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The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

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Volume 4  
Issue 6 *July*

Article 3

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July 1977

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### Recommended Citation

Ballou, Jacqueline (1977) "Work Incentive Policies: An Evaluation of Their Effects on Welfare Women's Choice," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 6 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol4/iss6/3>

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WORK INCENTIVE POLICIES:  
AN EVALUATION OF THEIR EFFECTS  
ON WELFARE WOMEN'S CHOICE

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I. LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF AFDC MOTHERS

Much rhetoric has been heard in recent years on the subject of getting AFDC mothers "off the welfare rolls and onto payrolls." The focus of many a federally funded study is still on those personal life characteristics such as "motivation" which are supposed to facilitate the actual leaving off of welfare checks. Indeed, much national policy effort has been aimed at improving work incentives and providing supportive services (training, job placement, day care) for those on AFDC. However, in spite of the efforts of the Work Incentive Program (WIN) only 16 percent of AFDC mothers were working in 1973 (USDHEW, 1974). The focus of this evaluation, therefore, is to explore those mandatory work incentive policies and choices that confront the AFDC mother as well as explore those specific barriers to labor market success confronting these heads of households, by way of evaluating the WIN program.

The problem ultimately lies in the structure of the labor market and in social attitudes about women's position in society, which affect the AFDC mother. It has been said that the traditional women's "role" though historically a crucial but economically unrewarding one has contributed directly to the present welfare crisis. The work ethic in our society still dictates that women are not expected to seek employment except under special circumstances, as when they become household heads, while at the same time our norms also dictate that they work at unpaid labor at home, and perhaps work harder, all told, than men.

It is argued here that Work Incentive Policies treat the symptoms rather than the basic causes of poverty with high costs to society. The writer's own experience with WIN participants as well as attitudinal surveys has suggested that there is a very high motivation to work among welfare mothers, however, the low-wage jobs available to them are not very competitive with benefits available through AFDC with its various in-kind programs such as Medicaid and day care. As Sawhill (1976) notes, the combined benefit-loss rates associated with work incentive programs remain high, as budgetary constraints associated with raising net welfare-wage incentives and services remain high along with administrative costs of a work incentive program. However acceptable the concept of work incentives and however great the effort, the shift from dependency to self-support for these three-and-a-half-million women and their children is extremely difficult to bring about.

It is well known that almost half of all female-headed families with

children are poor, and a similar proportion are on welfare comprising 97 percent of the adult AFDC caseload (1971 HEW AFDC Study). The concept of work for AFDC mothers seems to many to be an acceptable answer to the "welfare crisis" because of changing attitudes about the economic dependency of women when almost one-third of wives with husband present and children under age six are working today compared to less than one fifth a decade ago.

However, it is less well known that women on welfare already have a substantial work history even while on aid. Public assistance can be shown to be a form of wage supplementation to the low paid, partially employed workers (Rein & Miller, 1968). Welfare status does not represent a sharp break with employment as is commonly supposed. Schiller (1973) quotes studies having shown that the median time on welfare is only 20 months, and approximately one-fourth of current recipients are in the labor force. There are high rates of mobility between welfare and work status. Like other American women, most welfare mothers have worked for wages at one time or another. Data from the 1969 HEW study showed that before going on welfare, over three-quarters had worked at some time. Exactly how many now combine work and welfare during the course of a year is not known but there are large regional variations due to varying state wage rates and grant allowances. Data from pre-WIN studies pointed to around 30 percent nationwide (Coll, 1974).

## II. WORK INCENTIVE POLICIES: PROGRAM GOALS AND RESULTS

There is an assumption, however, by top policy-makers in Washington (especially in an election year) that the problem of employment for AFDC recipients is merely a choice between work or welfare. The thrust of government policy is now explicitly (as currently presented in TV spot ads for WIN) and some would say coercively directed at checking the rapid growth of welfare expenditures by funneling AFDC recipients into the labor force through the Work Incentive Program. The Talmadge Amendments which further reinforced the 1967 Social Security Amendments which conditioned welfare benefits on the willingness of the poor to accept work or training, are based on the premise that poor people must be forced to work. To make working worthwhile, however, states are, since 1971, required to allow the employed welfare recipient to keep \$30.00 plus one-third of monthly earnings before recalculating the assistance payment. This "earnings exemption" or "earnings disregard" is deemed essential in encouraging recipients to work rather than welfare because many states had heretofore deducted the full amount of earnings from the assistance payment. The practice of allowing certain expenses related to work or training, such as transportation and equipment, to \$60.00 a month is still to be assured as is day care for preschool age children and suitable arrangements for after school hours for other youngsters. Training, either institutional or on-the-job, was to be given those women who lacked immediate placement in employment. These aspects of the WIN I program are still in effect and came into full operation in July of 1969, but were replaced by a revised program - WIN II - on July 1, 1972.

The results of WIN I were disappointing in terms of numbers enrolled as well as numbers who completed training and/or got jobs. In the 3 1/2 years of WIN I, about 10 percent of the adult caseload were enrolled and only 3 percent had been placed in employment by April 1972. Slightly more than half of those enrolled had dropped out, many of them for "good cause" such as illness, pregnancy, or need to care for family (Coll, 1974). Job opportunities for women were mainly confined to clerical and sales work or service occupations where the pay was low (averaging \$1.92 to \$2.55 per hour). Only one out of five completed the course of training according to 1971 reports before the Talmadge Amendments. In urging changes in the WIN program, Congress called attention to the difficulty of defining the term "appropriate" referral to WIN, and criticized the extensive rise of institutional training, which had apparently been given "without due regard to existing skill demands." Therefore, all able-bodied AFDC recipients were required to register as a condition of eligibility with two important differences; WIN II specifically exempted women caretakers of children under 6, although these women were free to volunteer for the program. WIN II also exempted women caretakers if the father or other male relative was in the home and eligible for participation. Furthermore, the highest priority was to be given to unemployed fathers; then to volunteer mothers; third, other mothers and pregnant women under age 19; fourth, nonexempt dependent children and relatives (over age 16 and not in school); and fifth, all others. Direct placement in jobs was preferred to training and employers were allowed tax credits for hiring WIN participants. An expanded on-the-job training program with federal reimbursements was developed, which was largely confined to men because of the reluctance of employers to hire women for jobs suited to such training and public service employment (Coll, 1974).

Results of WIN II are not very different from WIN I, in spite of the substantially higher program participation and administrative costs. Evidence that the entire work training program may be fundamentally flawed is strengthened by the fact that 80 percent of those who in 1973 entered WIN failed to obtain jobs and the average wage of those who did was \$2.00 per hour (Goodwin, 1973). Furthermore, only 12 percent of the adult caseload was enrolled in 1974 and of those, only 4 percent were placed on jobs. More than a third of those dropped out and returned to welfare because a change in their situations had made them exempt. But a large number, almost half, left the program and the welfare rolls for reasons not directly connected to WIN, such as return of spouse or receipt of other benefits.

As would be expected, however, women were not nearly as successful as men in working their way off welfare. With a WIN participation rate of 70 percent of women, only 41 percent completing job entry became independent of welfare compared to 59 percent of men completing job entry (held a job for 90 days after placement). But the entry hourly wage for all jobs for women was \$1.87; for men, \$2.58 (Coll, 1974). Probably the HEW regulation requiring men who work more than 100 hours to be dropped from the rolls without the earnings disregard that is allowed women caused a higher rate of their being taken off aid.

### III. RELATION OF BENEFIT LEVELS TO WAGES

One seeming paradox of the program that should not be surprising is that the earnings disregard has, in fact, tended to reduce the number of women terminated from AFDC because of employment. The economic facts of a higher working income allowed before welfare grant reduction has, in some states, gone quite high before the welfare break-off point.

It is an important fact that welfare benefits have risen not only absolutely but in relation to income from work as part of a policy to increase work incentives. Durbin, in a New York City study (1968), discovered that in the 1960's welfare benefits increased more than the minimum wage and more than the average or maximum unemployment compensation benefits. She emphasized that benefits-in-kind such as medical services also determine real welfare income to the recipient.

A recent New York City study (Shkuda, 1976) showed evidence that economic insecurity in the low-wage high-turnover sector contributed to a more favorable view of welfare with one-third of the sample returning to aid after 6 months of independence. The relationship of specific welfare benefit levels to wages as a determinant of the work-welfare choice has not yet received all the attention it deserves in the seventies. There has been no conclusive research on the phenomenon as to why a small group of AFDC clients go on and off welfare periodically due to reasons of employment, and therefore only tentative hypotheses can be generated from the studies of the work efforts of recipients who were unsuccessful over a long time period (Lowenthal, 1971). Data also indicate that there is a small group of "stable" AFDC clients who use welfare in a continuous way, and a much larger group that rotates between being on and off welfare (Rein and Wishnov, 1971). Opton, in a 1971 study, for example, found that most of the jobs held by his sample of AFDC women lasted only a short time, with the modal length being three months. He points out that if an AFDC mother is to become self-supporting through her own earnings, she would need to find a job that would pay enough not only to make her ineligible for welfare, but enough to enable her to accumulate enough savings to carry her through unemployment, a very difficult task. What ultimately emerges is a picture of long association with the labor market, but employment periods of short duration or intermittent labor.

All of the studies cited previously are markedly consistent and imply that the assumption that welfare recipients require extraordinary world-of-work orientation or other forms of motivation stimulus is not well founded. The fact that millions of poor families continue to work without the security of welfare is itself significant evidence of a commitment to work. Comparative studies of employed and nonemployed poor indicate that these groups share virtually identical aspirations and attitudes (Schiller, 1973). Indeed some studies cited by Schiller, Goodwin, and others have even suggested that the poor have a stronger commitment to work than the nonpoor, implying that the motivation issue is a "middle class conceit."

Other important elements in the "choice" of work or welfare have

been overlooked by the present WIN program. So far, policy-making appears to have proceeded on the assumption that it could ignore the needs and experience of the target population with questionable results in terms of program effectiveness. These elements will be examined here.

#### IV. FACTORS AFFECTING THE WORK OR WELFARE "CHOICE"

Much of the research done on aspects of the work-welfare choice has treated only one aspect of the work-welfare issue - whether it be the relationship of wages to welfare benefits, examinations of the work characteristics and limitations of the ability of women in general to enter the labor force, or subcultural influences. Many of these studies have ignored the specific problems of AFDC heads of households and have instead assumed an unlimited "supply" side of the labor market, which ignores the "demand" for labor in economic terms. It is proposed here that any policy reevaluation of the WIN program with the goals of stimulating recipient motivation and also eliminating major barriers that AFDC women have in moving from welfare to self-support should be analyzed in terms of 1) the health of the AFDC population, 2) the role conflict of the maternal ethic vs. the work ethic of a mother without a husband, 3) adequacy of child care facilities, 4) the effects of past experience with WIN and the low-wage job market and training, 5) higher work and home related expenses of a mother with no "wife" at home, 6) general ignorance about work incentives in welfare budgets, 7) the human capital or labor characteristics of AFDC women, 8) the labor market environment and characteristics such as race and sex discrimination, and 9) availability of jobs and wage levels. It will be seen here that the present WIN program does not take each of these factors into consideration as determining the probability of self support. Each of these factors will be examined here.

(1) Health of AFDC Mothers. Serious barriers to the attainment of self-support or even to working at all were identified in a study conducted by SRS shortly after the inception of WIN (National Analysts, SRS, 1971). This study aimed to find out from the women themselves what their circumstances and intentions were in regard to working in ten cities. In view of their ages, a surprisingly large number (44 percent) said they were unable to work because of illness, surgery, accident, or physical disability. Although most were receiving medical treatment, they expressed a great deal of pessimism about sufficient recovery to take a job. Data from other studies tend to confirm the presence of a high degree of serious chronic illness and impairments among AFDC mothers: obesity, due to high starch diet; heart trouble; arthritis; tuberculosis; female disorders; hypertension; and varicose veins. Such ailments comprise "medical exemptions" for perhaps one-third of AFDC women because so many can qualify only for jobs requiring physical exertion (Coll, 1974).

(2) Role conflict. In contrast to the maternal ethic which may put any blame for juvenile delinquency on the mother who fails to provide her young children with proper attention, love, and guidance, the work ethic of the welfare rules places emphasis on the financial responsibility of the woman if the father is absent or deserts (Bluestone and Hardman, 1972). That is, the woman is supposed to find employment to

maintain herself and her children 6 years of age and over even when they need after school and summer-time care, ideally reducing welfare to a temporary stop-gap measure until self-supporting employment can be found.

As more political sentiment in the seventies encourages healthy welfare mothers with children under age 6 to enter the labor market, the emphasis on the work ethic intensifies and the maternal ethic becomes more problematic. The more restrictive a woman's conception of the maternal ethic or traditional family role, for example her decision to be the sole or primary caretaker of her child until he enters first grade--the greater the probability that she will choose to rely on AFDC. Wishnov, in a 1971 Boston study, speculates that such women attach less and less stigma to welfare since it is the sole vehicle which permits her to stay at home at a time when the homemaker role has greater validity with no husband present. Wishnov's study also showed that even among women who worked while on assistance, self-respect was more closely linked to their home and family than a job. Their first concern is their child's welfare, not work. This attitude is not peculiar to welfare mothers either, it is shared by the general population.

(3) Adequacy of Child Care Facilities. The subject of child care illustrates the complexities of policy decisions that must be made in any removal of barriers to employment for welfare mothers. The lack of adequate child care facilities has always been an important constraint on labor force entry of women. One cannot conclude, however, that the guarantee of child care facilities will significantly increase employment among welfare mothers. We are reminded that the "forced work" ethic is not absolute, but provisional, no mother will be referred to work unless child care is assured. Nationwide, there is a shortage of day care facilities. Most working AFDC mothers in the 1971 study had made their own arrangements with relatives or friends. Today, there is less stigma attached to the use of day care centers. But even those mothers who might prefer institutional care report that such facilities are often too inflexible for employment demands, operating too few hours and providing no care for children who are ill; the latter deficiency has been cited as a major cause of mothers' absenteeism (Schiller, 1973). Possible illnesses of the children, of the mother herself, or of the adult who is caretaker in the home, special school holidays, or severe weather conditions can disturb the mother's employment schedule. Many employers are not aware of the single parents' responsibilities or simply do not care. If the employer is aware, adjustments for time off or allowances for sick leave and emergencies are not always worked out in a "tight" job market. The mother does not always have relatives or friends who can assist during emergencies. It has been shown that WIN program administration cannot always cover these contingencies adequately and there are many job drop-outs due to these contingencies. Just exactly how many is not known. These considerations suggest that the employment impact of expanded day care facilities is likely to be modest, and that compulsory child-care programs are apt to have a hostile reception (Schiller, 1973).

(4) Effects of Past Experience with WIN and Jobs. It has been found that one source of anxiety about work capability among welfare women is past experience characterized by a series of low paying, high turnover jobs (Wishnov, 1971). Even with a job, women who have been on welfare may feel uncertain about their tenure or about the adequacy of their salary to improve their standard of living. When women who have been encouraged to complete a training program through WIN, for example, fail to obtain employment, they have definite and immediate experience of failure in the work world and thereby become even more dependent on welfare. Ninety-five percent of the unemployed WIN orientation and training trainees were back on aid in 1972 (Goodwin, 1972) and the statistics today are similar. Along these lines it should be noted that throughout the nation the demand for WIN skill training far exceeds available training slots and available services, and many WIN referrals are simply recycled time after time. In fact, recipients themselves report in the mid-seventies that job search efforts yield little payoff and that production cut-offs were a frequent cause of their welfare dependency in the first place. These phenomena, says Schiller and others, not only renders mandatory participation rules meaningless but expresses the desire of recipients to acquire skills and jobs. It is also known that many of the most able and motivated program participants become WIN dropouts who terminate their participation to take jobs.

(5) Higher Costs for a Mother with no "Wife" to do Housework. Surveys by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as reported by the Children's Bureau as far back as 1966 indicate that, on the average, work-related expenses can take one-third of a welfare mother's earnings if child care is not paid for, and the amount increases to one-half where there are school-age children. Today's WIN program pays for child care expenses including transportation of the child, but it does not pay for costs for additional clothing and personal care necessitated by employment, emergency (one time) transportation for medical and other needs, the costs of meals away from home for the mother (except in certain training programs where transportation is also paid for), the cost of extra food at home for the child-care person, if any, and above all, extra costs for cleaning, laundry, and other time-saving housekeeping devices needed by the mother who is employed. The mother, after a certain amount of time of on-the-job training, must pay her own transportation costs which may be high due to lack of inner-city public facilities from crime-ridden slum areas, or lack of rural transportation.

(6) General Ignorance About Work Incentives in Welfare Budgets. A pertinent aspect of the use of the aforementioned first thirty dollars and a third of all wages per month income disregards for recipients is the extent to which recipients know about them. Solary concluded in a 1971 study that most respondents were unaware of even the most general meaning of the disregards. The complexity of the computations still require a trained caseworker anyway. Appel in a 1972 study revealed that more than half of those in his Michigan sample who knew about these disregards stated that it had caused them to seek work or training. But most recipients still do not know at the time of WIN interviews whether or by how much employment will raise their incomes.



However, the earnings disregards should also make AFDC both available and attractive to working nonrecipient female heads of households according to the desirability theory. Thus the net effect of earnings disregards, says Rein (1973) is that they should be equally influential in encouraging those not on welfare to stop work, avail themselves of welfare and then go back to work. Another type of disregard that can affect the pattern of work and welfare is called "casual or sporadic income," and is defined as any amount that is "not received continuously or predicted over time such as seasonal (and holiday sales) employment. A third route for income disregard is failure of the client to report such seasonal or irregular income to the assistance payments worker for budgeting.

(7) Human Capital or Labor Characteristics. The sparse evidence on the human capital characteristics of welfare recipients indicates that although they have a significant amount of job experience (noted previously), they do have lower educational achievements than the average working woman in the economy. Rein (1972), for example, reviews research dealing with social determinants of the work-welfare choice which focuses on such human capital characteristics as education, employment history, and race. Recent studies report that more educated AFDC mothers are more likely to work and are likely to work more than those less educated, but there is no clear link between years of education and the occupational "success" of AFDC women (Goodman, 1969 and Rien, 1972). It is not well known that black AFDC recipients work more than whites put Podell (1968) reports a positive relationship between education and work history held for whites, but not for blacks. It is known that age of recipient and number of children and their ages are crucial to success or failure in working one's way off welfare, and the WIN program does not directly address itself to these factors.

Finally, evidence is accumulating that for a broad range of occupations, institutional training or educational attainment is a poor predictor of job success or performance. Schiller quotes several studies finding that the labor market payoff to vocational training or even several levels of educational attainment is negligible, especially for minority group workers. Much job training must still be done on-site, and many employers who do hire training program graduates are not aware that such persons have received skill training.

(8) Labor Market Environment and Discrimination. The linear association between education, occupation, and work effort is disturbed in the case of AFDC mothers by such factors as job discrimination, which nullifies the effects of education on occupation, as well as cultural patterns that lead to the prevalence of certain occupations rather than mobility (Rein, 1973). In addition to human capital it is racial and sexual discrimination and the overall level of the economy and, more recently, isolated cases of affirmative action suits that will determine how well AFDC individuals will do in the labor market. In effect, race and sex discrimination and high unemployment can make a highly motivated and well-trained AFDC mother unemployable.

(9) Availability of Jobs and Wage Levels. There has always been an implicit assumption in those years when welfare reform has been fashionable that jobs exist for all recipients who are ready and able to seek them. Many features of the WIN program are intimately linked to the supposition that ample job opportunities exist for welfare dependents, but empirical studies suggest that there is a tremendous gap between public expectations and labor market realities (Schiller, 1973). There is indirect evidence of job shortages in both WIN program statistics, year after year, and in national labor market trends. Many analysts have noted that participation in WIN appears to be conditioned by the availability of jobs, with WIN functioning as an alternative to regular employment. It is a fact that when jobs are available, trainees leave the program to take them. It seems preposterous to assume that job vacancies exist in abundance for welfare women with over 6 million or more people unemployed in the labor market. Even if some vacancies did appear, the competition from more advantaged workers would, under these labor market conditions, be intense, indeed. The tax credits made available to employers of WIN graduates cited previously has not had as much success as anticipated due to the fact, it is said, that during a tight labor market there is little employer interest in such a program, as few employers nationwide know about the credit or hire enough WIN graduates to justify the cost of processing necessary tax data.

Furthermore, with few exceptions, the jobs held by AFDC mothers are at the bottom of the economic ladder. A high percentage nationwide are service workers - many of these in household service. About one-third have clerical jobs or are doing light factory work. A few are saleswomen. Only a small percentage are in the better paid professional, technical or kindred occupations (Coll, 1974). The wage rates of these high-turnover jobs were not sufficient to pay job expenses or get even four percent of the adult caseload off the rolls in 1974. Unfortunately, there is no basis for identifying financial security with the kinds of jobs available to AFDC women. The problem is compounded by frequent layoffs and as a result, annual earnings are significantly less than implied by hourly wage data. Almost no one is "making it." So the situation is serious and the explanations "are much more likely to lie in the structure of the job market than in individual assets and liabilities" (Opton, 1971).

It appears that the relative position of AFDC women in the labor force has actually deteriorated in recent years. What is most disturbing about this situation is that when white women do find full time work, their wage income is normally less than two-thirds that of white men, and many surveys have shown that black women fare much worse, earning only half as much as their white male counterparts. Differences in education between the sexes cannot explain these large wage differentials. This deterioration can be traced to the growing labor force participation of women's influx into the traditional "female" sector of the economy and to the evolving stratification of the labor market. Any increase in the labor force participation rates has occurred mainly among white women because black women have always had much higher participation

rates (Davidson and Gaitz, 1974). Finally, since AFDC women are "crowded" into a smaller set of specific occupations, they are likely to depress wages further. Thus, we may be led to the conclusion that the foregoing employment barriers operate on a cumulative effect. Some of them can be coped with, but as their numbers increase, so does unemployment (Levinson, 1970; Shea, 1973). It should not be surprising to note that based on the analysis of the factors relating to the work-welfare choice, Bluestone and Hardman state that

to reach a 15 percent labor force participation rate among AFDC recipients would require, for example, that in addition to the 13.3 percent of adult AFDC women already employed, all unskilled AFDC women be trained and look for work, and that somewhat more than one-half of those who are needed in the home...be provided with services...to allow their participation in the paid labor force...and overcome the circumstances associated with their initial entry into assistance. (1972, p. 6)

Their maximum potential labor force participation rate is therefore approximately 32 percent or one-third (p. 6). It is also clear by HEW (1970) that unless hourly earnings are sufficiently high and work is full year and full-time, total welfare costs will fall only slightly. It is obvious that employment of AFDC household heads has not resulted in substantial financial gains to either client or taxpayers, and since a large percentage of WIN recipients never become employed, the average financial gain to clients and taxpayers of each referral to WIN is much lower than the average for those who receive services and actually become employed at their own request (Fine, 1972; Auerbach Associates, 1972; Breul, 1973). Yet 1972 regulations extending the WIN program required that about 1.5 million welfare recipients "sign up" for work with all the attendant administrative costs.

#### V. WORK INCENTIVE POLICIES: RECOMMENDATIONS

If program retention and attendance reflect program affectiveness, then WIN fails the test. The experience of WIN does not justify the belief that an expanded program will enable many welfare recipients to become self-supporting. The design and implementation of WIN are both based upon mistaken beliefs about the psychology of welfare recipients. The results of a psychological study of poor people showed that their orientation toward money indicates uncertainty about achieving success rather than denial of self-development (Goodwin, 1972). Long term welfare women lack confidence in their ability. An infrequently considered consequence of WIN's failure to deliver jobs is the frustration of the women's own aspirations because most of them have been shown to view WIN as an opportunity for self-advancement and a way to raise family income (Reid and Smith, 1972). Instead, the WIN orientation component is designed to introduce recipients into the world of work and to stimulate work motivation they allegedly lack (Gold, 1971).

Should the assumption of recipient lack of motivation be proven wrong, then it is obvious that such compulsory workfare requirements

will waste scarce administrative resources, impose unnecessary hardship on recipients, and further increase taxpayer and recipient hostility. But today's taxpayers misguidedly seem to be clamoring for a program that, upon closer examination, seems to hamper efficient administration and costs more than it saves by complicated financial arrangements that few persons thoroughly understand, limited subsidies to cooperating employers, and wide differences from state to state (Lowenthal, 1971; Levitan, 1973). There is little point in requiring attendance in such a weak program, and the resources used in keeping track of attendance and counselling absentees could be restructured to increase program effectiveness (Levitan, 1972), especially when training funds have been drastically cut back in these years of 1975-76 due to their not conforming to local labor market conditions irrelevant to job success. Much more serious attention should be given to the potential for job development and job creation instead of assuming a massive availability of jobs (Schiller, 1973).

The structure of the occupational system, the operation of labor markets, the levels of wages and taxes require intervention. Any effort to incite AFDC mothers toward employment as sole breadwinners will have to make provisions for regular and steady jobs paying enough to override some of the benefits-in-kind of income maintenance, must deal with mothers' flexibility to move between work and welfare due to child care contingencies, must be better than the security of welfare payments, and must be better than even the potential for incomplete disclosure of resources, as well as realizing the desirability of the minimal demands of irregular type jobs (Rein and Wishnov, 1971). Successful welfare reform must provide for those who cannot manage themselves, give incentives to those who can manage to contribute to their own success and at the same time keep administrative costs acceptable (Levitan, 1973).

Efforts to eliminate poverty should also include incentives for a husband and wife to stay together because of the importance of joint income. A more equitable distribution of the tax burden would probably have greater economic effect than governmental training programs, because work requirements make a large number of persons available for low-wage and seasonal jobs, which tend to depress wages (Lowenthal, 1971). Thus the WIN program may be actually keeping wages non-competitive by work requirements. Rein (1972), states that "A public policy intent on transforming the welfare system into a major instrument for reducing poverty and also for self-liquidating welfare, by converting it into a manpower program, is bound to rely upon coercion and to produce frustrating results."

As discussed earlier, there is no observable tendency for these mothers to reject economic opportunities for the "comfort" of welfare status. The writer has noted that confronted with few opportunities to achieve upward mobility themselves, welfare mothers place added emphasis on their children's future, expressing a strong desire for both financial and social service assistance in preparing their children for what they hope will be a brighter future.

One of the principal recommendations of this paper is that manpower

programs and public assistance programs be separated so that each may fulfill its particular mission. If the opportunity to work is absent or if the nature and circumstances of work is oppressive as in work requirements, severe repercussions are likely to be experienced in family life. A remarkable study which was commissioned by HEW the month when the Talmadge Amendment was passed, entitled Work in America, argues that one of the most satisfying and respected employments should be that of housewife, and that every woman, including the public assistance recipient, should have the opportunity to choose between taking outside employment and "working" to care for her home and family. The task force says that, "It is time to give full recognition to the fact keeping house is work, and it is as difficult to do well (and is as useful to the larger society) as paid jobs producing goods and services. Counting housewives in the labor force would be a useful step in redefining a portion of our welfare problem, and constructing judicious alternatives." Indeed, wages for family housework could go far toward solving the "welfare crisis," as so many European countries have already discovered.

The task force readily asserts that a particularly serious mistake in social policy in the United States was made in the late '60's and early '70's when there occurred the virtual amalgamation of manpower and welfare programs. Breul (1973) notes that the task force recommends that the role of public assistance should be limited to helping people who "cannot take jobs, or by social agreement, should not take jobs." Taking into consideration the effects of a high unemployment rate, the report concludes that "a welfare program with a work requirement will not help the mother, the children, or society at large." The task force emphasizes that work is the key to diminishing economic dependence, of course, but it states that no one should be forced into employment. Instead, everyone available for work should be guaranteed a satisfying and adequately compensated job. This guarantee should include AFDC mothers in their role as household heads who deserve adequate wages for housework. For the immediate future, however, the male-female earnings gap which is widening is one of the major barriers to large numbers of AFDC women leaving the welfare rolls for payrolls. No amount of work effort on the part of female heads of families will go very far in reducing their poverty and dependence on welfare as long as these women face such low wages in the market.

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