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*Positive Policies  
for American Agriculture:  
From Values to Goals  
to Analyses to Means*

**M**ATERIAL PRESENTED IN PRECEDING CHAPTERS provided background for the two concluding papers.<sup>1</sup> Authors Swerling and Schnittker were charged doubly. First, the discussions were to be based upon all of the preceding material. Second and more important, the authors were asked to try "to formulate agricultural policy elements for the 1960's which are most consistent with the basic economic and social values for agriculture" — whatever that is — and "to formulate agricultural policy elements which are most consistent with the basic economic and social values for the total society" — whatever that is.<sup>2</sup> The papers are appraised here within those missions and in the context of the book as a whole.

Four questions seem explicitly to have been engaged by the contributing authors:

1. What are, or perhaps what should be, the values or preference systems of individuals and groups in formulating agricultural policy?
2. How can values or preference systems be translated into workable or operational goals of farm policy?
3. What must be known about the determinants of changes in goal or target variables in order systematically to link values and means?
4. What alternatives of administration or control are consistent with given combinations of goals for farm policy?

Other and perhaps more important questions are engaged but not answered. How does one reconcile hostile value structures,

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<sup>1</sup>Boris C. Swerling, *Positive Policies for American Agriculture*. This book. and John A. Schnittker, *Positive Policies for American Agriculture*. This book.

<sup>2</sup>Earl O. Heady and Lee G. Burchinal, *The Concern With Goals and Values in Agriculture*. This book.

or should they be reconciled? What values should serve as bases for operating targets? What are the causal relationships of values to goals — and of means and achievement of targets to values and thus back again to goals and means?

It seems to be agreed that it is not yet possible directly to specify or to weight the value constructs that may well be the bases for administrative action in farm policy and that there are incompatibilities of values that preclude translating values into operational goals. Yet, without such translation, rational program activity is clearly impossible.

There seems to be only one major source of disagreement between Dr. Swerling and Dr. Schnittker: The two studies at issue here reach exactly opposite conclusions. Yet, each engage precisely the same question and within the same background and identical missions. Both studies are internally consistent in linking values to goals, thence to analysis, and finally to administrative proposals. Both authors apply analytical methods responsibly and within accepted rules. They start with basically opposite value constructs. Dr. Swerling seems to believe that price support of commodities is wrong — morally wrong, and wrong by the norms of efficiency. Dr. Schnittker believes differently.

Who is right? Should the differences be reconciled? If so, what compulsion of logic or other analysis can achieve reconciliation? If there is to be an agricultural adjustment program of real substance during the 1960's, one or the other of these value constructs must yield. Which one?

To appraise these two papers in the reference terms laid down in their mission and in the context of contributed discussions requires specification of the major attributes of values or preference systems; of operational goals; of the analytical determinants of such targets; and of operating programs. No violence to the values of the writers is intended. They seem to show their values plainly.

### Value Constructs or Preference Systems

Farm policy ultimately involves management designed to yield some combination of targets presumed to be consistent with underlying value or preference norms. These broad and often vaguely specified value constructs must ultimately be defined in terms of optimal levels or other attributes of operational targets. Then, in the action or program phases of policy, consistent means of obtaining the goals must be prescribed. John M. Brewster

discusses this in Chapter 6.<sup>3</sup> It is apparently impossible to quantify most values. The value constructs to which reference was made in nearly every presentation remained unidentified. Yet, preference systems have long been specified in demand and welfare theory. Here it has not been necessary actually to measure such values. Effective empirical work — including definition of goals, analysis and management or policy — has long been possible without measurement or aggregation of individual preference maps. Preference patterns and goals therein consistent with observed behavior are identified *ex post* to observed adjustments in demand. In this sense, value constructs for farm policy could be defined generally in terms of substitution relationships just as they are defined in demand theory in order to be made operational. Perhaps values might be approximated by postulation *ex post* to observed behavior of those involved in farm policy.

There was difficulty in determining whether operating targets or administrative mechanisms taken alone have any value component. There seemed to be general agreement that methods for deriving targets and setting and keeping their optimum values were causal determinants of subsequent value systems. At least implicitly, some contributing authors seemed to believe that norms could be made conceptually operational even if only by defining preference systems and goals that might be uniquely consistent with what people appear actually to do.

Differences among individuals with respect to particular attributes or weight of a preference system do not appear to be resolvable by adherence to any generally accepted procedures of logic or testing.

Yet, the authors held that these constructs are and perhaps should be the primary determinants of farm policy. Controversy, therefore, centered upon appropriate expression of values, of operating targets and of means to achieve such goals. It seems generally agreed that it is now difficult or impossible to specify the methods for translating values into goals. It also seems agreed that means for weighting such values have not been developed, since the values themselves are not identified. Thus, while there is no fatal conceptual difficulty in developing complex preference or value systems for individuals, the major present difficulty in formulating targets is the virtual impossibility of aggregation. Even if the thus-far-unattained specification of individual preference systems were given, still there would be no compelling constraints which would assure agreement or even

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<sup>3</sup> John M. Brewster, *Society Values and Goals in Respect to Agriculture*. This book.

limit permissible controversy with respect to weighting. There are, of course, many other computational difficulties. Additionally, weighting seems impossible if there be substantial interdependencies among alternative value systems for individuals and groups. In short, value constructs, even if defined ex post as logical concepts consistent with observed behavior, are not yet fully operational guides nor are they bases either for appraisal or adjustments either of actions or of values themselves.

Yet, somehow, participants seemed to agree that changes in values or in weights lead to changes in the optimum prescriptions for farm programs. Somehow, there was implicit assumption that all farm programs should be consistent with some set of weighted value constructs.

With this apparent agreement, the authors seemed, in effect, to conclude that programs are right only if they be consistent with some set of values thus far unspecified and possibly beyond specification. Yet, there seemed also to be agreement that values actually can be defined in terms of differing levels of specificity. Values, as defined or undefined, therefore seemed not to be goals but in some sense to be the determinants of operating targets or goals. However, values did seem to be considered as primary governors or guides in choosing among alternative actions through which targets might be achieved. They seemed also to be considered the final bases for consistent administration and also for consequent adjustments by individuals or groups of their own value systems.

Little if any reference was made to the determinants of preference systems. Little was said of any systematic or causal relationship of value constructs — however defined — to operating goals and actions. But it seemed clearly to be agreed that values — whatever they may be or however they may be weighted — are the bases for all other parts of policy programs. They were held to be governors of a continuing process ranging from values to targets to analysis to programs, back to values, and so on, ad infinitum. Implicitly or otherwise, it seemed to be agreed that values must be represented by surrogates or carrier variables derived by methods not once defined.

### Operational Goals — Surrogates for Values

If administrative action is not to be “wrong” — where “wrong” means inconsistent with accepted values — then there is clear necessity for operational definition of value surrogates as targets. Absent this, there is no basis for rational action, for appraisal, or

for adjustment of program. Most participants seemed to agree that means and ends are not discrete. They also agreed, apparently, that in fact there are many different groups, often with different values and often selecting different but always complex conglomerates of goals to be optimized. Professor Maddox defined farm policy as a "continuous process of group and individual compromise with temporary armistices" only.<sup>4</sup> Yet, even here there was agreement with respect to the necessity for operational goals, even if underlying value constructs and their linkage to targets remained undefined.

An operational definition of a conglomerate of targets involves specification of the operations required or the procedures used in the identification process itself. Optimally, value constructs should be translated to operational targets in quantitative form as carriers for values. In this sense, the farm problem or any other problem can be defined as a situation in which the magnitudes or other attributes of weighted target variables are undesirable or inconsistent with accepted value constructs. A solution of a problem then can be defined as changing the variables representing the values to more highly desired magnitudes or other attributes.

The transition from the general underlying value system to quantitative carrier variables serving as targets could conceivably be achieved by successive decreases in generalization of expression of values. This could lead to ultimate agreement that certain quantitative targets shall, during the operating period, be taken to represent the underlying value constructs and thereby to serve as guides in administration, as bases for appraisal of achievement, and possibly as bases for readjustment of the entire interrelated sequence running from values to administration. Similarly, it should be possible so to narrow group preference systems to represent goals of individuals or units in reasonably homogeneous institutions. There appear to be no other ways whereby the consistency of value constructs and administrative actions may be appraised.

Achievement of target levels or qualities in carrier variables can be taken at least as a best possible approximation to optimization adjustments for given creeds. Goals or targets specified this way are free of the crippling difficulties of the typical unspecified preference construct. Targets are susceptible of operational definition. Values — as used by these participants — are not. Conceptually, it is possible to weight and therefore to

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<sup>4</sup>James G. Maddox, discussing *The Concern with Goals and Values in Agriculture*. This book.

aggregate targets so defined. It is not possible to aggregate or even rationally to assign weights to creeds or values as defined by the participants. It is possible to measure interdependencies among targets. This could not be done with broadly generalized value constructs.

However, as Professor Maddox pointed out, it is actually necessary to specify goal magnitudes simultaneously in a variety of carrier variables. Nearly always, the value objectives of individuals or groups, even if narrowly defined, involve a multiplicity of creeds or values. Nearly always, these creeds and values appear to be interrelated with respect to their major determinants. Yet, as Dr. Foote noted, "If we are to get out of the realm of clashing platitudes, the best way to do so is to start transforming our values into goals, our words into numbers. . . . Intentions thus become intended effects. . . ."<sup>5</sup> With a multiplicity of targets, interrelations may be competing, or hostile, or involve substitutability.

Targets at best, it would seem from the conclusions of the participants, can be little more than approximations, and perhaps not good approximations, to basic values. There seems yet to be no method whereby the systematic or causal interrelations, if any, of generalized "values" and specific operating targets can be linked. It may be possible, as in some phases of demand theory, to specify the kind of value construct which would appear to be consistent on an *ex post* basis with observed behavior. The difficulties of this kind of specification are clearly understood. Most compelling, there is an operating necessity for explicit quantification of target goals if they are to guide action, guide appraisal, guide adjustment of administrative activity, and serve to amend underlying values themselves. Goals must be weighted so that they are mutually consistent or possible of simultaneous achievement within some pattern or system of interrelationship.

There is also necessity to introduce constraints or limitations impinging upon the goals. Achievement of targets may be limited or even precluded by constraints far beyond the power of persons involved in the value-means system. These constraints or limitations may emerge from many value sources — legal, institutional and budgetary. They may be physical in origin. Limits or constraints could be introduced into the definition of the target variables, into analysis of such variables or even into the administrative phases of policy. However, in policy, constraints often appear in the definition of the target variables which are taken to approximate the values themselves.

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<sup>5</sup>Nelson N. Foote, *Goals and Values and Social Action: A Model With Complications*. This book.

Little is known of how operating goals can or should be derived from the apparently underlying values. Little is known of how acceptance of values can or should be reached. The goals must be operationally defined to involve explicit questions conceivably answerable without reference to values. Weights are also drawn, apparently, out of underlying value constructs. Constraints, side conditions or limits may also be drawn from value constructs, relative or otherwise. Whether they are or whether they should be, or how they might be, are questions left unanswered by the contributing authors. Yet, it seemed agreed that if rationality is to be obtained in action, targets must be defined and weighted to provide basis for selection of optimum means. The difficult issue of expression of values through targets or carriers does not appear to have been resolved to the satisfaction of all participants.

### The Analytical Component of Policy

If values must be expressed through surrogates or goals, the analytical component of policy — farm or otherwise — is the next logically necessary link between values and means. Analysis is the single component of the policy process appearing to be free of any normative content. In this phase, it is first necessary to specify the alternative variables of alternative forms of relationship through which it is conceivably possible to obtain or to keep the optimum magnitudes or other qualities of the goals.

It seemed to be agreed by the participants that efforts to represent preference systems are not “scientific” or “theory-measurement” processes. In fact, the papers and discussions seem to indicate that participants do not know how values develop; how they may be specified; how they may be weighted; how their interrelations may be measured; how they can be related to goals; and how these goals can be related simultaneously to values and administration. It appeared agreed that there is no compulsion for competent and responsible people to reach agreement with respect to the relative desirability of values or goals. Ultimately, selection among values may rest upon aesthetic, ethical or other considerations not susceptible of resolution by accepted rules of analysis. These attitudes, which seemed to be general, support the generally accepted viewpoint that “scientific method” is a narrowly specified mechanism applicable only to narrowly defined questions. Fundamentally, questions must be structured to involve nothing more than patterns of co-variation if the arbitrary procedures of “scientific method” are to be applied. No value or normative questions may be engaged by these devices.

Creeds and carrier targets are indeed "Siamese twins" with respect to administrative operations, but they can only be joined together by means of "scientific" analysis of variation in target carriers. It seemed widely agreed that neither goals nor administrative actions have separate operational rationality aside from their underlying value constructs.

Perhaps even the analytical phase of policy is ultimately an arbitrary process involving rigid conventions based on aesthetic norms. It was widely agreed that value and action questions are not resolved separately nor are they susceptible of standard hypothesis-testing procedures. Most participants seemed ready to agree with John Brewster that "in organizational terms, this problem is a question of what alternative to customary rules can be spelled out and its results quantified... and... in value terms, the problem is a question of what new weightings of competing creeds would be required by the alternatives to our customary ways... and... the ideal models of scientific theory and measurement are not to be equated with so-called normative systems."<sup>6</sup> This means that to achieve targets consistent with values, action must be consistent with the determinants of goals. A given conglomerate of goal attributes might well be gotten by manipulation of a battery of alternative combinations of determining variables, magnitudes and relationships or forms of relationships. Thus, the basic purpose of the analytical phase is to specify those variables and relationships closely and systematically related to targets which might be susceptible of administrative manipulation. They may also provide the basis for choice among the different alternative administrative organizations and operations through which the goal conglomerate conceivably could be achieved. Thus, goals cannot be gotten except through analysis of the narrowest "scientific" or "hypothesis-testing" type. Consistent relationships of administrative operations and goals cannot otherwise be gotten.

This phase is really what Brewster calls "scientific method" or "theory-measurement" and serves as a major link in the chain from values to goals to means. Values and goals are normative and their generation does not directly involve analytical processes. There is no direct reference to norms in selecting or weighting carriers. But, for given weighted variables, the procedure of analysis which links values to means is a straightforward "scientific" operation. At issue are carefully structured questions, involving issues of naked co-variation and nothing else, designed to "explain" variation in the weighted goal or target system. The results are the necessary information to set up an administrative

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<sup>6</sup>Brewster, *op. cit.*



mechanism which can yield optimum results in terms of weighted goals subject to the constraints or limits introduced in the system.

Both the variables and the interrelations which might serve as administrative bases for control are identified. Alternatives through which different variables or different relationships might be changed in different ways to get given ends can also be identified. It is also possible to develop the side conditions not directly introduced in the identification of the goals themselves.

There was little discussion of this analytical component and occasional disparagement of its function. Yet, there seemed to be implicit understanding that this phase is indeed the necessary link between values, goals and means. While there are no apparent rules to resolve conflicts with respect to values or their derivatives — goals — there seemed to be implicit agreement that the analytical component was tenable only if values or goals were presented on a disjunctive basis. Thus, it is consistent with accepted conventions of analysis to state that "if the goals are taken to be some conjuncture of target variables, then optimal administration must be based on analysis of the system explaining variation in the goal conglomerate." This does not mean that the goal is necessarily accepted as a surrogate of the value or that there be any logical or other compulsion for general acceptance of the value constructs themselves.

While there are many ways of presenting the relationship of the analytical component to the total value-means continuum, three main attributes must be known in order to develop the appropriate means to achieve goals. These involve the variables causally related to the goals, their net interrelationships, and the total system of co-variation. Given this information, it then becomes possible to know those variables and relationships susceptible of manipulation; the alternatives among various relations and control variables through which a given combination of goal attributes might be gotten; and, in some cases, all of the possible alternatives for optimal administration.

### The Administrative Phase of Policy

Administration means development of an operating mechanism to impose optimum magnitudes or other attributes upon the determining variables or relationships which govern the goals. Explaining variation in the targets requires at least an approximation to straightforward "scientific" analysis. This may be an ideal procedure, but efficiency of administration for given goals is otherwise impossible. With a complex of goals, it is likely that there

will be alternative ways to get and to keep the desired target attributes. There are fundamental differences between the analytical component and the administrative processes. First, analysis can specify the alternatives of relationships or variables to be manipulated to obtain given targets. Administration is designed to achieve the optimal magnitudes of determining variables or relationships. Second, the analytical processes are at least superficially free of value connotation. However, there are elements of the administrative phase in which normative components are explicitly introduced.

An administrative mechanism may be defined in terms of units, methods, variables or relationships involved in control centers through which executive authority is expressed; parallel mechanisms designed to induce such adjustment without expression of authority, and consistent accounting, reporting and appraisal centers. Most important, provision for equity or distribution of burdens and benefits is an explicit reintroduction of normative judgments. The contributing authors seemed generally to agree that selection among alternative operational procedures could lead indefinitely over time to changes in accepted values, thence to targets, thence to analytical procedures, and again to administrative mechanisms and actions.

This continual adjustment of the value-means mechanism over time might be attributable to inconsistency of selected targets with basic creeds or of weights assigned to targets. Failure to introduce constraints or outright error in the analytical component of the process could lead to inconsistency between values and administrative operations. Inconsistency of administrative operations with the analytical component would lead almost inevitably to similar inconsistency of means with goals and therefore with values. There could be unforeseen side effects not introduced in target specification or in the analysis of the target variables. Finally, there could be change over time in the underlying creed structures from changes in other determinants and therefore in the targets, analysis and administrative operation.

With alternative "explanations" of variation in targets, there could also be alternative administrative mechanisms for given goals involving different interrelationships and constraints and perhaps yet be of equal "efficiency" in optimizing in the norms. Choice among these possible administrative alternatives must apparently rest on aesthetic, ethical or other "unscientific" bases. Thus, while targets and means are simultaneously defined through the analytical component of policy, there are usually alternative means to achieve given ends. Accordingly, the ultimate choice of means for given ends may also be normative and lead to readjustment over time in all phases of the entire process.

As indicated, the analytical operations involved in defining targets and in explaining determination of target variation differ sharply in nature from administrative operations designed to set up an optimal administrative machine to get and to keep the optimal attributes in the determinants of target variables or goals. There is a growing body of theory and measurement with respect to optimal organization and operations. Consistent administration can be defined in terms of optimal attributes of centers of authority, inducement, accounting, reporting and appraisal. Equity provisions bring value constructs back into the administrative process. "Efficient" administration is consistent with the goals, the analytical determinants of the goals, and the constraints of operation.

Apparently, the whole process of policy formulation and execution is agreed to be a continuum whereby all four components of the process — values, goals, analysis and operation — may change over time.

### THE APPRAISAL

Wishfully or otherwise, some measure of consensus seems to have been found in the viewpoints of many participants in this presentation of values and goals. Appraisal of the Swerling and Schnittker proposals is based upon apparent consensus of major attributes and relationships in the process by which values are linked to means of action through targets and analysis. First, the values upon which Messrs. Swerling and Schnittker base their recommendations are identified. Next, there is identification of the goals representing their values. Then, there is appraisal of the analytical procedures through which Swerling and Schnittker identify the variables and interrelationships incident to their goal system. Finally, the proposed administrative procedures are related to the analytical component, which in turn is specified by the targets which can be taken as representative of their underlying value systems.

Insofar as it is possible, effort has been made to determine the assumed relationships through which the targets are taken to represent the underlying value or preference constructs; to appraise the consistency of the analytical systems they have developed; to identify internal difficulties — which indeed seem minor; and, where possible, to indicate the sequential implications of their recommendations. This in a sense is an unaesthetic procedure grossly inconsistent with many of the norms explicitly accepted by professional analysts. To depart into the first person, I have never

checked — and do not now dare to check — my own work to determine the apparently underlying values; to measure the procedures whereby values are translated into goals; and to check the consistency of goal analysis to targets and to means. Here, the four major questions engaged in this presentation could be paraphrased as follows and addressed to Messrs. Swerling and Schnittker:

1. What do you believe to be right or desirable?
2. How do you specify operationally that which you believe to be valuable or preferred?
3. What must you know about variation in that which you believe to be preferred?
4. What must you do to achieve your targets?

The results are remarkable. Again, Swerling and Schnittker are competent and professionally responsible. Yet, engaging an identical question with an identical mission and in the context of the same basic discussion, opposite conclusions are reached. The two authors have conformed carefully to accepted conventions of logical derivation and empirical testing. Again, the fundamental difference appears to be the implicit assumption by Dr. Swerling that direct-interventionist programs or price support is wrong. The implications of this divergence are not clear. The possibilities of, or the necessities for, resolution are not clear. Only this much is clear: agreement could be reached only by resolution of the fundamental difference in their values. There appear to be no errors of logic or analysis. The basic divergence of value constructs does not appear to be subject to any agreed compulsion for resolution.

#### Positive Policies for American Agriculture: Swerling

This dissection of the conclusions of an able economist was undertaken, among other reasons, because Dr. Swerling is an old and valued friend who is aware that he is held in high professional regard. Yet, like all people born of Adam, he uses many value-loaded terms, operationally undefined, but giving some index of the value basis for his proposals. In effect, Dr. Swerling has explicitly restricted a "positive farm policy" to limited insurance payments and by indirection has indicated a value preference for substantially "free market" values. He has engaged all of the four questions. His values and targets are hostile to the present program and favorable to his proposals. He has analyzed the old

programs and his own proposals in basically non-normative terms. He has proposed administrative procedures consistent with his negative case against the present proposals and his affirmative case for the limited unemployment or income-insurance device.

### The Value Constructs

Dr. Swerling attributes to the "general public" certain values deemed to be hostile to present farm programs. He believes that the American people hold high in their value system such notions as private proprietorship, small farms and small business enterprises generally. He believes that country values are held higher than urban preferences. He holds that price support programs are advocated within value systems where the constructs of preference for open and free markets, state's rights and free enterprise are blandly, blithely and inconsistently amalgamated with advocacy of direct price intervention. He believes that the regressive effects of these programs violate prevailing notions of equity. He looks upon use of the power and the treasury of government to increase returns to farmers, in the absence of any protection for agricultural labor, as directly hostile to prevailing notions of "social justice."

Dr. Swerling further sets out his own views. He indicates that there is no compulsion from any construct of justice to protect higher income farmers who may be temporarily distressed. He believes that the present system is "malfunctioning," "inconsistent with economic realities," and thus apparently inconsistent with some efficiency norm. He believes that the value of "consistency" — the foundation for nonagricultural income-maintenance programs to decrease or to pool individual income risks and to set minimum protection for events beyond individual control — should be extended to agriculture on the same bases as in other industries. Dr. Swerling develops two explicit value constructs leading him to reject present policies and to substitute a proposal for a relatively small-scale income protection insurance. He believes that "justice" requires resistance to the extravagant claims of a declining sector of the economy but that "justice" also requires that adjustment be eased if it can be done without damage to general "efficiency." Both these values — affirmative and negative — are derived from his own construct of justice.

### The Targets

Dr. Swerling has developed two operational goals closely akin to his stated values. First, he proposes the elimination of the present system of direct intervention and of all collateral programs required by the standard side effects of direct price support. He seems to imply that income disparity and instability in agriculture have been overstated; that the universality of these two difficulties in all agricultural economies involves some inevitable sequence perhaps beyond amelioration; that returns from noncommercial low-income farms have been included in data taken to support the income disparity and instability cases; that off-farm earnings of small-scale agriculture have not been adequately represented; that the real welfare increments from rising levels of farm living are not effectively shown in current parity calculations; that mechanization and other technological change have eased adjustment to the outflow of farm labor and have increased the typical scale of the farm; that the cash and debt positions of farmers are better than those shown; that price support superimposes an "excess" income target, which in turn generates a damaging capital inflow, offsetting the salutary labor outflow; that there is gross value and operational inconsistency of farm programs with other domestic and foreign policies; and, finally, that the pressure groups who set present farm goals have set fair-share income targets which cannot conceivably be attained in a declining sector of an expanding economy. Thus, the argument for price support as a means of achieving income support to agricultural people is held to be inconsistent with social justice and would be obviously so were it not for the peculiarities of data availability, congressional organization, and similar factors.

With respect to his own affirmative proposal, Dr. Swerling implies that income insurance meets the value criteria of social justice and efficiency in that it is counter to uncontrollable personal income variation while avoiding inconsistent side effects.

In short, Dr. Swerling seems to say that the present system is morally wrong and operationally inconsistent with its own nominal goals. He holds that his own proposal is right and consistent. There seems to be no internal inconsistency in his proposals. His targets can be derived systematically and consistently from his values. There is no way to know whether his values should be accepted.

### The Analytical Component

Dr. Swerling analyzes the determinants of variation in income levels and distribution with respect to the present and his own proposed program. First, he lays out the analytical bases for price support operations. He does not directly attack the analytical validity of the standard price support argument involving low price and supply elasticities; the difficulties of a decreasing output with a declining farm price; the sensitivity of agricultural income to depression; and output restrictions leading to price and income increases. He believes, however, that orthodox economic analysis supporting these conclusions may be, in fact, invalid. He also points out quite properly that many low-income difficulties are analytically unrelated to price maintenance. He believes that there may be a possible perverse relationship to cyclic policy and that such intervention may counter the necessary labor outflow required to obtain stable and reasonably equal incomes in agriculture.

There is no difficulty in the affirmative analysis associated with his own target variables. He believes that his proposal cannot possibly lengthen or worsen present agricultural maladjustments. He considers that the "free market" is left with no price distortion and that expansion incentives are avoided. There may be implicit agreement by Dr. Swerling that his income-insurance proposal is basically palliative and not in itself a solution directly affecting income determinants but that it is not hostile to a free market solution. His "free market efficiency" and his "social justice" creeds therefore appear to be consistent.

### Administrative Operations

Dr. Swerling quite effectively buttresses his argument by noting the severe administrative difficulties involved in present programs, given their nominal goals. He holds that there are occasionally quite impossible administrative burdens; that it is far too costly a method of intervention; and that these programs introduce political uncertainty through burdening Congress with direct administrative activity. There is little direct reference to administrative attributes of his own proposals except correctly to note that workable analogies are available by reference to similar programs in nonagricultural industries.

### The Conclusions

Thus, Dr. Swerling in effect rejects present programs and any programs similar to them. He suggests in effect a free market solution eased by protection of minimum income levels for all people in the economy. He has stated his goals quite explicitly and has analyzed them well. He has buttressed his analytical conclusions with references to the administrative consistency of his affirmative proposals and the inconsistency of those policies the rejection of which he recommends. Given his values, the conclusion again seems tenable that Dr. Swerling believes that programs of the present type are "wrong" and that programs like those he suggests are "right." These are moral judgments. There does not seem to be any way to reconcile such judgments with opposite conclusions based upon acceptance of different values.

Positive Policies for American Agriculture: Dr. Schnittker

### The Value Constructs

Like Dr. Swerling, this reviewer, and virtually all of his colleagues, Dr. Schnittker also uses some value-loaded terms which are not precisely defined. Even so, he has quite carefully and systematically laid out the value constructs underlying his own qualified endorsement of a program that Dr. Swerling rejects outright.

Dr. Schnittker explicitly postulates certain beliefs with respect to the "nature of man." He believes that man is not a slave of the state and that all individuals are of equal worth and dignity; that man has risen above the tyranny of history with respect to control of other markets and can and should do so with respect to agricultural markets; that people are more important than commodities; that each generation quite properly is most interested in its own welfare; and that no individual should be unnecessarily harrassed by the program operations of government. Quite explicitly, and as an important element in his argument, he rejects any naive acceptance of perfectibilism of man or his institutions.

He posits certain axioms with respect to the "nature of man's government." He holds that the American people generally accept the obligation by, or at least through, government to reshape our own institutions; that democracy is a product of what he calls reason and moral strength; that government intervention is necessary and legitimate if change is to be achieved at a desired rate and cost; and that the "final, true aim of political society" is to improve



the lot of the individual as a means to assure the proper individual independence built upon guarantees of work, property, political rights, civil virtues and the cultivation of the mind.

Dr. Schnittker sets out axioms of "equality" and "justice." He believes that the norms of equality of opportunity and equality before the law require exploration of innovations in farm policy if collective bargaining is to be allowed to labor. Then he holds that justice requires formulation of government policies designed to manipulate farm prices, output, wages and employment if the same programs are used in other industries; that something be done about the inelasticity of demand for wheat; and accelerated research and action with respect to future needs for foods, foreign aid and assistance for the unemployed or unemployable.

There are norms called "consistency," "order," "stability," and "harmony." Part of the price paid for order and justice is held to be some loss of decision-making freedom by farmers. There are implications that indiscriminate planting or other individual decisions can be injurious to neighbors; that persons holding divergent values may place greater preference upon "individualism" than "society" does; that those who believe that diminished freedom of decision is hostile to social order and stability may in fact desire to impose their own values upon society; that the freedom of decision making is yielded by democratic methods, which presumably renders it consistent with one or more of the governing norms; but that order and consistency require continued development of innovations in farm markets, since product and factor pricing institutions already have been changed.

Finally, he sets out axioms to which the "people" — whatever that may be — are presumed to agree. It is held that the general public agrees that farm policy is not presently the most crucial domestic issue but would consider a 25 per cent relative price decrease during the decade beginning 1960 "intolerable" — whatever that is — to "agriculture" — whatever that is — and to "general society" — whatever that is. Full employment in all sectors is taken to be a generally acceptable value. The norms relevant to the low-income problem in agriculture are held not to be in conflict with the system of values justifying price intervention as a means to solace other ills. Dr. Schnittker holds that the low-income problem involves growth and welfare, substantially different issues than those to which price support should properly be directed. Finally, he believes that political campaigns disclose the basic values of the American public with respect to a positive policy for farming and perhaps identify a "fair farm price" — which is a "real thing."

As in all cases of value statements, it is difficult to know the

bases upon which this comprehensive set of guides and governors to public policy rests. It is also difficult to know how they can be effectively related to goals and programs, even assuming that they are in fact the preference structures of the people to whom they are here attributed.

### The Targets

Consistent with these values attributed by Dr. Schnittker to man, his government and the public, a comprehensive set of operational goals is specified. First, Dr. Schnittker holds that a target of a slight increase in price without reference to distribution of gains is tenable under his values only if it be understood that this goal is not related to the noncommercial, low-income enterprises in farming. His second goal is the improvement of conditions for farm product pricing so that owners of farm resources are compensated fairly for their labor. This presumably means alteration of the structural attributes of markets. Then, as a third goal, he specifies national full employment in all sectors, or at least a decrease in all unemployment including rural. He proposes changes in the attributes of agricultural labor to fit with nonagricultural demands. He proposes to decrease price support in agriculture if underemployment declines in consequence of increasing general employment opportunity. Then, there are several collateral goal proposals involving decreases in storage operations; unemployment insurance, which is taken to be no substitute for price and output policies but perhaps a supplement thereto; and inquiry into appropriate goals for long-run food needs, foreign aid, credit, and scale of operation.

These are respectable targets. They are certainly susceptible of analytical inquiry, and they seem to follow from the broad value systems specified by Dr. Schnittker.

### The Analytical Component

As in the case of Dr. Swerling, Dr. Schnittker's analytical processes seem to be consistent with his proposals. First, Dr. Schnittker states quite properly that there is an operating necessity to build upon present programs rather than to introduce fundamentally new ones. He states that price support operations are a necessary counter to declines in farm price attributable to the excessively slow decline in the number of farms, to demand inelasticities and to continuing increases in factor prices. He also

holds that price and incomes in farming are insulated from general economic fluctuations if price supports are used. He sees no possibility of remedial effect through population growth alone. He feels that there is ample scope for competition sufficient to maintain efficiency in farming in the face of price support operations.

Dr. Schnittker points out with respect to possibilities of increasing employment of agricultural labor in nonagricultural industries that it is impossible to decrease the present and prospective labor force, and therefore effort must be made to increase jobs. He believes that the situation reflects a pull to the nonagricultural industries rather than a push away from farming. He holds that further analysis of the determinants of demand for labor in all industries during the 1960 decade is needed. He believes that unemployment insurance does not in any analytical sense touch upon the determinants of the real income problems in agriculture. It cannot be taken as a substitute for collective bargaining and surely is no causal determinant of demand for farm labor.

### Administrative Operations

Administrative compulsion to build upon present operations is stressed. Dr. Schnittker notes the pressure of time in determining values and goals which, if rendered operational in 1960-62, would in all likelihood color operating activities for a long time ahead. He stresses the good effect of providing adequate information to intelligent policy makers. He feels that it is necessary to strike at agricultural underemployment even prior to full development of goals or analytical information. Dr. Schnittker places minor emphasis on administrative mechanisms, since he is in effect suggesting short-run improvisations built upon present administrative machinery, yet guided by a long-run objective.

### The Conclusions

Dr. Schnittker has laid out constructs of justice and equality which differ substantially from those to which Dr. Swerling seems to adhere. It is quite impossible to reconcile these differences. From these different values, Dr. Schnittker supports a positive program almost diametrically opposed to that proposed by Dr. Swerling.

## THE CONCLUSIONS

Two able and responsible people, operating within the same context of discussion, have engaged essentially the same general question. They have used essentially similar procedures in considering the same four major questions discussed in this book. Substantial exception can be taken to only one phase of the development of these conclusions. One may find values unacceptable. Their goals are clear, and they are operational. The analytical procedures are consistent. Both men know how programs are administered. They have set out their values quite explicitly. Here, and here alone, seems to be the major reason for the opposite conclusions. This difference leaves certain questions unanswered. What, if anything, is the importance of the difference; how could it be reconciled; and if it could be reconciled, should it be so resolved?

Two conclusions seem to be clear. If one structures his questions solely to the naked issues of co-variation and if he conforms meticulously to narrowly defined rules of analysis, compelling answers to certain types of questions can be gotten. Those questions can and must be relevant only to co-variation. They cannot encompass the really important questions faced by most people. It is impossible effectively to engage issues of ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics or theology by the use of the arbitrary and ultimately normative devices of scientific method. Yet, it is wantonly wasteful to disparage this method or to fail to realize that it is the crucial link between ends and means.

Second, it seems obvious that we cannot now answer the important questions of value posed in these papers. An action or means is "right" if it be consistent with an accepted precept or norm. It is "wrong" if it be inconsistent. There is no real difficulty in appraising consistency. Some norms are held by some people to be relative and by others to be absolute and eternal, independent of human consciousness or acceptance. Different groups have tortured and killed because intransigent and therefore wicked people held different absolutes for which they would torture and kill. There is no real difficulty in defining "right" farm policy if agreement can be reached with respect to governing values. No compulsion to agree upon norms seems yet to have emerged. What is right to Swerling may still be wrong to Schnittker.

