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# JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE

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## ERRATA

In the December, 1995 Issue, Volume XXII, Number 4, Martha N. Ozawa, PhD, authored "Public spending on income-tested social welfare programs for investment and consumption purposes," which begins on page 132 of that Issue. Appendix 1 of that article was inadvertently omitted from publication. Appendix 1 is printed below. We apologize to the author and our readers for the error.

## MORE ERRATA

A misprint occurred on the cover and spine of the March, 1996 Issue, XXIII, 1. The cover and spine incorrectly say Number 2. We sincerely regret any inconvenience this may cause our readers.

**APPENDIX 1****LIST OF SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS TARGETED TO  
LOW-INCOME FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS, 1992****EDUCATIONAL AID**

Stafford Loans (formerly called Guaranteed Student Loans)  
Pell Grants  
Head Start  
College Work-Study Program  
Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants  
Vocational Education Opportunities, Disadvantaged Activities  
Chapter 1 Migrant Education Program  
Special Programs for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds (Trio Programs)  
Perkins Loans  
State Student Incentive Grant (SSIG) Program  
Fellowships for Graduate and Professional Study  
Migrant High School Equivalency Program (HEP)  
Follow Through  
Health Professions Student Loans and Scholarships  
Ellender Fellowships  
College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)  
Child Development Associate Scholarship Program

**SOCIAL SERVICES**

Social Services Block Grant (Title XX)  
Community Services Block Grant  
Legal Services  
Emergency Food and Shelter Program  
Social Services for Refugees and Cuban/Haitian Entrants  
Child Care and Development Block Grant  
Child Care for Recipients (and Ex-Recipients) of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)  
"At Risk" Child Care (To avert eligibility for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)

**JOBS AND TRAINING AID**

Training for Disadvantaged Adults and Youth  
Job Corps  
Summer Youth Employment Program

Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program (JOBS) (successor to the  
Work Incentive Program)

Senior Community Service Employment Program

Foster Grandparents

Senior Companions

### **MEDICAL AID**

Medicaid

Medical Care for Veterans without Service Connected Disability

General Assistance (Medical Care Component)

Indian Health Services

Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, Title V of the Social  
Security Act

Community Health Centers

Title X Family Planning Services

Medical Assistance to Refugees and Cuban/Haitian Entrants

Migrant Health Centers

### **CASH AID**

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Pensions for Needy Veterans, their Dependents, and Survivors

General Assistance (nonmedical care component)

Foster Care

Emergency Assistance (EA) to Needy Families with Children

Adoption Assistance

Assistance to Refugees and Cuban/Haitian Entrants (cash component)

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and Death

Compensation for Parents of Veterans

General Assistance to Indians

### **FOOD AID**

Food Stamps

School Lunch Program (free and reduced-price segments)

Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children  
(WIC)

Nutrition Program for the Elderly

School Breakfast Program (free and reduced-price segments)

Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

Summer Food Service Program for Children

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

Special Milk Program (free segment)

### **HOUSING AID**

Section 8 Low Income Housing Assistance

Low Rent Public Housing

Rural Housing Loans (Section 502)

Section 236 Interest Reduction Payments

Rural Rental Housing Loans (Section 515)

Rural Rental Assistance Payments (Section 521)

Section 235 Homeownership Assistance for Low Income Families

Section 101 Rent Supplements

Rural Housing Repair Loans and Grants (Section 504)

Farm Labor Housing Loans (Section 514) and Grants (Section 516)

Indian Housing Improvement Grants

Rural Housing Preservation Grants (Section 533)

Rural Housing Self-Help Technical Assistance Grants (Section 523) and

Rural Housing Site Loans (Sections 523 and 524)

Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)

Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere (HOPE)  
Programs

### **ENERGY AID**

Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Weatherization Assistance

# Three Discourses on Practice: A Postmodern Re-appraisal

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*The current debate about the knowledge claims of modernity has profound implications for theories and practices of social welfare, though postmodern critiques of its foundational beliefs should be approached cautiously. This paper suggests that a postmodern critique of three historically significant discourses - American casework, British social administration and Marxist social work - illustrates what might be learned from a deconstruction of their modernist assumptions as a stage in a reconstruction of social welfare ideas appropriate to postmodern conditions.*

The debate about modernity and postmodernism has plunged a whole range of disciplines in the social sciences and humanities into turmoil in the past ten years. In part, it is a debate about the knowledge claims of that Western historical trajectory signified by the term "Enlightenment" which, in the name of universal reason, order and science brought modernity, primarily in a capitalist form, first to Europe, then to north America, and now to the whole world. Against the assertion that this process of "modernization" is essentially emancipatory in its effects, or at least its potential, postmodernists argue that modernity represented a eurocentric and destructive triumphalism based upon a philosophical foundation which resulted in dogmatism and the attempted homogenization of a world of diverse cultures, beliefs and histories.

Only recently does this debate appear to be having some impact on social work practice and education. Moore and Wallace (1993), for example, present postmodernism as an unambiguously progressive force which will contribute to an "emancipatory social work". The notion that postmodernism is clearly on the



side of radical and critical approaches to social work is, however, open to considerable debate. Outside of social work, feminists, for example, are divided on the question of whether modernity is finished and must give way to postmodern deconstruction of its universalistic assumptions (Nicholson 1992), or whether modernity retains its validity as an emancipatory process for humanity, as Lovibond (1989) argues. Marxists are also in dispute amongst themselves over the role of postmodernism as a critique of "grand narratives", with some protagonists, such as Laclau and Mouffe (1985) engaging in a wholesale deconstruction of Marxist beliefs in the primacy of class struggle and of economic determinants, whilst others see such attempts at re-stating Marxism as a betrayal of socialist aspirations (Geras 1987).

Given the ambiguity and complexity of the debate about postmodernism, and the often arcane language in which it is conducted, it would seem wise to approach postmodernism cautiously. In this paper I explore some specific examples of historically important discourses in the field of social work and social welfare to see what postmodernism might offer in terms of critique. My own view is that postmodernism is not a contemporary critical *alternative* to modernism, but a form of reflective consciousness which may contribute to a reconstitution of the project of modernity in a direction which is more diverse, cross-cultural and non-universalistic in its claims.

I have chosen to begin a discussion on three discourses: *American casework*, *British social administration*, and *Marxist social work*. I shall focus on negative critiques of these discourses in an effort to highlight the challenge of postmodern ideas, but I would argue that the next stage in critique should be to examine the *contradictions* within each discourse. On the one hand, I maintain that they exhibit the typical illusions and tendencies to domination of modernist discourse whilst on the other, I suggest in the conclusion that they have contributions to make to the possibilities of emancipatory practices in social welfare.

### Practice Discourses as Political Ideologies

Within the project of Western modernity social welfare was seen as carrying a significant function in responding to the social

consequences of the structural dynamic of capitalist modernization. We must begin by recognizing that the three discourses represent different interpretations of this function based upon three different political ideologies: liberal, social democratic, and revolutionary socialist.

The significant and influential texts in the formative literature of American casework before the mid 1970s, for example Charlotte Towle's *Common Human Needs* (1945/1973), Helen Perlman's *Social Casework* (1957), and Florence Hollis' *Casework: A Psychosocial Therapy* (1969) were deeply influenced by discourses outside social work, including psychoanalysis and structural-functional sociology, and later systems theory, especially through the work of Allen Pincus and Anne Minahan (1973). At the ideological level these texts represented a particular set of liberal ideas and rhetoric: the importance of individual self-determination, the existence of common human needs which social workers could understand and respond to, the central value of the family as an institution, professionalism as a benign force in society, and a relatively unreflecting acceptance, with some reservations and reformist notions, of the capitalist social order in which it was rooted.

British social administration, in contrast, had its roots within the Fabian tradition of social reform. It was an academic field of study closely integrated into the social democratic politics of Britain from the early 1950s, powerfully advocating an expanding Welfare State which would improve the life chances of the whole population, but especially the working class, whilst still maintaining a reduced but substantial market economy: the market and welfare were to co-exist. For the most influential texts within this tradition we need only refer, initially, to the work of Richard Titmuss, especially his *Essays on the Welfare State* (1962) and *Commitment to Welfare* (1968). These texts were profoundly influential, not only in providing a basis for the analysis of social policies, but also as representing welfare as a moral imperative—the ethical case for social democratic institutions within a reformed capitalist economy, sometimes called a mixed economy, or even *post-capitalism*.

Radical perspectives on social welfare emerged as a predominantly marxist or marxist-influenced discourse which contested

the ideological terrain occupied by American casework models and also the reformism and theoretical weakness in terms of class analysis, of mainstream social administration. It was a discourse based primarily on Marxist and socialist feminist scholarship and politics in a number of countries, and interestingly began to have its most significant impact from the mid -1970s onwards when the idea of welfare was already in retreat as the political influence of neo-conservatism grew, and capitalist economies took a new turn towards globalism. For early texts in this political movement of radical social welfare we might refer to Frances Piven and Richard Cloward's *Regulating the Poor* (1972), Jeffrey Galper's *The Politics of Social Services* (1975), Roy Bailey's and Mike Brake's *Radical Social Work* (1975) and also Elizabeth Wilson's *Women and the Welfare State* (1977), which reflected the tension between Marxism and feminism in this field. As a perspective, radical social work and social policy quickly split into a number of different ideological positions represented by the varieties of Marxism and feminism which fuelled it. In this paper, I intend to focus on the specifically *Marxist* tendency in this movement: the crucial influence of feminism is another, though interconnected story. During the 1970s and early 1980s this Marxist tendency emphasized the *critique* of dominant forms of social welfare theory and practice, but it gradually attempted to construct alternative forms of practice based upon the central ideas of class struggle, patriarchy and the inherently exploitive nature of the capitalist state and economy.

The task of preliminary deconstruction will be to highlight not only the ideological divergencies between these discourses which we can see at once, but also their common features. From the point of view of postmodernism, it may be argued that despite their differences they also present a *continuity* found in their adherence to "science", in their determination to control or guide others "in their own interests", in their giving priority to certain kinds of expert knowledge over other forms of social knowledge, in their subordination of those without expert knowledge to the power of professional, bureaucratic or political authority. In his work on the discourses of madness, sexuality and punishment, Foucault (1967; 1979; 1977) was able to demonstrate how deeply embedded are the assumptions and forms of power expressed in the language of these discourses (Sheridan 1980; Gordon 1985).

### Modernity, Progress and Order

We can begin a critical reading of postmodernism as it illuminates our three discourses by confronting the uncompromising challenge to the modern idea of progress which we find in the work of Jean- François Lyotard. It is a challenge to that humanist optimism which lies at the core of the whole enterprise of social welfare—the belief that planned, scientifically-based social intervention is a benign project. Lyotard's (1989 : 89) assault on Enlightenment beliefs is a powerful one:

One can note a sort of decay in the confidence placed by the last two centuries in the idea of progress. This idea of progress as possible, probable or necessary was rooted in the certainty that the development of the arts, technology, knowledge and liberty would be profitable to mankind as a whole. . . . After two centuries, we are more sensitive to signs that signify the contrary. Neither economic nor political liberalism, nor the various Marxisms, emerge from the sanguinary last two centuries free from the suspicion of crimes against mankind. I use the name of Auschwitz to point out the irrelevance of empirical matter, the stuff of recent past history, in terms of the modern claim to help mankind to emancipate itself.

To the name Auschwitz could be added other names signifying the recent history of crimes against humanity—Dresden, Hiroshima, the Gulag, Cambodia. The postmodernist argument is that these and countless other crimes were justified by reference to powerful ideologies which originated in the pursuit of progress and order: fascism, liberal democracy, Marxism. Lyotard (1989:9) argues that "the grand narratives of legitimation are no longer credible" and have lost their power to provide a foundation for social criticism. On the other side of the argument, we can see that rejection of the humanist idea of the inevitability of progress and of the grand narratives which underpin it, can clearly serve entirely reactionary purposes and a nihilistic withdrawal from the political arena, a neo- conservative version of postmodernism, in fact.

However, the contention that grand theories tend to objectify human subjects who then become the bearers of biological destiny, of human essence, or of a revolutionary task is well made. The appeal to science as a justification for professional, bureaucratic

or revolutionary practice, tends to solidify power in the hands of intellectuals and state functionaries and denies it to the mass of the oppressed and the dispossessed whose welfare has been claimed to be one of the central rationales of scientific advance in the West. Also, the postmodernist claim that progress cannot be *guaranteed* may be taken as a means of counteracting euro-centric conceptions of the world in which the West triumphantly brings the fruits of "Civilization" to the Other. To believe in the inevitability of progress involves the conception of an impersonal force called History as Popper (1957) famously pointed out, a force which unfolds itself through the specific histories of particular struggles and peoples (Attridge, Bennington, Young 1987). Such a mechanical notion of the process of history objectifies historical subjects and legitimates the leadership claims of a ruling class, a political élite or a revolutionary vanguard by reference to their historical role. But does accepting the postmodernist critique of grand narratives requires us to abandon all attempts to conceptualize in a broad way such issues as the various oppressions experienced in terms of gender, class and ethnicity, or more concretely, the problem of world-wide poverty, or the relation between the human species and the natural world?

The lesson of postmodern critique is surely that we should subject all grand theories to an interrogation as to their implications in terms of objectification, knowledge production and the processes of domination. We must admit, however, that the basis of such interrogation is inevitably another grand theory embedded in the postmodern perspective on the historic failure of the humanist idea of progress. Foucault's dislike of overarching theories and his wish to destroy the human sciences in the name of our liberation as humans is itself based upon a grand narrative of the nature of knowledge and its links with coercive power. We cannot do without grand theory, it seems; perhaps we can learn to approach it cautiously and reflexively, taking full account of its dangers and illusions.

### Progress, Science and Welfare Practice

How do our three discourses fare when evaluated in terms of their adherence to humanist ideas on the role of specific kinds of knowledge in ameliorating or confronting individual and social

problems? It is clear at once that these discourses are deeply embedded in legitimization narratives which appeal to the authority of science as well as to a moral imperative to change people and/or situations in ways which are expected to enhance their welfare.

Central to the discourse of American casework was a belief that liberal democratic progress could be achieved through "knowledge of the science of human relations" (Bowers 1949), and that "the characteristic method of social work incorporates within its processes both scientific knowledge and social values in order to achieve its ends" (Hamilton 1951:3). Although we see in American casework literature an adherence to scientific theories drawing, for example, on key metaphors from medicine such as the notions of diagnosis and treatment, we also find a belief that progress through a science aimed at ameliorating human suffering draws upon the professional practice of social workers—their experience of the "real world." These two sources of knowledge—scientific theory and professional practice—are seen as the basis of a moral commitment to individual adaptation and social change. Social workers are empowered to act on behalf of the progressive impulses of society as a whole:

The professions charged by society to educate, help and heal people have become increasingly concerned with contributing to the development of the individual. As we have inched toward the interdependence implicit in a democracy, society's aim progressively has been to afford the individual opportunity for the development of his capacities (Towle 1945/1973:15).

We can put aside, for this discussion, the problems which the language of this passage presents: the reification of the term "society", the rhetoric of "democracy", the implicit normalization in the idea of individual capacities and development. Towle's passage can be taken as representative of a profound belief in the progress achieved in U.S. democracy, and a moral legitimization for professional intervention in people's lives in order to enable them to enhance their capacities and development as individuals.

Whilst within the American casework tradition, moral commitment to the idea of progress was tied to a belief in the values of liberal democracy, in British social administration this commitment took on the tougher form of a moral critique of contemporary capitalist society. In the tradition of social democratic



humanism, it was intent on using the empirical social sciences, especially statistics, to condemn the continued existence of poverty and gross inequality and to see progress towards equality as possible within a reformed society. In undertaking a statistical re-evaluation of income distribution for example, Titmuss (1962) is concerned to "study the rich and the sources of power in society," because "ancient inequalities have assumed new and more subtle forms; conventional categories are no longer adequate for the task of measuring them" (Titmuss, op.cit : 199). In a similar moral approach, Townsend (1979) uses a mass of empirical material to indict current economic and social policy for the continuation and growth of poverty in Britain.

This moral critique was accompanied by optimism in the future. Donnison (1970) for example, argues that liberty, equality and fraternity are social goals to which Britain can aspire in a context of continuing economic prosperity:

Eventually it should be possible to maintain the process by which policies for the equalization of income, wealth and living standards extend freedom and promote innovation and development which ensure the continuing economic growth that makes further progress towards equality possible (Donnison op.cit. : 23).

Titmuss's work was based upon a conviction of social democracy's moral superiority in terms of the social relations it fosters. In his study of blood donor systems in the United States and Britain, which he called *The Gift Relationship* (1970), Titmuss argued that the voluntary British system is morally and socially superior as well as more cost-effective compared with the American system of paying for blood because the former is a social rather than an economic exchange. Titmuss develops this distinction between social policy and the market as a crucial defining characteristic of social administration:

Social administration is thus concerned, for instance, with different types of moral transactions, embodying notions of gift-exchange, of reciprocal obligations, which have developed in modern societies in institutional forms to bring about and maintain social and community relations . . . The grant, or the gift or unilateral transfer-whether it takes the form of cash, time, energy, satisfaction, blood or even life itself-is the distinguishing mark of the social (in policy and

administration) just as exchange or bilateral transfer is the mark of the economic. (Titmuss 1968: 21–22).

The analysis of certain kinds of moral transactions is, for Titmuss and his co-workers, a scientific pursuit involving knowledge-building “which is one of the attributes of science,” (Titmuss op. cit.: 24) a pursuit which his Marxist critics saw as lacking an overarching structural theory of class exploitation which alone could satisfactorily explain the empirical data on poverty and inequality which social administration research revealed.

In its reaction against both the liberal American casework tradition and the social democratic thrust of British social administration, Marxist perspectives on welfare argued for their own versions of progress and science, for historical materialism. The ultimate authority on what was science and what was progress was to be found in Marx’s work. In much of the radical social work literature, Marxist analyses of contradictions within the state apparatus were undertaken in order to identify arenas of class struggle, so that the Welfare State became the location in which a critical social work practice was possible (Leonard, 1993). Radical study of social policy was, by the early 1980s, dominated by a Marxist “political economy” approach which emphasised the role of the state in the reproduction of class and gender relations.

The science of historical materialism provided then, the overarching paradigm for Marxist writers on social work. At the beginning of their introduction to *Radical Social Work*, the editors, Bailey and Brake (1975) present their perspective on the welfare state grounded in a particular grand narrative:

Any understanding of the position of social welfare in our society requires an understanding of its history, and an understanding of the state. ‘The state is founded upon the contradiction between public and private life, between general and particular interests . . .’ (Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*) . . . Marx and Engels argue in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848) that ‘the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie’. The state executive not only controls the political and economic situation, but also the distribution of welfare schemes.

Bailey & Brake op. cit. : 2, 3.

The certainty about *any* understanding having to be founded upon Marxist analysis can be seen in the editor's introduction to the first of a series of texts on radical social work and social policy:

. . . this series is based on the proposition that its foundation must be predominantly Marxist. It cannot, therefore, depend primarily on the bourgeois disciplines of sociology, psychology, economics or social administration: it must seek to develop a Marxist political economy, a Marxist theory of the welfare state and, most difficult of all, a Marxist theory of interpersonal relations.

Leonard (1978) : xiii

Thus the science of historical materialism is seen as providing the guide, outside of which exist only "bourgeois disciplines" which by definition cannot furnish an understanding of social welfare. Although western Marxism was always more permeable, more diverse and more critical than its orthodox Soviet variants, it tended, until the entry of feminism as a powerful theoretical and political critique, to remain hermetically sealed within its own discourse. Like their political opponents the Marxist writers on social welfare remained children of the European Enlightenment belief in progress. Although stronger in critique than in prescriptions for action, they continued to hold the view that social and moral progress meant moving towards some form of state socialism, often avoiding the contemplation of the contradictions of the "actual, existing" socialist states of Eastern Europe and elsewhere.

Belief in the inevitable progress of modernization legitimated social welfare interventions, but often closed the eyes of writers to the negative aspects of these interventions. Scientific work, Kuhn (1970) points out, normally takes place within a dominant paradigm which controls and socializes those who work within it. Until it is effectively challenged by a "scientific revolution," the dominant paradigm acts as a filter through which all results are assessed, and negative results which do not confirm the paradigm are explained away as aberrations, as poorly conducted practice or research, or as indicating the need for merely a small adjustment of the paradigm. It appears that in social welfare discourses a similar process was at work.

Under the sway of non-radical and scientific forms of psycho-analytic theory, coupled with the authority of medical models of

disease, most American casework writers of the 1950s and 1960s consistently failed to live up to their own rhetoric of maximizing client self-determination. Their paradigm could not account for the class, gender and cultural control omnipresent in the interaction between client and social worker, and thus interpreted client resistance as the result of a range of defence mechanisms, ego weaknesses and poor socialization. The professional assessment of client "needs" took absolute priority over clients' expression of their "wants" and so the "casework relationship" could not be opened up to the client's definition of the situation.

Although based upon a moral critique of the state and the economy, the social administration paradigm was largely blind to the negative consequences of organizational forms and practices which increased bureaucratic and professional power. Despite the rhetoric of "community participation," belief in the effectiveness of professional and scientific rationality meant that such participation was token at most: democracy was seen primarily in terms of political representation through the ballot box, rather than community and service-user *control* at the point of policy-making, planning, and the delivery of services.

The Marxist paradigm on the other hand took for granted that we already know how power is exercised (through exploitive class relations) and why such power is successful (through economic production and ideological reproduction). The microscopic processes of power, its diffusion throughout the social system and its connection to knowledge production could not effectively be taken into account because a paradigm of the centrality of production and of class subordinates diverse and contradictory experience of oppression (gender, race, culture, age etc.) to a single explanation. Furthermore, certainty about the single locus of power blinded some Marxist writers to the fact that organizational structures and practices do not necessarily cease to be oppressive simply because they are legitimated by the reference to Marxist theorization.

The effects of the power of eurocentric grand narratives within the discourses on social welfare was, overall, to produce an objectifying tendency which has become the focus of critique by a potent conjunction of feminism, critical psychoanalysis and now postmodernism.

## Discourse and Truth

The basic assumption behind the discourses we are discussing is that they were approximations to the truth about the real world which scientific knowledge has progressively revealed to us. Given that these various discourses were in conflict with each other, it was assumed further that their verification could ultimately be settled independently of the discourses themselves by reference to "real" processes in the world. These processes could be discovered by accumulation of empirical data, by the careful classification of individual and family problems, or in the longer run, by the outcome of present social processes—how History (with a capital H) turns out. The issue of the truth of statements was either removed from politics and seen as an "empirical question" as the positivists argue, or seen as reflecting the social and political world as in the case when Marxists claim that the economy ultimately determines intellectual production. In both cases the aim is to guarantee the claims to objective truth which professional or scientific discourses make.

Against all of these assumptions that what we say or write is ultimately determined by "real" objective processes, postmodernism argues that discourse itself determines knowledge production and not the other way around. Postmodernism maintains that there can be no appeal for verification as to truth to anything outside discourse because outside one particular discourse can only be specified some other discourse that always already constructs it in a specific form.

It is the perceived totalitarianism of grand narratives, the terrible certainty that underlies dogmatic belief in the unrelenting pursuit of "progress", of the domination of nature and of the social world, that postmodernism confronts. Guarantees of certainty, "the grand narratives of legitimation" are swept aside by postmodernism in favour of a predominately relativist position whereby the criterion of truth or the adequacy of an explanation is internal to specific discourses: the real only exists because there is a discourse which describes it. The needs of social services clients exist, postmodernists might argue, only in so far as social policies and professional social work has constructed them as objects that it can assess and respond to. Need does not arise from the social

services client spontaneously; "needs" are constructed through discourses and the client is required to fit into them.

By maintaining that what we count as knowledge is determined by specific discourses, the postmodern critique, especially in the hands of Foucault, points to the oppressive role of professional and scientific discourse in its power to define the social world and develop technologies of administration and control in the management of troublesome populations: the mad, the poor, the criminal. These scientific and professional disciplines *claim* objectivity, and see themselves as part of the moral and social progress of the modern world, but in reality they are profoundly implicated in the discipline and punishment of populations which they (the professionals) legitimate by reference to the specific discourse within which they are situated. Thus caseworkers often re-defined their clients' culturally specific needs and "learned to use authority" in the clients' supposed interests; thus social administrators studied poverty and often increased the knowledge of governments in the management of the poor; thus Marxist social workers represented state power and sometimes justified it by reference to the political rhetoric of revolutionary consciousness-raising.

Although extremely powerful as critique, postmodern analysis cannot, I believe, be accepted without substantial challenge and modification. If we are sympathetic to the assault by postmodernists on the idea of grand, unifying theories which claim universal objectivity, are we therefore compelled to fall entirely into the relativist camp which takes no account of what goes on outside of discourses? I think not, for an adequate theory of discourses must account for resistance to dominant discourses and the politics involved in the production of knowledge. Foucault's (1967) history of madness, for example, though a powerful critique of medical ideology, cannot further our understanding of the social construction of mental health and mental illness in the present historical juncture, because it lacks an adequate account of social forces and relations outside of discourse.

It is clear that we can use discourse analysis to reveal to us, for example, how certain social welfare paradigms, theories and practices were implicated in "the logic of domination", but why were they resisted and challenged by new paradigms? Were



these challenges simply the result of what was happening *within* discourses, or were other social events, such as changes in the balance of class, gender or cultural forces, of major relevance? To answer these questions we must address the issue of the relation between knowledge and power.

### Knowledge/Power

If we examine the discourses of casework, social administration, and Marxist social work, we shall find that their claims to truth or adequacy as knowledge took place in the context of struggles around legitimacy, authority and power; around the relationship between knowledge and ideology. The politics of these struggles were not simply *outside* the discourses themselves, but also inside the knowledge-producing activities with which the discourses on social welfare interact. The fact that these knowledge-producing activities are outside the narrow boundaries of scientific and professional disciplines can be seen in the way that our knowledge about individual and social problems goes outside social work, or sociology, or medicine, to knowledge inscribed in everyday practices in a variety of institutions—the family, community organizations, income maintenance agencies, schools, etc.

It would be absurd to claim in a relativist manner that it is because the concept of child protection exists that children are abused. What actually *constitutes* child abuse however, is essentially a political debate related to questions of cultural diversity and state control. Child abuse is certainly “real,” but it is inextricably caught up in the articulation between different discourses and practices, whereby each set of activities (such as the practices of child protection workers, community critiques of these practices, the articulated claims of ethnic diversity in child rearing) conditions the other. Discourses develop in interaction with a range of practices which are both discursive and material, practices which are historical products.

By concentrating on the relationship between knowledge production and power, we are able, I believe, to reject *both* the absolutist model of scientific truth *and* the relativist model of discourse determination. Instead we can focus on the debates and arguments which surround and penetrate scientific and professional

discourses, examining alternatives and exploring the specific historical and cultural assumptions which contextualize these debates. An approach which emphasizes the significance of power and resistance in the arguments which take place around major discourses should provide us with a dynamic picture of the development of social welfare ideas. If we accept the postmodern account of the oppressive tendencies of the discourses which have shaped social welfare as material practices which define and act upon troublesome subject populations, then we must discuss how these subjects of social intervention are culturally constructed.

### The Production of Subjectivity

Postmodernists argue that the most far-reaching illusion of modernity is that concerning the subject, the belief that there is an essential self, the author of my intentions, which lies buried beneath social and intra psychic repression. Postmodernism, allied here to contemporary feminist, psychoanalytic and Marxist theory (Leonard 1984), is concerned to question this belief and to ask what are its origins and social consequences. Although the various critiques of the illusion of a unitary, autonomous self are at variance with each other, they agree that the individual's sense of herself as a unitary subject is achieved by her identification with a dominant discursive formation reflecting class, gender, ethnic and other relations. Traces of what determined her (discursive and material practices) are "re-inscribed" in her discourse—she believes in her autonomy (Pêcheux 1982). This process, it is argued, is essentially how compliance is engineered: subordinate populations, including social welfare clients, are complicit in their own oppression through their incorporation of dominant discourses of normality, of health and illness, of what is possible and impossible, and all of the attendant practices which sediment these definitions into "common sense".

Holding to the myth of the essential autonomous self was originally at the root of the American casework use of post-Freudian ego psychology with its assessments of strengths and weaknesses, and its concern with adjustment to "reality". The principle of client self-determination was based on the notion of the possibility of autonomous choice, and prevented the theorists

of American casework from seeing how the discourse of which they were part permitted choices only within the parameters set by the discourse, a discourse which defined the "client" and re-inscribed this definition in her consciousness: she becomes a client one can work with because she has accepted her client role.

Similarly, under the influence of British social administration, social services and health care planning were based upon the careful categorization of client and patient "needs", supposedly reflecting the generally common needs of integrated coherent subjects rather than the diverse, conflicting and culturally varied needs of different individuals and populations. It was believed that the users of services were relatively free to make choices and to participate at least in the evaluation of services—a belief that largely excluded from the discourse an understanding of the way in which these very users were, in practice, required to subordinate themselves to professional perceptions of their needs and so present an apparent integrated self to whom services could be delivered.

Marxist social work intended to make the principle of client self-determination *real* by helping the individual to understand how her view of herself was socially constructed within the context of class and gender relations. In practice, the Marxist perspective failed to take this understanding to the point of acknowledging and acting upon the fact that discourse determinism implies multiple identities rather than an integrated subject. Thus clients or service users were often seen as relatively homogeneous in terms of their crucial social characteristics, namely members of the working class or women, in either case subjects whose consciousness could be raised and whose common needs might be responded to through community-controlled state services.

The argument concerning the production of subjectivity might lead us to accept that subjectivity should be theorized as multiple, a historical product based upon particular forms of rationality which are produced through particular technologies and practices. The traditional Enlightenment subject is therefore displaced into positions within specific discourses, and it is a range of normative practices and assumptions which produce in us a model of a unitary, rational and coherent subject to which we are motivated to aspire. Motivation and intention re-enters

into this account of subjectivity—the individual is not totally powerless and determined, but neither is she free to choose unconditionally or without struggle and resistance. It is a position which will not satisfy many postmodernist critics, but it implies an optimistic view about the possibilities of change, and perhaps a more plausible account of subjectivity.

### From Deconstruction to Reconstruction

In discussing three discourses on practice I have sought to show that postmodern critique can be useful in exploring their modernist domain assumptions, although at many points I have registered objections to the more extreme and illogical postmodern positions. In any case, quite apart from the notion of postmodernism as a distinct set of political and cultural perspectives, we should also acknowledge the existence of *postmodernity* as a contemporary form of human consciousness. It is a consciousness rooted in our awareness (and anxiety) that we live in an uncertain, insecure world without transcendental guarantees about truth, progress or science, because modernity in either capitalist, or, briefly, socialist forms, has not delivered what it promised in terms of freedom, security, and prosperity. In this world we can no longer, as social workers or social scientists claim to make authoritative judgements about individual or social problems based upon scientific objectivity any more than we can seek certainty in tradition. Instead, we are in a world which is more relativist, more modest in its knowledge claims and hopefully more sensitive to cultural difference as the eurocentric base of modernity becomes ever clearer to us.

With this postmodern consciousness, we turn back to look at the recent history of modernity, at its contradiction between emancipation and domination, and at present, necessarily perhaps, place more emphasis on its failures than its achievements. It may be, however, that close examination of the social welfare discourses of modernity will also enable us to ask what they might offer, after shedding some of their more strident claims to universality, certainty and objectivity, to the re-constitution of critical social welfare practices.

Currently, social welfare is dominated by the concerted push by governments and multinational corporations to give political

priority to the establishment of a global market. This class project is based upon a "modernization" process which is largely indifferent to cultural diversity except where it serves the purposes of capital accumulation and social regulation, an example, *par excellence*, of modernity as domination. In this context, the American casework tradition of respect for the expressive, relational needs of clients turns out to be positively progressive, for it contains the promise that individuals' narratives about their intersubjective experiences of a destabilized and often hostile world can be given sustained attention. The tradition of British social administration as an interdisciplinary field of study and action contains, in its twin emphases on empirical investigation and ethical critique, one basis for intellectual, political and moral resistance to those current forms of modernity which ruthlessly exploit subordinate populations of the world's poor by prioritizing the drive for markets over all ethical objections.

Finally, Marxist analysis, as it abandons dogmatic and scientific claims to holding the exclusive key to understanding and articulating emancipatory struggles, has the potential of becoming a crucial means, alongside other critical perspectives, by which new forms of practice emerge to face new historical conditions. Marxist perspectives on social welfare retain their persuasive power because of their analyses of class relations, of state power, of the various forms which capitalist exploitation takes, and of the potential which exists in solidarity and collectivity. Following the deconstruction and critique of the social welfare practices of modernity, we are in a position, perhaps, to forge new practices relevant to the postmodern conditions of uncertainty, cultural relativity and global interdependence.

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# Poverty, Family Support, and Well-Being of Infants: Mexican Immigrant Women and Childbearing

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*Data reveal that despite high levels of poverty, Mexican immigrants have relatively few low birth weight babies. This unusual pattern suggests that there are "protective" social factors mediating the effects of poverty—perhaps especially family support. Our study, based on in-depth interviews with immigrant women in Chicago, finds that family support does protect some women from delivering a low birth weight infant but it does not protect women living in extreme poverty. Implications for services to Mexican immigrant women in childbearing years and their families are presented. These findings also speak to broad issues in social policy, especially the need for outreach and basic support to the very poor.*

The well-being of infants is considered a litmus test for overall life chances. Despite high per capita income and massive health care expenditures, the United States has a worse low birth weight rate than 30 other nations, and a worse infant mortality rate than 19 other nations (Children's Defense Fund, 1994). A great deal of attention and resources have been devoted to reducing rates of infant mortality and low birth weight (National Center for Health Statistics, 1991). Improvements have been made, but racial and ethnic disparities persist (Paneth, 1995, Singh & Yu, 1995).



In these efforts, it is important to examine the unusual example of birth outcomes of Mexican origin babies. Data show that infants of Mexican descent have rates of low birth weight and infant mortality that are lower than more advantaged non-Hispanic white babies (Ventura, et al., 1994). For example, 1993 data show that the percentage of low birth weight infants of Mexican descent was 5.8, similar to that of whites (5.9 percent), and considerably less than that of Puerto Ricans (9.2 percent) or African-Americans (13.4 percent) (Ventura, et al., 1995). Among Mexican immigrants alone, the low birth weight rate is even lower (5.1 percent) (Ventura, et al., 1995). The pattern is surprising because babies of Mexican descent would be considered vulnerable by the most well-established risk factors—including poverty and access to health care.

This pattern of low birth weight has been called an “enigma” and a “paradox” by health researchers (Markides & Coreil, 1986; Williams, et al., 1986; Rumbaut & Weeks, 1994). It raises fundamental questions about the dynamics of poverty and ethnicity, and the relationship to birth outcomes. An examination of these patterns offers an opportunity to distinguish the most deleterious aspects of poverty and those that can be ameliorated. This would give us a greater insight into how to further improve birth outcomes among babies of Mexican descent and may lead to ideas for more effective services for other groups as well.

### Factors Thought to Mediate Poverty's Impact on Birth Outcomes

Researchers have argued convincingly that poverty is associated with an increased risk of low birth weight (Ounsted & Scoll, 1982; Paneth, et al., 1982). However, how poverty affects birth weight and what factors may mediate poverty's most harmful effects are less clear (Hughes & Simpson, 1995). Researchers point to the possible role of education, prenatal care, and social services in reducing rates of low birth weight.

Regarding education, studies show that risk of low birth weight decreases significantly if the mother has at least 12 years of formal schooling (Erhardt & Chase, 1973). But educational attainment among women of Mexican descent is lower than most other groups (Velez, 1989), suggesting that formal education plays

a minor role in mediating the impact of poverty on birth weight in this population.

Access to prenatal care also has been shown to reduce the incidence of low birth weight and, therefore, could potentially reduce rates of low birth weight in poor communities (Institute of Medicine, 1985; Alexander & Korenbrot, 1995). However, studies show that Mexican origin women are less likely to receive prenatal care than other groups. The high cost of care, inability to pay, lack of medical insurance, and fear of using US health services contribute to low care (Treviño, et al., 1991). Therefore, it is unlikely that prenatal care is a key mediator of poverty for the Mexican immigrant population.

Combs-Orme (1988) has suggested that social workers and social services historically have played an important role in reduction of infant mortality. But studies suggest that Mexicans have relatively low social service utilization rates (Hayes-Bautista, 1989).

Thus, conventional explanations do not explain why the rate of low birth weight in the Mexican community is low compared to other high poverty populations. The inconclusive nature of research requires "unbundling" the reasons for low birth weight among specific populations. Is poverty somehow different for women of Mexican descent? We turn to recent debates on the nature of poverty to identify possible explanations for why Mexican immigrants have relatively positive birth outcomes.

William Julius Wilson, whose work has re-focused attention on urban poverty, proposes that economic restructuring has led to persistent and concentrated urban poverty (Wilson, 1987). Wilson and colleagues argue that poverty, particularly in the African-American community, is accompanied by weak attachment to the labor force, welfare dependency, female-headed households, incompleteness of high school, high rates of low birth weight, and high rates of infant mortality. Researchers examining the situation among Latinos (64 percent of whom are Mexican descent), point to low high school completion rates, high unemployment, poor earnings, and larger families as indicators of economic difficulties (Barancik, 1990; Chapa & Valencia, 1993).

But others argue that the nature of poverty in Latino communities is different (Cuciti & James, 1990; Massey, 1993). Moore and Pinderhughes (1993) propose that economic restructuring has had

less negative impacts on Latinos than on Blacks. There is strong attachment to the labor force among Latinos and concentration of poverty has been less severe. (These arguments are framed in terms of Latinos as a whole and research on specific groups is needed; however, the authors make it clear that Mexican immigrants fit the overall patterns.) One of the factors that makes poverty different is a high rate of immigration that reinforces community social institutions, such as churches, businesses, local organizations, and self help groups. These provide resources and support that mediate some of the most pernicious effects of poverty (Delgado & Delgado, 1982; Valle & Vega, 1982; Sherraden & Martin, 1994).

Researchers have also documented that the poor utilize informal social networks to mediate poverty (Portes & Bach, 1985; González de la Rocha, 1994). They utilize social networks—especially extended families—to find housing and jobs, to incorporate several income earners, to reallocate work responsibilities, and to lower household expenses (Angel & Tienda, 1982; Mines & Massey, 1986; Anderson & de la Rosa, 1989).

Viable community-based institutions, social networks, and families may reinforce, in Hayes Bautista's words (1989), a "cultural vitality" that sustains "protective mechanisms that cushion Latina mothers against the effects of low income, low education, and low access to care" (see also, Dowling & Fisher, 1987). For example, Collins and Shay (1994) find that residence in extremely poor areas of Chicago has little effect on birth weight among Mexican immigrants, whom they suggest maintain a Hispanic cultural orientation and social supports that counterbalance urban poverty. Nelson and Tienda (1985) argue that ethnic communities can provide a basis for "social solidarity" that protects the community from the vicissitudes of poverty.

We propose that these factors—community institutions, social networks, and families—may help to mediate the effects of poverty and help to explain lower rates of low birth weight among Mexican immigrants. This study poses two questions: (1) How do Mexican immigrant women cope with poverty and childbearing? and (2) Are there differences between women with low birth weight babies and women with normal birth weight babies with

respect to poverty and factors that mediate the impact of poverty? The first question explores possible reasons why low birth weight among Mexican immigrant families may be lower than expected. The second question examines the relationship between poverty and birth weight in the Mexican immigrant population.

### Research Methods

In order to answer these questions, it was important to explore immigrants' social and economic situations, their pregnancy and child birth experiences, and their experiences receiving help and assistance from formal social services, community-based organizations, informal support networks, and families. We chose in-depth, ethnographically-informed interviews as the principal data collection method for several reasons (Becerra & Zambrana, 1985; Sherraden & Barrera, 1995). First, an exploratory and intensive methodology was called for given the nascent state of knowledge about the dynamics of poverty and pregnancy among Mexican immigrants (Merton, et al., 1990). There was no assurance that the questions in a survey format would be relevant for this population. Although some research instruments had been developed that could be utilized for some aspects of the research (e.g., social support, acculturation), coping strategies and care during pregnancy among this population were not well-understood. Open-ended questions, in particular, were a useful method in this situation, permitting the researcher to guide the interview without confining the respondent to certain response categories. For example, questions such as "how do you and your family get along financially?" and "how difficult is it 'to make ends meet'?" provided direction but, at the same time, encouraged exploration of issues from the women's point of view and experience. Open-ended questions also led to discussing topics we had not anticipated, such as the role of secret pregnancies that are described in this paper.

Second, although time-consuming and challenging to arrange, we believed that relaxed, in-depth interviews would increase trust and confidence between researchers and subjects. The practical difficulties of collecting reliable data among Mexican immigrants—particularly undocumented immigrants—are

well known (Cornelius, 1981; Marín & Marín, 1991). Informal interviews can relieve anxieties that are often associated with institutional settings and "official-sounding" interviews.

Third, because we wanted to learn about the social and economic contexts of the women's lives during pregnancy, it was important to locate ourselves where they spent most of their time during pregnancy—in their homes and communities. We feared that a different interview site, particularly a large institution such as a hospital or clinic, might make it more difficult for them to focus on their everyday lives and for us to appreciate the meaning.

Field work began in 1990 when we undertook preliminary interviews with over 20 health and social service providers, researchers, and community leaders in Chicago's Latino communities (Becerra & Zambrana, 1985). Research procedures were based on many of these providers' observations and suggestions, in addition to our own research and experiences in the community. Between 1991 and 1993, we conducted long interviews with 41 Mexican immigrant women in Chicago, a city with the third largest concentration of Latinos in the United States, and a major port of entry for Mexican immigrants.

Most of the women were recruited at Chicago's regional public hospital, where almost a quarter of all Mexican immigrants in the Chicago area delivered their babies in 1989. A few mothers were recruited at other facilities, including a federally-funded community health center, a teaching hospital, and a community hospital. Although not a random sample, our recruitment method provided access to a much more diverse group of women than the more usual snowball sampling employed in many studies with undocumented immigrants. The women lived in various areas of the city and suburbs, including all of the major Mexican-origin communities.

We attempted to contact all mothers of low birth weight infants (under 2500 grams or 5.5 lb.) identified in hospital and clinic records during the study period. Because there are relatively few low birth weight babies, the recruitment period was lengthy. Mothers of normal birth weight infants were chosen from lists of babies born over several months, preferably within six months of birth. Initial contact with most women was by telephone, although 12 women were also recruited during their hospital stay. Spending time explaining the project and getting to know the

women increased the women's' willingness to participate. Only four women refused, including one whose baby had died, one whose father would not let her participate, one who was too busy, and another who gave no reason.

Interviews were conducted in a minimum of two sessions, lasting four to five hours and often longer (McCracken, 1988). The approach was designed to maximize trust between the researchers and the women. We explained the research objectives in an understandable manner and tried to let the women know that they had important information and observations that might be helpful to others (Marín & Marín, 1991). We tried to help each woman feel comfortable and in control during the interview. Most women preferred to hold the interviews in their homes, when family members were absent, and in Spanish. All interviews were conducted by the authors. In recognition for the women's effort, we took small gifts for the babies and other children and paid the women \$20.

Because the women's upbringing and current circumstances were both likely to affect their behaviors during pregnancy, we talked about their lives in both contexts. The first half of the interview (two to three hours) was an open-ended discussion of the woman's life history, with a particular focus on migration history, household and family composition and well-being, and pregnancy experiences. We followed a memorized interview guide and did not take notes during the interview (Edin, 1993). We took only a tape recorder, business cards, and consent forms. We made time to get to know each other and for the women to bring up issues and concerns of their own. We started the tape recorder only after obtaining permission and establishing rapport. We reassured them that we would not use their names on tape and they gave the recorder little notice after the first few minutes (Laslett & Rapoport, 1975). Initially, assurances of confidentiality put the women at ease, but it was the process of going to their homes, spending several hours with them, talking about issues that really interested them, playing with the children, helping with referrals, or making dinner that, in the end, encouraged them to be forthright.

The second session contained more closed-ended questions, including scales of social support and acculturation (Barrera, 1980; Marín & Marín, 1991), information about the baby's father,

an assessment of the family's socioeconomic circumstances, additional demographic data, and service utilization. The structured questions provided a more systematic method of gaining information that could be interpreted and corroborated within the context of the previous open-ended discussion. Overlap in the first and second sessions allowed us to explore some of the most important material in slightly different ways. Occasionally, additional contacts or visits were made. Information about prenatal care and labor and delivery also was abstracted from medical records, although data were often sketchy or missing.

Analyses were conducted by coding the transcriptions of the first interview, and identifying themes and passages. Data were also quantified where possible and entered into a statistical program for descriptive and analytic purposes. The second interview and medical records data were coded and entered into the statistical program. We wrote a summary of key issues covered in the interview, including overall impressions and observations of the household. These summaries became the basis of "profiles" of each woman's experiences, which helped us to remember the respondent as a person. Analyses involved using the three sources—transcribed interviews, profiles, and statistical summaries—to identify themes and test findings. The quantitative data, while contributing to overall understanding, was not the primary mode of analysis.

## Findings

### *Background: Poverty in Mexico and the United States*

The median age of the women was 24 years. Sixty-six percent were married and seven percent were widowed, separated, or divorced (see Appendix A for a statistical description of the women). A substantial proportion, 27 percent, had never married. The women had an average of two children, far fewer than the average of almost nine children their mothers had. Half of the women said they planned to have no additional children and most others planned to have only one or two more.

Most of the women grew up in poverty. Two-thirds (68 percent) came from rural towns and villages. More than half of the women (56 percent) grew up very poor and twenty percent

remembered going hungry as children. Another 29 percent said their families had a little more money to cover some additional expenses, such as uniforms and books for school. Only 15 percent grew up in families in relatively comfortable economic circumstances.

Survival in Mexico depended, in most cases, on the economic contributions of several members of the household and extended family. Three-quarters of the women lived in close proximity to grandparents, many of whom provided daily child care or meals. A fourth of the women began working before the age of 18 years, including two who worked as domestic servants before the age of ten. Forty percent did not attend school beyond the sixth grade, and only a quarter graduated from the US equivalent of high school.

More than half of the women migrated in late adolescence and early adulthood, arriving in the United States during the 1980s. For most, this was their first US migration and Chicago was the only place they had lived in the United States. Only six came on earlier migrations and only six lived elsewhere in the United States before coming to Chicago.

Half of the women had never returned to Mexico and only five returned annually or biannually. Nonetheless, ties to Mexico and Mexican cultural heritage remained strong. Over half of the women maintained regular communication (either by telephone or letter) with relatives in Mexico, saving money by using relay calls and letters through other US relatives to relatives in Mexico. Only ten percent of the women had no contact at all with families in Mexico. Most continued to use only Spanish in their daily lives. Although they wanted their children to learn English, they also wanted them to maintain Spanish language and Mexican cultural values. Slightly more than half of the women expressed a desire to retire in Mexico, although several commented on how difficult it might be to move so far away from their children.

In Chicago, most women continued to live in poverty. Two-thirds (68 percent) lived below the official poverty line including 22 percent who lived below 50 percent of poverty (Appendix A). The majority (62 percent) of those above poverty were near-poor and had incomes between 100 and 150 percent of poverty. Median monthly income was approximately \$920 (during pregnancy) in-



cluding wages, AFDC checks, food stamps, and other direct financial assistance from family and other sources. (These estimates are high because we included *all* sources of income. We wanted an accurate picture of the amount of financial resources available to the women and their immediate families during their pregnancies. Income of other extended family members in the household was not included because it typically was accounted for separately. In the case of unmarried women with no outside income who were living with their parents, parents' income was used.)

Non-employment among the women was common. Half of the women (51 percent) did not work at least part of the time during their pregnancies and 76 percent did not work at the time of the interview (this number is high in part because a high proportion of the women had infants with health problems associated with low birth weight). Fifteen percent of the babies' fathers were not employed, and another 10 percent were out of touch. The women said that lack of immigration documents, lack of English, and poor job opportunities contributed to difficulties in obtaining jobs.

Turning to perceptions about economic well-being, most women (61 percent) said their families found it very difficult to meet basic monthly expenses, and a few (10 percent) found it impossible. Others (29 percent) reported that they could afford basic expenses of food, housing, clothing, transportation, and baby care items, but they had to plan their consumption very carefully in order to save a little money for emergencies or a few non-essentials (e.g., toys for children). A mother of two (neither was low birth weight) explained when we asked her whether she had enough money for food:

Well, sometimes we can afford meat or sometimes nothing but vegetables. As far as other things, for example, clothes or a toy or something like that, we can't afford them all the time. If there is a little left over money and I don't have to pay something, then we'll buy something simple.

None of the women said her family was financially secure. Many of the women worried and were anxious about their financial situation. As another observed:

The Mexican community suffers a lot. . . . more than anything else it is the worry we have here, above all because of the economic

situation . . . . You make money only to survive, eat and pay the rent. Nothing else.

### *Poverty and Low Birth Weight*

Women having the most difficult time financially also had more problems with their pregnancies. Women who had low birth weight babies expressed considerably more difficulty making ends meet during their pregnancies than those who had normal birth weight infants. For example, a 23 year-old woman with a low birth weight baby lived in a basement apartment with her husband and six people who shared one bedroom. She said she was unable to afford enough food all of the time. Another mother of a low birth weight baby said she was very worried about having enough money. She and her husband were unemployed and undocumented. Another young mother, a 19 year-old woman living in the suburbs alongside a noisy freeway, said she tried to save a little money in a tin can for emergencies. Because her husband worked only four hours a day at a hamburger joint, she said they had to spend all of their money on food. Her mother-in-law used to help them through the bad stretches, but she had recently been laid off her job.

Living below poverty was not statistically associated with having a low birth weight baby, but there was marked tendency in that direction (Appendix B). However, using other indicators, the poorest women were more likely to have low birth weight babies (Appendix B). Of the nine women living below 50 percent of poverty, eight had low birth weight babies ( $p < .05$ ). Women with monthly median incomes of less than \$900 (including all sources) were more likely to have low birth weight babies ( $p < .05$ ). Significantly, women who perceived their economic situation as very precarious were more likely to have low birth weight babies ( $p < .001$ ).

There is other evidence of the relationship between extreme poverty and birth weight. Women who were unable to save money or to send remittances to families in Mexico (a very common practice among immigrant families) were more likely to have low birth weight babies ( $p < .01$  and  $p < .10$  respectively). Finally, women with less than eight years of education were also more likely to have low birth weight babies ( $p < .001$ ). Although these data refer to a small sample and the analyses are bivariate, the

fact that quantitative data consistently agree with the qualitative findings strongly supports the negative impact of *extreme* poverty on birth outcomes.

But the interesting question is *why* does extreme poverty make such a difference in these cases while moderate poverty does not? The lower incidence of low birth weight among the moderately poor suggests that the effects of moderate poverty may be ameliorated or mediated in some way. The higher incidence of low birth weight among the poorest of the women suggests that it may be difficult to overcome the effects of poverty when there are too few resources. We turn now to examining the dynamics of poverty and how some poor immigrant women may avoid the negative impact of poverty on birth weight. Following the suggestions of prior research, in the next sections we examine the roles of formal social services, community based organizations, and family support on birth weight.

**The Role of Formal Social Services.** We found that most social services were not utilized by these families. Only seven of the families received Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and only ten of the women received foodstamps, even though most of the children and some of the adults in the households were eligible. Ironically, women with low birth weight babies were most likely to receive AFDC and food stamps (Appendix C). We found that this is explained by the fact that pregnancy complications brought more of them to the attention of medical providers, who encouraged them to apply for government assistance.

More important sources of government assistance were Medicaid and the Food Supplement Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Most of the women who received Medicaid (41 percent) were enrolled with the assistance of health providers sometime in the course of pregnancy. The others paid for pregnancy care and childbirth with cash (46 percent) or paid through workplace benefits (10 percent) or were unsure how they paid (2 percent). The Medicaid program allowed many women to receive prenatal and birthing care without carrying the large debt that others incurred with the baby's birth. Almost all of the women (81 percent) received WIC coupons but most were enrolled late in pregnancy or upon delivery and, therefore, the program helped

most with infant, rather than maternal nutrition. Many women expressed appreciation for the WIC program, saying that the baby formula made it easier for them to make ends meet.

**The Role of Community-Based Support.** Researchers also point to the potentially important role of community-based organizations, especially in immigrant communities. We asked the women about help they may have received (e.g., financial, nutrition, housing, legal, counseling, or health) from community-based organizations, such as non-profit social service agencies, churches, schools, or neighborhood associations. We found that few had links with community-based social service agencies. Only seven women remembered ever receiving services other than the financial and health services already discussed. Among these, six received counseling (three at health centers, two at schools, and one at a mental health agency); two received legal assistance (non-profit agencies); one child was enrolled in Headstart; and one disabled child utilized transportation to a special school.

Participation in informal community support groups was not common either. Only 33 percent of the women attended church at least once a week, 13 percent attended monthly, and 55 percent attended less than monthly, usually on church-related holidays and festivals. Very few suggested that organized religion played an important role during their pregnancies. One family belonged to an evangelical denomination and their lives were dominated by church activities, but the remainder, while typically religious, were not involved in broader church activities. A few (12 percent) were involved in occasional school activities. Less than seven percent were engaged in any sports, politics, or ethnic organization activities. Even among the women who were involved in activities outside the home prior to pregnancy, many curtailed these activities when they became pregnant. Thus, low participation among the women in community-based organizations may reflect a number of issues (e.g., gender or stage in life cycle) that deserve further investigation.

**The Role of Family Support.** However, most of the women were deeply involved with their families. All but three of the women said family member gave support during their pregnancies. Almost all gathered with family members on a regular basis. Over a third of the women said they received no support of

any kind from friends (including *compadres*). More than half the women said they rarely or never socialized outside of family.

Moreover, our conversations with the women pointed to the key role played by family and friends in helping them make ends meet economically. In Mexico, families survived in the absence of government financial assistance with the help of extended families. To pay for migration, money was saved for the expensive and risky trip up north, usually to be repaid or reciprocated at a later date. In Chicago, reliance on family continued.

The women spoke about in-kind resources, financial assistance, and exchanges. For instance, one woman and her husband were making improvements on a small house owned by her father, who in turn charged them low rent. Her father's help and the small amount of pocket money she earned cooking and selling *tamales*, gave her a more optimistic view of their economic well-being than one would predict based on their income alone. Nine women rented their apartments from relatives (often a partitioned house), although not all received a reduction in rent.

These family support arrangements were often reciprocal. Families got help when they needed it, but they helped others when they were able. A woman (whose low birth weight baby had died) described how she always helped her family:

When I was single, I gave all my money to my father. . . . It was impossible [for him] to support all the little ones. Later, I gave half and kept half and [my husband and I] were able to start saving this January.

Another way that women said they coped financially was through pooling resources and expenses. Most of the women accomplished this by sharing housing with extended family or friends or living close to relatives. As one mother states, "A couple can't live alone [in an apartment] with the expensive rents and no jobs, so we have to live stacked up to be able to pay the rent." Another young mother of two, confiding that she did not eat well during her first pregnancy because of a lack of money, told how she and her husband decided to share an apartment with friends:

[In our own apartment] we had to save on food. We didn't buy anything in order to pay the deposit. After that, we had to repay a \$100 loan. That's how we were, and it was in April that this guy,

who was giving my husband a ride, . . . said, "Why don't you get together and share a place?" And so we rented with two other guys.

Even the women who did not share housing with other family members often lived close enough to share baby-sitting, meals, transportation, and other daily chores. Thus, although one-third of the women lived in nuclear households, and seven percent lived alone with their children, three-quarters of them had family members living within ten minutes of their home, many in the same building, across the street, or next door.

Although these arrangements were often financially necessary, they were sometimes difficult and discordant. Not uncommon was one woman who lived with her husband and his father, recently arrived from Mexico. The father-in-law did not have a job and had no money to help with rent, but the woman wanted him to make some kind of contribution to the household:

I tell [my husband], "If your father was someone else, if he helped you fix up the basement, then I wouldn't want to charge him, but all he does is eat and watch television. Tell your father to give some money for rent."

Many of the women we interviewed played important roles in keeping these shared living arrangements afloat. They cared for their own babies, and also for the children of working family members. They cooked, cleaned, dropped off and picked up children from school, shopped, arranged for one repair or another, transported and accompanied friends and relatives on errands, and took care of households' daily needs. A young woman who lived with her husband, her children, and her sister's family explained how they managed financially:

We go the cheaper stores where they have sales and discounts. And I say to my husband, "Don't worry about me." I don't go out of the house nor do I work, I keep busy with housework. I say to him, "You buy your sweater, jacket and tennis shoes, because you have to work. I will stay at home."

What happens in poor households when family is not available to help? It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of family, especially for women who lack legal immigration documents and speak only Spanish. One young mother described the difficulty

she and her husband experienced when they arrived in Chicago without family support:

When we arrived in Chicago we didn't even know where the airport was or what bus to take to see our cousins. We called and they didn't communicate with us, they had too much work, and were busy, they said they would call later. There were only Americans [around us], no one else. And we hardly ever went out . . . I was afraid of slipping on the ice and being seven months pregnant I couldn't.

Family support extends the limited economic resources of immigrant families, but how does that affect pregnancy and birth weight? There were indications that increased economic capacity through family support helped improve the well-being of pregnant women in several ways.

First, extended family households and families living in close geographic proximity shared cooking and provided food for one another. For example, one woman who said that she and her husband often did not have enough money, said that there was always enough for food because "we cooperate among all of us and although we don't have what we call great nutrition, there is enough." Another woman said that her brother gave her money for food early in her pregnancy:

"What do you eat? Only beans? That won't do your baby any good!" And I told him, "Well, [my husband] doesn't have any work." And he said, "Take this and go buy something to eat and I will eat when [your husband] finds work. Go on and buy fruit."

Second, by pooling resources and sharing housing, the women were able to afford better housing than they could have by themselves. This may have provided more women protection from cold winters and possible infections.

Third, some women were able to quit work or get help with housework when they experienced complications (such as bleeding) during their pregnancies because of the support they received from families. One woman said that her doctor:

told me that I had to quit working and stay home lying down doing nothing. So I quit working at six months. My mother-in-law took care of the older children.

Later, she had a normal birth weight baby, and although it is impossible to say whether quitting work prevented a premature delivery, it surely did not hurt.

Unfortunately, many of the women who experienced pregnancy complications had low birth weight babies even though they may have quit working in the course of pregnancy. But in some cases there were indications that poverty and lack of adequate family support may have delayed some women's decisions to leave work. For example, one woman described the onset of heavy bleeding in her second month of pregnancy. Her factory job required that she clean off large pieces of equipment, attach them to large hooks, and load them on a trailer:

That day I had to hook them because the other [worker] said she couldn't because her hand was hurt. So I had to handle the hook and put the 17 pieces on the trailer. . . . I said to the other *senora*, "Ay, this hurts me." My hips were trembling so much. . . . when I raised up, something burst. . . . I was bleeding and bleeding. . . . [She was taken to the emergency room] The doctor told me to rest for one week and I stayed at home for two days. . . . I returned to the factory and it happened again and then again another time.

At six months gestation, her baby was born. Her mother and siblings gave as much support as they could, but were not able to offer much financial help. With more financial resources to help support her large family, she might have been able to stay home after the first incident and possibly could have prevented a premature birth.

Economic arrangements in immigrant households typically resulted in daily contact among extended family members. For the pregnant women, this meant they received advice from family about how to care for themselves during their pregnancies. When we estimated the amount of advice that the women received during their pregnancies, we found that women who received more advice were more likely to have normal birth weight babies. Of the women who had normal birth weight babies, 17 (89 percent) received some or a lot of advice, while only 2 (11 percent) received little or no advice. Of the women who had LBW babies, only nine (43 percent) received some or a lot of advice, while 12 (57 percent) received little or none ( $p < .001$ ) (Appendix C).



This can be illustrated by a group of particularly extreme cases. We interviewed five women who had what we call "secret pregnancies." They told no one about being pregnant until they "showed" at five or six months or later. In four of these cases, the women were unmarried and were afraid or embarrassed to tell their families. In another case, a woman told her husband but did not tell her sister until she was seven months pregnant—*por pena*—because she was embarrassed to talk about it. Although each of these women eventually joined family members in Chicago, they were very socially isolated compared to other women interviewed. One young woman despaired "because no one knew [about the pregnancy] and I felt very poorly and asked myself 'what am I going to do?'"

Not only did women with secret pregnancies lack advice, they also did not receive prenatal care. Because most women we interviewed located prenatal care through family and friends, those who kept their pregnancies secret did not know where or were hesitant to seek care. All five of the women with secret pregnancies started prenatal care late, including one who did not go at all. One young woman said that the couple whom she lived with at the time "didn't know that I was pregnant. And when I was nine months they noticed. . . . Then, when they knew that I was pregnant, they took me [to the doctor]." Another woman, who began prenatal care at seven months, said she did not go earlier because

nobody knew that I was pregnant. I was alone. And my sisters and brothers didn't notice. . . . When I was seven months pregnant, my sister told me to go to the doctor.

Significantly, four of the five women with secret pregnancies had low birth weight babies.

### Summary and Conclusions

Research on birth weight has pointed to a persistent relationship between poverty and low birth weight. But the impact of poverty on birth weight appears to differ among various groups. Babies of Mexican descent are relatively less likely to be born low birth weight compared to other groups with low incomes. Babies whose mothers were born in Mexico—who are likely to have even

less income—are even less likely to be born low birth weight. It has been suggested that Mexicans have been able to “beat the odds” in part through the support of formal services, community support, and family support. The results of this qualitative study suggest that family support, and to a lesser extent, medical and nutrition services, do make a difference.

Family support appears to have two important effects. First, it mediates the effects of moderate poverty. Economic survival strategies, such as mutual aid, sharing household expenses, and using in-kind resources, “stretch” incomes for these families. Family support plays a particularly important role in nutrition, housing, and physical well-being. Second, “sticking together” economically also means that women are less socially-isolated during their pregnancies. Family members are in a position to provide advice and guidance to the women during their pregnancies. The women receive advice about physical (especially nutritional) and emotional well-being. It is also important to note that the numbers of family members or people who give advice is not nearly as important as the quality of those relationships, including geographic and emotional proximity and available resources.

The potential impact of family support is illustrated clearly in the case of women with secret pregnancies. Women with secret pregnancies did not receive family support. Therefore, they did not receive emotional support during their pregnancies, nor did they receive advice about how to care for themselves in pregnancy. Finally, they did not receive encouragement from family and friends to seek prenatal care. Among those who had secret pregnancies, almost all had low birth weight babies.

Family support, however, does not help all women avoid having low birth weight babies. We find that the effects of more extreme poverty are difficult to overcome. Oakley (1992) observes that “the health-promoting effects of social support cannot cancel the health-damaging effects of poverty” (p.326). We find that this is particularly true for the women who were the poorest.

These results underscore the important role that social service providers can assume in identifying and assisting childbearing women who find themselves in extreme poverty without support from family members. For example, medical social workers, who are increasingly concentrating their efforts on discharge planning,

the back end of health care, could move to the front end where they might play a significant role in prevention. A relatively efficient method of preventing low birth weight among Mexican immigrants might be for social workers to develop a relationship with the women during their *initial* pregnancy screening visit. Although many women do not attend prenatal care visits regularly, most seek a pregnancy test fairly early (Sherraden & Barrera, forthcoming). It is important to develop mechanisms to reach the women who may show up infrequently. For women who are assessed to be vulnerable (the very poor and the socially-isolated), initial interviews could be followed by home visits with community outreach workers. Home visits would further build trust and permit an assessment of the women's situations. Where poverty and social isolation make it difficult to maintain healthy pregnancies, needed services and support can be arranged. Without such efforts, there is little that would bring the most vulnerable women to the attention of service providers until a pregnancy complication occurs.

It is a greater challenge to reach women who do not seek care within the first two trimesters of their pregnancies, especially those with secret pregnancies. Improving access to prenatal care is important, but probably would not attract women who are actively keeping their pregnancies secret. Community-based organizations (such as churches or social service agencies) that provide a variety of outreach and support services to young immigrant women are one possible way to reach women in this situation. Unfortunately, we have seen in this study that many pregnant immigrant women are not linked to community-based organizations. It is important to point out that community-based supports—especially churches—may play a more notable role in the lives of other family members (at different life stages, perhaps) that contribute to the ability of family members to support pregnant women. One way to reach young mothers is to utilize their social networks. In this study, we find that family networks are the principal social contacts for pregnant women. Community-based organizations could use contacts with extended family members in order to reach others. Additional research and outreach efforts are needed to explore ways that these young women are connected to community-based supports and ways that they can be reached successfully.

Among women who are already in contact with the health and social service sectors, it is important for providers to acknowledge and help sustain support that women are receiving from family. For example, during a woman's pregnancy, providers should take into account the possibility—indeed, the likelihood—that family is involved in mediating the impact of poverty on pregnancy. Considerable care should be taken to understand these relationships and to sustain valuable family support.

Social workers should be concerned about the relatively small role played by formal social services in the lives of immigrant women in their child bearing years. Although not statistically associated with differences in birth weights, the availability of nutritional supplements, and prenatal and birthing care took a certain financial burden off of families. But high levels of poverty and low levels of assistance overall suggest the need for greater attention to the basic needs of these families, perhaps especially after their babies are born. The political and cultural circumstances of Mexican immigrants require that policies and programs be given close scrutiny, and adapted to meet particular needs. Unfortunately, in the current US political climate, we cannot be hopeful about increased attention to services for immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants.

Although caution must be taken not to generalize our findings to all Mexican immigrants or to other groups, the relationships that emerge appear to be strong. Research with larger samples is needed to analyze the complex relationships among poverty, family support, and birth weight. Moreover, it is important to distinguish by level of poverty, especially among populations with high proportions living in poverty. Although standard poverty measurements can be useful, they also conceal important information about the economic well-being of certain groups. A more specific assessment of economic well-being may help to unravel the effects of poverty on birth weight and other health and social problems.

In addition, studies are needed that examine how Mexican women continue to cope after their babies' births and how succeeding generations of Mexican Americans cope with poverty and childbearing (Guendelman, et al., 1990). For example, Mexican American infants and children may be at higher risk for health problems, including mortality, during the first year of life because

of poverty conditions (Guendelman, et al., 1995). In addition, we may find that level of family support dwindles in succeeding generations, as acculturation increases. Over generations—as the children grow up in a US urban poverty environment—levels of family support may not have the same mediating impact on poverty.

The findings reported in this paper speak to fundamental issues in social policy—issues that are currently in the nation's agenda: What, if any, is the appropriate role of the state in the life and well-being of the family? It has become fashionable to say that social policy intervention can only interfere with "natural" family strengths and ultimately cause harm. But is this always the case?

The population in this study is characterized by many family strengths and is largely unaffected one way or the other by social policy. Social policies should by all means recognize and build on these strengths. Nonetheless, the poorest are not protected by family support. Families clearly cannot do everything in all circumstances. The results of our study underscore the importance of outreach and support to families who do not have the minimal resources to help themselves.

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## APPENDIX A

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS  
OF MEXICAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN

(n=41)

	Number	Percent
Under 20 years of age	6	14.6
Rural origin	28	68.3
Migrated		
Alone	4	9.8
Under 17 years	8	19.5
Under 20 years	22	53.7
Undocumented	27	65.9
Time in U.S.		
Less than 1 year	7	17.1
Less than 5 years	22	53.7
Years lived in Mexico		
<20 years	22	53.7
<10 years	2	4.9
Never married	11	26.8
Non-high school graduate	31	75.6
Household composition		
Extended <sup>1</sup>	24	58.5
Nuclear	13	31.7
Single	3	7.3
Income under \$900/month	19	46.3
Below poverty	28	68.3
Below 50% of poverty	9	22.0

<sup>1</sup>Households that include members of extended family or friends (usually *compadres*).

# **APPENDIX B** **SOCIOECONOMIC VARIABLES AND BIRTH WEIGHT**

	LBW <sup>1</sup> n=22 (%)	NBW n=19 (%)	N	X2
Currently not employed	77.3	73.7	41	0.07
Schooling <8 years	81.8	36.8	41	8.67***
Below poverty <sup>2</sup>	77.3	57.9	41	1.77
Below 50% of poverty	36.4	5.26	41	5.76*a
Income under \$900/month <sup>3</sup>	63.6	26.3	41	5.71*
Perceived poverty Extremely difficult/difficult	81.8	36.8	41	8.67***a
Never send remittances to Mexico	76.2	47.1	38	3.43#a
Never save money	90.5	52.9	38	6.83***a
Baby's father				
Not employed or unknown <sup>4</sup>	27.8	5.3	37	3.45#a
Undocumented	47.1	23.5	34	2.06

Chi Square probability: # < .10, \* < .05, \*\* < .01, \*\*\* < .001

<sup>a</sup>Chi Square probably is computed without requisite expected cell size.

<sup>1</sup>Under 2500 grams or 5.5 lb.

<sup>2</sup>Includes all sources of income.

<sup>3</sup>Official poverty line for 1992, calculated using all sources of income and number of dependents

## APPENDIX C

FACTORS THAT MEDIATE EFFECTS OF POVERTY  
ON BIRTH WEIGHT

	LBW <sup>1</sup> n=22 (%)	NBW n=19 (%)	N	X2
Formal social services				
No medical coverage	40.9	57.9	41	1.18
No AFDC	68.2	100.0	41	7.29**a
No food stamps	59.1	94.7	41	7.02**a
No counseling	86.4	73.7	41	1.04
Community-based support				
None or occasional church	61.9	50.0	39	0.56
Family support				
Extended family household <sup>2</sup>	68.2	47.4	41	1.82
Less than five social supports utilized <sup>3</sup>	54.6	36.8	41	1.28
Any substance use during pregnancy				
Cigarettes <sup>4</sup>	4.6	11.1	40	0.62
Alcohol <sup>5</sup>	22.7	11.1	40	0.93
Illegal Substance(s) <sup>6</sup>	0.0	0.0	41	—
Little or no advice <sup>7</sup>	57.1	10.5	40	9.53***

Chi Square Probability \* = .05, \*\* = .01, \*\*\* = .001

<sup>a</sup>Chi Square probability is computed without requisite expected cell size.

<sup>1</sup>Under 2500 grams or 5.5 lb.

<sup>2</sup>Households that include members of extended family or friends.

<sup>3</sup>Social supports utilized in the previous month (Barrera, 1980)

<sup>4</sup>Includes infrequent, occasional, or frequent smoking during pregnancy.

<sup>5</sup>Includes infrequent, occasional, or frequent alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

<sup>6</sup>Includes infrequent, occasional, or frequent use of any illegal substance during pregnancy.

<sup>7</sup>Qualitative measure of advice and availability of person during pregnancy.

# Speak of the Devil: Rhetoric in Claims-Making About the Satanic Ritual Abuse Problem

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*This paper uses Toulmin's (1958) scheme to conduct a rhetorical analysis of claims being made in the construction of the satanic ritual abuse of children problem. The analysis reveals that the persistence of these claims over the last fifteen years is the product not of their compelling facts or their effective conclusions, but of their persuasive warrants. These implicit, "self-evident truths" resonate well with recent cultural concerns about the vulnerability of children to abuse, and the satanic menace.*

As an alternative to the traditional perspective that views all social problems as objective realities that generate collective behavior and political action, the constructionist perspective contends that all social problems actually are constituted by collective and political processes (Spector & Kitsuse, 1973). In making that assertion the constructionist perspective redirects the focus of analysis from what the purported social problem is, to the kinds of claims that are being made about it.

Claims are statements, descriptions, allegations and demands that are made by individuals and/or groups to convince others that a particular issue is indeed a social problem. They are made to "assert the existence of some condition, define it as offensive, harmful, and otherwise undesirable . . . publicize the assertions and stimulate controversy and . . . create a public or political issue over the matter" (Spector & Kitsuse, 1987, p. 147). Claims also suggest, even if they do not explicitly state, the particular ways by which a purported social problem can be resolved, redressed, or even eliminated (Schneider, 1985). The language of claims, therefore, must be deliberately, even powerfully, persuasive.

Rhetoric—the study of persuasion—can be used to analyze claims as Best (1987) demonstrated in an insightful examination of the claims that successfully transformed the issue of missing children into an exigent social problem over a decade ago. Similar types of rhetorical analyses have been conducted on the claims made about such social problems as elder abuse (Baumann, 1989), wife abuse (Loeske, 1987), child abuse (Pfohl, 1977), and child custody and support (Coltrane & Hickman, 1992).

This present article seeks to contribute to the sociology of rhetorical work by analyzing the claims being made about what is being defined as an urgent social problem—satanic ritual abuse of children. The article also forges a link between rhetoric and cultural context by locating these claims within a social and historical setting.

### Satanic Ritual Abuse of Children

Claims that covert, diabolic satanic cults are abusing children in ritual ceremonies have been spreading across this country over the last fifteen years. Initially, the abuse was described as sexual in nature. The ceremonies during which the abuse is alleged to occur, however, also include such horrific practices as torture, forced drug ingestion, brainwashing, blood-drinking, cannibalism, and human sacrifices, thus the term “satanic ritual abuse” has come to embrace a melange of sexually, psychologically, and physically abusive acts.

These claims garnered the attention of the media almost immediately. While major newspapers consistently have reported them with some degree of skepticism, smaller local newspapers and the tabloid press have done so with credulity (Victor, 1993). And television has done so with enthusiasm. Satanic ritual abuse of children has become a staple topic of talk shows and even has found its way into primetime programming through made-for-television movies, news magazine reports, and documentaries.

Their newsworthiness and entertainment value aside, the claims about satanic ritual abuse of children are leading to, and simultaneously are the product of, highly publicized investigations, most of them targeting daycare and preschool providers. In fact, between 1983 and 1988 alone, investigations were initiated in

over a hundred communities across the country (Bromley, 1991). These resulted in scores of arrests, long and expensive criminal trials that all too often created irreparable rifts within the communities in question, many convictions, usually draconian prison sentences and, over the last five years or so, many reversals of those convictions upon appeal. In an effort to facilitate the prosecution of these cases, some states have passed bills that specifically criminalize ritualistic acts of any kind within the context of diabolic cults (Hicks, 1991).

The courtroom is not the only arena in which this purported social problem is being addressed. Professionals from a variety of disciplines are attending seminars on satanic ritual abuse of children that are being taught by other professionals as well as by laypersons who identify themselves as experts on the topic (Mulhern, 1991). The treatment of what is described as the devastating psychological effects of satanic ritual abuse for both child and adult survivors is emerging as a speciality for some psychotherapists (Ofshe & Watters, 1994). Dozens of hospital-based inpatient treatment programs are being developed across the country as well, along with a countless number of formal and informal survivor self-help groups, and even a nationally marketed 12-step recovery program (Ryder, 1992).

None of this activity is occurring in the absence of counterclaims. The natural history of the purported social problem of satanic ritual abuse of children is rife with adversarial assertions that all of this activity is evidence of nothing more than an attempt to construct a social problem out of imaginary deviance (Jenkins, 1992; Nathan, 1991; Ofshe & Watters, 1994; Victor, 1993). These counterclaims, however, have been offered essentially by those whose "field of argument," as Toulmin (1958, p. 100) would refer to it, is different than that of the primary claims-makers. Fields of argument not only are distinguished by discipline and profession, but by lines of reasoning; therefore claims that are persuasive within one field of argument are not necessarily so in another. Thus, there has been little dynamic tension between the claims and the counterclaims made about satanic ritual abuse of children as a social problem.

Dynamic tension very well may be predicted for the near future, however, as the findings of the long-awaited Goodman,

Qin, Bottoms, and Shaver (1995) study reach claims-makers. This empirical study investigates the characteristics and sources of over 12,000 allegations of satanic ritual abuse made over the last fifteen years in this country, and concludes that "there was no hard evidence for intergenerational satanic cults that sexually abuse children" (p. 48). This conclusion serves as the foundation upon which this present article builds its analysis.

### Analytic Strategy

The analytic strategy of this article is to follow the lead of Best (1987) by using Toulmin's (1958) scheme to categorize claims in order to reveal their rhetorical structure, as well as to demonstrate the centrality of rhetoric to claims-making in general. In the case of the purported social problem of satanic ritual abuse of children, four major groups historically have acted as claims-makers: psychotherapists, survivor self-help groups, law enforcement professionals, and religious fundamentalists (deYoung, 1994; Jenkins & Maier-Katkin, 1992; Victor, 1994). The data base for this article, then, is comprised of the published and unpublished materials put out by these claims-makers, and includes scholarly journal articles, books, official reports, papers presented at conferences, and biographical and autobiographical accounts written about or by alleged survivors of satanic ritual abuse.

### Rhetorical Analysis of Claims

Toulmin (1958) asserts that every argument has a basic structure. That structure consists of the conclusions, the facts or data that can be appealed to as the grounds of the conclusions, and the warrants that justify drawing the conclusions from the grounds.

#### *Grounds*

Facts and data comprise the grounds of any argument. Although they, themselves, are socially constructed (Best, 1989), they serve as the foundation upon which the argument is based, and can be appealed to whenever the argument's conclusions are called into question (Toulmin, 1958). There are three kinds of grounds statements being made by claims-makers in their active construction of satanic ritual abuse of children as a social problem: definitions, typifying examples, and numeric estimates.

*Definitions.* The most basic task of claims-making is to define the problem at hand. A definition serves the dual function of establishing a topic's domain and offering an orientation towards it (Best, 1987).

The immediate concern of claims-makers was to distinguish satanic ritual abuse of children from other, more prosaic, forms of child abuse to which the culture reluctantly had become sensitized during the 1970's and early 1980's (Olafson, Corwin, & Summit, 1993). In creating this new domain of threats to children, claims-makers tended to structure their definitions around the unique features of satanic ritual abuse: the horrific acts and their cultic context.

Kelley's (1989) definition is prototypic of those that focus on the acts. She defines satanic ritual abuse as "repetitive and systematic sexual, physical and psychological abuse of children by adults as part of cult or satanic worship" (p. 503). She further states that the abuse may involve such acts as "ingestion of human excrement, semen or blood; ceremonial killing of animals; threats of harm from supernatural powers; ingestion of drugs or magic potions; and use of satanic rituals, songs, chants, or symbols" (p. 503). Other definitions focus more on the cultic context of the acts. Young, Sachs, Braun, and Watkins (1991) define satanic ritual abuse of children as that which occurs within "intrafamilial, transgenerational groups that engage in explicit satanic worship which includes the following criminal practices: ritual torture, sacrificial murder, deviant sexual activity, and ceremonial cannibalism" (p. 182).

After fifteen years of active construction of this social problem, there still is no consensus definition of satanic ritual abuse of children (Lloyd, 1992). There is a shared sense of the sort of problem it is, however, that is revealed in the orientation statements made by claims-makers. In these statements, the problem of satanic ritual abuse of children is tantamount to evil, thus its threat is not just to children, but to society as a whole (Feldman, 1993; Friesen, 1992; Raschke, 1990; Sinason, 1994). This point is strongly made by Ryder (1992):

There is a concern not only about what these people [satanic cultists] are doing behind closed doors, in basements or attics, or out in the



woods at two o'clock in the morning, but about the evil stemming from these groups weaving itself into the fabric of society in broad daylight. (p. iv)

*Typifying Examples.* Orientation statements such as that are bolstered by what Johnson (1989) refers to as "horror stories." These typifying examples draw attention to the alleged problem, shape the perception of it and, in the case of satanic ritual abuse of children, are so emotionally evocative that they also detract attention from any skeptical counterclaims. A first-person account, published in a popular magazine by an adult who identifies herself as a survivor, is an example: "I was forced to watch as they killed my baby sister by decapitation in a ritual sacrifice. The sacrifice was followed by a communion ritual, during which human flesh and blood were consumed" (Rose, 1993, p. 42).

First-person accounts are not the only way in which typifying examples are presented. Most of the survivor self-help groups disseminate lists of the types of ghastly acts that are included under the rubric of satanic ritual abuse of children. VOICES in Action (1991), as an example, lists 36 satanic cults rituals involving children, any one a horror story in and of itself. The list includes: necrophilia, isolation in cages or caskets, application of electrical charges, surgical removal of breast nipples, and forced childbirth for young girls chosen by the cult to be "breeders" of babies for human sacrifices.

Clinical case studies also underscore the horror of satanic ritual abuse, but often add the dimension of the initial incredulity of the treating professional. Feldman (1993) illustrates this in a case study of her treatment of an adult survivor:

Barbara's telling me about being buried alive with snakes and left alone all night pushed me to look at my own powers of denial. These things were simply too strange and horrible to accept. I didn't want to believe that anyone could treat a small child in that way. My mind was like software unable to process information that had never been part of the program. (p. 48)

Adding the dimension of initial incredulity is an interesting and effective rhetorical strategy. It creates a sympathetic alliance with disbelievers, and resolves through example some of the dissonance they may be experiencing between knowing that there

is such a thing as child abuse, yet not wanting to believe that it is being perpetrated in such a terrible way by satanic cultists.

*Numeric Estimates.* Horror stories give life to the problem of satanic ritual abuse of children, and numeric estimates give it dimension. Numbers should constitute a problem for claims-makers; those that are bandied about vary widely and are wholly unsubstantiated. Yet this seems only to lend support to claims-makers' assertions that the satanic ritual abuse of children is a social problem like no other—a "perfectly hidden evil" (Summit, 1994, p. 399) that continuously defies any real attempts to objectively assess it.

Estimates of the number of diabolic satanic cults in this country, and of the number of practicing cultists, usually are taken by claims-makers from the anti-cult literature put out by religious publishing houses. These vary widely from 500 to 8,000 satanic cults nationwide, with from 100,000 to over a million members (Brennan, 1989; Dumont & Altesman, 1989; Schwarz & Empey, 1988).

Estimates of the number of children who have been ritually abused are even less specific. Claims-makers insist that the lack of a centralized data collection system, the poor training of psychotherapists in diagnosing satanic ritual abuse and of law enforcement officers in investigating it, the trauma suffered by survivors that hinders convincing disclosures and even precludes their coming forward in the first place, and the widespread cultural denial that such a problem even exists, all conspire to frustrate efforts to determine just how many children have been ritually abused (Cozolino, 1989; Gould, 1992; Kelley, 1989; Rogers, 1992). Some claims-makers, however, guesstimate that there have been tens of thousands of victims over the last several decades in this country alone (DeMause, 1994; Hammond, 1992). In contrast, many others finesse the estimation problem by insisting that numbers become meaningless in the face of the horrific nature of the abuse. In the words of Braun (1988): "If even 10% of this stuff is true, then we're in big trouble."

While there is some disagreement among claims-makers as to numeric estimates of the problem, there is a widespread consensus that the problem is growing. Satanic ritual abuse of children is described as a national epidemic "that is growing faster than

AIDS" (Raschke, 1990, p. 56), and as "the most serious threat to children and to society that we must face in our lifetime" (Office of Criminal Justice Planning, State of California, 1990, p. 39). Even pleas for restraint in the face of this purported social problem carry the intimation that it is growing. Braun (1992) warns:

I caution people against panic. If there truly is an international organization [of satanic cults], it has been around longer than we have. If it's running not only our society, but the world economy, then it has been doing it for a long time and neither you nor I are going to be able to change it.

### *Warrants*

Warrants are statements that bridge the gap between grounds and conclusions, thus legitimizing demands for action (Toulmin, 1958). Implicit in nature, they usually are offered as self-evident truths that require little if any discussion, and no debate. It is in the warrants that the values of claims-makers become most evident, and these values, in turn, can be used as resources by the claims-makers in the ongoing construction of a social problem (Spector & Kitsuse, 1973). The implicit nature of warrants renders them somewhat difficult to analyze, but some overlapping value themes emerge from a careful reading of the claims being made about satanic ritual abuse of children.

*Value of Children.* Claims-makers allege that the very characteristics which make children so sentimentally valuable in this culture—their purity and innocence—also makes them desirable to diabolic satanic cults. The blood and the bodies of young children are described as filled with the vibrant life energy that cultists must appropriate, through the ceremonial process of ritual abuse, in their quest for personal power (Gould, 1992; Hudson, 1991; Kahaner, 1988; Katchen & Sackheim, 1992; MARC, 1991). That claims-makers also insist that many of the children who are procured for ritual abuse by cultists are "throw-aways" from violent or neglecting families, orphans, patients in psychiatric hospitals, and commodities sold by their avaricious parents (Coleman, 1994; Larson, 1989; Michaelson, 1989; Schwarz & Empey, 1988), only underscores the implicit warrant that well-protected and well cared for children are this culture's most valuable resource.

And they also are this culture's future. That the experience of satanic ritual abuse renders children incapable of functioning well in this post-modern culture is emphasized often by claims-makers. Gould (1992), for example, list dozens of behavioral, emotional, and physical sequelae of satanic ritual abuse, any one of which very well might functionally incapacitate a child for most of his or her life. The list includes debilitating phobias, violent behavior, severe learning disorders, suicidal ideation and behavior, and chronic psychosomatic illnesses. The threat that satanic ritual abuse poses to the future also is emphasized by the dire prognosis given to victimized children. On this point Hudson (1994, p. 75) states, "Whereas I used to think two or three years of therapy would suffice for ritually abused children in most cases, I now believe it might take a lifetime."

*Value of Believing the Victim.* Claims-makers often create a sociohistorical context for their claims by reminding their audience that in not too recent history the allegations of victims of more common and prosaic forms of child abuse, especially sexual abuse, were heard with skepticism, at best, and not believed at worst. Victims, consequently, were deprived of the opportunity to express their pain and, ultimately, to heal. This conspiracy of silence, as Herman (1992) refers to it, disturbingly linked otherwise well-meaning people with perpetrators of child abuse, a link that in the case of satanic ritual abuse can be broken, according to claims-makers, if the value of believing the victim is stressed. Sinason (1994, p. 4-5) states that:

[Satanic ritual abuse victims] share a "double trauma." Like many others they have been victims of sexual, emotional and physical abuse . . . However, the secondary trauma is often a harder one. With a few notable exceptions, nobody can bear to believe the real nature of what these survivors have experienced . . . (O)ur patients suffer from societal disbelief.

*Value of Social Order.* Claims-makers allege that the satanic ritual abuse of children is inextricably entwined with a number of "evils" that threaten the social order. For example, the uses of ritually abused children in pornography produced and sold by the cults, and in prostitution, is described by many claims-makers (Coleman, 1994; Kaye & Klein, 1987; Lundberg-Love, 1988).

Some claims-makers, however, are beginning to describe a more insidious threat to social order and stability that is posed by satanic ritual abuse of children. Because these children supposedly are thoroughly indoctrinated into satanic cults practices and ideology, they are described as posing a significant threat to society at large during their adulthood (Braun, 1992; Kaye & Klein, 1987; Lundberg-Love, 1988; Ryder, 1992). Hammond (1992) makes this point most forcefully when he insists that the purpose of satanic ritual abuse of children is to "create tens of thousands of mental robots who will do pornography, prostitution, smuggle drugs, engage in international arms smuggling. Eventually those at the top of the satanic cult want to create a satanic order that will rule the world."

*Value of Vigilance.* Claims-makers explain that children have been ritually abused for decades in this country because satanic cultists are otherwise respectable members of society. Few people, therefore, unless they are extraordinarily vigilant, would even suspect that such horrific acts could be conducted by those who otherwise live such regular, even exemplary, lives. This banality of evil claim is illustrated by Braun's (1992) "Rule of P's" that describes the real identities of many secret satanic cultists: physicians, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, principals and teachers, pallbearers (undertakers), public workers, police, politicians and judges, priests and clergies from all religions.

Particular vigilance in regards to daycare and preschool personnel started being stressed by claims-makers during the infamous McMartin Preschool case in which teachers were accused of sexually abusing over the years hundreds of children who had been entrusted to their care. The satanic overtones of this case were heard again and again in the dozens of daycare/preschool cases that followed over the years (Hollingsworth, 1986; Manshel, 1990; Waterman, Kelly, Oliveri, & McCord, 1993). In testimony before Congress, the social worker responsible for interviewing most of the children in the McMartin case warned:

I believe we're dealing with an organized operation of child predators designed to prevent detection. The preschool, in such a case, serves as a ruse for a larger, unthinkable network of crimes against children. If such an operation involves child pornography or selling of children, as is frequently alleged, it may have greater financial,

legal and community resources at its disposal than those attempting to expose it. ("McMartin Case," 1984)

*Value of the Spiritual Order.* With the notable exception of religious fundamentalists who have been active claims-makers over the last fifteen years, most claims-makers have been careful not to express unabashedly sectarian views about satanic ritual abuse of children. Satan, of course, is a powerful metaphor for evil in a Judeo-Christian culture (Russell, 1988), and satanic ritual abuse is an irresistible metaphor for a heretical force aimed at the very spiritual foundation of society. Yet the value of preserving and protecting that spiritual foundation is only an oblique theme that runs through many claims.

Satanic cults rituals, for example, often are described as inversions of sacred Christian rituals (Hill & Goodwin, 1989; McShane, 1993; Smith & Pazder, 1980), and ritual abuse is depicted as having a devastating impact on the spiritual development of the child (Gould, 1992; Hudson, 1994; Young, 1992). Many claims-makers also assert that the primary goal of diabolic satanic cults is to dominate the world, thereby replacing a Judeo-Christian spiritual order with what Mollon (1994, p. 140) describes as "an alternative world of permissiveness, power and magic—constructed of lies and asserted as an alternative to the laws of 'God the Father.'"

### *Conclusions*

In Toulmin's (1958) scheme for analyzing the structure of an argument, conclusions are the calls for action that collectively comprise the claims-makers' agenda for redressing, resolving, or even eliminating the problem at hand. In regards to the problem of satanic ritual abuse of children, these calls are directed towards a social audience composed of professionals, laypersons and children, and are embodied in fifteen years of activity on the parts of claims-makers.

The first call is for awareness. As a constructed social problem, satanic ritual abuse of children has a unique feature that makes attempts to bring it into public awareness particularly problematic. According to claims-makers, it is and has been for decades a hidden social problem, kept from public view by conspiratorial forces. Bringing it into public awareness, then, entails some degree of physical risk for claims-makers (Hammond, 1992; Mollon,

1994), and psychic risks for the social audience which must work through its own incredulity and denial to come to the realization that such a threat exists to children. Despite these alleged risks, or perhaps because of them, claims-makers have been quite successful in using such diverse media as film, television, books, as well as professional and community seminars to raise public awareness of their claims (Mulhern, 1991; Victor, 1993).

Claims-makers also call for prevention, however this conclusion is not without its own problem: the typifying examples offered in the construction of this social problem preclude any real possibility of prevention. If children are born into satanic cults, kidnapped or otherwise forcefully procured for the purpose of ritual abuse (Coleman, 1994; Young, Sachs, Braun, & Watkins, 1991), then little can be done to prevent their victimization. Claims-makers, therefore, have aimed prevention efforts at certain features of the popular culture that, in their opinion, insidiously weaken the values of the individual, and of the culture at large, thus rendering both susceptible to satanic cult influences. Heavy metal music, fantasy role-playing games, horror films, occult literature, "new age" religions and personal growth movements all have been targeted by claims-makers over the years (Larson, 1989; Mendenhall, 1990; Raschke, 1990; Sinason, 1994). Such prevention efforts occasionally, and probably unintentionally, have spurred efforts in some communities to censor certain books and films, especially in public school settings, and have been the bases of civil suits against fantasy role-playing games manufacturers, and even against heavy metal rock groups for influencing young listeners, through lyrics or record jacket art, to commit antisocial, illegal, or self-injurious acts (Richardson, 1991; Victor, 1993).

The final call is for the enactment of social control policies, and it is in the arena of the law that claims-makers have been most successful in bringing about changes. By defining and typifying this alleged social problem in the most horrific of terms, they have been able to turn satanic ritual abuse of children into what Nelson (1984, p. 27) refers to as a "valence issue," one that elicits "a strong, fairly uniform emotional response." As a consequence, many states across the country have revised their existing criminal statutes, or passed new laws, that specifically prohibit and heavily penalize ritual abuse.

But this call for social control is not without its problems. Religious beliefs, no matter how distasteful, are constitutionally protected (*U.S. v. Ballard*, 1944), therefore these new laws cannot specifically criminalize the practice of satanism. In order to protect children, however, the laws prohibit their abuse within the much broader context of *any* ceremony, rite, initiation, performance or practice. This potentially invites the law to overreach into all religious and spiritual belief systems (Lanning, 1992). Further, in an effort to target what claims-makers insist are the ceremonial acts that attend the ritual abuse of children, these laws also criminalize mutilation, dismemberment, torture, and human sacrifice—acts that already are prohibited by extant criminal and child protection laws (Ogloff & Pfeifer, 1992). While claims-makers' urgent press for new legislation responds to the nature of the social problem they have constructed, such broadly written and reiterative new laws end up having more symbolic than utilitarian value (de-Young, 1994).

### Discussion

The use of Toulmin's (1958) scheme for categorizing claims reveals some interesting features about the problem of satanic ritual abuse of children. Its grounds, that is, the facts and the data that support it, are weak, contradictory, unsubstantiated, and uncorroborated by external evidence (Goodman, Qin, Bottoms, & Shaver, 1995; Hicks, 1991; Lanning, 1992). Its conclusions appear unimaginative and ineffectual in the face of what claims-makers are describing as such an urgent social problem (deYoung, 1995; Ofshe & Watters, 1994). Commonsense would predict that the claims being made about satanic ritual abuse of children would not be particularly persuasive, and that the problem would have only a brief natural history in what increasingly has become a competitive social problems marketplace (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988).

Commonsense, however, very well may not recognize that it is a resonance between warrants, those implicit and "self-evident truths" offered by claims-makers, and prevailing cultural concerns that largely accounts for the persuasiveness, and the persistence, of claims about satanic ritual abuse of children. A



necessarily brief examination of two prevailing cultural concerns will frame this discussion about the link between rhetoric and cultural context.

### *Cultural Concern About Vulnerable Children*

Over the decades since the turn of the century, children increasingly have been seen as innocent and in need of protection. No longer economically useful, they have become sentimentally valuable (Zelizer, 1985). With that ideological shift in attitudes about children, the family was idealized as the safe haven where the task of socialization is lovingly carried out. Over recent years, however, some previously ignored and ugly realities of family life—incest, physical abuse, emotional neglect—were being exposed, and the family was being redefined as a potentially dangerous place for children. Best (1990) notes that when such a cultural concern about the vulnerability of children to abuse within their own families increases, an appeal to the value of children becomes a convincing warrant in any kind of claims-making activity, satanic ritual abuse certainly no exception.

This cultural concern has intensified over recent years with the conversion of traditional family functions into contractually provided services. This conversion is the result of the strain between what Bromley and Busching (1991) term covenantal and contractual social relations, that is, between family and economy. Changes in the family, most particularly in the number of dual-career families, are contracting covenantal relations and expanding contractual relations, with the result that the delicate and crucial task of socializing children and inculcating them with morals and values increasingly is being reduced to the terms of contracts made by parents with such agents as daycare and preschool providers, babysitters, and teachers. This transformation not only increases the persuasiveness of any claims-makers' appeal to the value of children, but also resonates well with the warrant about the value of vigilance. That warrant, incidentally, is emphatically stressed by claims-makers in the case of the satanic ritual abuse of children problem, and legitimizes their calls for awareness and increased social control as well.

Those same claims-makers also appeal to the value of believing the victim, a warrant that has become more persuasive over

recent years with the growing cultural concern about the link between child abuse and trauma. That link, however, was not forged until attitudes about the believability of abuse allegations, and about the credibility of victims as witnesses to their own experiences, had been transformed (Herman, 1992). As the culture gained more experience in listening to and believing the victims of other, more prosaic, forms of child abuse, there was an increased readiness to do the same with claims about satanic ritual abuse (deYoung, 1993; Nathan, 1991).

### *Cultural Concern About a Satanic Menace*

At the same time that a cultural concern about the vulnerability of children to abuse was emerging, so was another about the menace to society posed by satanism. While there is historical evidence of the existence of groups covertly organized around the worship of Satan (Russell, 1988), most modern images of satanism have come from pulp fiction and horror films. But over the last fifteen years or so, satanism not only has come to be regarded as real, but as threatening to both the social and the spiritual order.

Religious fundamentalism has played a major role in that transformation (Jenkins & Maier-Katkin, 1992; Victor, 1994). Recently distinguished by its vast infrastructure of television and radio programs, publications, audio and video tapes, the messages of religious fundamentalism reach a wide and receptive audience. Primary to fundamentalist doctrine is the assertion that Satan exercises a real and evil power in this world that threatens the spiritual order. The wide array of social problems and ills that plague the culture are put in evidence of that power, as is the rise of the occult and of New Age religions. In regards to that latter piece of evidence, Jenkins and Maier-Katkin (1992) write: "For the fundamentalists of the last two decades, New Age and mystical movements have been the Devil's Trojan Horse in the subversion of America, a means to introduce the gullible young to anti-Christian concepts and practices" (p. 63).

Such purported widespread evidence of Satan's power further supports another central tenet of fundamentalist belief: that a return to traditional spiritual values is the only antidote to Satan's power. Such a moral crusade necessarily secularizes fundamentalist beliefs and further extends the authority of religious

leaders into the public realm. As Jenkins and Maier-Katkin (1992) point out, "A campaign against 'satanism' would in reality be a sweeping endeavor to remold American social life on the lines advocated by fundamentalists and extreme conservatives" (p. 65).

All of this certainly creates an engendering context for claims about satanic ritual abuse of children. Not only does it provide the frame of reference for interpreting the claims, but it also makes the claims believable as the most evil example of Satan's influence in the world. The warrant about the value of the spiritual order becomes powerfully persuasive under these conditions, as do the claims-makers' calls for prevention efforts aimed at restoring traditional spiritual values.

The warrant about the value of social order also is convincing because it resonates with another, related cultural concern about the link between satanism and crime. Through the interchangeable use of the terms "occult" and "satanic," such crimes as grave desecration, animal mutilation, vandalism, kidnapping, and even some types of murder, were linked to the practices of satanic cults (Lanning, 1992; Richardson, 1991). Claims about satanic ritual abuse of children with all of its attendant criminal practices became plausible in this context, and claims-makers' warrant about the value of social order became persuasive in the light of its resonance with this cultural concern.

### Summary

This paper uses Toulmin's (1958) scheme to conduct a rhetorical analysis of claims being made in the construction of the satanic ritual abuse of children problem. The analysis reveals that the persistence of these claims over the last fifteen years is the product not of their compelling facts or their effective conclusions, but of their persuasive warrants. These implicit, "self-evident truths" resonate well with recent cultural concerns about the vulnerability of children to abuse, and the satanic cult menace.

Best, whose rhetorical analysis of claims made in the construction of the missing children problem guided the analysis of this paper, raises a disturbing question about the public opinion and policy consequences of social problems constructed around the image of threatened children:

A society which is mobilized to keep child molesters, kidnappers, and satanists away from innocent children is not necessarily prepared to protect children from ignorance, poverty, and ill health. Inevitably, some campaigns succeed in the social problems marketplace. Whether the most significant issues come to the fore is another question. (1990, p. 188)

After fifteen years of the active construction of satanic ritual abuse of children as a social problem, that question has yet to be answered.

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# Factors in Length of Foster Care: Worker Activities and Parent-Child Visitation

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*This is an exploratory case study investigating factors potentially related to length of foster care placements in a small western state. Findings of earlier researchers are supported. More frequent visits by natural parents are associated with shorter foster care placements.*

## Introduction

The prolonged placement of children in foster care has been a longstanding concern of child welfare professionals, evidenced by the accumulation of a substantial body of research following Maas and Engler's (1959) landmark study of "foster care drift." The relationship between length of time in foster care and likelihood of termination prior to the attainment of majority age has been well documented (Stein, Gambrill, & Wiltse, 1978).

Investigators have found that visitation between many natural parents and their children in care is infrequent (Fanshel & Shinn, 1978; Gruber, 1978; Mech, 1985), contributing to prolonged foster care for children whose parents cease significant involvement in their lives. In addition, location of parent-child visits



(Hess, 1988, 1987) and the role of the social worker in supporting visitation (Horejsi, Bertsche, & Clark, 1981; Proch & Howard, 1986) have been identified as variables warranting further study as they relate to visitation and duration of care.

Traditionally, child welfare agencies have focused on providing services to the child and the foster parent, while paying little attention to the natural parent's needs and problems (Fanshel & Shinn, 1978; Gruber, 1978). Also, researchers have found that the duration of care is related to the context and the frequency of social worker contact with the child's parents (Benedict & White, 1991; Gibson, Tracy & DeBord, 1984; Turner, 1984).

The exploratory case study reported here involved an investigation of factors potentially related to length of foster care placements in an urban area of a small, western state. Of particular interest to researchers were the efforts made by social workers to promote parent-child visitation, including direct contacts with the natural parents. While some child welfare practitioners have discussed these variables, few empirical studies have been conducted to clarify their importance for the timely termination of foster care.

## Review of Literature

### *Visitation Frequency*

Fanshel and Shinn (1978) in a longitudinal study of 624 children entering foster care in New York City found that most children were visited infrequently by their parents throughout their placement and that the rate of visitation declined dramatically as the length of time in foster care increased. Other research findings offer additional evidence of a strong, inverse relationship between visitation frequency and the duration of placement (Aldgate, 1980; Lawder, Poulin & Andrews, 1985; Mech, 1985; Milner, 1987; Seaberg & Tolley, 1986).

Fanshel (1977) noted that the frequency of the social worker's contact with the child's parents was associated with the frequency of visitation and emphasized the need for increased worker-parent contact. Other researchers pointed to the need for workers to systematically promote visitation (Horejsi, et al., 1981). Proch and Howard (1986) found that when parental visitation was encouraged by social workers and specific schedules for visitation were established, parents tended to visit regularly.

### *Visitation Location*

Parent-child visitation while a child is in foster care helps to preserve and strengthen the bond between the child and his or her family (Fanshel & Shinn, 1978; Hess, 1982). However, agency policies frequently work against the goal of frequent visitation by restricting visits to the agency office during normal business hours (Parry, 1975). In addition, worker practices often result in natural parents bearing the responsibility for initiating contact, effectively discouraging visitation (Horejsi, et al., 1981).

Stein, et al. (1978) suggested that workers vary the location of visitation in the belief that visits confined to the artificial environment of an agency office do not adequately promote spontaneous and natural interaction between parent and child. Additionally, visitation outside the agency setting preserves the child's sense of belonging in his neighborhood and community (Millham, Bullock, Hosie, and Haak, 1986).

### *Social Worker Activity*

Research findings indicate that level of social worker contact with parents is related to the likelihood of frequent visitation (Fanshel & Shinn, 1978; Proch & Howard, 1986). Also, the types of roles performed by the social worker and his/her efforts to systematically promote visitation are related to frequency of parent-child contacts.

In tracking the frequency of social worker contacts, Shapiro (1976) noted that social workers had monthly contact with either the child or the parent in 49 percent of cases where children left foster care in the first year of placement. Jones, Neuman and Shyne (1976) identified the relationship between the parent and the social worker as the most important predictor variable of reduced length of stay in care and the achievement of reunification. Similarly, Boyd's (1979) pilot project, based on the premise that frequent worker-parent contact would reduce the time a child spends in care, resulted in two-thirds reduction in the length of time children spent in placements.

### *Methodology*

Researchers examined the relationships among a child's length of stay in foster care, the frequency and setting of parental

visitation, and social worker activity directed toward solving problems, promoting visitation and achieving family reunification. The study involved a sample of 41 closed case records of children under the age of 10 years. These clients had been in the custody of the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Las Vegas District Office, and had been reunited with a parent after six or more months in out-of-home care. Thirty-one children had been placed in family foster homes and the remaining 10 children had been placed with relatives. The sample was drawn from a computerized DCFS listing of the 91 cases which were closed between June, 1990 and June, 1991.

Quantitative data were gathered on the following demographic variables: child's age at time of placement, mother's age, father's age, child's gender, ethnicity and special education classification, family income, parents' marital status, and parental problems identified at placement. Placement related variables included time in care, number of placement changes, type of placement, reason for placement, frequency of visitation, and location of visits. Social worker activity was assessed with three variables: frequency of contact with parents, evidence of efforts to promote visitation, and evidence of problem-solving interactions with parents.

The researchers calculated the average monthly occurrence of parental visits for each individual case over the length of time the child was in care. Since the average length of stay for a child in foster care in the state is approximately 20 months, the sample was divided into two groups for the purpose of comparison: those in care less than 20 months and those in care 20 months or more. Data for the 31 cases where a child was in a foster home were used for statistical analysis for all visitation related variables. The variable measuring worker contact with parents is included in the analysis of the entire sample of 41 cases.

## Findings

### *Demographics*

The final sample included 26 males (63.4%) and 15 females (36.6%). Seventeen of the children involved were white (41.5%) and 24 were minority children (58.5%). The average age at placement was 2.5 years (2.1 years for minority children and 3.09 years

for non-minority children). Minority children remained in care an average of 33.67 months as compared to 17.89 months for non-minority children. They experienced 1.6 placement changes, compared to 1.35 for non-minority children, and had more frequent changes of social workers (2.6 as compared to 1.9).

The category of minority children represents collapsed data for 21 Black, one Hispanic and two Asian American children. Overall, minorities constitute 25.1% of the population of Las Vegas, Nevada, with 9.5% Black and 11.2% Hispanic (Census of Population and Housing, 1990).

The average age of the mothers of the children in the sample was 25.5 years and fathers averaged 30.89 years of age. White parents reported slightly lower rates on the parental problems identified at the time of placement (1.882 versus 2.292). Table 1 reports more detailed information regarding the incidence of parental problems as well as data on income and marital status differences.

#### *Frequency and Location of Parent/Child Visitation*

Children in the sample received an average of .759 visits per month ( $s=.458$ ). When the groups are divided by length of stay, those in care less than 20 months received 1.02 visits per month while those in care over 20 months received 0.51 visits per month ( $t=3.70$ ;  $p<.001$ ), suggesting that more frequent parental visits are associated with shorter placements.

When the location of parent-child visits is considered in relation to length of stay in care, a statistically significant difference between the comparison groups is found for visitation frequency outside the agency office. Children in care over 20 months were less likely to have received visits in a setting outside the agency office ( $t=4.01$ ;  $p<.001$ ).

#### *Social Work/Parent Contacts*

Parents of the children in the sample had an average of 2.008 contacts per month with their child's social worker ( $s=1.061$ ). When the cases were divided by length of stay, the differences between the groups were statistically significant ( $t=3.13$ ;  $p<.003$ ). Parents of children in care for longer periods have less contact with their child's social worker (1.55 contacts per month) than those who experience shorter placements (2.49 contacts per month).

Table 1

*Parental Income, Marital Status and Type of Identified Problem, by Ethnicity (N=41)*

	Total	Nonminority	Minority
<i>Income Source**</i>			
Public Assistance	5 (12.2%)	0	5
Employment	21 (51.2%)	12	9
Unemployed	15 (36.6%)	5	10
<i>Marital Status</i>			
Married	18 (43.9%)	16	2
Separated	2 (4.9%)	0	2
Never Married	21 (51.2%)	1	20
<i>Parental Problem</i>			
Substance Abuse	32 (78.0%)	12	20
Economic	32 (78.0%)	8	24
Mental Illness	1 (2.4%)	0	1
Marital Conflict	20 (48.8%)	12	8
Physical Illness	3 (7.3%)	1	2

\*\*Income was reduced to the nominal categories used above in order to better illustrate the frequency of households with parents who were unemployed or on public assistance.

Further analysis indicates that social worker-parent contact appears strongly related to the occurrence of parental visitation during a child's out-of-home placement ( $r=.8395$ ;  $r^2=70.48$ ;  $p<.001$ ).

#### *Social Work Activity*

Differences were found between the two sub-samples with respect to specific efforts by the social worker to encourage visitation ( $t=2.61$ ;  $p<.019$ ). Although the frequency of efforts to encourage visitation is minimal overall, it occurs far less when children are in care for longer periods (.428 efforts per month as compared to .135 efforts per month in placements over 20 months).

An analysis of social worker-parent problem solving interactions did not reveal statistically significant differences between the two groups ( $t=1.54$ ;  $p < .135$ ).

### *Services to Minority Children*

Minority children have fewer parental visits (an average of 14.35 compared with 17.71 for non-minority children as noted in Table 2). Minority children were more likely to come from single parent homes ( $X^2=23.892$ ;  $p < .000$ ) where economic strain was an identified problem ( $X^2=16.279$ ;  $p < .0001$ ). Their parents are also more likely to be unemployed or on public assistance ( $X^2=4.361$ ;  $p < .037$ ).

Minority and non-minority cases were compared on social worker activity variables. Significant differences emerged for frequency of the social worker's contact with parents, efforts to solve problems, and efforts to utilize less restrictive visitation settings as noted in Table 2.

The results indicate that the two groups represent two different populations which appear to be served in a distinctly different manner in relation to the variables under study.

### Discussion and Recommendations

This study supports the findings of earlier researchers indicating that more frequent parent-child visitation is associated with shorter periods of placement. It also supports the finding that increased social worker contact with parents of children in care is associated with more frequent parental visitation and ultimately with a shorter length of stay. Differences were found in the level of effort put forth by workers to encourage visitation and to utilize visit locations other than the agency office when children remained in care 20 months or more. Overall, indications of efforts to encourage visits and to engage in problem-solving with parents were infrequent.

The majority of the children in the sample came into care due to neglect. Problems with substance abuse and economic strain were prevalent. One-half of the parents were unemployed or receiving public assistance and slightly over one-half were single parents. Development of effective outreach and prevention programs to serve this population is essential; broad social programs

Table 2

*Mean Values and t-Tests for Visitation-Related Variables per Month, by Ethnicity \*\**

	Nonminority (N=17)		Minority (N=24)
	<i>Mean Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Mean Std. Dev.</i>	<i>t score Prob.</i>
Visits	1.061 .421	.509 .320	t=5.04 p <.000
Contacts	2.915 .762	1.365 .719	t=6.56 p <.000
Problem Solving	.693 .313	.267 .205	t=4.91 p <.000
Encouraging Visits	.396 .439	.179 .172	t=1.74 p <.101
Visits Away From Agency	.482 .339	.190 .201	t=2.84 p <.010

\*\*Data is missing for visit frequency, efforts to encourage visitation, and use of visit settings away from the agency office for children placed in relative homes.

must address the major contributing problems which cannot be solved by the child welfare system alone.

Differential services to minority children reflect the child welfare system's inability to effectively address the needs of the minority population. When the results are examined by ethnicity, findings indicate that fewer services overall are offered to minority children. Minority children clearly appear to be vulnerable to neglect by the system as well as by their parents. Results of this study support the findings of Albers, Reilly, and Rittner (1993) that minority children represent a highly disproportionate number of the children remaining in care for prolonged periods in Nevada.

Given the differences in service delivery provided to minority children and the fact that eight of the ten children placed with

relatives were minority children, questions arise regarding the manner in which extended family resources are utilized. Workers generally regard placement with a relative as preferable to foster care when out-of-home placement is needed—seemingly an advantage for minority children. However, it appears that minority children placed with relatives may be left in their care for an indeterminate length of time with inadequate attention from the child welfare system.

### *Recommendations for Further Research*

Further research into the context of the worker's relationship with parents of children in care is needed. Children come into foster care as a result of family problems. Case planning must begin to effectively address family problems in order to successfully and expeditiously reunify families, especially in light of the federal mandate to provide "reasonable efforts" in this regard. The measure of problem-solving interactions utilized in the current study may not adequately capture the most effective process by which social workers assist families in addressing the issues which resulted in placement. Further research into the nature of the worker-parent relationship is warranted.

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# Mothers With Children and Mothers Alone: A Comparison of Homeless Families

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*Researchers usually define a homeless family as those parents accompanied by minor children. This study compares a sample of homeless mothers accompanied by their children to homeless mothers who report that their children are elsewhere. While there are some differences between these two groups such as age and number of children, there are also a number of similarities. Both groups of mothers report that they rely on family members and friends as sources of instrumental support. These networks are especially useful for housing children. The findings from this investigation suggest a need for a more inclusive definition of homeless families so that services can be geared towards all families affected by a loss of stable housing.*

Homeless families compose the fastest growing segment of the homeless population (Rossi, 1994; Burt, 1992). Most studies on homeless families focus specifically on parents accompanied by minor children in public or private shelters. "When mothers seek emergency shelter alone, they are considered single regardless of their possible contact with children and their own self images as part of a family network" (Brickner et al., 1990:140). This operational definition of a homeless family excludes those adults who resort to homeless shelters while their children reside elsewhere thus limiting our understanding of the process families go through upon losing stable housing. The present study relies on a sample of homeless mothers both with and without their minor children in a public shelter. Two questions are addressed by this comparison of types of homeless mothers: (1) Are these two groups significantly different from one another? (2) If there are differences between them, do these differences suggest that

mothers who resort to the shelter alone are in need of different services than those accompanied by their children?

Studies comparing homeless individuals without children to homeless parents accompanied by children and those comparing housed mothers to homeless mothers suggest that homeless mothers accompanied by children resemble a housed population more so than homeless women without children. For example, homeless women are older and tend to have more psychological problems than homeless mothers with children. Some authors conclude that these two groups are indeed different and in need of different types of services (Johnson and Kreuger, 1989). Comparisons of housed mothers in poverty and homeless mothers find that these groups are similar in age, education, number of children and number of social ties (Goodman, 1991). It appears that homeless mothers are less likely than housed mothers to have the resources to maintain independent housing but are just as likely to have social contacts. While there is some evidence that homeless adults with children are different from those without children, few studies ask about the existence of minor children not in the shelter system (Burt and Cohen, 1989). Consequently, if we rely on the types of studies discussed above, our perception of the extent to which families are affected by homelessness and the needs of such families will be limited to those in which parents and children remain together. By using information on the location of children who are not in a shelter with their mothers, this study can describe the array of strategies used to cope with the loss of stable housing.

### Methodology

The data for the study is drawn from a population of homeless families taking shelter in Austin, Texas. The shelter offers a variety of services for those needing assistance and is therefore conducive to collecting a sample of homeless families from a variety of backgrounds and situations. As with many investigations of homelessness, this sample is limited in scope and may not be generalizable to the national population of homeless families. Files of social workers' interviews with homeless women were utilized to create a quota sample of 168 family units with children present or women with dependent children elsewhere. The

sample includes women seeking shelter over a recent 18 month period. There were 46 mothers without accompanying children and 81 mothers with at least one child present at the shelter. These groups will be referred to as unaccompanied mothers and accompanied mothers respectively.

### Findings

The homeless families in this sample are similar in many ways to the homeless families found in other major studies (Rossi, 1989; Burt and Cohen, 1989). However, the suggestion that homeless families are, for the most part, composed of young mothers leaving their parental home, temporarily homeless and awaiting Public Assistance funds to allow them to set up their own home is not supported (Rossi, 1989). The characteristics of the Austin sample defy this image. The average age and education levels of the mothers in this study, for example, are higher than this image of teen mothers with few skills. There are some differences between the two groups of mothers in this sample, however.

The accompanied homeless mothers are younger (30 vs. 33 years), have younger children (4.1 vs. 8.3 years) and have fewer children (1.9 vs. 2.4) than those unaccompanied by their children. In addition the accompanied mothers are less likely to have completed high school. Nonetheless, half of the accompanied mothers had a high school degree or its equivalent and sixty-six percent of the unaccompanied mothers had at least this much education. The t-tests (not shown) for these demographic characteristics indicate that these are significant differences but neither group fits the stereotype of the young mother leaving her parental home for the first time. A comparison of the work and residential history of these two groups illustrates several similarities between the two groups of mothers.

Few of the accompanied or unaccompanied mothers in this sample are currently employed upon entering the shelter, although many indicate that they have previously worked and gave the reasons for leaving their last place of employment. Table 1 presents the reasons given for leaving employment. Of those specifying a reason, accompanied mothers are more likely to report that they left their jobs due to family responsibilities, pregnancy, child care constraints and illness. The greater likelihood

that women accompanied by their children lost their jobs due to family responsibilities suggests that the role conflict of breadwinner and care giver may lead to homelessness. These mothers have younger children on average. The difficulties single mothers face in the job market and in finding adequate and affordable child care make this population particularly vulnerable to homelessness (Milburn and D'Ercole, 1989). Since neither group of women is likely to be employed, job programs may be of use to both. Public child care and sick-child care are also needed, especially by those mothers who do not or cannot rely on family and friends for these services and therefore cannot maintain employment.

Table 1

*Employment Status and Reasons for Leaving Last Place of Employment*

	Unaccompanied Mothers		Accompanied Mothers	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Employed On Entering Shelter	5	10.9	10	12.4
Reason for Leaving Last Employment				
Move or transportation Problem	5	10.9	7	8.6
Job Related (ie. temp job, etc.)	3	6.5	7	8.6
Conflict at work/ Fired, quit, etc.	5	10.9	5	6.2
Family/Illness, Preg., childcare	4	8.7	15	18.5
No reason given/ No previous job	24	52.2	37	45.7
Number	46	100.0	81	100.0

Source: Emergency Shelter, Austin, Texas

It is common for families to share living quarters with friends or other family members before resorting to public shelters. As seen in Table 2, accompanied and unaccompanied mothers who came to the Austin shelter are both likely to have come from a family or friend's home. Interestingly none of the unaccompanied mothers came directly from a home shared with a spouse or partner. These mothers are more likely to be formerly married, however, suggesting the availability of a former spouse to house their children when the mothers are unable to do so. The accompanied mothers are more likely to have come directly from a home shared with a spouse. In other words, when marital break-up and homelessness occurred simultaneously, children became homeless with their mothers. Clearly, both unaccompanied and accompanied mothers are likely to have relied upon other social contacts for assistance and housing before resorting to the public shelter.

Table 2

*Previous Residences of Unaccompanied and Accompanied Homeless Mothers*

	Unaccompanied Mothers		Accompanied Mothers	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Own Home	9	19.6	19	23.5
Home of Spouse/Partner	0	0.0	8	9.9
Parents'	4	8.7	10	12.3
Other Relatives'	3	6.5	7	8.6
Friends'	13	28.3	18	22.2
Other (tents, shelters, etc.)	5	10.9	6	7.4
Unknown	12	26.1	13	16.0
Number	46	100.0	81	100.0

Source: Emergency Shelter, Austin, Texas

That social networks are important resources for homeless mothers is also demonstrated by the living arrangements of the children not found at the shelter. Table 3 looks at the living arrangements of all of the children of both groups of mothers. Parents, grandparents and other relatives are important sources of care for these children. Older children are more likely to be in the "other" category which includes the few children in foster care as well as children who moved in with friends' families.

As the above discussion illustrates, the biggest difference between the accompanied and unaccompanied mothers is the presence or absence of their minor children. Looking only at the 46 mothers who came to the shelter without their minor children, two things are clear. First, the experience of having their children removed from their care by a social service agency is very rare. The reason mothers separate from their children have much more to do with their financial need rather than abuse or psychological distress. The second observation from these unaccompanied mothers' situations is that family members and friends are important sources of housing and care for their children. A large

Table 3

*Location of The Children of Unaccompanied and Accompanied Mothers*

	Children of Unaccompanied Mothers		Children of Accompanied Mothers	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Present at Shelter	0	0.0	179	88.5
Other Parent	30	37.5	8	4.0
Grandparent	28	35.0	8	4.0
Other Relative	12	15.0	3	1.5
Other (Foster care, self care, etc.)	10	12.5	4	2.0
Number	80	100.0	202	100.0

Source: Emergency Shelter, Austin, Texas

minority of all mothers (41.3%) report their children are in the care of their other parent. This means, however, that the majority of the minor children not at the shelter with their mothers are not in the care of either parent but are more likely to be in the care of a grandparent or other relative. Some of the mothers keep their youngest children with them when they move to the shelter but leave older children with others so they can remain in school. For example, one mother came to the shelter with her two toddler children but had left her older son with her parents so that he could stay in school. With only limited resources at their disposal, the mother's parents were doing all they could to help her by housing one of her children.

It is not clear at what point mothers separate from their children, but those who do leave their children in the care of others appear to do so when their social networks become stretched and doubled-up living arrangements become crowded. For example, some unaccompanied mothers report that they did not come directly from the place they left their children but had lived with other family members or moved in with friends for as long as they could. The mothers may move through their social networks before resorting to the public shelter, while using the most secure of their social ties (ie. their own parents or siblings) to house their children. These situations are frequently intended to be temporary. One mother describes leaving her six year old daughter with her grandparents in another town while looking for permanent housing in Austin. She then intends to be reunited with her daughter once she can afford to care for her. Had this woman been included in other studies of homelessness, she would not have been counted as a homeless family because her child was not with her in the shelter. Nonetheless, the ties between parent and child still exist and the services needed by this woman and those like her are similar to those needed by mothers who bring their children with them to the shelter. Designing programs to support families clearly needs to include families temporarily separated by housing needs.

### Summary and Discussion

There are several small differences between those women whose children are housed elsewhere and those who bring at least



one of their children to the public shelter in Austin. Unaccompanied mothers are older, have higher educations and older and fewer children. In addition, accompanied mothers are more likely to report that they lost employment due to the need to care for family members. Thus, the precipitating events to homelessness may be different for some of the mothers who bring their children to the shelter than for those unaccompanied.

These two groups of mothers are quite similar in terms of their contact with friends or family suggesting that homeless mothers are not isolated from their social networks. The unaccompanied mothers may have networks with more resources available. For example, the fact that their minor children are not with them reflects the capacity of some mothers' networks to provide instrumental support. In addition, their separation from their children represents choices mothers make in the interest of their children. The fact that some mothers can find friends or relatives to provide care for their children in times of need does not indicate that these mothers have different service needs than those whose friends and family members are unable or unwilling to provide housing.

Including single adults in analyses of family homelessness illuminates the manner in which a lack of stable housing affects all family members, not just those found in emergency shelters. Broadening the analysis of family homelessness to include absent children illustrates the importance of social networks for homeless mothers and the variety of ways families may adapt to a loss of permanent housing. Many homeless mothers have others they can turn to for support and housing for their children and for temporary housing for themselves. The fact that some mothers do not come directly from the same location as their minor children suggests that there are many steps on the route to becoming homeless. Some findings suggest that leaving a stressful, doubled-up living arrangement is the last step before resorting to public shelters (Burt and Cohen, 1989). Apparently another part of this process for some mothers involves establishing secure housing for their children. Such strategies are useful in the face of obstacles for self sufficiency such as low paying jobs and long waiting lists for subsidized housing.

The data of this study call into question the conventional definition of a "homeless family" and suggest that excluding mothers

alone in public shelters from services aimed at supporting families without stable housing ignores a significant segment of the population of families affected by homelessness. The findings also have important implications for public policy reforms. For example, the viability of proposals for reform of the welfare system are called into question by the fact that so many mothers indicate that they lost their employment due to family-care needs. Reforms that include job requirements for welfare recipients are untenable without affordable, reliable child care.

The findings of this study also indicate that programs for homeless families are providing services needed by families where only the adults are technically homeless. Many mothers have no one to house them or their children or they must choose which children to leave with relatives. Mothers in the dire economic conditions that lead to homelessness may have friends and family members who wish to help them but cannot afford to do so forcing separations of mothers from their children. A more behaviorally accurate definition of a homeless family would include those adults who lack a fixed permanent address and have minor children dependent upon them, regardless of where their children are located. By including all families in services for homeless families, it may be possible to reunite these children with their parents.

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# Managed Computer System Conceptualization: Knowing When to say No

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*Computer systems in human services are often abandoned after significant investments have already been made. A case study of preventing the utilization of a wrong computer system for a child development center illustrates how managed system conceptualization minimized damage. Critical consciousness and adherence to specific computer implementation technology created an environment which supported recurrent system efficacy evaluation. When the system, as initially conceptualized, could not meet practitioners' needs, early project abandonment was achieved. Some considerations for successful system development in human service are presented.*

How can a human service administrator know if a highly touted computer system is the right one for the service in question and prevent the implementation of the wrong system? How can computer abandonment be achieved at the design phase and not after full system implementation? Clarification of these questions may help avoid the waste in money, time, effort and staff morale which occurs when final software product does not meet service needs.

Exploratory management research indicates that a substantial number of computer projects are abandoned. Moreover, most projects are abandoned mainly because of human factors, rather than cost-overruns or technological difficulties (Ewusi-Mensah & Przasnyski, 1991). At this time, no empirical data are available as to the frequency of abandoned computer projects in the human service arena.

Abandonment often occurs when problems arise in planning, perceiving, analyzing, designing or configuring system objectives, as a result of which some group of stakeholders perceives major potential difficulties that may cause subsequent failure of the system (Ewusi-Mensah & Przasnyski, 1991; Keider, 1984). Specifically, system abandonment in the human services has been attributed to a lack of immediate system relevance to the direct service worker (Binner, 1988; Gripton, Liker & de Groot, 1988, p. 78; Phillips, 1993), and incongruence between workers' needs and system requirements (Dery, 1983; Orman, 1987). We submit that system abandonment is often rooted in failed system conceptualization.

System conceptualization is the process of creating the blueprint of a computer system. That includes a clear perception of the characteristics of the planned system, including its expected impact on non-computerized work procedures. The literature on system development for human services generally takes system conceptualization for granted (Schoech, Schkade & Mayers, 1982; Tighe, 1993), only rarely considering it as an issue warranting specific attention (Monnickendam & Morris, 1989). As we will show, the dynamics and difficulties of system conceptualization are of central concern in system development. Sound system conceptualization may prevent project abandonment. Conversely, it may lead to project abandonment, which is in itself not necessarily unacceptable. Abandonment is preferable to full system implementation and further investment in a nonproductive venture (Staw & Ross, 1987).

We shall present a case study of an abandoned computer project, originally intended for a child development center, to show how system conceptualization was successfully managed. Our focus will be on the utility of system conceptualization, rather than on the specifics of the computer system itself. We will first describe the process leading from the initiation of the project to its abandonment. We will then apply Gil's (1990) concept of critical consciousness to this process, and analyze how the creation of an unneeded system was prevented. Finally, we will discuss the application of managed system conceptualization to human services, and the role of management in preventing pitfalls in computer development for human services. We hope that this

study will contribute to sound system development and to the increased use of computer systems in human services.

## System Development

### *Impetus*

The catalyst behind the project was a major research and development foundation in Israel which was interested in developing a computerized expert system to assist practitioners in clinical decision-making. The foundation assembled the project team, provided funding and computer resources, and selected a site for the program—a child development center which served developmentally disabled children in a multidisciplinary service. Many of the children suffered disabilities in or more of the following areas: speech, motor development and cognitive ability. The clinical decision for which the system was intended was selection of the problem area most amenable to further intervention.

The foundation felt that decisions were being based on inexact criteria and frequently could not be reconstructed. The project team assumed, as a working theory, that decision criteria can be modeled and applied to specific cases by using a computerized expert system. Such a system could be a tool for entering case data and would then output a prioritized list of the intervention areas together with reasons for each priority (Schoech, 1990, p. 600). The clinician would only have to decide whether to accept the computer's suggestion.

### *Need for project*

Before project initiation the team met with most of the staff at the center to discuss whether an expert system was appropriate within the framework of the center. The staff considered the idea attractive, as it addressed their uncertainties in making correct decisions with multi-problem clients.

### *System development*

The team investigated possible methods for expert system development and adopted a multifaceted approach. System development comprised three stages, which were actually overlapping and concurrent, though presented here in sequence for reasons of clarity.

The first stage, *clarification of the treatment flow and decision points*, aimed at mapping the professional and administrative framework of the center and at identifying the main treatment decisions. The center's staff (n=23) completed an open-ended questionnaire, which included items relating to job content, types of client, types of decision, case flow, case recording procedures, formal and informal structure of the center, and expected utility of the proposed system. In addition the team employed non-participant observation and observed practitioners from all represented disciplines in therapeutic sessions and case conferences (three case conferences and five treatment sessions). Finally fifteen case files were scrutinized to clarify the case-processing path (Fisher, 1978) and to understand the practitioners' thought processes. It was thus possible to achieve a better understanding of the center's actual practice.

The second stage, *decision analysis*, aimed at analyzing treatment decisions. To develop an expert system one analyzes the decision(s) which are to be simulated by it and maps the knowledge that is applied to it (Benbenisthy, 1992; Hart, 1986; Hayes-Roth, Waterman & Lenat, 1983; Schuerman, 1987). Knowledge engineers use knowledge acquisition techniques to query experts, e.g., how do they arrive at diagnoses. Working together, they explore these complex processes until they can specify and define them.

As in any action research the team took special care to ensure the validity and reliability of the data (Tripodi, 1983, p. 59). Accordingly, the initial findings, especially in the case of discrepancy between different sources, were corroborated with three parties. The first was the project team, which met frequently, compared notes, and tried to conceptualize the process and identify inconsistencies; these findings then provided a basis for further interviews. The second party was the administrator, who was knowledgeable, familiar with the inner workings of the center and responsible for daily operation, scheduling, file keeping, etc. The third side of the triangle consisted of the practitioners, who were requested to clarify inconsistencies. Their responses frequently acknowledged a process different from that initially envisaged by them, and provided new insights into their own actions.

The third stage relates to the outcomes of stages one and two,

i.e., *system conceptualization* and, finally, abandonment. Reflecting on their own decision-making processes, practitioners expressed a vaguely defined but strongly felt dissatisfaction with the manner in which decisions were made, while at the same time believing in practitioner judgment. Asked point blank whether the center could use an expert system as envisaged by the research team, the polite answer tended to be: "Yes! that would certainly be very nice, but . . .", followed by a series of reasoned objections. The predominant objection was that, given a clearly defined case and situation, practitioners possessed adequate knowledge for decision-making, i.e., for selecting the most viable intervention. They did not feel the need for a computerized expert to propose choices for them.

Additional probing revealed a more fundamental problem, namely, how to formulate a clearly defined case prior to decision-making. Cases are frequently complicated, and involve many different disciplines. Retracing a case, understanding past decisions and framing the case for current decision-making often took considerable amounts of time and effort. The process was cluttered and difficult to follow, understand and assess. Practitioners felt that they could somehow utilize the computer's readily accessible memory, storage and organization to help them consider cases in an orderly and clear fashion, so that the decision-making process could be traced and past actions understood. In other words, their demand from the computer was that it would help to clarify what they were doing, not that it would do it for them.

This realization persuaded the team to inform both the foundation and the practitioners that the system, as initially proposed, and the practitioners' real needs as conceptualized in stage three, were incompatible. The team recommended the abandonment of the initially planned expert system. A different system which did cater to practitioner needs, was later developed.

### Discussion

A system's concept is the blueprint of the computerized solution of a problem. However, despite tight problem definition, many constraints may remain hidden at the planning stage, to be discovered only during design and implementation (Giandomenico & Wildavsky, 1984; Korsmo, 1990). Thus, the concept



needs redefinition and readjustment, without which it will fail. To manage this dynamic process, with its overlapping and often interwoven stages, specific tools are required. The implementors must constantly be on guard to identify developments not in line with the original intentions, or, conversely, check that these intentions are still appropriate. To that end, Gil (1990) coined the term *critical consciousness*. He sees critical consciousness as a medium for reflection on a project's *assumptions*, the magnitude of the *need*, the appropriateness of the *goals* and *theory* linking the problem to the expected end-result, and the suitability of the *implementation technique*. We will show how each of these five components were instrumental, on the one hand, in averting the creation of the wrong computer system; and, on the other, in clarifying the real needs of the service.

#### *Managing with critical consciousness*

Firstly, clarification of the *projects' assumption* was initially not successfully carried out. The assumption that an expert system was the solution to this specific problem was not objectively evaluated. The initial situation induced acceptance of an externally defined problem statement. Problem definition was largely imposed by the foundation, who also assembled the project team and provided a cooperative site. The project team, for its part, was also eager to create an expert system. This is not to say that the second component, *magnitude of the need* was not assessed. On the contrary, before implementation of the project, the team met with the center staff and discussed the need for the system, in keeping with accepted action research procedures (Tripodi, 1983). In those preliminary interviews, the center expressed considerable interest, and the team sincerely believed that the center could benefit from an expert system. Only at stage three did it become clear that such a system was unnecessary.

Could these misconceptualizations have been avoided? One might argue that this was a case of bad practice, that a solution had been imposed and/or that there had not been sufficient consultation. We contend, however, that at these early stages none of the participants were aware of the constraints that were later discovered (Giandomenico & Wildavsky, 1984; Korsmo, 1990). In view of the convergent interests of all parties, it would be unrealistic to expect a different scenario so early in the process.

Nevertheless, despite these early mishaps, and independent of them, system conceptualization occurred, due to constant reflection on two other attributes of critical consciousness, namely *goal* and *theory* appropriateness.

The goals faithfully reflected the project's initial assumptions and need: to design an expert system, and to provide the center with a relevant product for routine use. But while these two goals were initially thought to be fully compatible, it turned out that in practice they were not. That is, application of an expert system would not ipso facto lead to the creation of a relevant product. Constant critical attention to the congruence between solution and problem provides the desired mechanism which will initiate change, if needed, or project abandonment, if incompatibilities cannot be remedied.

The conflict which emerged was whether the desired project outcome was to generate knowledge in concert with the specific needs of the development site, i.e., to manufacture a useful product; or to create knowledge irrespective of those needs, i.e., to produce an expert system (Weiss, 1972, p. 100). That the team did *not* chose to produce an expert system was due to their success in selecting and applying the last, but not least, component of critical consciousness, namely *implementation technique*.

Expert systems development presupposes a sound personal rapport between implementors and end users (Ford et al., 1989; Stebbins, 1987; Tait & Vessey 1988); it can be done only *with* people, not *to* people. Its success depends on user participation (Mandell, 1987), on staff belief that the system will be useful and relevant (Overby, 1987; Werner, 1987) and will not pose a threat to the therapeutic aspects of treatment (Monnickendam & Eaglstein, 1993). The creation of an environment that promotes these conditions is dependent on appropriate staffing of the development team (White, 1984). White and Leifer (1986), reviewing implementation research results, concluded that in the majority of successful computer implementation projects, team members possessed complementary knowledge about computer technology, the type of organization to be conceptualized, the type of system to be implemented and implementation techniques.

Staffing of the project team met these requirements. They were all Ph.D.'s familiar with specific aspects of expert systems, who complemented each other's resources: a social worker expert in

computer systems for human services and system implementation; a cognitive psychologist expert in decision modeling; and an educational psychologist proficient in the area of computer-aided instruction. This team composition provided the elements for participatory system development, thereby creating the conditions that enabled the goal conflict to surface. It also enabled staff to understand the system proposed was not what they needed, and to be clearer as to their actual requirements.

In compliance with participatory system development and based on their knowledge of computer systems in human services, the team unremittingly evaluated the second goal (relevance of the system) by asking, "What value will the expert system have for the center?" To acknowledge that there was an answer, but no problem to which it could be applied, requires intellectual integrity and freedom from preconceived notions (Campbell & Stanley, 1966, p. 3). The team's adherence to the implementation technique created an environment in which hard questions were not avoided. Had they adhered less strictly to implementation technique, they might well have created an unusable expert system.

Although outside the scope of this article some remarks regarding clinical expert systems are warranted. After the decision to drop the expert system, the center and team faced the question what system to develop, if at all. The practitioners wanted the computer not to make decisions but to clarify case complexities. This paradigm is in line with Weed's approach to medical decision making. That is, computers should not provide clinicians with all possible information and try to solve patient's problems, but rather systems should present options that let the patient and clinician see the complexity of a situation (Weed & Zimny, 1989; Zimny & Tandy, 1989). A system along these lines was eventually developed and is reported on elsewhere (Monnickendam, Yaniv & Geva, 1995).

### *Who's in charge?*

Our discussion so far has stressed the central role of the team, implying that the management of the center transferred part of its responsibility to the team, as indeed it did. Practitioners viewed the proposed system as esoteric, something they understood only

rudimentarily. Even when doubts began to surface, they were still prepared to accept the computer experts' diagnosis and solution. This raises the question: should computer implementation be left entirely to an external agent?

It was adherence to the second goal—projected use—that led to successful conceptualization. The team attributed much importance to constant goal reevaluation. They did so as result of their familiarity with the problems associated with computerization in human services. This enabled them to maintain close contact with their clients and listen to the latter's comments and provided a context for attention to practitioners. A management-oriented implementation team, however, unfamiliar with human service computing and human service practice techniques, might not have understood the practitioners reservations (Chaiklin, 1993). Such a team might well have assumed that the system would be useful, and would have created an expert system. It is management's responsibility, too, to set stringent controls on the development process (Fasano & Shapiro, 1991). If this approach implies an underlying uncertainty about development, that is justifiable, for uncertainty is a prerequisite for change. It is management's responsibility to hire experts in system development for human services, just as it is the project team's responsibility to involve service management in system conceptualization.

### Conclusions

A project postmortem—a rare occurrence in itself (Boddie, 1987)—revealed that the key to successful project abandonment in this case was utilization of critical consciousness which in turn effected system conceptualization. Adherence to critical consciousness created an environment which permitted close attention to the practitioners. User involvement does not mean just listening and explaining, but also understanding the users and seeing the system from their viewpoint (Monnickendam & Eaglstein, 1993). From the users' perspective it provides the means to clarify their needs.

The case study showed that project abandonment does not necessarily reflect bad management. On the contrary, it reflected sound system conceptualization. Project abandonment should

not be a chance occurrence: it should occur as early as possible in the development cycle, so as to minimize costs. We found this to be the case, as the centers' system was abandoned even before the design phase. It became clear, as well, that project abandonment was due to human factors, rather than technology or cost-overruns. Systems are often implemented in complex and dynamic environments. It is managements responsibility to guide the conceptualization process, even when not familiar with human service computing. Critical consciousness was shown to be effective in this regard.

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# Purchase of Service Contracting Versus Government Service Delivery: The Views of State Human Service Administrators

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*Purchase of service contracting (POSC) as a mode of human service delivery is based largely on untested normative grounds. This article presents the results of a national study comparing the views of state human service administrators on the relative merits of POSC versus government service delivery in four issue areas: (1) service costs, (2) service quality, (3) bureaucracy and red tape, and (4) effect on government employees. The study results provide some support for POSC in three of the four issues areas. The study finds that geography plays no role in the views of state human service administrators, but that program/service type does.*

## Introduction

Over the last 25 years, a revolution of sorts has taken place in the human services. In the 1960s, not only was direct government delivery of publicly funded human services the norm, no competing paradigm existed. Beginning in the 1970s, a new paradigm, purchase of service contracting (POSC), began to take shape. Widespread state human service agency experimentation with POSC under various titles of the *Social Security Act* triggered similar experimentations in the areas of mental health services, aging and adult services, employment and training services, and others. Today, by most accounts, POSC is the principal mode



of human services delivery in this country (e. g. Salamon, 1987; Terrell, 1987; Kettner and Martin, 1994).

While POSC has been called one of the most important developments in the human services in the last 50 years (Karger, 1994), the subject has received little systematic research attention. Consequently, the knowledge base about POSC remains underdeveloped. The lack of research on POSC does not mean that the subject has been ignored in the human services literature. Quite the contrary! A significant body of literature on POSC has accumulated over the last two decades. Unfortunately, a substantial proportion of this literature tends to be ideologically based and designed to demonstrate that POSC is either "good or bad" social policy. In a recent major review of the published POSC literature over the last twenty years Kramer (1994:33) concludes that a significant amount is based largely on, "... ideological and impressionistic grounds."

Early on, Alfred Kahn (1979) pointed out that the relative merit of POSC as a mode of human services delivery is an empirical question. If a knowledge base is ever to be built on POSC, Kahn's admonition points the way. The ideological and impressionistic literature on POSC needs to be replaced with broad based empirical inquiries. Specifically, more research is needed that directly tests the normative underpinnings of POSC, particularly those dimensions that have provoked the greatest debate in the literature.

### Literature Review

#### *Service Costs*

Perhaps the loudest debate over POSC versus government service delivery involves the issue of relative costs. One of the major arguments in support of POSC is that it costs less than government service delivery. For example, Fabricant and Burghardt (1992) suggest that many human service administrators simply believe *a priori* that POSC is more efficient than government service delivery. Likewise, Terrell and Kramer (1984), Terrell (1987), and Karger (1994) maintain that POSC is frequently viewed by human service administrators as being less costly than government service delivery. Demone and Gibelman (1989) suggest that

much of the appeal of POSC can be traced directly to the desire of human service administrators to reduce service delivery costs.

Hatry and Durman (1985) put forth the argument that POSC—or at least the portion based upon competitive contracting models—should result in lower service delivery costs. However, Smith and Lipsky (1992), as well as Karger (1994), question the validity of this argument because they maintain that competitive contracting models are largely absent in POSC. This latter interpretation is supported by the research of Martin (1986), Kettner and Martin (1994) and Kramer (1994).

### *Service Quality*

Improved service quality is another purported benefit of POSC. For example, Fitch (1974) and Hatry and Durman (1985), argue that POSC should result in improved service quality. On the other hand, Willis (1984) and Abramovitz (1986) argue just the reverse. The existing POSC research on the issue of service quality (e. g., Willis, 1984; Bennett and DiLorenzo, 1983; Bailis and Ellenbecker, 1988) is limited in scope and the results are inconclusive.

Some researchers question the logic of the assertion that POSC can both reduce service delivery costs and increase service quality. DeHoog (1986), for example, suggests that a more plausible expectation is a trade off between cost and quality.

While issues of cost and quality tend to dominate the debate, two other normative claims frequently made are that POSC results in less bureaucracy and red tape and fewer government employees.

### *Bureaucracy and Red Tape*

POSC, it is frequently maintained, also reduces the amount of bureaucracy and red tape associated with human services delivery (e. g., Brilliant, 1973; Martin, 1986; Rehfuss, 1989). According to Osborn & Gaebler (1992), authors of the best selling book *Reinventing Government*, the reduction of bureaucracy and red tape in human service delivery is one of the major benefits of POSC. Conversely, Schlesinger, Dorwart and Pulice (1986) argue that the additional contract administration and monitoring activities

created by POSC may actually result in an overall increase in bureaucracy and red tape rather than a decrease.

### *Government Employees*

Yet another "advantage" ascribed to POSC is that it results in the need for fewer government employees. This claim has been made consistently over the years, but generally not by human services researchers (e. g. Fisk, Kiesling, and Muller, 1978; Rehnfuss, 1989; Osborn & Gaebler, 1992). Other reachers, including many in the human services, do not view the long term decline in government human service employment as necessarily a positive development (e. g. Leveson, 1977; Kettner and Martin, 1985; Ghere, 1981). Regardless of the position taken on this issue, if POSC is contributing to a long term decrease in the number of government human service employees this development needs to be documented and debated.

### *Summary*

In summary then, there are at least four major normative assumptions that underpin the use of POSC. Stated as propositions, they are:

- Proposition 1 – POSC is *less* costly than government service delivery,
- Proposition 2 – POSC services are of a *higher* quality than government services,
- Proposition 3 – POSC *decreases* the amount of bureaucracy and red tape associated with service delivery, and
- Proposition 4 – POSC results in *fewer* government employees involved in service delivery.

### *The Study*

In order to test these four propositions, a study of state human service administrators involved with both government delivery and POSC was undertaken in 1993. The study involved the top human service administrators in each of the 50 states responsible for overseeing: (1) aging and adult services, (2) services to

children, youth, and families, (3) mental health services, and (4) employment related services.

State administrators were selected as the unit of analysis because previous studies of state POSC activity demonstrate that they tend to be relatively informed and reliable commentators on service delivery issues (APWA, 1980; Martin, 1986). The administrators were asked to compare their program experiences with POSC and government service delivery in the issue areas of: service costs, service quality, bureaucracy and red-tape, and effect on government employees.

Two hundred mail surveys were distributed, 102 useful responses were received, constituting a response rate of 51 percent. However, not all of the responding administrators answered all survey questions. Thus, the number of cases cited in the tables presented below are frequently less than the total number of overall responses.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis is divided into three sections. The first section presents overall summary responses for the four issue areas. In the second section, the data are subjected to a regional analysis. In the third section, the data are analyzed by program/service type.

#### *Summary Responses*

Table 1 presents the aggregate responses of the administrators dealing with the four issue areas. As Table 1 demonstrates, the opinions of administrators on the issue of service costs present a fairly balanced picture. Slightly more than a third of the administrators (36%) hold the opinion that no differences exist between the costs of POSC and the costs of government delivery, while nearly a quarter (24.7%) of the administrators believe that POSC costs more than government delivery. The modal view, however, expressed by nearly 40 percent of the administrators is that POSC costs less than government service delivery.

When the analysis shifts to the issue of service quality, the resulting picture is less balanced. The majority of administrators (64.8%) express the view that no quality differences exist between POSC and government service delivery. Nearly a third of the

Table 1

*State Human Service Administrators Perceptions of POSC Versus Government Service Delivery*

<i>Response Categories</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Service Costs</i>		
1. POSC Costs More Than Government Delivery	22	24.7
2. No Difference	32	36.0
3. POSC Costs Less Than Government Delivery	<u>35</u>	<u>39.3</u>
Totals	89	100
<i>Service Quality</i>		
1. POSC Service Quality Is Poorer Than Government Delivery	3	3.4
2. No Difference	57	64.8
3. POSC Service Quality Is Better Than Government Delivery	<u>28</u>	<u>31.8</u>
Totals	88	100
<i>Bureaucracy &amp; Red Tape</i>		
1. POSC Creates More Bureaucracy & Red Tape	33	35.9
2. No Difference	32	34.8
3. POSC Creates Less Bureaucracy & Red Tape	<u>27</u>	<u>29.3</u>
Totals	92	100
<i>Government Employees</i>		
1. More Public Employees With POSC	3	3.2
2. No Difference	27	28.7
3. Fewer Public Employees With POSC	<u>64</u>	<u>68.1</u>
Totals	94	100

administrators (31.8%), however, also believe that the quality of POSC services is better than the quality of government service delivery. Only a marginal 3.4 percent of the administrators are willing to state that POSC service quality is poorer than the quality of government service delivery.

On the issue of bureaucracy and red tape, the opinions of the administrators are again more balanced. The modal (35.9%) view, is that POSC results in more—not less—bureaucracy and red tape. However, only one more administrator ( $n=33$ ) held this view than held the view that there is no difference ( $n=32$ ).

Finally, on the issue of effect on government employees, the majority of administrators (68.1%) express the view that POSC results in fewer government employees. Another 28 percent of administrators believe no difference exists and a marginal 3.2 percent report that POSC results in more government employees.

From an overall perspective then, strong support is found among state human service administrators for the proposition that POSC costs less than government service delivery. Some limited support is found for the proposition that POSC services are of a better quality than government delivered services. Contrary to expectations, little support is found for the proposition that POSC results in less government bureaucracy and red tape. Finally, considerable support is found for the proposition that POSC results in fewer government employees.

### *Regional Differences*

A major study dealing with the use of POSC by local governments (municipalities and counties) reported significant variation by geographical region (Agranoff and Pattkos, 1985). If region can affect the use of POSC, region may also be an important factor in terms of the four issue areas under consideration here.

The study data were analyzed using the standard regional groupings (North-East, North-Central, South and West) developed by the Bureau of the Census. Mean scores for each region were computed and differences between regions explored using two statistical tests. The appropriate test for differences between groups given the nominal level of the data is Chi-Square. However, in several instances, the Chi-Square statistic was computed with more than one-fifth of the fitted cells being sparse (frequency

< 5). Thus, the Chi-Square significance tests are suspect. As an additional test of statistical significance, a robust approach was taken with the data being treated as ordinal and tested using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Using the ANOVA F-test, differences in responses between regions were able to be probed for statistical significance from a second perspective.

No statistically significant regional differences were found in the views of administrators in any of the four issue areas: service costs, service quality, bureaucracy and red tape and affect on government employees.

#### *Program/Service Type Differences*

Previous studies conducted by the American Public Welfare Association (APWA, 1980), Agranoff and Pattkos (1985) and Kettner and Martin (1993), suggest that program/service type is another important consideration when studying POSC. Agranoff and Pattkos (1985) report that the level of POSC activity varies significantly by program/service type. Kettner and Martin (1993) found that the relative importance of the factors used by human service administrators in making POSC decisions also varies significantly by program/service type. A major study conducted by the American Public Welfare Association (APWA, 1980) suggests that program/service type is one of the main reasons why aggregate data from POSC studies frequently show "inconclusive patterns" (p. 60). Following this lead, if the data on the four issue areas under consideration here are disaggregated by program/service type, additional insights may be gleaned.

Table 2 presents the data arrayed by the four program/service types included in this study: (1) aging and adult services, (2) services to children, youth, and families, (3) mental health services, and (4) employment related services. Mean averages and the two significance tests (Chi-Square and the ANOVA F-test) used to explore regional differences are again used here.

*Service Costs*—As Table 2 illustrates, when the data are disaggregated by program/service type, considerable variation is present in the mean scores of administrators regarding the relative costs of POSC versus government service delivery. The differences between program/service types are statistically significant using both statistical tests.

Table 2

*Mean Scores of State Administrators Perceptions of POSC Versus Government Service Delivery By Program/Service Type (1)*

	Mental Health	Aging & Adult	Children Youth & Families	Employment Related
Service Cost (n)	2.53 (16)	2.50 (18)	2.07 (30)	1.69 (19)
	$\chi^2 = 19.05 *$		$F = 6.48 **$	
Service Quality (n)	2.31 (16)	2.33 (18)	2.28 (29)	2.26 (19)
	$\chi^2 = 2.39$		$F = .07$	
Bureaucracy & Red Tape (n)	2.47 (17)	2.22 (18)	1.81 (32)	1.58 (19)
	$\chi^2 = 23.06 **$		$F = 5.50 *$	
Effect on Government Employees (n)	2.94 (13)	2.68 (22)	2.65 (34)	2.42 (22)
	$\chi^2 = 9.40$		$F = 3.05 *$	

\*  $p < .01$     \*\*  $p < .001$

(1) scores are means based on response categories (1, 2, 3) from Table 1

Administrators working in mental health and aging and adult services view POSC as less costly than government delivery. This view is shared by over 60 percent of the administrators in both programs. By comparison, a plurality (46.7%) of administrators working in children, youth and family services are of the opinion that no significant cost differential exists. Conversely, a plurality (47.4%) of administrators working in employment related services believe that government service delivery is actually less costly than POSC.



*Service Quality*—The mean scores of the administrators show little variation on this issue. The differences between program/service types are not statistically significant using either of the tests employed. A majority of administrators in all four cases—mental health (56.2%), aging and adult (55.6%), children, youth, and families (65.5%) and employment related (73.7%)—perceive service quality to be essentially the same between POSC and government delivery.

*Bureaucracy & Red Tape*—The mean scores on the issue of whether POSC results in less government bureaucracy and red tape than government service delivery show considerable variation between the program/service types. The differences are statistically significant using both tests employed.

The same pattern that appeared on the issue of service costs again appears on this issue. A majority of administrators in mental health (64.8%) and a plurality (44.9%) in aging and adult services express the opinion that POSC results in less bureaucracy and red tape than government service delivery. A majority (56.3%) of administrators in children, youth, and families believe that no difference exists. And a majority (57.9%) of administrators in employment related services responded that in their experience POSC actually causes more government bureaucracy and red tape than government service delivery.

*Government Employees*—The mean scores on the issue of whether POSC results in fewer government employees show only minor variation. The Chi-Square test indicates that the differences are not statistically significant, while the stronger F-test indicates the differences are significant.

The majority of administrators in three program/service types view POSC as resulting in fewer government human service employees: mental health (93.8%), aging and adult (68.4%) and children and youth and families (62.7%). Administrators of employment related services are evenly divided between those (47.4%) who believe that no difference exists and an identical 47.4 percent who hold the view that POSC leads to fewer government human service employees than does government service delivery.

A relationship appears to exist between service costs and effect on government employees. Administrators in mental health

and aging and adult services believe that POSC leads to fewer government human service employees and that POSC service costs are lower than government delivery. Conversely, administrators of employment related programs have mixed views on whether POSC leads to fewer government human service employees and also believe that POSC costs more than government delivery. Administrators of children, youth and families present a mixed picture.

### Study Limitations

In interpreting the study data, two cautions are suggested. First, several alternative explanations—other than program/service type—may actually account for the observed differences in the views of state administrators including: the education and training of state administrators, the amount of involvement with POSC, past success with POSC, or a combination of such factors. Due to the limitations of the study design, these alternative explanations can not be ruled out.

A second caution is the possibility of respondent bias. In all survey research, one must assume that respondents are providing accurate information. With respect to this study the specific question is: To what extent, if any, are the responses of state administrators colored by either a pro-POSC or a pro-government delivery bias? No definitive answer to this question can be provided, except to say that the considerable variation in the responses over the four issue areas (cost, quality, bureaucracy and red tape, and effect on government employees) is not what one would expect if the respondents were operating exclusively from an ideological perspective.

### Summary & Conclusion

This study represents the first time that major normative assumptions about POSC have been tested using broad based empirical data. The study sheds new light on the on-going debate over the relative merits of purchase of service contracting (POSC) versus government service delivery. Four propositions concerning POSC were tested using data from a study of state human service administrators. The study data provide strong support

for the propositions that POSC costs less than government service delivery and results in fewer government employees. Moderate support is found for the proposition that POSC results in less bureaucracy and red tape than government service delivery. No support is found for the proposition that POSC services are of a better quality than government services. Geographic region does not appear to affect the views of human service administrators concerning POSC versus government delivery, but program/service type does.

The study data suggest that some programs and services may be able to increase service quality and reduce costs by resorting to POSC; for other programs and services, government service delivery may achieve these same goals. While this exploratory study represents only a first step toward establishing such relationships, this path of inquiry does appear promising.

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# Ecological Approach in Practice: A Case Study of the Ounce of Prevention Fund

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*In an attempt to suggest ecologically sensitive program models which are developmentally responsive to the needs of adolescent parents and their children, this paper reviews existing research to identify the critical ecologies in their lives, evaluates existing program models for their ecological sensitivity, and presents a case study of the ecological approach in practice. Drawing from Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective and typology of systems, the paper identifies family, partner, school, work, health care, neighborhood, poverty, and ethnicity as critical ecological systems in the lives of the adolescent and her child. Many existing program models do not systematically address all of these critical systems. The Ounce of Prevention Fund's multiple layers of partnership model is presented as a realistic and effective approach to providing services that address the critical system needs of adolescent parents and their children.*

Since the 1970s, the epidemic of adolescent pregnancy in the United States has grown to tremendous proportions at a high public cost. By age 20, 18% of women in the U.S. will have given birth to one or more children (Henshaw & Van Vort, 1989). In 1985, adolescent childbearing cost the United States government 16.85 billion dollars (Burt, 1986) and has been connected with higher rates of school-drop out, subsequent pregnancy and unemployment for these mothers (Astone, 1993; Hayes, 1987; Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn, & Morgan, 1987). While many different types of programs exist to prevent adolescent pregnancy and to intervene in the usually negative life course of adolescent parents, programs

have had varying degrees of success. It is the contention of this article that programs will have a better chance at having a long-term positive impact if they address the important critical systems in the ecology of the adolescent, ranging from her individual development to the social and cultural environment in which she lives.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) provides an ecological theoretical framework in which to locate the influence of various systems on people's lives. The ecological framework has been tested in different contexts ranging from child development and adolescent childbearing to domestic violence (Cochran, 1988; Dutton, 1984; Olds, 1990; Pence, 1988). Lamb (1988) uses an ecological approach to examine the social context in which adolescent pregnancy and parenting occurs. The social context included several critical systems: the adolescents' parents and fathers of children who are potential sources of social support; school and work systems; the prevailing social and political attitudes about adolescent childbearing; and the impact of these systems on the adolescent's development, including her educational, occupational, and relationship outcomes.

Olds (1990) found that home visiting programs which use an ecological approach had better birth outcomes and improved the long-term functioning of environmentally at-risk mothers and children than programs which did not address all the critical systems. The ecologically sensitive programs specified and addressed the appropriate causal factors, such as the lack of health care, parenting education, and social support, that resulted in poor birth and developmental outcomes for mother and child. On the other hand, the less effective programs provided primarily social support on the assumption that psychosocial stress was the causal factor.

There are a plethora of programs that have been developed to address the needs of the adolescent parent and her child, but few explicitly use an ecological approach wherein the relevant systems that impact and are impacted by the adolescent are considered. No research has looked at how programs incorporate, even if implicitly, the important critical systems. This is a pivotal issue because ecologically sensitive programs which holistically focus on as many relevant critical systems as possible have

been found to be more effective and cost-efficient in the long-run than those programs which do not (Pence, 1988). This paper will, therefore, examine existing research to take a broad look at the critical ecologies of adolescents and assess the ecological sensitivities of typical program models that serve low-income adolescent mothers. Finally, using the case study of the Ounce of Prevention Fund in Chicago, Illinois (The Ounce), the paper will illustrate the possible models for implementing the ecological approach. This review will highlight critical areas for program design and implementation, if programs are to generate enduring impacts on low-income adolescent parents' life course.

### Theoretical Perspective

Bronfenbrenner (1979) provides a contextual schema to articulate the diverse ecologies in the life of an individual. His schema includes four systems; the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem. The microsystem includes the most primary and immediate interpersonal relationships between two or more persons. These involve the relationship between mother and child, between close friends, and between the individual and her partner. The mesosystem encompasses those direct relationships with secondary and distant systems "outside" of the immediate realm of the family, friends, and partners and those which directly affect the individual. School and work represent mesosystem influences for the adolescent. The exosystem consists of secondary systems that do not directly impact, but still influence, individuals. For example, parents' work situation indirectly affects children through the parents' work related behavior. And finally, the macrosystems are those socio-cultural or subcultural systems which are shared by people living in that environment, such as race/ethnic background and economic opportunities in the community.

Each system is related to the others in a nested fashion. The nested systems model "places the microsystems of immediate experience within a mesosystem of two or more microsystems, (which) is in turn embedded in the exosystem of non-immediate social contact; each of these system levels is, in turn, nested within a macrosystem of socio-cultural mores, values, and laws" (Pence,



1988; p. xxiii). One implication of the nested relationships among systems is that the effect of more distant systems can also be experienced at the more immediate levels. For example, while ethnicity is a macrosystem factor, it can also directly impact individuals through the cultural norms and options available to members of an ethnic group. These systems subsequently impact the developmental processes of the individual. "Direction and degree of psychological growth are governed by the extent to which opportunities to enter settings conducive to development in various domains are open or closed to the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; p.288). These settings can developmentally impact everything from identity formation to an adolescent's ability to integrate formal and informal supports.

One major criteria for the selection of critical elements is whether the elements "have meaning for the person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; p. 22) as either positive or negative influences in their lives. Consequently, "the principle helping strategies for ecological practitioners are to identify and build strengths of individuals and families, empowering them to take charge of their situation and to change aspects of environments that hinder the development of healthy families" (Wharf,1988; p.195).

### Critical Ecologies of the Adolescent Parent

To set the context for assessing the ecological sensitivity of program models, it is necessary to identify briefly the critical ecologies of adolescent mothers. We will first focus on the adolescent mother and her child and examine the multiple contexts, both immediate and distant, in which their lives are embedded. Specifically, we will examine the family, partner, school, work, health care, neighborhood, ethnicity, and poverty systems.

#### *The Adolescent Microsystem*

Programs which address the critical systems of the adolescent must consider the developmental impact of childrearing at an early age. Parenting would not be so traumatic except for the fact that it interrupts the adolescent's development (Brooks-Gunn, Petersen, & Eichorn, 1985). Motherhood before the age of 18 makes adolescent mothers feel overburdened (Freeman and

Rickels, 1993); affects their personal efficacy (McLaughlin & Micklin, 1983); renders them unable to maintain intimate relationships as evidenced by their high divorce rates (Teti & Lamb, 1989); lowers their self-esteem, and impairs their academic and non-academic school performance (Simmons, Burgeson, Carlton-Ford, & Blyth, 1987). At a minimum, ecologically sensitive programs support the adolescent parent in dealing with these potential changes.

Parenting by adolescents impacts their children as well, especially those born into low-income families. Economically disadvantaged children of adolescent parents are more likely to have difficulties in their school, in social relationships, and in their emotional well-being (Felner, 1984; Furstenberg et al., 1987). Providing social support for mothers can help improve mother/child attachment and increase the possibility of the infants being more secure (Crockenberg, 1981). These findings challenge programs to assist adolescents in maintaining ecologies that will support their own and their children's developmental needs.

### *The Family Microsystem*

The adolescent's family of origin is usually the most important microsystem in her life and greatly affects her development. A majority, especially younger and African American adolescents, tend to live with immediate family members (Fernandez, Ruch-Ross, & Montague, 1993; Mott & Maxwell, 1981). Even adolescents who are married or who report they are close to their partners usually turn to their families of origin before consulting their significant other (Lamb, 1988).

Adolescent mothers who live with their families are less likely to be on welfare, to have dropped out of school, and to be unemployed (Marsiglio, 1987). Parents' expectation that their daughters will graduate from high school is also an important determinant of whether or not she will finish school (Williams, 1991). Not only do families provide emotional and financial support, but they fulfill more practical needs like childcare, and thereby remove a major obstacle to completing school and/or becoming employed (Crockenberg, 1981). Strong ethnic/cultural family networks can also ameliorate the conflict between acculturation and personal identity which can impede the

developmental process. "When acculturation is made possible by openness of the dominant culture and complementarity with minority culture, children tend to thrive-literally getting the best of both worlds" (Garbarino & Kostelny, 1992; p. 193).

Children of adolescent mothers who live with their mothers and grandmothers have better behavioral and educational outcomes than those who live apart from grandmothers. This finding applies irrespective of whether the adolescent mothers' husbands or boyfriends are present in the home (Furstenberg, et al., 1987). "As individuals, single parents may be excellent caregivers. But as microsystems, their households may be insufficient, unless they are augmented from the outside to produce a fuller, richer range of roles, activities, and relationships for the child to use in his or her development" (Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992; p.39). As Cochran (1988) argues, if programs can help protect the family system, then the family will be able to adequately provide for the needs of its members.

#### *The Partner Or Husband Microsystem*

Contrary to stereotypes, many adolescent mothers maintain a relationship with the fathers of their children (Fernandez et al., 1993; Elster & Lamb, 1986), even if the relationships are not long-term. Yet an adolescent's continued involvement with her child's father could have long-term negative outcomes for mother and child. When adolescents are involved with their children's fathers they tend to exclude other critical microsystems, such as family, friends, role models, and other peer groups, from their lives (Rickel, 1989). Some of the negative consequences of the fathers' involvement could stem from the difficulties the fathers themselves face in school, at work, and in other areas of their lives (Marsiglio, 1987).

Whether the child's father is involved with the adolescent mother or not (either in or outside of marriage), few programs focus directly on the relationship between the adolescent mother and her partner, let alone directly providing services to the father of her child (Elster & Lamb, 1986). Ecologically based programs will assist in strengthening the relationship among the adolescent mother, her child, and the child's father. Such a program component may provide the best developmental outcome for mother and child (Parke, Power & Fisher, 1980).

*School, Work, and Health Care Mesosystems*

Analyses of the mesosystem ecology of the adolescent generally focus on the interrelations between the secondary "outside" systems (school, work, health care, and other service agencies) and the microsystem of the adolescent. School and work impact the adolescent at a mesosystems level while they impact her child indirectly at an exosystem level, and later as a mesosystem when the child is ready for school and work. Although these systems are important in themselves, it is when these mesosystems and microsystems begin to work together that the result is most beneficial for mother and child (Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992).

An adolescent mother's success in school spills over into her other microsystem relationships. Staying in school not only gets her a high school diploma, it also allows her the opportunity to maintain contact with peers and to continue her own development (McLaughlin, Manninen, & Wings, 1988). When a single mother has a post-high school education, her child is also likely to perform better in school (Cochran, 1988). Further, those pregnant or parenting adolescents who are working are more likely to be in low paying jobs, and to be less satisfied with their jobs than same age females with no children (Card & Wise, 1978). Yet, not being in school or not working significantly increases chances of a subsequent pregnancy (Ruch-Ross, Jones, & Musick, 1992).

Being pregnant requires that adolescents take steps to ensure their health and that of their babies. Improper nutrition, lack of knowledge about sources of prenatal care, transportation and financial difficulties, and depression are some health related risks adolescents face (Harvey and Faber, 1993). Since many adolescents are still in school or working at low-paying jobs, AFDC and/or WIC may be the only source of health care and food. Some have to set up their own households to receive AFDC benefits (Gold and Kenney, 1985). It is important that programs find ways to help adolescents negotiate these mesosystems.

*The Neighborhood Exosystem*

At another level, the neighborhood or communities in which adolescent parents live can critically impact them at many different levels. Garbarino & Abramowitz (1992) summarize the ecological salience of neighborhoods: "A strong and healthy neighborhood enhances development by providing the kind of

multiple connections and multiple situations for children that permit them to make the best use of their intellectual and social resources" (p. 49). Living in a neighborhood with few professional or managerial workers is associated with higher rates of adolescent non-marital births and early school leaving (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Katoklebanov, & Sealand, 1993). Most adolescents who are pregnant and decide to keep their child live in neighborhoods with significant numbers of low-income, single-parent households (Williams, 1991). Being surrounded by single-parent homes and adolescent parents, many expect that they will have a child before marrying (Freeman & Rickels, 1993). Crane (1991) calls this phenomenon the epidemic impact of ghettos and neighborhoods on dropping out of school and teenage childbearing.

Further, adolescent mothers tend to be socially isolated throughout their lives, with few belonging to any community or religious organizations (Williams, 1991). Social isolation has also been found to reduce the length of participation of high-risk mothers in intervention programs (Powell, 1984). Hence, ecologically sensitive programs will have to be cognizant of neighborhood or community effects on adolescent parenting.

### *Macrosystem Impacts*

Ethnicity and poverty are two macrosystem factors that are critical in the lives of many adolescent parents. The nested nature of the relationships between the microsystems and these distant systems suggest that the impact of ethnicity and poverty will be seen at all system levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Ethnic and social class differences are found in the development of the adolescent mother and child, in her relationships with her parents, partner, school and work environments, and in the impact of her neighborhood.

For women from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, adolescent childbearing has been found to represent an alternative pathway to adulthood (Upchurch, 1993). Yet, poverty is a potential cause for developmental risk (Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992). Brooks-Gunn, et al. (1993) found that the presence of affluent neighbors improves developmental outcomes for children of all socio-economic statuses. "It is clear that the best hope for the teenage mother, baby and any future

children is a setting in which there are rich developmental possibilities for both mother and infant" (Fisher, 1984; p.62).

Ethnic differences are also found in the relationship between the adolescent and her diverse ecologies. For example, a Hispanic adolescent mother is more likely than a black or white adolescent to leave her family and get married or to live with her child's father at the time of conception. The Hispanic mother is also the least likely to finish school (Salguero, 1984). In contrast, black mothers are more likely to live with and to receive financial, emotional, and childcare support from their families than whites or Hispanics. The continued familial support available to black adolescents may explain why they are more likely to finish high school, even if they are more likely than whites or Hispanics to have a child while in high school (Freeman & Rickels, 1993).

The contradictory impact of family involvement for different adolescents can be reconciled by examining the ethnic differences in the implications of having a child for the adolescents' sense of self. Black adolescents found "motherhood (was) self-affirming", but not at the exclusion of school and work (Williams, 1991). Williams (1991) also found pregnancy to bring a black adolescent closer to her mother. Mothers are often reported to be role models in the decision of black adolescents not to terminate their pregnancies. In contrast, for many Hispanic adolescents, having a child means gaining equality with, and independence from, their mothers; as a result, a pregnancy tends to isolate a Hispanic adolescent from familial supports that could potentially help her in finishing school (Salguero, 1984).

There are also ethnic differences in adolescent mothers' relationships with their partners. Two-thirds of white teens and 97% of black adolescents got pregnant while not married (Furstenberg et al., 1987). White adolescents are more likely than blacks to marry during pregnancy; blacks are more likely than whites to separate if they do marry (Billy, Landale, & McLaughlin, 1986; Teti & Lamb, 1989).

Thus, the relevance of poverty and ethnicity must be addressed at multiple system levels. Yet, while much attention has been paid to ethnicity and poverty, research has failed, for the most part, to examine other critical societal influences, such as values, political climate, and public policy, on the negative life

courses of many adolescent parents. Rhode & Lawson (1993) believe that "(i)nsufficient attention has focused on the societal level, in structures that offer female adolescents 'too little too late': too little reason to stay in school, too little assistance in birth control, too little opportunity for childcare, health services, vocational training or decent jobs, and too little understanding of the responsibilities of single parenthood" (p.302). The United States does not provide sex education, contraceptive services, and childcare at the same level as other developed countries which also have lower levels of adolescent pregnancy and childbearing (Jones, Forrest, Goldman, Henshaw, Lincoln, Rosoff, Westoff, & Wuff, 1985).

### Program Models

Given the importance of these systems in understanding the causes and impact of adolescent pregnancy, the next step is to examine some common program models and to assess their ecological sensitivity. Specifically, four of the most frequently used program models—home, school, health care, and other service agency based programs—will be discussed.

#### *Microsystem-Focused Program Models:*

##### *A Case Management Approach Through Home Visiting*

Through outreach and case management, home visitors use a personalized approach to help adolescents negotiate the complicated life ecologies which may jeopardize their positive development and life outcomes (Powell, 1989). The home visitor often helps the whole family adjust to the addition of a new family member, increasing the possibility that the adolescent mother can remain at her parental home, if that is deemed to be a more stable environment than being on their own. Home visitors can also help the adolescent work out issues with her child's father (Olds, 1990), and assist the adolescent in negotiating her relationship with "outside" agencies that provide childcare, job counseling, mentoring and family counseling (Dryfoos, 1988). In ecological terminology, the home visitor acts as a direct liaison between the adolescent and both the immediate microsystems and the secondary systems in her life.

*Mesosystem-Focused Programs: Agency Based*

Addressing all the special needs of adolescent mothers in the school, work, health care, and other service agency systems may be beyond the scope of the home visitor. Hence, there is need for mesosystem based programs that the adolescent can access either directly or with the help of a home visitor.

*School-Based Programs.* These programs address the unique needs of adolescent mother-students and help them negotiate the school mesosystem along with their parental roles. Successful school-based programs generally provide counseling, medical assistance, parenting classes and in some cases, child care (Weatherley, Perlman, Levine, & Klerman, 1986). Powell (1989) suggests that connections between school and home are even more important for non-Anglo and poor children, particularly when there are discrepancies in cultural values and expectations between the home and school.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the mesosystem relationship, such as that between the school and home, can be strengthened if there is goal compatibility, supportive linkages, staff overlap, and open, face-to-face communication between the two settings. In short, supportive school programs can fulfill two purposes: one, they help the adolescent continue her development; and two, they help her negotiate the meso- and exosystems and consequently help her to integrate her student and parent roles successfully.

*Health Care-Based Programs.* Hospital or health care-based systems usually are the first mesosystems that adolescents encounter when they discover they are pregnant. Although the primary focus of these programs is on microsystem-level outcomes (preventing low birth weight babies, premature births and infant mortality, delaying subsequent pregnancies, etc.), their relationship with the adolescent and her child often takes on a mesosystem twist. For example, helping the adolescent mother negotiate her relationships with obstetricians and gynecologists becomes an important part of these programs (Brooks-Gunn, McCormick & Heagarty, 1988).

Independent health programs providing services in partnership with the school system is an example of how the health needs



of adolescents can most effectively be addressed at a mesosystem level. For many poor adolescents, school-based (located in schools) or school-linked (located near schools) clinics are the only source of much needed health care (Kirby, Waszak, & Ziegler, 1991).

*Other Service Programs.* Another context in which mesosystem type services are provided include social service, mental health, and public health agencies. An example is the REAP (Resources and Education for Adolescent Parents) program which operates out of the Department of Social Services in Fresno, California, and provides income assistance, one-on-one support through case-workers, and referrals to other agencies (Weatherley, Perlman, Levine, & Klerman, 1985). Community satellite health clinics, administered by Harlem Hospital, provide outreach services, transportation allowance, and information on child-rearing and health (Brooks-Gunn, et al., 1988).

*Summary.* The programs examined thus far address different critical systems in the lives of adolescent parents. The home visiting program seems best suited to the microsystems level, because it offers a personal approach and immediate access and knowledge to all family members involved. However, the home visitor's role in helping the adolescent mother deal with her mesosystem relationships are limited. School-based programs help the adolescent negotiate and accomplish her educational and occupational goals. But even they may have little or no chance to mediate difficult situations in the adolescent's family or personal life which may adversely affect her ability to accomplish her mesosystem goals. Similarly, health-based programs generally do little to provide assistance in negotiating changes in the adolescent's family, school, work, and neighborhood. Besides, the program models reviewed above seldom deal with the exosystems and macrosystems of the adolescents, such as poverty, lack of quality child care, of affordable housing, and of transportation, issues that ecologically sensitive programs serving low-income pregnant adolescents must be prepared to address.

#### The Ounce of Prevention Fund Programs: Multiple Layers of Partnerships

While it may not be realistic or feasible for one program to directly provide all the services an adolescent needs, an option

may be a partnership model that links a variety of programs, each of which concentrates on different critical systems. The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Chicago, Illinois, and its programs for adolescents, offer a model for such partnerships. The Ounce enters into partnerships with various agencies to address, in an ecologically sensitive manner, the immediate and distant critical systems in the lives of low-income children, adolescents, and their families. Ounce partnerships are a consortium of services that program participants can tap into as they negotiate the critical systems that impact their lives. These partnerships provide an excellent case study in implementing the ecological approach.<sup>1</sup>

The Ounce program philosophy recognizes that no single agency or program can deal effectively with the complex problems faced by children and their families. It is also recognized that different aspects of an individual's successes and challenges (be they in relationships, education, employment, parenting, or child rearing) are interconnected; consequently, attempts to assist the individual can be more effective if programs are complementary. Also, in an era of diminished resources, collaboration among agencies is an imperative in order to pool and maximize existing resources and to eliminate duplication. In short, Ounce partnerships attempt to make programs more responsive to the complex problems that individuals and families face.

Many Ounce sponsored programs provide direct services at the micro-system level to adolescents, children, and families. Further, in the process of providing direct services, Ounce programs engage in and facilitate several layers of partnerships. Some of the significant layers are direct and indirect liaisons with other agencies, partnerships through expanded scope of services, and collaboration among programs.

### *Microsystem Services*

The Parents Too Soon (PTS) programs sponsored by the Ounce provide direct intervention services, such as home visits, parent support groups, developmental assessments for children, and child care, which strengthen the microsystems of parent-child and family relationships. They also provide prevention services which include promoting school success, building self-esteem and social skills, delaying sexual activity, and discouraging other high-risk behaviors. Funded through the Illinois Department of Children

and Family Services (DCFS), the primary program goals are to deter teen pregnancy and to support adolescent parents. The Ounce serves as fiscal agent and offers training and technical assistance to 37 agencies that provide PTS services in diverse urban and rural populations across the state.

#### *Direct Liaison with Mesosystems*

Through services such as GED training, access to prenatal care, and after school enrichment opportunities, PTS programs directly link adolescents with the critical mesosystems of schools, employment, and health care agencies. Further, by providing training and technical assistance to community agencies (a meso-system), the Ounce supports the partnerships between agencies and their program participants.

#### *Indirect Liaison with Exosystems and Macrosystems*

The networks between the Ounce, exosystems (such as the policymakers), and macrosystems (such as the communities) that indirectly impact children, adolescents, and their families represent yet another layer of partnership. The KidsPEPP (Kids Public Education and Policy Project) division of the Ounce concentrates on advocacy and reform of policies that impact participants as well as ensuring adequate funding for programs. The Ounce conducts its own public education efforts and forms coalitions with other children's advocates. The Problem Resolution Office (PRO) at the Ounce, in partnership with the Illinois Governor's Office, attempts to make government (exosystem) more responsive to participants' needs, through the implementation of recommended administrative policy and procedural changes.

The Research and Evaluation division of the Ounce indirectly links its participants to another exosystem, the academic community. The scientific evidence accumulated on service provision and on program effectiveness enables the Ounce, directly and through the academic community, to shape policies and funding (another set of exosystems) for programs.

Further, the Ounce also serves as an indirect liaison between DCFS, an exosystem in this instance, and the community, its adolescents and their families. Operating PTS programs through

community agencies ensures that services are tailored to community needs and builds on community strengths. To ensure the effectiveness of the partnership model and to keep pace with changes in the demographics of the population in Illinois, the Ounce also conducts periodic assessments. A recently completed competitive bidding process for the delivery of PTS services resulted in building new partnerships in previously underserved areas of the state and in expanding outreach to the Latino community. "It also gave us the opportunity to strengthen the implementation of our program guidelines and ensure that program goals are met" (The Ounce of Prevention Fund 1993; p.6).

### *Partnerships Through Expanded Scope of Services*

Yet another aspect of Ounce partnership is found in instances where Ounce programs have expanded their scope to provide services that have traditionally been the purview of other systems. For example, the Ounce, through its Toward Teen Health division, operates school-based adolescent health centers in three of Chicago's most economically depressed communities. These health clinics are often the only source of medical care for students. The after-school prevention programs (Peer Power for girls and ADAM or Awareness and Development for Adolescent Males) work towards raising self-esteem, developing social skills, promoting school achievement, and discouraging early sexual activity and other high risk behavior such as drug and alcohol use. The clinic health educators and teachers who facilitate the discussion groups and other activities enable the school system to provide individual support services to students, their families and communities that go beyond the traditional business of teaching. By addressing the social and emotional needs of students, these support services better prepare students to learn in the classroom.

### *Collaboration Among Programs*

Another layer of partnership is found in the collaborations among Ounce programs (mesosystems), between Ounce programs and systems outside the Ounce, and among outside systems. Collaboration between the Ounce's Peer Power/ ADAM programs and school-based clinics (mesosystems) discussed above offer students continuous service beginning early in their

sixth grade and continuing on to their high school years. The Peer Power/ADAM and school-based clinic programs also offer collaboration possibilities among mesosystems outside the Ounce, such as between high schools and elementary schools in which they are located, and between schools and health care systems. Partnerships have also been established with residents in public housing developments and the Chicago Housing Authority to address problems inherent in the neighborhood system. Ultimately, the goal of such partnerships is to address "the ways in which family, friends, schools, and communities transmit the norms, values, and expectations which give different meanings to girls' developmental experiences" (Sarigiani, Camarena, & Petersen, 1993; p.139).

### Effectiveness of Ounce Programs

Participation in Ounce programs has resulted in positive outcomes for adolescent mothers and their children as well as cost savings for the communities funding these programs. A one-year outcome evaluation of PTS participants during 1985–1987 found the following: compared to a comparable national sample of teenage mothers drawn from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), Ounce participants were a third less likely to have had a subsequent pregnancy, were 3.4 times more likely to be enrolled in school, and were 1.5 times more likely to be employed after a year of being in the program (Ruch-Ross, et al., 1992).

These and other outcomes have also been estimated to involve significant cost savings<sup>2</sup>. A one-year subsequent pregnancy rate of just 10.7% among PTS program participants was estimated to save up to \$5.1 million in one year<sup>3</sup>. Consistent contraceptive use is one reason for the relatively low subsequent pregnancy rate. Nearly three-quarters of PTS participants who had been in the program for one year had reported using birth control at last intercourse. This figure compares favorably with the 54% of Project Redirection's participants who used birth control regularly after one year in the program (Polit & Kahn, 1985). Contraceptive use figures were even lower at 45% among a comparison group of non-program adolescent parents in Project Redirection's analysis.

Further, six months after entering the PTS program, 75% of participants' children were up-to-date on immunization as opposed to only 41% of the children who were up-to-date when they entered the program. Considering that every dollar spent on childhood immunization saves the government \$10 in later medical costs, this accomplishment represents significant future cost savings.

### Conclusion

It is evident from this review that designing a program to meet the multiple needs of low-income adolescent mothers is a complex task. There are many critical systems in their lives that must be considered holistically. While much still needs to be done, Ounce Programs provide an excellent case study of the ecological approach in practice. They demonstrate the possibility of simultaneously addressing many critical systems.

It is also clear from this research that most ecologically sensitive programs address the microsystem and mesosystem influences on adolescent mothers. But more systematic emphasis is needed at the exosystem and macrosystems levels, especially the chronic economic poverty which negatively influences the development of the adolescent mother and her child. Following Bronfenbrenner's ecological tradition, the common goal that unifies programs at different system levels has to be one of helping the adolescent parent build a supportive ecology that can ensure the best developmental outcomes for her and her child.

### Notes

1. The 1992-93 Annual Report titled, "Partners For Change" will be the primary source of information for the case study. The Ounce's target population includes more than adolescents. Ounce programs are designed for environmentally at-risk children, adolescents, and their families, although a high proportion of the participants are adolescent parents and their children. For additional information about the history of the Ounce and its other ecologically sensitive programs, see Ounce of Prevention Fund, March 1993.
2. Data on cost savings associated with successful outcome among program participants were taken from The Ounce of Prevention Fund /Parents Too Soon Outcome Fact Sheets, June 1992.
3. The one-year subsequent rates for adolescent mothers in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth was 14.8% (Ruch-Ross, et al., 1992).

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## Book Reviews

Franklin E. Zimring and Gordon Hawkins, *Incapacitation: Penal Confinement and Restraint of Crime*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. \$27.95 hard cover.

For nearly thirty years, Gordon Hawkins and Franklin Zimring, either individually or collectively, have been providing the academic community with stimulating and insightful analyses of criminal justice policy and practice in the United States. Consistently, these scholars produce works that are well researched, concisely written, and have clearly stated positions. They are able to explain complex concepts in ways that enhance understanding. Their writings serve as knowledge platforms that engender lively and provocative classroom discussions as well as debates in the applied criminal justice community. *Incapacitation: Penal Confinement and Restraint of Crime*, the authors' present collaborative work, is no exception.

The central theme of *Incapacitation* is plainly stated in the first sentence of the book's preface: "Of all the justifications for criminal punishment, the desire to incapacitate is the least complicated, the least studied, and often the most important." The authors go on to skillfully identify relevant literature, synthesize critical cogent issues on the use of incapacitation in the United States, outline policy research directions of the future, and identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in knowledge acquisition and research.

The book is organized into three main sections. Section I, entitled "Concepts," consists of four chapters that identify key ideas, paradigms, ideology and theories of incapacitation. The first chapter briefly traces the evolution of key 1970s justice paradigms of imprisonment, rehabilitation and incapacitation, then connects these to academic research. Selective incapacitation is discussed in the next chapter. In it, the authors trace incapacitation from the eighteenth century writings of Jeremy Bentham through the 1970s era of LEAA policy influence to the Greenwood, Blumstein and National Academy of Science research of the early 1980s. In the third chapter the authors discuss "theory" in relationship to the use of incapacitation. The fourth chapter concludes this

section by focusing on issues of jurisprudence and due process of law.

Section II, entitled "Research," includes Chapters 5 and 6. In these, the authors first critically evaluate the utility of three methods of research that were used generally in the 1980s to assess "effects of imprisonment:" survey, official-record studies and community-level studies. Then, the authors focus on California crime research to illustrate the present inadequacies of crime and incapacitation policy research. The authors conclude that there is a continuing need for multiple measures of community level research, especially relationships between crime rates and crime policies. They also suggest four areas for substantive future research into the issue of incapacitation: "(1) identification of different patterns for different crime and offender types; (2) the documentation of patterns over time in individual offense frequencies; (3) the detection of variations in individual crime rates that are associated with large shifts in criminal justice policy, and (4) the study of incapacitation and specific offenses."

Section III of the book is entitled "Policy" and consists of Chapters 7 and 8. The first examines the policy issues of cost and benefit incapacitation by critically analyzing several different studies conducted by different academic disciplines. The authors conclude that the 1980s research which focused on "costs and benefits of imprisonment in dollar terms" resulted in criminal justice studies taking "a significant step backwards." The concluding chapter to the book is organized into four themes: (1) placing incapacitation in its socio-political context; (2) valuating the utility of incapacitation in dealing with drug and property type crimes; (3) examining some of the factors and influences that limit the use of imprisonment, and (4) the future of incarceration and incapacitation policy and research. The authors conclude that future scholars will focus on selective, rather than on collective incapacitation. They also argue that incarceration, in general, will occupy a "less dominant position" in criminal justice policy making than it has in the past.

This book is most suited for criminal justice policy scholars and graduate level courses in criminal justice, political or social policy. It may also be useful in selected advanced undergraduate classes as well, but would not be appropriate for general

undergraduate usage. The authors presume that the reader has a thorough background and understanding of: (1) the history of American criminal justice and judicial sentencing policy, especially since the 1970s; (2) criminal justice practice and operations; and (3) criminal justice research and policy debate. They also presume that the reader has a substantial background in sociological theory, social-governmental policy and research methods. Without this substantial background, many readers would simply not comprehend the complex issues that our presented.

*Incapacitation* is a book written from the ideological perspective of academic sociology with which some scholars may disagree. This perspective leads the authors to some inconsistencies in their analyses. For example, on one hand the authors lament the fact that little meaningful applied policy research on incapacitation was either conducted or published in the late 1970s and 1980s. Yet, the authors fail to recognize the fact that sociological academic values discourage applied research, prevent its funding and inhibit its publication in scholarly sociology dominated journals—conditions that continue today.

Despite its few weaknesses, *Incapacitation* is an example of outstanding academic scholarship. Its thoughtful reading and discussion should be considered mandatory for anyone interested in criminal justice policy in the United States and the role that penal incarceration will take in the future.

William G. Archambeault  
Louisiana State University

Kathleen Barry, *The Prostitution of Sexuality*, New York: New York University Press, 1995, \$24.95 hardcover.

Prostitution, like pornography, is one of those complex issues that painfully divides the women's movement—not surprisingly, given its explosive mix of sexuality, class, race and nationality. Feminists hold two basic positions on prostitution: first, it is a legitimate means for women to earn a living and should be decriminalized, and second, it is inherently exploitative of women and must be abolished. Kathleen Barry belongs firmly in the second camp, and has written a passionate argument for ending

undergraduate usage. The authors presume that the reader has a thorough background and understanding of: (1) the history of American criminal justice and judicial sentencing policy, especially since the 1970s; (2) criminal justice practice and operations; and (3) criminal justice research and policy debate. They also presume that the reader has a substantial background in sociological theory, social-governmental policy and research methods. Without this substantial background, many readers would simply not comprehend the complex issues that our presented.

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what she calls "the prostitution of sexuality"—i.e., prostitution itself and the patriarchal exploitation of sexuality on which it is based.

This is Barry's second book about this subject; her influential *Female Sexual Slavery*, published in 1979, brought her to prominence in national and international movements against pornography and prostitution. Her two books overlap considerably, but this new work is more tightly focussed and empirically based, drawing on more than a decade of additional research and activism. Its core position is provocative yet compelling: prostitution, rooted in male power over women, is inherently and always exploitative. "When the human being is reduced to a body, objectified to sexually service another, whether or not there is consent, violation of the human being has taken place." Evidence for the damaging effects of prostitution comes from studies in the U.S. and other countries, especially the third world, where sexual exploitation is tightly linked with economic and racial exploitation.

Barry's discussion of the close ties between prostitution, the trafficking in women, and economic development in Asia is particularly forceful. She explains how, under rapid industrialization, changes in family structure and rural-to-urban female migration lead to increased dependency on prostitution industries "both as a source of foreign exchange through sex tourism and as a means of siphoning women off from the developing labor force." Legitimation of these industries is found by looking to European nations where prostitution and sex industries have been legalized. This "industrialization of sex" is built on the economic and social vulnerability of women, rooted in both feudal and modern conditions. Prostitution, Barry argues, "may well be among the high costs women pay for their country's development."

To those who argue that prostitution can be a freely chosen activity or occupation ("sex work"), Barry retorts: "If the act exploits, it is in itself destructive of human life, well-being, integrity, and dignity. That is violation. And when it is gendered, repeated over and over in and on woman after woman, that is oppression." Supporting the right of women to be prostitutes is like defending abusive marriages. Thus, for Barry, there is no distinction between "free" and "forced" prostitution, a change in the position taken



in her first book when, she explains, she was still mired in an individualistic, market-oriented conception of human rights.

Barry reviews the impact of the three legal strategies regarding prostitution: prohibition, regulation, and abolition—i.e., decriminalization. Since all nations are patriarchal, she argues, women lose no matter which strategy is taken, whether through harassment by law enforcement and regulatory authorities, or brutalization by pimps and organized crime. She advocates an alternative “feminist human-rights” approach which punishes customers and pimps while helping prostitutes move into more acceptable work.

The book ends with a call for the United Nations to adopt the Convention Against Sexual Exploitation, a document modeled after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and developed by non-governmental organizations and women’s groups from around the world. The Convention defines sexual exploitation broadly: female infanticide, wife/widow murder, woman battering, pornography, prostitution, genital mutilation, female seclusion, dowry and bride price, sexual harassment, rape, incest, and sexual abuse and torture. Among other requirements, nations would be urged to criminalize the customers of prostitution but not the prostitutes, prohibit sex tourism and mail-order-bride selling, and enact laws that hold liable those who produce and distribute pornography.

Barry’s arguments against sexual exploitation are powerful, but they are marred by a tendency to collapse complex matters into simplistic and absolutist categories: prostitution equals violence equals pornography equals sex. For example, she speaks of “sex itself as violation of women, whether or not there is consent,” and criticizes the “No Means No” campaign against sexual violence for suggesting “that when women do not say no, when women actively consent, they are not violated.” Wives who are controlled by their husbands, she asserts, are just as much sexual slaves (and she uses this term literally) as prostitutes controlled by their pimps. In a similar vein she argues against using consent and force to separate prostitution from rape. “In marriage, in dating, and in rape, what women have to prove is not that they were abused but that they are not whores, that is, that they are not sexed bodies.” Since patriarchy defines every woman as a sexed

body, according to Barry, marriage, dating, rape and prostitution become indistinguishable, except by degree of exploitation. Finally, she dismisses out of hand those anti-censorship feminists and other "sexual liberals" who believe that state power should not be used to restrict sexual expression.

Despite these flaws, the book is a serious contribution to a complex and important problem. Barry offers an analysis well grounded in feminist theory and principles, and provides a concrete strategy to address female oppression on a world-wide level. For these reasons, her book merits close attention.

Beth Cagan  
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Ann Goetting and Sarah Fenstermaker (Eds.) *Individual Voices, Collective Vision: Fifty Years of Women in Sociology*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995. \$49.95 hardcover, \$18.95 papercover.

If there were ever any doubt about the diversity of women's experiences—even within academic sociology—*Individual Voices, Collective Vision* surely puts it to rest. The recollections of eighteen senior women are almost breath-taking in their variety. Yet, as the title of the volume suggests, shared threads emerge quite clearly from these autobiographies. In her conclusion, Sarah Fenstermaker refers to these common themes as "living outside" (the marginality that these women—and many sociologists—experienced early in their lives) and "living inside" (their struggles to succeed in the often unfriendly world of academia). The end result, as Ann Goetting suggests in her introduction, *is* to give voice to women's reality. Rather than simply summarize each writer's chapter, I hope to describe some of the diversity and commonality of this reality.

First, the diversity. The contours of these women's lives vary widely, both in their youth and as adults. Gaye Tuchman, for example, writes in great detail of the Sugarman Family Circle, and laments its diminution: "No one phones to say that my grandfather's first cousin's granddaughter has had a child" (304). The lives and families of several of the women who wrote for this collection

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were scarred by the Holocaust; Shulamit Reinharz describes the near annihilation of her parents' relatives. Suzanne Keller had two sets of parents: her "peasant parents," with whom she spent the first few years of her life, and her biological Austrian parents, with whom she fled the tide of Naziism. (Already, of course, you see one of the common threads amongst varied family circumstances: several writers, either with their parents or on their own, came to the U.S. from other countries.)

Few of these women had the sort of linear career that Goetting describes as typically male, and the non-linearities are legion. Datha Brack began in nursing training; she, Beth Hess, and Helena Lopata all took substantial time to be full-time mothers and homemakers. Janet Lever and Elaine Hall traversed the most circuitous paths, I think. While most of these women experienced obstacles and diversions along the way, none but Lever co-hosted a show on the Playboy Channel called "Women on Sex." And only Hall spent fifteen years wandering the U.S., taking odd jobs when she needed funds (work that informed her later research on waiting tables).

Now, the commonality. I have already hinted at several shared themes: immigration, traditional women's roles on the way to academia, careers characterized by twists and turns, fits and starts. But there is more, much more. As Fenstermaker notes, a sense of marginality is common among sociologists, and there are no exceptions here. I would argue that marginality based on sex is the central theme of this collection: no writer came through college, graduate school, and employment without some sense of being an outsider *because she was a woman*. But additional dimensions of difference imbued their lives. Nationalities other than U.S. (Hannah Wartenberg, Britta Fischer, Keller, Martha Gimenez, Lopata) and even region within the U.S. (Jane Prather, a non-Southerner raised in Arkansas) stood some of these women apart. For Reinharz and Pamela Roby, most clearly, class standing lower than that of their peers in the neighborhood and at college shaped their visions. And many of these women experienced marginality for combining traditional women's roles (being wives and mothers) with graduate training and professional sociology. Some revealed in their distinctiveness: Fischer enjoyed the "near-stardom" of being a foreigner in the U.S., and Reinharz writes of "pleasant

marginality" in both the U.S. and Israel. Pleasant or not, being outsiders gave sociological insights before most of these writers knew the discipline existed.

The marginality that accompanied motherhood crosscuts a second common theme in these writings. Several women, as children or adolescents, examined the lives of women kin and found them wanting. Hall, Linda Holmstrom, and Roby explicitly write of rejecting their image of the traditional woman. Roby believed that her "foremothers had paid dearly when they abandoned careers for family. Not only did they lose work they enjoyed, they lost control of their lives as well" (322). Hall resolved to be the "Unwomanly Person" (205).

Third, none of the writers began college with an express interest in sociology as a discipline. Hess calls herself "an accidental sociologist;" Diane Margolis chose graduate school in sociology because all the books she was reading were authored by sociologists; Helen Hacker writes of "slouching toward sociology." (To digress: Fenstermaker notes that she felt both connected *and* unconnected to the experiences described in the collection. That simultaneity struck home when I read that Hacker taught at Randolph-Macon Woman's College; the conservatism of the college and town appalled Hacker. On that campus, 30 years later, I encountered a mentor—herself an alumna of R-MWC—who was the spark for my career in sociology.)

Finally, these sociologists were, early on, inured to gender inequality. Almost to a woman, they write that even upon recognition of inequities based on sex, they had no "feminist framework" (Goetting's phrase) with which to analyze their experiences. Judy Long is most pithy, describing her denial of tenure at Cornell: "*I think that was the last time I didn't get it*" (120; emphasis in original). Eventually, all "got it," and saw that womanhood disadvantaged them in academia. Further, their recollections illustrate a point made by Coramae Mann: "the many roles of professor for a woman are not the same as those of a man" (Mann, 282). Thankfully, these women had the energy to write of the ways in which they and their roles are distinct.

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Steven Fraser, ed., *The Bell Curve Wars: Race, Intelligence and the Future of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

One day in 1984 I squeezed into a standing-room-only seminar at the Heritage Foundation to hear an author whose work was the talk of Washington and would dominate the domestic policy debate for the remainder of the decade. The author was Charles Murray; his book: *Losing Ground*. Conservatives in the audience marveled at Murray's audacity; liberals were flummoxed. Through selective use of data and a "thought experiment" (eliminating public assistance for the employable), Murray reframed the welfare reform debate in such a way that liberals have yet to recover.

Now, ten years later, Murray has presented a sequel, *The Bell Curve* which he coauthored with Richard Herrnstein who died shortly before the book appeared. Once again, artful promotion is serving Murray well; in a feature magazine article *The New York Times* labeled him "the most dangerous conservative in America", and *The New Republic* gave him a centerfold opportunity to summarize the book's contents. Once again, Murray uses ersatz thinking to construct a sinister plot: intelligence determines socio-economic success and disparities along racial lines are dividing American culture into a white "cognitive elite" which is fated to rule over a black underclass.

Steven Fraser's *The Bell Curve Wars* is the liberal response to Murray and Herrnstein. In this anthology, 19 essays by prominent intellectuals rebut various features of *The Bell Curve*. The relatively rapid appearance of the book suggests that Fraser was not about to let Murray go unchallenged. But the contents of *The Bell Curve Wars* are uneven, suggesting haste in the project, a problem that continues to dog the American Left.

Several of the essays Fraser has chosen are gems. Stephen Jay Gould, Howard Gardner, and Richard Nisbett succinctly point out the substantial flaws of *The Bell Curve*, a book that would not pass muster in a good graduate research course, let alone appear on the pages of the refereed professional literature. The essays by Jacqueline Jones, Andrew Hacker, and Randall Kennedy reveal a restrained rage as counterattack to the corrosive consequences of Murray and Herrnstein's work in light of the nation's tentative

progress in racial justice. In an effort to provide balance, essays by conservatives are included, and it is noteworthy that Thomas Sowell and Nathan Glazer express reservations about the analysis of Murray and Herrnstein. The pieces by Martin Peretz, Leon Wieseltier, and Michael Lind are particularly strong and in the best tradition of American intellectual criticism. Interestingly, five of the essays Fraser selected were penned by associates of *The New Republic*, a post facto apology for the gratis coverage afforded *The Bell Curve* in that magazine, perhaps.

The quality of several of the essays is such that *The Bell Curve Wars* could serve as an excellent supplement to a graduate social research course. Too often the research enterprise is couched as an ideal form of rationalization, independent of the historical, social, and ideological context in which it occurs. As critique of *The Bell Curve*, Fraser's collection is a poignant illustration of how badly research can be distorted; it serves as a prophylactic for what Randall Kennedy labels as Murray and Herrnstein's "big, sloppy, poisonous book" (p. 185).

Still, *The Bell Curve Wars* is disappointing. Since the late 1970s much of the nation's social infrastructure, in terms of both social policy and social science, has been under assault. *Losing Ground* and *The Bell Curve* illustrate the strategy that conservatives have deployed so successfully in their crusade to cashier welfare programs: target inadequately funded benefits for the minority poor and highlight bogus social thinking with specious data. When executed under the imprimatur of a well-endowed, Right-wing policy institute, the analysis is assured of quick dissemination through the electronic and print media, and the author becomes a prophet virtually overnight. This, of course, is what has happened with Murray. Through the machinations of the Manhattan Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and the American Enterprise Institute, he has become the American equivalent of the oracle at Delphi.

More than a decade later, the American Left has yet to formulate a coherent response to Murray and his confederates. At best, liberal intellectuals indulge in collective whining, corresponding among themselves through professional journals and progressive

magazines. The result is fragmented and inaccessible to the American people. All the while Charles Murray continues to surf the conservative ideological wave, in the process becoming a bona fide public intellectual.

Thus, it is tempting to speculate what Fraser could have produced had he convinced one of his better essayists to build *The Bell Curve Wars* into a post-conservative manifesto of American social policy. Certainly, many of the ingredients are here: Lind's location of *The Bell Curve* in the conservative ideological campaign; Nisbett's identification of research that contradicts Murray and Herrnstein (especially the work of psychologist Craig Ramey of the Abecedarian Project); the Western philosophical tradition outlined by Peretz and Wieseltier; and an American morality voiced by Jones and Kennedy. Such an endeavor could have generated a unitary affirmation of the future; as is, *The Bell Curve Wars* represents a fragmented reaction to the past.

The continuing failure of liberal intellectuals to respond convincingly to a still-cresting conservatism is predictable enough: 2004 . . . the crisis in entitlement spending is checked by sacrificing much-discredited poverty programs that had served the urban poor . . . movement conservatives purge the Right of mainstream Republicans like Jack Kemp and William Bennett . . . accordingly Democrats shift to the right to avoid being tarred as "welfare state liberals" . . . the intellectual Right boasts new magazines and cable channels to shape public philosophy . . . a third generation of young conservatives have cycled through think tanks into government service and out again . . . Charles Murray is poised to promote his most recent book through a nationwide series of talk shows and book signings . . .

The liberal response?

David Stoesz  
Virginia Commonwealth University



David Croteau, *Politics and the Class Divide: Working People and the Middle Class Left*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995. \$49.95 hardcover, \$19.95 papercover.

Arthur J. Vidich (Ed.), *The New Middle Classes: Life Styles, Status Claims and Political Orientations*. New York: New York University Press, 1995. \$50.00 hardcover, \$17.50 papercover.

The vigorous debates of the 1980s about the U.S. middle class are largely over. What was once a radical and politically charged notion is now orthodox: the middle class is shrinking. So widely accepted is this fact that business publications routinely contain advice on how to develop and market niche products or how to penetrate the growing working class market. In this context of a moving (shrinking) target, along come two new volumes on middle classes. Croteau's monograph is a compilation of his extensive field experiences in working class settings as well as an assessment of contemporary theory in political sociology. Vidich's collection reprints articles and essays on the "new" middle classes that have appeared across this century. While neither directly addresses the middle class decline issue, each has much to offer.

Croteau frames the presentation of his data with three theoretical chapters. The first explores the "promise of democracy" and laments the chronic lack of working class political participation. The second theory chapter is an overview of recent U.S. social movements that, according to Croteau, have championed middle-class issues to the exclusion of the working class. In the third chapter, Croteau reviews theories of political participation and lays the foundation of a cultural explanation for working-class nonparticipation. These theory chapters are followed by seven chapters which report Croteau's field work in rich detail. The bases for his data are field notes from five months employment in a mail and shipping operation and more than forty in-depth interviews with working class persons. The thesis that emerges from Croteau's imagery challenges conventional notions held by many about the working class. It is not that working class persons are apathetic or conservative. Rather, the working class makes different use of "cultural tools" than does the middle class. The alienating result for the working class is that political participa-

tion efforts fail. In contrast, the middle class affirms its standing and relative efficacy through its participatory tradition.

What is new about Vidich's assembled writings on the middle class? To answer this question, one must appreciate his historical and sociological orientation. While Croteau focuses on post-modern middle and working classes, Vidich builds a depiction of a modern middle class with special emphasis on the middle classes that emerged in Weimar Germany and in the post-war U.S. Classic statements by Lederer and Marschak (1926), Mills (1951), and Giddens (1975) are reprinted along with more recent essays by Vidich himself (1982), Burris (1986), and Hughey (1982). The most contemporary essay is a reprint of Evans' (1992) article on the black middle class. The utility of the collection is that it brings together classic and more contemporary writing on the middle class. Other than Evans' paper, however, the reader does not learn much about the condition of the middle class after the early 1980s.

Does the middle class have a future? Neither of these volumes treats the existence of the middle class itself as problematic. Like many writers, the authors here tend to assume that the middle class is a constant even as they describe finite resources and declining abundance. The strong points of the two books are the depth and breadth of their depictions of emerging and entrenched classes. These same strengths could also be a basis for articulating a theory of middle class decline. Indeed, it may well be that this genre of work shifts from theorization of emergence to explanations of decline.

Charles M. Tolbert  
Louisiana State University

Martha Albertson Fineman, *The Neutered Mother, the Sexual Family (and Other Twentieth Century Tragedies)*. New York: Routledge, 1995. \$16.95 papercover.

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conception of "alternative families" that encompass a broad spectrum of possible relationships. Advocates of such a perspective contend that the provision of supportive and loving relationship should be the measure of acceptance, not simply a male-female marital dyad, regardless of inequity and/or abusiveness. While supportive of this viewpoint, Fineman maintains that it is limited. Most nontraditional elective dyads are modeled after the sexual union as the primary intimate connection. "The new family formations," Fineman maintains, "merely replicate old concepts and beliefs and there is little fundamental challenge to the ways we think about the institution of the family and its relationship to society (7)." Her book is predicated on this premise, challenging the reader to think in radically new ways.

The neutered (ungendered) mother is defined as a contemporary legal oxymoron, a contradiction in terms generated by negative images of motherhood and mothering. While the gendered, mother-centered lives of most women continue in real life, the law renders children and the values of mothering (nurturing and care) suspect, based upon traditionally restricted notions of intimacy and connection reflected in the male/female sexual dyad. Presently, the paradox is being played out in the reformulation and reinforcement of historic control of fathers over children and families. The casting of single motherhood as pathological, a social disease and core cause of poverty, is a case in point. Speciously comparing the idealized nuclear family with those of troubled single mothers who were troubled even before they had children is the name of the game. The repudiation of this disingenuous "family values" perspective which is reshaping policy today lies at the heart of Fineman's thesis. Poverty and dependency are not caused by single motherhood, but by the conditions of women's social reality. Fineman makes a strong case that women's reality is clouded by the egalitarian family myth which is belied by statistics reflecting the way women and men *really* live.

Within the pages of this ground breaking book, Fineman refers to ideas she cites as *passee*, such as non-marital births regarded as illegitimate offspring, and the correlation of divorce with fear of impoverishment and social condemnation. Given the relatively short timespan between submission of the final draft and the date of publication, the reader is struck by the tenuousness of

women's place in society, as the country fast regresses to the stigmas of yesteryear. We have returned to the land of the "undeserving poor," if indeed we ever left. The reason, according to the Fineman hypothesis, is that the power men implicitly enjoyed within the context of indissoluble marriage and patriarchy has been threatened, as the norm of the male-defined, male-headed nuclear family, with heterosexual union at its center, is threatened. One would be hard pressed to refute either her premise or its ramifications.

Fineman points out that the nuclear family, with its sexual marital union, is the natural family under the law, thus dependency within that traditional structure is legally sanctioned, and the family entitled to legal protection and freedom from state control and intervention. Single mother families, on the other hand, do not constitute a complete or real family under the law, thus dependent or not, its members are not entitled to privacy, protection and the right to make demands upon society for certain accommodations and support.

Fineman calls for a re-visioning of family law whereby the primary legally sanctioned intimate connection is the Mother/Child dyad, rather than the sexual male/female union. She uses the terms, Mother and Child, metaphorically, maintaining that men and women can be Mothers (an idea not at odds with that of many feminists), and that the Child in the dyad stands for all forms of dependency that require physical caretaking, whether elderly, disabled, children, or people who are ill. She proposes two recommendations for legal reform and policy development in support of caretaking: " 1) the abolition of legal supports for the sexual family [and the abolition of marriage as a legal category], and 2) construction of protections for the nurturing unit of caretaker and dependent exemplified by the Mother/Child dyad (228)" With the law supporting the caretaking unit, rather than the sexual union, a healthier more just society for all (women, men and children) would be more likely.

Given the reality of the power structure and the formidable forces it can muster, it is difficult to think, even dream, of the radical restructuring of society that the coupling of Attorney Fineman's professional knowledge and feminist ideology has created so convincingly. But a sliver of light shines through when one

realizes that some semblance of the U.S. scenario is played out in every country of the world, and that the women of the world, bonding together to fashion a more just society for themselves and their families, are teaching well educated and indigenous illiterate women alike to learn about their existing laws, to assess them, and to develop new laws that better support the advancement of women and their human rights. Perhaps at this time a century from now, the world will not need another Martha Albertson Fineman to write about the family tragedies of the 21st century.

Janice Wood Wetzel  
Adelphi University



## BOOK NOTES

Robert Halpern, *Rebuilding the Inner City: A History of Neighborhood Initiatives to Address Poverty in the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995. \$49.50 hardcover, \$17.00 papercover.

Concern with inner-city decay, crime, drug addiction and poverty is hardly new. As Halpern shows in this important historical overview, these problems have been a characteristic feature of the urban landscape for many decades. In fact, social reformers first began to provide services to inner-city slum dwellers in the 19th century. The settlements were the first coordinated effort to address these problems. Since then, a bewildering variety of programs and projects with similar aims have been implemented. However, one hundred years after the heyday of the settlements, the problems of urban decline have not been solved. Indeed, there is significant evidence to show that they are worse than ever before. Inner-city areas are more deprived, violent, impoverished and desperate than they were even twenty years ago.

Halpern traces the history of efforts to improve inner city neighborhoods over the last century providing rich historical material as well as a comprehensive guide to the numerous programs which have been introduced at different times and places. The book is essentially a history and reference work and, as such, it will probably be the definitive work on the subject. However, the author also raises critical questions about the role of inner city revitalization programs in American social policy. While his commentary on the success and failure of urban community organizing is sadly too brief, it is insightful, offering an interpretation that will resonate with those who are skeptical of the view that the massive social problems facing America's cities can be solved through local effort. As Halpern points out, these efforts are highly compatible with prevailing views about poverty and deprivation in American culture. The impoverished urban community is viewed no differently from impoverished individuals. Exacerbated by racist ideology and entrenched segregationist tendencies, the inner city is exhorted to solve its own problems through its own efforts. But Halpern does not view community

organizing as a futile endeavor; indeed, he emphasizes both its successes and failures. Nevertheless, he remains doubtful that the massive problems of inner-cities can be solved locally with minimal external aid.

Robert Halpern has written an important and exciting book which will should serve as the standard work on the subject of urban community organization for many years to come. It should be widely read.

John Hagen and Ruth Patterson (Eds), *Crime and Inequality*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995. \$45.00 hardcover, \$16.95 papercover.

The link between crime and inequality has been debated for many years but both criminologists and the lay public remain skeptical of the idea that crime is a function of the social structure of society. Instead, there is a distinct preference for views that attribute criminality to individual malevolence, genetic defects, unsatisfactory child rearing practices or nefarious neighborhood influences. Structural views are not palatable, particularly in a society that venerates wealth and ostentatious living. Despite substantive sociological evidence, the link between crime and inequality is generally disregarded.

Hagan and Peterson have made a significant contribution to the literature by compiling a useful collection of original articles on the subject. The book is wide ranging, covering topics as diverse as gender and age inequality and crime; the role of unemployment in exacerbating inequality and crime; race and crime; and law, crime and inequality. The book also contains interesting theoretical pieces and several articles that introduce comparative content into the discussion. These include an account of crime and inequality in 18th century London and a chapter in crime and inequality in Eastern Europe. The editors introduction is well written and offers a useful overview of the topic.

While much of the material contained in the book is interesting, like many edited collections, the articles are uneven and they do not make for coherent reading. The editor's introduction does provide an overall framework but the thread is lost as some of the articles diverge into esoteric and marginally related

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topics. Nevertheless, the book will be essential reading for scholars concerned with crime and inequality.

Amitai Etzioni (Ed.), *Rights and the Common Good: The Communitarian Perspective*. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1995. \$35.00 hardcover.

Like many others social science terms, communitarianism is very difficult to define. Although used imprecisely, the term has been employed for many decades. It is usually associated with the exaltation of the community as a desirable social entity and with the celebration of community based activities. With its evocation of the intimacy and security of community living, it has instinctive appeal especially in American society where the notion of the integrated, harmonious community has been a recurrent historical theme.

In this book, the respected sociologist and public policy commentator, Amitai Etzioni seeks not only to define the concept but to offer a detailed account of the communitarian agenda. Transcending his earlier role as social scientist and policy analyst, Etzioni has become a campaigner for reform believing in the need to recreate community based institutions. His writings on the subject have attracted considerable media interest and intellectual support. The book is a sequel to Etzioni's successful earlier book *The Spirit of Community* (Crown Publishers, 1993) which outlined the communitarian manifesto in some detail. Consisting of more than 30 essays by different authors, the book offers detailed discussions on different aspects of communitarianism. The introductory chapter by Etzioni is particularly important for its summary of the communitarian agenda. As Etzioni points out, communitarianism represents a normative ideal type which may be contrasted with other normative traditions in Western political thought such as large scale collectivism and atomistic individualism. Other chapters deal with the notion of rights and responsibilities in communitarianism, the difference between communitarianism and populism, the role of the family and schools, the importance of voluntarism and other mediating structures, community policing and the relationship between communitarianism and capitalism. Although some of the chapters are more interesting than others, the book provides extensive elaboration of the communitarian

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Gary Alan Fine (Ed.), *A Second Chicago School: The Development of a Postwar American Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. \$70.00 hardcover, \$22.50 papercover.

The Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago has long been recognized as one of the premier centers for sociological inquiry in the United States. Its reputation emerged in early decades of this century when the contribution of scholars such as Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, George Herbert Mead, W. I. Thomas and others dominated the field. Their contribution was so widely recognized that these scholars came to be known as the Chicago School. However, it is widely believed that Chicago's contribution was eclipsed in the years after the Second World War. While Harvard, and to a lesser extent Columbia emerged as the new centers of excellence in sociology, Chicago appeared to be in decline.

This book has been specifically compiled to refute the impression that sociology at Chicago during the years after the Second World War had descended into academic mediocrity. The editor and contributors assert that sociology at Chicago was in fact flourishing and that it deserves the appellation of a 'second' Chicago School equal to that of its illustrious predecessor. To support this claim, the book contains articles on different facets of sociological inquiry at the University of Chicago in the postwar years. These articles cover topics as wide ranging as the department's contribution to research methodology, research into race and ethnicity, studies of deviance and the development of symbolic interactionism under Becker and Goffman. Two chapters deal with social relations in the department at this time. One focuses on faculty relations while the other is concerned with the position of women. Both make for interesting reading and transcend the book's partiality for nostalgia.

While the book will be useful to sociologists concerned with the meta-theory of their discipline, its wider interest is questionable. This is not to deny that it is well written and readable. But it could have been enriched by an attempt to ensure broader relevance through, for example, using the Chicago material to ask

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wider questions about the discipline and its academic acceptance. In a field riddled with faddishness, an inquiry of this kind would have been valuable.

James H. Schultz, *The Economics of Aging*. Westport, CT: Auburn House, 1995. \$69.50 hardcover, \$19.95 papercover.

James Schultz is a world renowned expert on social security and other economic aspects of retirement. A professor at Brandeis University, he has served as an expert advisor to governments and international associations on social security questions. His knowledge of the field is prodigious and he has published widely on income retirement issues.

*The Economics of Aging* is now in its 6th edition and it continues to be the definitive book on the economics aspects of retirement in the United States. It covers topics as diverse as employment in old age, retirement planning, social security and medicare and occupational pensions. One of the book's strengths is that it effectively combines descriptive, theoretical and policy content. Its descriptive content is useful not only to students and researchers but to elderly people who need to know the basic facts about retirement income. At the same time, it tackles complex policy and theoretical issues making a useful analytical contribution to the literature.

The book is well written and readily comprehensible. Topics that confound even the most intelligent lay person will be easily understood. One example of Schultz's ability to simplify a complex field is admirably revealed in the chapter dealing with occupational pensions. The subject is a maze of intricate rules, regulations and different provisions. However, Schultz not only simplifies the subject but makes it interesting. In addition, the book covers a range of policy and theoretical issues. It discusses the question of social security's long term fiscal viability, and reviews the arguments which have been made for modifying the system. The chapter on social security and inter-generational conflict is particularly stimulating. The book is essential reading for all who work in the field of gerontology and will undoubtedly continue to be an important reference source for many years to come.



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James H. Schultz, *The Economics of Aging*. Westport, CT: Auburn House, 1995. \$69.50 hardcover, \$19.95 papercover.

James Schultz is a world renowned expert on social security and other economic aspects of retirement. A professor at Brandeis University, he has served as an expert advisor to governments and international associations on social security questions. His knowledge of the field is prodigious and he has published widely on income retirement issues.

*The Economics of Aging* is now in its 6th edition and it continues to be the definitive book on the economics aspects of retirement in the United States. It covers topics as diverse as employment in old age, retirement planning, social security and medicare and occupational pensions. One of the book's strengths is that it effectively combines descriptive, theoretical and policy content. Its descriptive content is useful not only to students and researchers but to elderly people who need to know the basic facts about retirement income. At the same time, it tackles complex policy and theoretical issues making a useful analytical contribution to the literature.

The book is well written and readily comprehensible. Topics that confound even the most intelligent lay person will be easily understood. One example of Schultz's ability to simplify a complex field is admirably revealed in the chapter dealing with occupational pensions. The subject is a maze of intricate rules, regulations and different provisions. However, Schultz not only simplifies the subject but makes it interesting. In addition, the book covers a range of policy and theoretical issues. It discusses the question of social security's long term fiscal viability, and reviews the arguments which have been made for modifying the system. The chapter on social security and inter-generational conflict is particularly stimulating. The book is essential reading for all who work in the field of gerontology and will undoubtedly continue to be an important reference source for many years to come.

Gail E. Thomas (Ed), *Race and Ethnicity in America: Meeting the Challenge in the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: Taylor and Francis, 1995. \$29.95 papercover.

This edited book of original articles is an attempt to examine issues of race and ethnicity in the United States with reference to three major issues: education, health and employment. It is not, as its title might suggest, a general work on the subject of race relations but rather an attempt to focus on specific social issues that have policy relevance. As such it contains useful material on the ethnic dimensions of educational, health and employment problems. An additional strength is its concern with various ethnic groups. The articles in the collection deal with African, Asian, Hispanic and Native American communities and cover different facets of their lives with specific reference to educational, health and employment questions.

The articles in the book deal with a number of topics which will be of interest to different readers. There are in the educational section, articles on subjects as diverse as the paucity of black teachers, bilingual education, tribally controlled schools and effects of school desegregation. In the health section, the articles cover topics as diverse as racial differences in mortality, race and infant mortality, AIDS and race and the contribution of public health programs to the improvement of minority health. In the employment section, the authors discuss employment and ex-offenders, the white-black employment gap and race and gender factors in rates of return to educational investments. Much of the material is interesting and will be of value to social scientists concerned with race and ethnic issues in American society today.

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## INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

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JSSW welcomes a broad range of articles which analyze social welfare Institutions, policies, or problems from a social scientific perspective or otherwise attempt to bridge the gap between social science theory and social work practice.

*Submission Process.* Submit manuscripts to Gary Mathews, School of Social Work, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 49008. Send *three* copies together with an abstract of approximately 100 words. Since manuscripts are not returned by reviewers to the editorial office, the editorial office cannot return them to the authors. Submission certifies that it is an original article and that it has not been published nor is being considered for publication elsewhere.

Reviewing normally takes 120 days.

*Preparation.* Articles should be typed, double spaced (including the abstract, indented material, footnotes, references, and tables) on 8½ x 11 inch white bond paper with one inch margins on all sides.

*Anonymous Review.* To facilitate anonymous review, please keep identifying information out of the manuscript. *Only the title* should appear on the first page. Attach cover pages that contain the title, authors, affiliations, date of submission, mailing address, telephone number and any statements of credit or research support.

*Style.* Overall style should conform to that found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Fourth Edition, 1994. Use in-text citations (Reich, 1983), (Reich, 1983, p. 5). The use of footnotes in the text is discouraged. If footnotes are essential, include them on a separate sheet after the last page of the references. The use of italics or quotation marks for emphasis is discouraged. Words should be underlined only when it is intended that they be typeset in italics.

*Gender and Disability Stereotypes.* Please use gender neutral phrasing. Use plural pronouns and truly generic nouns ("labor force" instead of "manpower"). When dealing with disabilities, avoid making people synonymous with the disability they have ("employees with visual impairments" rather than "the blind"). Don't magnify the disabling condition ("wheelchair user" rather than "confined to a wheelchair"). For further suggestions see the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* or *Guide to Non-Sexist Language and Visuals*, University of Wisconsin-Extension.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Books for review should be sent to James Midgley, Office of Research and Economic Development, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803.

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