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COMPARING EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED WELFARE RECIPIENTS:  
A DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS\*

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ABSTRACT

Based on data from the 1973 Minnesota AFDC Characteristic Study, 348 female AFDC recipients were classified according to whether they were employed or unemployed. T-tests and a discriminant analysis were performed to determine which of several demographic and economic variables distinguished the employed group from the unemployed group. The best discriminators were found to be those related to economic condition, such as value of personal and real property, liquid assets, and monthly income. Little difference was found between employed and unemployed women on the demographic variables. The implications of these findings for the argument that personal motivation or individual differences account for unemployment in AFDC recipients are discussed.

In a study of public attitudes toward welfare, Kallen and Miller (1971) found that 75% of their respondents agreed with the following statements: "There are too many people receiving welfare who should be working" and "I don't see any reason why a person able to work should get welfare money." Since two-thirds of

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These data were collected by the State of Minnesota's Department of Public Welfare and in cooperation with the University of Minnesota Family Studies Center's training program in Family Impact Analysis. The author expresses appreciation to that department and particularly to its Director of the Office of Evaluation, Webster Martin, for his cooperation and assistance in making this data available.

The author also wishes to thank Gerald McDonald for his helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

the public assistance budget is distributed through the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program (Levitan, et al., 1972), generalizations like the above usually are aimed at AFDC parents, most of whom are women .

This push toward employment of welfare recipients is relatively recent. When the U. S. Congress first legislated payments to mothers of young children in 1935, the purpose of the aid was to allow mothers to remain at home and care for their children (Rein and Wishnov, 1971). That is, women receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) were considered "unemployable" as were other welfare recipients--the aged, blind and disabled. Since that time, however, our national values have changed regarding the acceptability of working mothers, as well as our conceptions of who are "deserving" and "non-deserving" poor (Cox, 1971). Accelerating increases in the number of AFDC recipients during the 1960s have also contributed to interest in employment of recipients, as a means of reducing the welfare rolls (Levitan, et al, 1972).

These changing attitudes have caused program emphasis toward mothers receiving public assistance to shift away from simply providing services for them and their children to encouraging, if not expecting, them to be employed outside the home (Warren and Berkowitz, 1969; Morse, 1968). As a reflection of this national concern with making welfare recipients "tax payers rather than tax consumers" by having them "work off the welfare rolls," the U. S. Congress enacted a series of programs designed to enhance the employment potential of the recipients: the 1962 Community Work and Training (CWT) program, the 1964 Work Experience and Training (WET) program, the 1968 Work Incentive (WIN) program.

The scholarly research in social work and related fields also reflects the increasing salience of employment in relation to welfare. A profusion of articles appeared in the late 1960s and early 1970s which dealt with the "employability" and "employment potential" of AFDC recipients (e.g., Burnside, 1971; Carter, 1968; Cox, 1970; Goodwin, 1972; Levinson, 1970; Morse, 1968; Oberheu, 1972; Prescott, 1971; Rein and Wishnov, 1971; Warren and Berkowitz, 1969).

The premise of most of these articles is that structural characteristics rather than personal motivation differentiates between those AFDC recipients who are employed at a given point in time and those who are not. This position is supported by studies which questioned AFDC mothers on their feelings about employment and found them to be as committed to the work ethic as non-welfare mothers (Goodwin, 1972), to desire "a steady job," and to expect to work in the future (Burnside, 1971; Cox, 1970).

The demographic and structural characteristics which are often used in the comparison of employed and unemployed AFDC recipients include: race, age of children, number of children, health of head of household, rural-urbaness of residence, status of "usual occupational group," educational attainment of household head, participation in job training, work history, recency of employment, length of time employed at last job, length of time continuously on AFDC, length of time since most recent opening of AFDC case, number of times family has been on AFDC, sex of household head, and age of household head. Table I summarizes factors that are often associated with employment of AFDC mothers and reports the nature of these associations as found by earlier researchers.

As may be noted in Table I, there are certain inconsistencies in how these independent variables are found to affect employment. Because of the discrepancies between the studies it is difficult to integrate their conclusions about those factors which differentiate employed from unemployed AFDC recipients. This, in turn, makes it difficult for policy makers who are interested in fostering employment among welfare recipients to know what variables contribute to employment.

The present study attempts to distinguish between employed AFDC recipients and unemployed AFDC recipients by using both new and formerly used characterizing variables, and finding the best statistical fit between these variables and employment. It is expected that a configuration of factors will be a more accurate predictor of employment than taking the characteristics individually as has been done previously. This approach also provides a more appropriate reflection of reality in that a given variable is seldom caused by single effects. The statistic which enables one to distinguish between two groups in this manner is discriminant analysis, which is described more fully in a succeeding section.

#### Data Source

The data to be used in this analysis were drawn from the 1973 AFDC Characteristic Study for Minnesota. The AFDC Characteristic Study is performed biannually in each of the fifty states at the behest of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. A 2% simple random sample is taken of each state's AFDC population, about whom demographic, economic, and welfare program related information is gathered. To obtain this information, eligibility workers complete questionnaires about the sampled AFDC recipients, with instructions to "answer the items from information in the case record, your own personal knowledge of the case, or the personal knowledge of another agency worker. If necessary, contact the payee to obtain the answers." It is prudent here to offer a precautionary note about the nature of this data base.

Table 1. Factors Associated With Employment of AFDC Mothers in Earlier Studies

	Cox (1970)	Oberheu (1972)	Warren & Berkowitz (1969)	Burnside (1971)	Levinson (1970)	Carter (1968)
Being non-white	+a	+	-b	+	+	+
Having children of older ages	+	+		+	+	+
Having relatively few children		-	+			
Being at least 30 years old		+		+		
Being in good health	+			+	+	+
Urban residence		-		+	+	+
Relatively high educa- tional attainment	+	+	0c	+	+	
Relatively high occupa- tional status	+			+	+	+
Having worked previously and recently			+	+		
Participation in job training programs	+					
Number of times on AFDC			0	+		
Length of time since AFDC case opened		0				
Total length of time on AFDC		+	0	-		

a + = positive relationship      b - = negative relationship      c 0 = no relationship

It can probably be assumed that the caseworkers who provided these data varied in their ability and willingness to seek out and deliver accurate, documented information. To the extent that this causes some of the data to be less reliable than others, caution should be exercised when interpreting and generalizing the findings of this study.

Data were available on 405 families for the 1973 Minnesota study. For purposes of this paper, only female-headed families were analyzed, yielding an N of 348.

### Procedure

Of the 247 variables tapped by the 1973 survey, the following were selected as probably most relevant to employment, according to previous research:

1. number of months since most recent opening of AFDC case
2. number of children in AFDC family
3. number of children under three years old
4. number of children between three and five years old
5. number of children between six and eight years old
6. number of children between nine and eleven years old
7. number of children over eleven years old
8. race (American Indians, blacks, and "other" are combined into the category of "non-white")
9. whether the mother is registered for the Work Incentive (WIN) program
10. rural/urbanness of the place of residence
11. "usual occupation group" of the mother (responses range from 1 to 12, with 1 being "professional, technical, and kindred workers" and 12 being "private household workers")
12. mother's age
13. dollar value of "real property not used as a home"
14. dollar value of "liquid assets (cash, bank deposits, savings bonds, etc.)"
15. dollar value of "other personal property (motor vehicles, business and farm tools and equipment, cash-in value of life insurance, etc. Excludes only household furnishings)"
16. dollar amount the AFDC family paid for shelter during the study month
17. dollar amount the AFDC family paid for utilities during the study month
18. total amount of monthly income received by the family which is not from public assistance
19. amount of AFDC monthly grant received by the family
20. total monthly income: a computed variable of monthly non-assistance income + amount of AFDC monthly grant

Employment status was determined by an item in the schedule reading "What is the current employment status of the mother?" Full time and part time employed were combined into an "employed" group containing 98 respondents. The 216 respondents in the "unemployed" group include those who were "physically or mentally incapacitated for employment," "needed in the home full time as homemaker," and "not actively seeking work." Finally, there were 34 cases for which the caseworkers had responded "actively seeking work." These 34 cases were excluded from the analysis because it was unclear conceptually in which group they belonged.

First, descriptive statistics were run on the total sample and on the two sub-samples by employment status to provide a profile of these female-headed AFDC families.

Second, the two employment status groups were compared on the twenty independent variables, using t-tests. This preliminary analysis was performed because of a limitation in the SPSS discriminant analysis program which allows only listwise deletion of missing data. That is, if a response is missing for any one variable, the entire case is removed from analysis. This severely reduces the number of cases available for analysis when several of the variables have some missing values (i.e., schedule items were left blank or coded "unknown"). Therefore, t-tests were used to determine which of the twenty variables were most likely to be significant discriminators in order to decrease the number of variables entered into the discriminant analysis, and thereby decrease the numbers of missing values and deleted cases.

Finally, discriminant analysis was used to differentiate between the two employment status groups. Because this type of statistical analysis is less than common in social science research at this time, a description is provided in the next section.

#### Method of Analysis

Discriminant analysis statistically distinguishes between two or more groups of cases from a collection of "discriminating variables" selected by the researcher. The analysis weights and linearly combines the discriminating variables so that the groups are as statistically distinct as possible (Walters, 1978). This linear combination of variables is called a "discriminant function" and takes this form:

$$D_i = d_{i1}Z_1 + d_{i2}Z_2 + \dots d_{ip}Z_p$$

where  $D_i$  = score on the discriminant function

$d_i$  = weighting coefficients

$Z_i$  = standardized values of the discriminating variables

In analyzing two groups, one discriminant function is developed, although more functions may be used when more than two groups are being differentiated.

In making this linear fit of variables, discriminant analysis is similar to multiple regression analysis, with the difference that the dependent variable in discriminant analysis is categorical, rather than continuously measured. The  $d_i$ 's or discriminant function coefficients, represent the relative contribution of each variable to the function and are interpreted analogously to multiple regression beta weights.

Independent variables may be entered into the analysis concurrently or in stepwise fashion, with the highly discriminating variables being entered first. The present paper uses the latter option. The statistic chosen to determine the order of entry of the variables in Rao's  $V$ , or generalized distance measure, which selects variables that "contribute the largest increase in  $V$  when added to the previous variable. This amounts to the greatest overall separation of the group" (Nie, et al. 1975:448).

### Findings

The means, medians, and standard deviations of the descriptive variables are given in Table II, for the total sample and for the sub-samples by employment status. Because of the prevalence of stereotypes about AFDC recipients, many of which are backed by quasi-documentation, and because the data in this paper represents AFDC families from only one state, a brief profile of the total sample of female-headed families is provided here.

Racially, the sample is approximately 70% white and 30% non-white which includes blacks and American Indians primarily, with a very small proportion of "others." The families tend to live in a central city area of 100,000 to 250,000 people, or an urban environment. The average age of the mother is 31 years old and her average age at the birth of her first child is 22 years old. There are about 2.6 children per family. The occupational groups which contain the largest numbers of AFDC women are "clerical and kindred workers" (18%), "service workers, except private household" (19%), and a combination of three occupations under the "blue collar" subheading -- "craftsmen and kindred workers," "operatives, except transport," and "laborers, except farm" (12%). While the mean education level is "10th or 11th grade," 45% have graduated from high school and 4% have had "some college, without graduating."

In terms of their financial position, the great majority of these families have no accumulation of cash or belongings -- 97%



Table 2. Statistics of Central Tendency and Spread Describing a Sample of AFPC Mothers

Variable	Employed			Unemployed			Total		
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Mdn.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Mdn.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Mdn.
Number of months since most recent opening of AFPC case	39.18	33.64	27.50	40.48	44.91	27.00	40.31	42.11	27.10
Number of children in family	2.63	1.62	2.38	2.59	1.67	2.16	2.57	1.62	2.21
Number of children under 3 years old per family	.27	.44	.18	.55	.66	.43	.45	.60	.33
Number of children 3 to 5 years old per family	.47	.69	.30	.45	.64	.29	.44	.64	.28
Number of children 6 to 8 years old per family	.51	.72	.32	.42	.68	.24	.44	.68	.26
Number of children 9 to 11 years old per family	.47	.76	.27	.51	.78	.27	.49	.77	.27
Number of children over 11 years old per family	.42	.49	.24	.33	.49	.21	.36	.49	.23
Rural/urbanness of residence *	3.51	2.43	2.42	2.83	2.04	2.08	3.05	2.22	2.14
Mother's age	32.15	8.96	30.10	30.33	8.81	29.13	31.10	8.96	29.70

Table 2. Continued

Mother's educational level **	5.63	.88	5.77	5.33	1.77	5.66	5.41	1.14	5.70
Value of real property	\$60.90	577.60	\$1.36	\$8.11	118.60	\$4.07	\$27.80	316.80	\$ .55
Value of liquid assets	\$31.22	75.07	\$ .23	\$14.48	59.24	\$ .11	\$18.15	61.86	\$ .14
Value of personal property	\$130.41	214.74	\$ .85	\$33.80	106.88	\$ .25	\$69.87	159.58	\$ .34
Amount paid for shelter monthly	\$109.23	40.11	\$114.88	\$109.81	46.99	\$114.88	\$109.74	44.62	\$114.95
Amount paid for utilities monthly	\$27.85	12.04	\$29.12	\$28.50	18.99	\$28.50	\$28.18	17.31	\$28.72
Amount monthly non-assistance income	\$278.33	154.67	\$260.50	\$24.83	61.14	\$ .11	\$95.83	149.39	\$ .35
Amount of AFDC monthly grant	\$229.49	89.26	\$233.00	\$280.89	91.11	\$264.50	\$266.56	93.16	\$257.83
Total monthly income	\$507.82	151.39	\$467.50	\$305.72	89.34	\$292.50	\$362.39	142.31	\$320.00

\* The possible survey responses were: 0) central city of 1 million or more; 1) central city of 500,000-1 million; 2) central city of 250,000-500,000; 3) central city of 100,000-250,000; 4) central city of less than 100,000; 5) non-central city urban area (over 2500); 6) rural area (under 2500). Therefore, a mean of 3.0 indicates residence in a central city of 100,000-250,000.

\*\* The possible survey responses were: 0) less than 5th grade; 1) 5th or 6th grade; 2) 7th grade; 3) 8th grade; 4) 9th grade; 5) 10th or 11th grade; 6) high school graduate; 7) some college, did not graduate; 8) college graduate. Therefore, a mean of 5.4 indicates a 10th or 11th grade education.

have no real property, 74% have no liquid assets such as cash or bank accounts, and 74% have no personal property (excluding household furnishings). The families, with an average size of three to four people (2.6 children plus one adult), receive about \$267.00 monthly from public assistance, which may be supplemented by employment, OASDI benefits, veteran's benefits, other pensions, support payments from absent parents, or contributions from "others." Employment provides the largest amount of supplement, with those who are unemployed receiving only about \$25.00 a month from other sources. Those who are employed (31% of the sample) increase their income by about \$275.00 a month, although it must be remembered that their grant is lowered as a result of their employment, even after some of their extra income is "disregarded" for expenses and "incentive" (\$30 plus one-third remaining earned income is disregarded for this purpose).

This sample tends to be atypical from AFDC recipients in other states in terms of racial composition and amount of public assistance received. There is a lower proportion of non-whites in the Minnesota sample than in national AFDC figures. Possibly related to this, education level for Minnesota recipients is slightly higher than the national average (cf, Ross and Sawhill, 1975). Minnesota has a reputation for providing one of the better public assistance programs in the country, and the amounts of its AFDC grants are appreciably higher than in many other states, particularly those in the South (for example, Florida pays less than \$150.00 per month as a base grant to AFDC families).

It should be recognized then, that one needs to proceed with caution when generalizing from further analyses to other AFDC populations. However, since the dependent variable of employment status is applicable in all states, findings regarding the differences between employed and unemployed recipients may tentatively suggest similar conditions in other states.

T-tests were performed on the twenty independent variables to determine which ones were significantly different from the employed group to the unemployed group. The nine variables which were significant for at least the .05 alpha level are shown in Table III. These variables were entered into the discriminant analysis, along with "amount paid monthly for shelter" and "amount of monthly AFDC grant." Amount of AFDC grant did not reach statistical significance on the t-test but the differences between its means for the two groups appeared substantively different, nonetheless. Amount paid for shelter was included because it may interact with some of the other economic variables. It should be noted here that the variable of recipient's past work history was not included in this analysis, although certain previous research has shown this to be a potentially

Table 3. Variables Which Showed a Significant Difference on T-Tests for the Employed and Unemployed Groups

Variable	Group	Mean	F-Value	Two-tail Probability
Race	Employed	1.86	1.53	.024
	Unemployed	1.75		
Number of children 1-3 yr.	Employed	.27	2.21	.000
	Unemployed	.55		
Rural/urbaness of residence	Employed	3.51	1.42	.038
	Unemployed	2.83		
Education of mother	Employed	5.63	1.74	.007
	Unemployed	5.33		
Value of real property	Employed	\$60.90	23.72	.000
	Unemployed	\$ 8.11		
Value of liquid assets	Employed	\$31.22	1.61	.006
	Unemployed	\$14.49		
Value of personal property	Employed	\$1247.63	9509.79	.000
	Unemployed	\$33.80		
Amount paid for utilities	Employed	\$27.85	2.49	.000
	Unemployed	\$28.50		
Total monthly income	Employed	\$507.82	2.87	.000
	Unemployed	\$305.72		
-----				
Amount of AFDC grant	Employed	\$229.49	1.04	.830
	Unemployed	\$280.89		
Amount paid for shelter	Employed	\$109.23	1.37	.077
	Unemployed	\$109.81		

discriminating factor between employed and unemployed welfare recipients (e.g., Burnside, 1971; Warren and Berkowitz, 1969). To the extent that work history is as strong or stronger than the included variables for distinguishing the employed group from the unemployed group, the findings of this study are weakened and any interpretations, conclusions, or generalizations must be undertaken with caution.

In order to include the largest possible number of cases in the discriminant analysis, those variables which had very few cases with missing values were recoded to make the missing values equal to the mean for that variable. This procedure did not substantially alter the distribution or descriptive statistics of these variables and had the advantage of retaining the cases for the discriminant analysis.

The recoding was performed on the following variables: the six missing values (1.7%) of "value of real property" were recoded \$22.00; the twenty-one missing values (6%) of "value of liquid assets" were recoded \$18.00; the thirteen missing values (3.7%) of "value of personal property" were recoded to \$369.00; and the one missing value (.3%) of "amount paid for shelter" was recoded \$109.00.

Mother's educational level had sixty-eight, or 19.5%, missing responses. It was felt that this was too large a proportion of unknown data to accurately substitute the mean educational level. Therefore, missing values were declared for the variable "education of mother," which prevented those sixty-eight cases from being included in the discriminant analysis, due to the listwise deletion component of the SPSS program. Thus, the discriminant analysis was performed on 253 cases, with 78 employed respondents and 175 unemployed respondents. The results of the discriminant analysis are presented in Table IV.

The first variable entered in the stepwise analysis is total monthly income, which makes a particularly substantial contribution to distinguishing between the employed and unemployed group (change in Rao's  $V = 170.77$ ). Amount of AFDC grant makes almost as significant a contribution (change in Rao's  $V = 165.64$ ) and is entered second. Rural/urbanness of residence changes Rao's  $V$  by 15.41 and enters the discriminant function equation third. The fourth variable to differentiate between the two groups is "value of personal property" (change in  $V$  of 8.69). Amount paid monthly for shelter and amount paid monthly for utilities entered fifth and sixth in the equation, with changes in Rao's  $V$  of 4.67 and 5.32, respectively. The remaining four variables to enter the analysis had sufficiently high  $F$ -values to meet the entry criterion, but individually they did not produce statistically significant changes in Rao's  $V$ . In order of entry, they are: number of children three

Table 4. Step-wise Discriminant Analysis of Employed and Unemployed AFDC Mothers

Step No.	Variable	Rao's V	Change in Rao's V	Sig.	Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients
1	Total income	170.76	170.76	.000	1.481
2	AFDC grant	336.46	165.69	.000	-.743
3	Rural/urbanness	351.87	15.41	.000	.123
4	Value of personal property	360.56	8.69	.003	.162
5	Amount for shelter	365.23	4.67	.031	-.166
6	Amount for utilities	370.56	5.32	.021	-.120
7	Children 1-3 years	372.24	1.68	.195	-.060
8	Value of liquid assets	373.31	1.06	.301	.052
9	Race	373.40	.09	.763	.017
10	Mother's education	373.49	.09	.757	-.017

Canonical correlation = .77

Classification:	Group	N of Cases	Predicted Group Membership		Correctly Classified
			Employed	Unemployed	
	Employed	78	76.9%	23.1%	87.7% of known cases
	Unemployed	175	7.4%	92.0%	

years old and under, value of liquid assets, race, and educational level of mother. "Value of real property" did not contribute enough separation power, when taken in consideration with the other ten variables, to enter the analysis.

The standardized discriminant function coefficients indicate that the relative contribution of total monthly income to the discriminant function is very high compared to the other variables in the equation. Amount of monthly AFDC grant is also high compared to the variables which follow it, but its relative contribution is only about half that of total monthly income.

The canonical correlation is a "measure of association between the discriminant function and the set of variables which define group membership" (Nie, et al., 1975). It is analogous to the eta, or correlation ratio, in one-way analysis of variance. The high correlation of .77 obtained in this analysis indicates the ability of the discriminant function to discriminate between the groups.

An additional feature of discriminant analysis which indicates the discriminating ability of the independent variables is its "classification" aspect, or its prediction of group membership based upon the derived discriminant function. The function developed from the ten variables included in this analysis correctly placed 77% of the employed women in the employed group and 92% of the unemployed women in the unemployed group, for a combined total of 88% correctly classified.

### Discussion

One of the most notable features of the discriminant analysis is that, of the first six variables entered into the discriminant function, five relate to economic conditions -- total monthly income, amount of AFDC grant, value of personal property, and amount paid for shelter and utilities. As would be expected, total income and value of personal property is greater for the employed group, and amount of AFDC grant is greater for the unemployed group. Surprisingly, for the subsample on which the discriminant analysis was done, the unemployed group paid more for shelter and utilities ( $\bar{X}$  = \$108.03 and \$29.13) than the employed group ( $\bar{X}$  = \$105.60 and \$28.63).

The sixth variable, rural/urbaness of residence, may also be related, indirectly, to economic conditions, to the extent that the density of population has an effect on the availability of jobs. The unemployed group tends to live in more heavily populated central city areas than the employed group, which may indicate greater difficulty in getting jobs where there are more competing job seekers.

The employed and unemployed groups are differentiated on the remaining four variables as might be expected -- the unemployed group tends to have more children three years and under, to be non-white, to have less education, and to have fewer liquid assets than the employed group. These variables, however, contribute relatively little, compared to the first four variables, in differentiating between the groups.

The conclusion which appears appropriate, then, is that individual and demographic characteristics of the AFDC mother and her family, such as age, total number of children, occupational group, race, educational level, preschool-age children, and being registered for the Work Incentive program, make little difference in whether the welfare recipient is employed or not. This tends to contradict the "personal motivation" or "individual differences" explanations which have been advanced by some as reasons for welfare recipients being unemployed. Those characteristics which most readily distinguish between the employed and unemployed groups are those which result from the condition of being employed -- monthly income, value of personal property, and, less dramatically, value of liquid assets and real property. The reader should remember, however, that these findings and conclusions are derived from data provided by eligibility workers, rather than from the AFDC recipients themselves. Because the data may contain some inaccuracies on this account, caution is encouraged with regard to interpretations made in this paper.

Some of the contradictory findings among earlier studies in how certain demographic variables are related to employment may be due to the fact, observed in this data, that there is no consistent difference in employment status according to those variables. This observation corroborates empirically some of the theoretical discussions of "work and welfare." Carter (1968) points out that the type of employment market which most welfare recipients fit into is an "irregular" one, with low pay, few or no fringe benefits, no provision for legitimate absences, and high turnover. This irregular economy contributes to a lifestyle pattern represented by the finding that 70 to 80% of AFDC mothers have had previous employment experience, but at a given point in time, only about 25 to 50% of the women on welfare are employed (Rein and Wishnov, 1971; Goodwin, 1972).

Investigations of the welfare history of AFDC recipients show that there is a turnover of more than one-third of AFDC families each year and that the median length of time for continuously receiving public assistance is two years (Cox, 1970; Carter, 1968). Rein and Wishnov (1971) conclude after a review of data on case openings and closings that "there is a small group of 'stable' AFDC



families that uses public assistance continuously and a large group that rotates between being on and off." They also find that a "substantial number" of the rotating cases fall into the category of "opened and closed for reasons of employment" (1971:9). Others have also described an intertwining of work and welfare, in that poverty-level heads of households are found not to participate in one alternative or the other, but to combine welfare and employment, simultaneously or serially, in order to support their families (Reid and Smith, 1972; Goodwin, 1972; Cox 1970; Valentine, 1970).

The need to supplement wages with public assistance funds is related to Carter's (1968) concept of employment opportunities being in an irregular market due to lack of education and job training and that most AFDC heads of households are women (who typically earn less than men regardless of the job). As Valentine (1970) says, "under fluctuating and marginal economic conditions the actual sources of general subsistence and occasional surplus become multiple, varied, and rapidly shifting . . . For most citizens, it is impossible to receive an adequate income without combining both wages and welfare or other sources."

Carter (1968) makes a similar observation when she states "In general, individual and family characteristics are similar for persons 'on welfare' and persons who happen to be 'off welfare' at a particular point in time. The differences lie in the immediate effect on marginal families of external events that upset their last-straw, make-shift provisions for food and shelter" (1968:2).

This suggests, then, that many or most of the two-thirds of the present sample who were unemployed at the time of data collection were temporarily in this situation due to recent events or chance factors, such as having a new baby or the car breaking down or not being able to find a job that meets transportation and schedule constraints. One might expect to find, if the same sample were surveyed at another time, that of those still on welfare, many in the unemployed group would have shifted to the employed group and vice versa.

It should also be noted that the proportion of employed AFDC mothers in the sample compares favorably with the proportion of women in the general population who are in the labor force. About 50% of women in the general population are employed. The fact that 30% of these AFDC mothers are employed, who by definition are single parents and have dependent children, clearly does not portray a group given to labor market idleness (cf., Hasenfeld, 1975).

These conclusions should suggest to policy makers that a more farsighted approach is necessary for permanently reducing welfare

rolls than simply encouraging employment of the recipients. The key seems to be to attack the structural obstacles which foster the "irregular" job market rather than concentrating on individuals, who after all have both histories and futures of being employed, but who nonetheless continue to require public assistance from time to time to supplement their low wages and fill in between dead-end jobs. Combating the structural obstacles is a deepreaching process which touches many complex and "close to home" areas, such as re-evaluating educational standards, increasing the amount of public assistance maintenance income to provide the secure base necessary to promote economic independence, and seriously examining the exploitation of the poor by the "secondary," low wage market (cf., Hasenfeld, 1975). However, the long-range benefits for society, nations, and individuals of such an encompassing solution would undeniably be worth the effort.

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