustaining a "policy network" in the state that has the capacity to act, collectively and as individuals, to reduce unnecessary incarceration in the state. In the end, it is this capacity that Clark hopes to leave behind to continue its leadership effort.

The program operates through a series of "strategy meetings" in which the state coordinators and the director review the basic strategy and operations for each particular state, and make decisions about what grants should be made, and what other interventions launched. It also operates through the work of the consultants and the efforts of local grantees, both coordinated by the state coordinators. And it operates through meetings within the states attended by the director designed to give special emphasis to one initiative or another. Insofar as these efforts link up effectively with efforts already occurring in the state, and motivate and equip individuals in the states to exercise their own leadership on behalf of SCP goals, the natural course of development of state sentencing policy can be deflected.

III. Important Issues of Strategy and Management

Given this basic operating strategy, several important questions about the management of the SCP should be considered.

First, are the goals of the program adequately defined in the sense that they mark out important values to be realized, give useful operational direction to the Program's efforts, and establish the terms in which they may usefully be held accountable?

Second, are the key operating assumptions-particularly the necessity of going "up to policy"-valid and useful in shaping the efforts of the Program? How can the Program retain its focus and direction in such fluid circumstances?

Third, is the way that the SCP is now structured and operated well designed to achieve its objectives? What changes could be considered?

Fourth, what should be done to help the SCP achieve its national as well as state-level objectives?

A. The Goals and Objectives of the Program

A key element of the overall strategy of the SCP is the definition of its purpose. Giving such a definition is an important managerial act since it declares what the enterprise thinks is valuable and important, and establishes the terms in which it will be held accountable.

1. Criteria for Defining Goals

To be useful, defined goals must meet three tests. First, the goals must set out a plausible vision of some social or public value to be achieved by the enterprise. There must be a story-implicit or explicit-about why the effort would be valuable to society.

Second, the goal must command legitimacy and support from those who oversee its operations and provide resources necessary to achieve the goal; otherwise, the enterprise will be de-legitimated. The goal must also command the hearts and minds of those who work on behalf of the enterprise; otherwise their commitment and effort will be no more than half-hearted.

Third, there must be some plausible means for achieving the goals, and of measuring progress towards the achievement of the goal. Otherwise, the enterprise will fail, or appear to fail. That, in turn, will lead to a loss of both external and internal support.

2. Engaging State Level Officials

In the case of the SCP, the managers face one additional problem in defining their goals. Their goal must, to some degree and in some way, engage the goals of those who are the desired objects of the SCP's influence; namely, officials of the state governments in the states in which the program is operating. In the long term, the SCP cannot achieve its goals except through the actions and commitments of these officials. Moreover, their commitment cannot be commanded or bought; it must be engaged.

In thinking about the underlying substantive values being pursued through the SCP, one can see that there might be significant room for agreement between the SCP and state level officials. After all, the financial costs to governments of supporting record prison populations is hardly negligible. If the SCP could show that substantial savings could be made by some particular adjustments in the sanctioning system without any reduction in perceived or real public safety, then, in principle, there is much for the SCP and state level officials to agree upon.

The difficulty, however, is that sanctioning policy is guided not only by the utilitarian concerns about costs and crime reduction effectiveness. It is also guided by "justice" values such as "accountability" and "just deserts." Indeed, to many, these values should be dominant in establishing criminal sanctions. In this view, the criminal law is a promise made by the state to punish those who offend against society, and it ought to be willing to spend whatever is necessary to live up to that promise.

What constitutes a just response to criminal offending is, of course, an ongoing conversation within the society. In some eras, and in some places, society seems primarily concerned with calling offenders to account and punishing them. In other eras and in other places, those concerned with justice focus much more attention the contributions that circumstances rather than the intention of the offender make to the commission of crimes, and on the fallibility of human institutions that seek to adjudicate guilt and innocence. These concerns counsel temperance in punishment and the protection of individual rights over a concern for punishment.

Because of the strong differences in conceptions of justice, disagreements could easily arise between the SCP and state officials about what constitutes "unnecessary incarceration". They could also disagree about how much of it there was, where it was located, and what could best be done to reduce it. Indeed, in the extreme case, officials of the client state might think that there was "insufficient incarceration," and seek help in increasing it. Presumably the SCP selection processes would exclude such a state from site-eligibility. But in the states in which SCP has operated in the past and will act in the future, there will always be at least some officials, and perhaps many, who are thinking in these terms. Otherwise, there is little reason for SCP to be involved; its goals will be achieved without it having to do anything.

Such officials present a dilemma. From some perspectives that emphasize the importance of state sovereignty and state level democratic processes, the SCP's policy preferences for a state should always be less important than those of state officials. Taken to extremes, this perspective suggests that the SCP should not attempt to recast state processes and agencies to achieve its policy goals, but should, instead, limit its work to helping state officials learn how better and more effectively to achieve their own policy goals.

A different perspective, however, would see the SCP as being entitled to exercise leadership in shaping a state's view of the problem. In this view, the SCP could reasonably claim to be in a better position to see the problems with a state' s sentencing policies and practices than state officials. The Foundation's advantage would arise from its broad national experience, its ability to focus on the economic costs of imprisonment as well as its appeal as a crime control strategy, its knowledge of the efficacy of alternative sanctions, and its knowledge of citizens' attitudes towards punishment. Consistent with its mission and with its legal status, the Foundation could also reasonably claim to be more attuned to the plight of disadvantaged and despised people, and authorized by its donors and the space that is granted to philanthropic enterprises in the American political system to champion their cause beyond what ordinary political processes would comfortably support. On both accounts, the Foundation would be justified in intervening to help a state reduce "unnecessary incarceration," particularly if its techniques revealed the existence of an unexpected level of "unnecessary incarceration" to state officials who worked with the program.

In this "leadership" perspective, the problem of local officials who oppose the SCP's policy goals becomes a tactical rather than moral issue; their opposition is a problem to be solved, not a complete bar to action. If unconvinced policy-opposed officials are to be convinced of the desirability of the SCP's goals, they must be "brought along" through discussion and evidence and learning. Pushing them, or opposing their

policy preferences too vigorously or too soon may alienate them and lead to their active opposition to the SCP, but it is not morally wrong to challenge their current conceptions.

Note that the moral and tactical problem faced by the SCP is similar to the problem faced by many federal government officials who seek to implement national programs through federal grants to states. They, too, must succeed in gaining the attention of state and local officials, and in enlisting their cooperation in achieving federally mandated goals. They, too, may face problems in motivating state level officials who resist the goals or methods of the federal initiative to go along. In this case, however, the problem may be more severe, because the SCP has less institutional authority to use in persuading state officials to go along, and has less money to distribute. In the SCP's favor, however, is that it can, far more credibly than the federal government, threaten to abandon a state if it is not achieving enough of what the SCP wants to achieve. And that may be worth a great deal both practically and ethically.

In any case, the point is that in setting the goal for the SCP, the task is to consider not only what is attractive, important and feasible to achieve from their particular perspective, but also how their declared purpose will engage politicians, officials, and agencies in the states they seek to influence. If the locals cannot align themselves comfortably and confidently with the Foundation's objectives, it will be difficult for the Foundation to achieve its objectives, for the people on whom the success of the enterprise depends will not be effectively mobilized. On the other hand, if everyone agreed with the Foundation's perspective, there would be little "value-added" from the Foundation's efforts.

3. Alternative Formulations of SCP Goals

In trying to find words to describe the goal of the SCP, the SCP tried many different formulations. Some were substantive goals; others were process goals.

Initially, the SCP's goal was simply "to reduce prison populations" in the client states. Other times, it was the far broader goal of "promoting just, humane and effective responses to crime." Still other times, it was to "promote the use of alternatives to incarceration." At some points, these substantive goals were abandoned in favor of process goals that emphasized helping states develop their own policies by "strengthening policy networks," as though the content of the policies they develop did not matter. These variations in the characterization of the goals reflected more than mere semantic difficulties: they revealed deep ambivalence about what the valuable, legitimate, and feasible purposes of the SCP could and should be.

In its heart of hearts, the SCP was pretty clear about its ultimate goal: namely, to reduce absolute levels of incarceration and supervision of criminal offenders in the United States. To the experienced professionals involved with the program, it seemed clear that most states were much too heavily invested in imprisonment, and that much of the imprisonment that was occurring was by any rational standard, "unnecessary." It wasn't making people safer in either the short or long run. It was very expensive. And it risked injustice to those who were wrongly or inappropriately harshly punished. The only reason that unnecessary incarceration existed was because society had been misled into making an ill considered response to crime by politicians who exploited society's fears, and obscured the financial and moral costs of excessive imprisonment. In this

view, states could save money, do greater justice, and maintain current levels of security by eliminating unnecessary incarceration.

Still, the SCP shied away from stating its goal quite so bluntly. The reasons were two. First, in the then current political climate, the straightforward goal of "reducing prison populations" would simply not be either widely supported or achievable. Indeed, as noted above, many political figures continue to think that we have a problem of "insufficient incarceration" rather than "unnecessary incarceration." Therefore, to establish absolute reductions of the population in prison as the goal would be to erode the legitimacy and guarantee the failure of the program.

Second, it is not clear that the SCP could engage enough support in the states they seek to influence if their clearly stated goal was to simply to reduce the number of offenders now in prison-with or without the creation of alternatives. Arguably, some potentially important partners and allies would be alienated by such an unconditional objective.

To have a goal that is both achievable and supportable by their in-state partners, then, the SCP needs a somewhat wider, more accommodating goal than simply "reducing overall prison populations." The difficulty, however, was that, once the SCP surrendered its heartfelt goal, the leaders of the SCP faced the problem of figuring out how far they should go in defining an alternative purpose. Would the SCP be a success if: 1) the proportion of convicted felons being supervised in prisons declined even though the absolute number of people in prison continued to increase; or 2) if the level of intermediate punishments in the society increased; or 3) if the average level of supervision for all convicted felons declined? Arguably, all of these objectives are desirable and would be important successes. The only problem is that all of these objectives could be achieved without necessarily reducing the absolute number of people in prisons.

The SCP was also somewhat ambivalent about how much respect they should accord the states they sought to influence. When those involved with the SCP talked about achieving substantive purposes, the target states tended to become nothing more than a means to the SCP's end of reducing prison populations nationwide. If the states were for some reason unsuitable for this purpose, they could be cast aside as not worthy of SCP largesse and assistance.

In other moments, the program was described as "facilitative." In this conception, the goal was not to achieve any particular substantive goal, but instead to achieve process goals such as helping to develop coherent and competent policy-making processes. At these moments, the states' views are taken seriously, and the SCP role seen as advisory rather than directive. The goals of the SCP thus become intermediate process goals such as: 1) changing the political climate within the state; 2) building policy networks and improving policy-making processes; 3) changing sentencing laws, policies, and practices; or 4) increasing the use of intermediate punishments.

While it is easiest to see these as process goals necessary to achieve the ultimate end of reducing prison populations or reducing unnecessary incarceration, one could reasonably view these results as ends as well as means. For example, one could argue that the development of intermediate punishments, or the strengthening of the

policy networks, would be important and valuable objectives in their own right -- regardless of their impact on prison populations. Indeed, one could observe that the more seriously one takes the goal of respecting state autonomy in defining its own substantive purposes, the more appropriate it seems to define what were initially seen as process objectives or means to a substantive end as ends in themselves. Further, one can observe that in the effort to enlist states in the Clark effort, there might be some advantages in talking about building up intermediate punishments or strengthening policy networks rather than emphasizing the goal of reducing prison populations.

For many in the SCP, however, this shift in emphasis towards process goals seemed to give away too much -- both substantively and managerially. The leaders of the SCP want to stay closer to the substantive objective of reducing overall levels of supervision -- not just prison populations. They also do not want to risk the loss of accountability that might come from adopting "nonmeasurable, nonquantitative process goals" rather than "measurable, quantitative, outcome goals."

4. The Goal: "Reducing Unnecessary Incarceration"

What emerged, then, as the most satisfactory and operationally useful statement of the goal of the SCP was "to reduce unnecessary incarceration" in the states that are the focus of the SCP's efforts (and, ultimately, through demonstration effects, nationwide). This formulation has the advantage of retaining the SCP's focus on reducing prison populations, while allowing room for discussion about how much the populations ought to be reduced. However, it also may lead to exaggerated attention to presence or absence of short-term effects on prison populations.

The key word, of course, is "unnecessary." Expressing SCP goals in terms of "reduction of unnecessary" incarceration evades recognition of an inherent (but probably necessary) ambiguity that camouflages important differences in perspective among SCP personnel and consultants and between SCP personnel and many state officials. Most professionals now involved with the SCP probably take it as given that most states engage in substantial "unnecessary incarceration." Some SCP personnel favor reduced use of incarceration as an absolute policy goal. Among state officials, by contrast, most probably fall between beliefs that there is "some" unnecessary incarceration to little or none. As noted above, there may even be some who believe that there is too little incarceration!

The argument for reducing unnecessary incarcerations is rooted most fundamentally in the claim that achieving this objective would achieve the (consensual) economic objective of reducing expenditures on prisons and jails in a time of tight money. It rests secondarily on the (more contested) claim that there are more just, effective and humane responses to many convicted offenders than incarceration. The principal means for accomplishing these goals involve: 1) analyses of the prison population that reveals which offenders now being incarcerated could be safely released to lower levels of supervision; 2) persuading judges and corrections officials to build and use the intermediate forms of punishment; and 3) and creating a political and policy climate in which such officials feel free to move in these directions.

5, Strengths and Weaknesses of the Goal

In the "unnecessary incarceration" formulation of the goals of the SCP, the operational focus remains on the size of the prison population. The development of intermediate sanctions and the establishment of a suitable policy and political climate both become means to the achievement of that operational goal. The collision between the Foundation's goals and state officials' goals is contained in the arguments over what constitutes "unnecessary" imprisonment with both sides allowed to develop and argue their own point of view.

There may be a real tension in the operation of the program between achieving sure, short run reductions in prison populations on the one hand, and larger but only probabilistic gains in the long run through the gradual development of effective working relationships with policy networks in the state. The tension between short and long run goals could exist for two different reasons.

First, to some extent, pursuit of these different objectives competes for limited staff time, and limited foundation funds. If the staff is helping the parole department develop and apply a new risk assessment instrument to this quarter's parole eligible population in the interests of releasing several hundred prisoners several months earlier than they otherwise would be, it is spending less time organizing policy meetings among legislators, executive branch officials, and leading jurists to discuss progress in the state in reducing unnecessary incarcerations.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, focused pursuit of short-run reductions in prison populations may damage the working relationships in the state that the SCP is ultimately relying on to produce large durable effects after they leave. The reason is that such focused and determined efforts indicate to local officials that the Foundation does have an agenda of its own that it is pursuing. Further, it is willing to pursue this even at the expense of the ambitions and desires of their partners within the state. These observations, taken together, help rekindle initial suspicions that the Foundation was not really there to help the state and its officials find their way, but to use them to produce a result that Clark wanted. The deep sense of betrayal that this engenders can damage the partnerships that are essential to being able to make progress in the state while the Clark Foundation is actively involved. Even more importantly, the betrayal can jeopardize the success of any "exit strategy" that necessarily depends on having state officials take up the cause after the foundation leaves.

This concern does not seem to be purely an academic possibility. We have seen examples where working relationships with key players have become frayed to the breaking point. Tension in the relationships is not necessarily a bad sign. Often, it indicates that the SCP is challenging the state deeply and usefully. But if the challenge ends up destroying the relationship with the SCP, or if a continued relationship with SCP destroys the relationship of particular local officials with their colleagues in the State, then the potential for long run accomplishments is diminished, and the SCP will have no way of leaving the state without sacrificing all that they have built.

Some tension over goals between state officials and outside agencies (notably foundations, advocacy groups, and the federal government) with substantial policy interests are inevitable. After all, outside agencies would not be attracted to a state but for a sense that their expertise, resources, or point-of-view will be beneficial. To this point the SCP has not encountered serious estrangement of officials participating in SCP activities. This may be because the "unnecessary incarceration" goal permits

ambiguous agreement. Or it may be because much SCP work at operational levels appears independently valuable, whatever unstated difference may exist over long-term goals. Increased focus and candid discussion of these issues might be a valuable exercise as SCP activities expand.

B. Validity of Operating Assumptions

A second key question in managing the program is whether the basic operating assumptions of the program-particularly the notions that the program has to reach "up to policy" and attack the problem of unnecessary incarceration on a broad operational front-are accurate and useful. This is particularly important because these assumptions do pose a heavy decision-making burden on the effort.

There is a relationship between this question and the question of the goals of the program. If what the SCP is really after is the development of a strengthened state capacity to identify and reduce unnecessary incarceration through the creation of improved policy networks and policy-making processes that can survive after the SCP leaves the state, then it is clearly very important to focus on shaping the policy networks, individual leadership within those networks, and the political climate and context surrounding them. It is those changes in state orientation and capacity that becomes the engine that drives continued improvement after the SCP leaves, and gives them the confidence that they can leave.

1. Reaching Up to Policy

On balance, we think it is wise to continue the effort to "reach up to policy." If anything, we think that deserves a larger and more sustained effort. Some of the most significant accomplishments of the SCP have been secured at this level. Some of the most innovative efforts have succeeded in producing changes at this level. Yet, to some degree, there seems to be a tendency, once the SCP gains entry to the state at the policy level, to drift downward into operational level programs.

Ideally, the SCP could continue to operate at the policy levels by using its auspices to convene a continuing set of meetings among key, high level officials from the three branches of government. These meetings would provide the audience for reports produced by local officials and Foundation grantees on the level of unnecessary incarceration, the factors that seem to be driving it, and the measures that are being taken to reduce it. This group, in turn, would provide an implicit authorization for taking action to deal with the problem, and the nucleus of any lobbying efforts that needed to be undertaken to produce policy changes in the legislature, in the executive, or in the judiciary. In short, it could become a continuing force for reducing unnecessary incarceration in the state.

The principal challenge in maintaining this policy level focus seems to lie in finding the optimal size and combination of policy level officials to be engaged, and in developing information systems and analytic capacity that can keep them usefully informed about and engaged in the problem of reducing unnecessary incarceration. There is a natural tendency to gravitate towards those officials who support one's goals regardless of the formal or informal influence over sentencing systems. There is also a natural tendency to focus on administrative people rather than elected officials. Yet, the important drivers of the system are often political rather than administrative.

Consequently, years of work with administrative officials can often be overwhelmed by a spasm of political activity. For this reason, it remains crucial, in our opinion, to take on the arduous task of cultivating sustained relationships with political figures as well as administrative types. An important device for accomplishing this objective is to develop an administrative capacity for producing high quality information about the state of the sanctioning system. It is that that allows legislators and elected chief executives to see the consequences of their actions, and to see paths of action that can be taken.

2. Maintaining a Focus while Operating Across a Broad Front

The difficulty of keeping a focus on the policy level may be the result of uncertainty about whether that focus could really produce important operational results in the short run. But it could also reflect the more general problem in the SCP of staying focused on any given intervention, and making sure that the intervention happens in a timely way that works effectively with other initiatives.

Regardless of whether SCP is working at the policy or the operational levels, it is important to be able to stay with an effort and demand performance. That is particularly true if one SCP purpose is to use its interventions to commit and qualify individual officials to play leadership roles in developing policy networks. Of course, Clark should cut off support to individuals in the state if they do not seem to be performing or developing in desired directions. But when and how to cut off support is a delicate matter.

In the experience so far, there have been both successes and failures in focus and follow through. What seems to be important in determining success and failure in these instances is effectiveness at feeding and nurturing state level people at rates that they can absorb. The way to maintain focus might be to focus on the development, care, and feeding of potential partners in the state. Perhaps there should be a "people-focused" strategy in addition to an operations-focused strategy.

The use of the existing cadre of national technical assistance providers represents a potential problem for keeping a focus, and particularly a focus that emphasizes the development of partners within the state. In principle, the consultants should be very responsive to Clark direction, since they are paid specifically to do the Foundation's bidding. In principle, too, the consultants could operate in ways designed to strengthen local capabilities rather than substitute or supplant them.

In practice, however, neither of these seems to be quite true. The consultants are involved with many other activities than support to the SCP. Consequently, they are neither always ready to be deployed at the time the SCP needs them, nor to finish at the time they are needed. The systems that hold them accountable for timely and successful performance seem a little weak.

It is also true that the consultants apparently vary in terms of their commitment to and ability to develop partnerships with the local people whose work they are partly doing. There have been some notable successes where the consultants did seem to be successful in transferring their enthusiasm and skills to local people. But the more typical experience seems to be a failure to engage. This may be because the consultants feel more accountable to the Foundation than to their state-level clients.

This could be changed by seeking evaluations of the consultants from state-level clients and making these evaluations an important part of the system that holds the consultants accountable. Indeed, the one instance in which state-level officials felt most control over the actions of the consultants resulted in a significant, long-term success.

3. A Catalyst for Change

The SCP is based on the idea that it can become a "catalyst" rather than an independent producer of change. Implicit is the notion that there is some latent potential for change in a state that is to be activated. Also implicit in this metaphor is the notion that the catalyst can be introduced when conditions are right, and that the catalyst itself will be used up at some stage and cease operating. It has done its work when it has altered conditions and on-going processes in the state.

The SCP faces the problem of entering and exiting a state. Ideally, the way it enters and the way it exits will increase its effectiveness as a catalyst. So far, there is little information to be used to think about how to exit a state, since that has not yet really been done. But there signs that are worrisome in both these domains.

With respect to entering a state, some observations about the experience so far can be offered. First, the basic principle of scouting a state to ascertain whether there is a serious problem, and whether there are local processes already in motion trying to solve the problem is clearly a good and important one. If there is no problem, or no material to work with in solving it, the Foundation cannot hope to be a catalyst.

Second, it seems clear that there might be some advantages in being open about SCP's interest in the state, and inclusive in talking to people in the state rather than secretive and exclusive. The risks in being secretive and exclusive include the following. For one thing, t arouses suspicions about the Foundation's purposes and methods. These are unnecessary because the Foundation can be perfectly forthright about its interests. It seems to encourage those who are initially consulted to think that they have a special relationship with the Foundation that can be exploited. When it turns out that they will become one of many with whom the Foundation works, they are often disappointed. For another, in being secretive, the Foundation can easily get a distorted view of conditions in the state, in particular in failing to get important information about the political forces that are arrayed against the Foundation's objectives. This is a handicap not only in the strategic decision about whether to enter a state, but also in initial operating decisions in developing networks and partners.

Third, it seems likely that the SCP is thinking in time frames and scales of effort that are too small relative to the objectives to be achieved. Our historical review offers caution about just how slow and painful the processes of making important changes in sentencing policies are, and of how many people and how much money are engaged in the process of change. They make the two to four years, and the $3 - 5 million per state the Foundation is willing to invest in the Program seem pretty small. Similar apprehension is raised concerning how long it might take for an individual to emerge as an important leader in a developing policy network. There may not be a sufficiently sustained commitment to allow the catalyst to do its work, even when there are local resources and people to be engaged.

4. Each State is Different

The last key operational assumption is that the Clark intervention in each state must be customized and improvised to be effective. This is an important issue for two different reasons. First, insofar as it is true, it makes it more difficult to hold the SCP accountable, for SCP cannot be held accountable for executing a particular plan or model in a reliable way. Second, it imposes significant decision-making burdens on the management of the effort, and this limits the ultimate reach of the program.

Whether states are different depends at least a little on the level of abstraction used in describing the states. It is almost certainly true that each state will have some important similarities and some important differences that will affect the form that the Clark intervention should take. The Clark intervention will probably have to be keyed to some particular features in each state, and adapted to changing conditions and responses within the state.

It is also true, however, that as the SCP accumulates experience with states, they will all come to look a little more familiar, and there will be more knowledge about how each intervention should be shaped. In the first two states, it was hard to figure out what was going on, and what interventions would be useful. Both the strategy and the tactics were being invented. With this experience behind it, the SCP will still have to adapt, invent, and improvise, but it will probably do so in a more orderly and knowledgeable way. The Foundation now knows the likely results of a Public Agenda Foundation survey, and has more ideas about how to capitalize on them. The Foundation knows that there is a tendency to slip from policy levels to operational levels, and has a sense of some devices that could be helpful in counteracting that tendency. The Foundation knows something about what judges want to see in programs, and in feedback about their sentencing decisions that will allow them to have confidence in the use of alternatives. And the Foundation knows something about the scale of the effort that is required in a state, and how long it takes to develop effective leaders and partners.

All this may make it easier to formulate plans, and to have the plans be more realistic and firmer than they have been in the past. But that should not prevent recognition that the processes of adaptation and customization will continue to be important as well.

5. Summary

In sum, SCP's operating assumptions appear generally to be appropriate. What we have learned is that it is very difficult to sustain a focus on the policy level. We have also learned that it might be useful to maintain the operational focus of the program by concentrating as much on the development of people and leaders as on the identification of operational points of leverage. It may also be important to work harder at ensuring that the consultants build rather than replace local capacity and that they remain responsive to and accountable to their local clients as well as the foundation. And, while the overall level of innovation and invention might be expected to diminish, and the plans made for each state to become firmer as SCP experiences accumulate, it will continue to be important to adapt the activities to new states.

C. Structure and Operations

The observations made above have important implications for the structure and operations of the program.

First, they suggest that the state coordinator position is a very important one. Indeed, if anything, it seems that this position is even more important than it once was, and will become more important if the program expands to other states. A key question is whether the state coordinators should be given more discretionary authority to originate proposals and approve grant requests. Another key question is whether they should be permanently resident in the state, or even be drawn from existing state personnel.

In general, we think the state coordinator positions should move in both these directions -- towards more direct operational authority, and towards more sustained instate residence. To get the maximum benefit of having an "ambassador" from the Clark Foundation in the state and to give them the entree and the clout they need to convene and mobilize state level officials, they should be omnipresent and authoritative. Initiative in operating the program should move from New York to the state capitols.

Second, our effort to evaluate the SCP suggests that there should be reduced reliance on consultants, and more money spent on local initiatives. This may create a problem with the long-term maintenance of the kinds of capabilities that this stable of consultants represents. But if the goal is to build competence in the state, it is crucially important that the Foundation use its grants, combined with pressures from the state level coordinators, to challenge and develop state level capabilities. At a minimum, the consultants should be made accountable to the state level clients as well as to the Foundation.

D. Producing National Impact

Eventually, the Clark Foundation would like to widen the impact of the SCP. The important question is through what particular media should the possibilities demonstrated by the SCP be communicated to others.

1. Replications of the SCP in Other States

One possibility is simply to replicate what has been done in the existing client states. Replication could be important for two different reasons. One is that the SCP has simply not yet had enough experience to know how to help states reduce unnecessary incarceration. Additional states are necessary to further test SCP strategies and programs. A second is that replication is the right way to extend the benefits of the State-Centered Program. While it would be nice if there were a lower-cost way to disseminate the knowledge and experience gained in the early sites, the painful reality is that nothing important will happen in other states, based on the SCP experience and strategy, unless Clark makes the same kind of effort and commitment in the other states. The benefits of the SCP can probably be brought to other states only through this kind of individualized, sustained effort.

2. Publications and Technical Assistance to Other States

While replication may be an important part of the SCP strategy, its efforts to disseminate its work nationally should not be limited to this approach. It is simply far too

expensive for the Foundation to have to launch a State-Centered Program in each state to achieve a national result. Therefore, the Foundation faces the question of how to broadcast its experiences and accomplishments and to stimulate action in other states through devices other than entering the states themselves.

One possibility is simply to prepare a variety of written documents that can be circulated widely to other state governments. Indeed, Clark has already started down this path. <u>Overcrowded Times</u>, which is at least partly an account of the approach taken by the SCP and a record of what has worked and what has been more difficult, is now widely distributed beyond the states in which Clark is operating. Indeed, it is probably the principal connecting link in an emerging national policy network focused on reducing unnecessary incarceration.

It might be desirable to produce separate manuals on how to develop and use the instruments that Clark thinks are necessary to reduce prison overcrowding: e.g. how to conduct a survey of citizens to determine their views towards imprisonment; how to involve citizens in programs to supervise and control offenders in the community; how to analyze a state's prison population to gauge the magnitude of overcrowding and estimate the costs that can be saved by adopting different policies and procedures; what risk assessment instruments are now available to be used in deciding which offenders can be released on bail, probation, and parole; descriptions of, various intermediate punishments including their costs and the populations for which they seem particularly appropriate; how to set up client-specific planning efforts to support judges; and so on. In effect, there could be a small encyclopedia describing everything a state that wanted to know about reducing unnecessary incarceration should know, and how the pieces can be assembled in a coherent, overall strategy.

Alternatively, Clark could try to reach other states through media other than the print media. Clark support has already provided a film on prison overcrowding and the SCP's response to it. SCP personnel have also cooperated with a television show that was interested in presenting the activities of the SCP. Perhaps these fledgling efforts could be expanded.

3. Convening National Meetings to Reduce Unnecessary Incarceration

The disadvantage of these approaches, however, is that the information will be communicated somewhat impersonally and didactically. A more powerful but more expensive way of communicating information about how to deal with this problem is through face-to-face meetings. One kind of meeting would be educational sessions in which people in the SCP discuss their ideas and experience with those in other states who are interested in beginning to take action on unnecessary incarceration. Some such meetings, particularly for state legislators, have already been held with some modest success.

A second kind of meeting would involve a large and riskier investment. A representative and influential group of people would be assembled to consider the question of unnecessary incarceration and what could be done about it. In one versions, this would be a blue ribbon panel chosen to come to some particular preordained conclusion. In another version, it would be an ongoing "executive session" in which the group addressed the question openly and freshly, but with the benefit of the experience that the Clark Foundation has accumulated.

A third kind of meeting would be one in which teams of people from different states-including legislators, corrections commissioners, and judges-would come together to analyze their own state's situations and formulate plans to deal with them in the company of several other teams who were doing the same thing. They would then go back to their states to try to make something happen, and meet again later to find out what had happened, and how they were having to adjust their plans.

Which of these approaches, or what combination of approaches, would be most effective in spreading the goals and information available to the SCP in the interest of having an impact on the national problem of unnecessary incarceration is worth further discussion.

IV. Conclusions

It is no easy task to intervene effectively in a highly politicized, widely decentralized system when the political tides are running against the goals of the intervention. It is particularly difficult when the resources and legitimacy of the intervenor are limited.

Still, it is surprising how much can be accomplished when one combines sustained commitment to a plausibly valuable purpose with a bit of expertise, a national audience, and some discretionary money to support convening efforts, local analyses, and experimentation. The Clark Foundation's State Centered Program sought to maximize its leverage over a complex problem not by going with one or another of a Foundation's traditional arsenal of instruments – the national study, the advocacy effort, the demonstration program, or the development of leaders. It sought to maximize its leverage by making a sustained effort to change policies in practices in a few states by intervening at different levels across a broad front. In doing so, they ended up producing effects which registered in all of these ways: they succeeded in focusing some national attention on the problem of unnecessary incarceration, they gave strength to advocates of alternative approaches, they developed knowledge about the impact of many different kinds of interventions, and they helped to create a community of officials devoted to the goal of reducing unnecessary incarceration.

It may well be that it will take a change in political tides for these accomplishments to register effects, but it is certainly true that when the tides change, the SCP will have created the capacity to react quickly to these changes, and it may be true, that they will have been instrumental in changing the tides. In any case, what is interesting and important about the SCP is that it sought to intervene on both the political and the operational side in a sustained effort at system change. That makes it worth thinking hard about.