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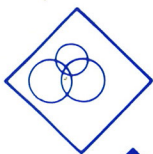
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Contested Workplace: The Case of the Strike of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union versus Meijer

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This paper examines the struggle between labor and management at four, newly-opened supermarket/discount stores, culminating in a strike. It considers workplace control as an issue in the strike and its resolution. Edwards' typology of workplace control is reviewed, along with other indirect forms of control explored in recent literature. Workers complained most stridently about direct control mechanisms. Workers' objections to technical and bureaucratic control played only a minor part in workers' decision to strike and the work stoppage's outcome. Indirect controls, including customer and gender-specific control mechanisms, were seldom questioned or acknowledged by workers. On the other hand, both the union and management recognized that customer support can influence the course and outcome of a strike. The settlement of this eight-and-one-half week strike resulted in slightly improved wages and benefits and modification of some elements of direct control.

Employers attempt to obtain desired work behavior from their employees and thus increase profits by creating structures of control in the workplace. Employer success in creating structures of control depends upon their relative strength and that of their workers (Edwards 1979). Among the ways workers can resist their employers' power over them are work slow-downs, workplace sabotage, and strikes. Thus, employers want to institute sufficient control mechanisms to elicit the proper behavior from employees and to forestall more dramatic expressions of worker power. However, if employers exercise too much control, workers

will resist and employers' goal of procuring work from their employees will be hurt. In this paper we explore how systems of control affected workers at a supermarket/discount chain and the role that control mechanisms played in a work stoppage.

This case study focuses on Meijer, Inc. and its efforts to control workers as the company expanded into the Toledo area and established four new stores. Besides the employer and workers, a third party, the United Food and Commercial Workers' Union (UFCW) that represents the workers, defined issues of significance in the strike. The UFCW conducted contract negotiations with Meijer, Inc. on the employees' initial contract. When negotiations broke down, the union led an eight-and-one-half week strike against the Toledo-area Meijer stores.

The discussion is based on interviews with forty randomly selected workers about the organization of work at Meijer and workers' strike interests. Some respondents struck against the company; some did not strike. We also interviewed supermarket managers, UFCW officials, and workers in other supermarkets. All interviews were conducted by the authors and lasted from 20 minutes to more than one hour. We reviewed rosters of union members at the Meijer stores following the strike, the Meijer employee handbook, and newspaper reports on the strike.

Systems of Control

Employers and their managers develop systems of control to increase profits by "obtaining the desired work behavior from workers" (Edwards 1979: 17). The means of control may be direct or indirect. Direct or simple controls require employers and/or their agents to closely supervise their workers and continually give their workers instructions. Because direct controls are the more blatant form of control, workers' resistance (e.g., a strike) may arise from or be directed at these mechanisms. Efforts to control workers' behavior can continue, even as workers take action to resist management's demands.

Indirect controls involve the use of impersonal, formalized mechanisms to obtain desired behavior from workers (Blau 1968). They are less visible to workers because they are embedded in the structure of the workplace, instead of resting directly in

the hands of employers and their managers, supervisors, and foremen. Managers may indirectly control workers by burying the mechanisms in the physical structure of the labor process (i.e., technical controls) or in its social structure (i.e., bureaucratic controls; Edwards 1979; also see Bacharach and Bamberger 1995).

Early labor process theorists (Braverman 1974; Edwards 1979) focused on manufacturing because it was expanding, although they briefly discussed retailing. As the service sector grew and became the dominant sector in the economy, analysts (Fuller and Smith 1991; Gottfried 1991; 1992; Leidner 1993) examined control issues in service jobs more thoroughly. Edwards' (1979) assertion that direct control is still dominant in retailing is simplistic (Benson 1986; Fuller and Smith 1991; Leidner 1993). In her examination of a fast-food industry, Leidner (1993) found that all three types of control—direct, technical, and bureaucratic—identified by Edwards (1979) existed at McDonald's. However, customer-worker interaction also constitute another form of control over "interactive service workers"—those who interact directly with the service recipients.

The transformation of the economy to service-based has increased the opportunities for management to adopt more subjective controls (Gottfried 1992; Smith 1994). Managers in sales occupations and other selected occupations may manipulate workers' emotions, personalities, and minds (Hochschild 1983). Employers, especially in service areas, feel empowered to require workers to perform emotional labor because as Chase (1978: 140) noted: "Any interaction with the customer makes the direct worker in fact part of the product, and therefore his [or her] attitude can affect the customers' point of view of the service." This emotional labor that workers perform may be directed at their customers and themselves (Hochschild 1983). For example, Meijer follows a common service-sector practice of referring to its customers as "guests." Leidner (1993: 129) argued that McDonald's management instituted this practice to reinforce the view that "all customers were entitled to respectful and courteous treatment and that workers were there to serve them."

Labor analysts have extended our view of control mechanisms in ways other than acknowledging customer control mechanisms, recognizing such worker characteristics as gender

(Gottfried 1992; Lee 1993; Smith 1994). Acker (1990: 145–46) stated that “the control of the work process . . . [is] always affected by symbols of gender, process of gender identity, and material inequalities between women and men.” Men and women often differ in their responsiveness to management’s directions (Smith 1994), and these directives can involve such work behaviors that managers try to control as resistance, disruptive and argumentative conduct, and unionizing (Edwards 1979). For example, some employers have favored employing women because they believe women are more easily controlled and less likely to unionize (Ehrenreich and Fuentes 1981; Cobble 1993).

Workers at the Toledo-area-Meijer stores were subject to all of these mechanisms of control: direct/simple, technical, bureaucratic, customer, and gender. In the following sections we describe these mechanisms, how they operated at these Meijer stores, and what, if any, role that they played in the strike.

Workplace Control and the Meijer Strike

Direct Control

Direct control is the oldest, simplest form of worker control and is associated with relatively small entrepreneurial firms (Edwards 1979). Meijer Inc.’s roots are as a small, privately-owned company that dates back to 1934 when Hendrick Meijer started his first store in Greenville, Michigan. Over the years, the family-owned business opened additional stores, spreading into small towns across western Michigan (Meijer 1984). In 1994 Meijer had 81 stores in three states, about 55,000 employees and gross sales of \$3.5 million (“Meijer looks . . .” 1994). Today the company has over 95 stores. This expansion includes four stores in the Toledo area that opened in 1993. Despite this tremendous growth, Meijer remained a private company and, as a manager described the firm, “very secretive.” He went on to say, “That’s the way they [top management] like it and that’s the way they want to keep it. They teach us to be that way.”

Meijer’s closed management style is compatible with direct controls because concealing information places more power in the hands of those people who have the information (i.e., management). It allows managers much discretion in their direction

of workers (Edwards 1979). Workers described elements of this personal type of control: "First, they try to make you feel like a family. They tell you you're part of Fred Meijer's family, the Meijer's family. If you don't do exactly as they prescribe, then they try through intimidation." Another worker described management as "always on our backs to do more and more and more, just kind of slave drivers."

Because direct controls are subject to the whims of those in charge, they can be "erratic, and subject to favoritism and arbitrariness" (Edwards 1979: 27). These types of decisions played a part in the strike. Indeed, both striking workers and union officials stressed the importance of the issue of what they called treatment, but were in fact issues of direct control. For example, many of the workers we interviewed complained of arbitrary decisions in the day-to-day operations of their stores, a significant form of control. Striking workers contended that managers gave favored workers more hours and at preferable times.

Brown nosers would get the extra hours . . . They were allowed to get over-time. . . . They were allowed holidays off. I've worked there for a year and a half and I had one holiday off. And that was only because they were closed. And I've got top seniority in the store.

This service-desk worker went on to say that for "unfavored" workers, overtime could have serious ramifications.

If they would ask me to stay over, or if we were busy and I couldn't leave . . . , I would have to let them know early enough in the week so that they could cut my schedule. . . . If I clocked in 15 minutes overtime, that would be at time-and-a-half. They would take disciplinary action by writing you up and putting it in your file. If you get enough of these, then you would get time off without pay, and enough of them, you'd lose your job.

Some workers that we interviewed reported other instances of management's inconsistent enforcement of company rules. One cashier explained that if a cashier's drawer was short of cash, Meijer's policy stated that he or she would be off for three days. However, for some workers the manager "would say, 'Well, you've been off Monday and Tuesday, that was two days off. Next Thursday's your next day off, and it's your next day off.'" Thus,

with favored workers management may count regular days off as part of their suspension. But as the cashier went on to explain: "Another girl, possibly is a part-timer, or [someone who] has a personality conflict with one of the managers, or they just didn't like her, they'd bring her in the office and give her three days off without pay." It was these workers' hope that their union could help protect them from managers' use of direct control mechanisms, such as the arbitrary disciplining of workers.

Workers also believed that Meijer management controlled them by misleading them about its willingness to pay workers in Toledo wages comparable to other unionized grocery-store employees in the area. This led to an impasse between the company and the union (Morrissey and Coventry 1996). When entering the Toledo area, Meijer met with UFCW representatives to discuss union representation. Meijer allowed the UFCW to give a membership talk to the workers. A union organizer told us that Meijer was aware of the higher wage/benefit standards in the Toledo area and indicated that they would meet them in their Toledo stores. Several workers reported to us that Meijer had given them the same impression about wages. One woman said that when she interviewed for her job at Meijer, the company representative told her "'the union was coming in and wages would go up tremendously.'" During contract negotiations, however, Meijer's wage proposals fell below those earned by Meijer's unionized competitors. For example, Meijer offered to pay their top cashiers \$6.70 an hour, which was \$3.30 below the rate for top cashiers at Kroger, Food Town, and Cub grocery stores (Pakulski 1994a).

Sticking points in the contract negotiations went beyond wage issues. The union took exception to management's proposals for health insurance that required workers to pay a large portion of their premiums and a pension plan that did not cover the entire workforce. Another point of contention was the company's policy that gave part-time workers little chance to become full-time (Pakulski 1994b). Striking workers and union officials also emphasized the importance of worker treatment—a product of Meijer's direct control mechanism. Contract negotiations eventually broke down, and on April 27 the UFCW membership at

Meijer voted to authorize a strike by a margin of 596 to 107 to begin May 10 at 12:01 a.m. (Pakulski 1994b).

Meijer's direct-control efforts increased as negotiations deteriorated, and worker resistance grew. Meijer, Inc. prepared for the strike by hiring 100 additional private security guards from the Vance International's Asset Production Team. Both newspaper accounts and interviews of workers indicate that these security officers proved to be a source of concern to workers. Three days before the scheduled start of the strike, workers "flooded" their union hall with complaints that the private security officers were harassing union members (Henry 1994). Emphasizing the negative treatment workers received, some of the workers we interviewed referred to the APT guards as the "goon squad," and saw them as an example of management's attempts at intimidation.

Here we were cashiers and clerks out there [on the picket line], and they were treating us like Teamsters and longshoremen. They had goons out there, hired in from Virginia in their paramilitary uniforms, standing at attention all the time, shooting cameras at us. They've got video tape on every one of us.

Another union supporter told us:

When I first started my union activities, promoting people to sign up and be union members, giving out registration cards, I was followed to my area . . . I had people watch me. I had people follow me to the break room, sit in on my conversations, follow me to the bathroom. It got to the point where they followed me home. They would sit outside our house.

At 4:00 p.m. on May 7, the day workers inundated their UFCW local with complaints, union officials decided to strike early. An hour later, workers at one of the stores began walking out. By 5:20 union members at the other three stores were joining them. The union reported strong support by the workers on the job that afternoon. They claimed that 75 to 85 percent of the members walked out of three of the stores. Only about half of workers could leave the fourth store before the APT guards locked employees inside (Henry 1994).

Walking off the job did not eliminate some workers' concerns about Meijer's efforts to control workers through intimidation. Additional incidents occurred on the picket line. A striking

cashier indicated that the APT guards kicked, stoned and shouted obscenities at the picketers. In an attempt to protect their striking workers, the union filed a complaint of harassment and intimidation against Meijer, Inc. and APT security firm on May 26, requesting a restraining order against them. That same day the litigants agreed on an order to prohibit mistreatment of picketers. Meijer's spokesperson Brian Breslin indicated that the agreement should not be viewed as an admission of any wrong-doing, and that they stood behind the security firm they hired. A newspaper account quoted Breslin as saying,

We continue to maintain that Asset Protection Team is a highly professional and disciplined labor-dispute security organization and are highly suspect of any accusation of improper conduct with regard to any APT employees (quoted to Pakulski 1994c: 37).

A union member we interviewed spoke bitterly a few months after the strike ended about her experiences at Meijer. She emphasized that the strike was as much about the treatment of workers as wages and benefits, and was concerned that problem of worker treatment was not rectified. "Better treatment is very important. . . . We filed over forty unfair labor practice charges against Meijer's, and they were very serious. They were not addressed at all. They were dropped. So what has Meijer's learned from this?"

Thus, efforts at direct control, along with wage and benefit issues, contributed to the strike and influenced Meijer's reactions to the strike. Technical and bureaucratic controls also concerned workers, though less dramatically than direct mechanisms.

Technical Control

Employers developed technical control to direct, evaluate, and sanction workers indirectly by hiding the means of control in the physical structure of the workplace. At Meijer, the structure of the stores function as a control mechanism. The supermarket industry has added more and more product lines and services, such as a pharmacy, salad bar, lunch counter, video rental, ticket sales (Walsh 1993; Mayo 1993). Some stores, like Meijer, expanded even further becoming "hypermarkets" where shoppers could buy groceries as well as auto supplies, clothing, yard tools, etc.

Although few supermarkets became "hypermarkets", or combination stores, as they are now more commonly called, they can be found in many areas ("American food . . ." 1993; Johnson 1989). Meijer's market strategy to offer everything from groceries to lingerie to hardware result in stores of about 35 departments that typically cover over an acre of land (hence their former name, Meijer Thrifty Acres). However, the size of the stores also affected workers' involvement in the strike and functioned as a control mechanism.

Joining the work stoppage often followed departmental lines. We found that the greatest worker involvement occurred in those departments associated with traditional supermarkets. Several non-strikers indicated to us that it was more of a grocery strike. A toy-department worker told us that

The non-grocery area really wouldn't be considered in the strike. . . . Essentially, everything that they [the union] were fighting for raise-wise or getting more full-time positions, things like that, it all had to do with just groceries and cashiers.

Many of the non-grocery workers indicated that union position had relatively little significance to wages and working conditions in their departments.

Technical control embedded in the stores' structure also helped account for non-involvement. Non-strikers' reasons for crossing the picket line varied. Some of the non-strikers we interviewed expressed an anti-union viewpoint; others simply identified more strongly with their departments. Others did not strike because their co-workers failed to support the work stoppage. Given the physical size of the stores, each of the Meijer stores had approximately 500 employees, compared to large supermarkets that employ about 200 workers. Many workers knew few people outside their department. A furniture-department worker told us that he started shortly before the strike and did not know workers from other departments. He worked throughout the strike because everyone in his department stayed and the strike "didn't really affect my department." Without the support of immediate co-workers, some workers did not view striking as an option. A meat-department worker explained that he did not strike because only a few of his co-workers struck. However, he indicated that

if he worked at the Meijer store from which he transferred, he would not have crossed the picket line. Workers in the meat department at that store participated in the strike. Thus, the size of the store and the workers' isolation within departments acted as mechanisms of control, deterring some workers from striking.

Workers who talked to us indicated that Meijer managers used various technology (e.g., computerized check-outs) to evaluate workers (see Braverman 1974: 372). However, they qualified management's use of the information. One cashier explained: "they can't push you too far because they can't make you do something that would injure you. You know, carpal tunnel." But they do use the information as a "guideline." She went on to say that the union plays an important role protecting workers, "acting as a counterbalance" against management.

Bureaucratic Control

The job structure and social relations of the workplace can function as bureaucratic control mechanisms. Different types of bureaucratic controls are used depending on the job. Employers stress company rules to workers in low-level jobs, but reward employees in middle-level jobs for their dependability. Workers at the highest level receive rewards for internalizing the firm's goals and values (Edwards 1979). At Meijer workers receive a company handbook that instructs them on their dress and grooming, how to interact with customers, how to bag items, etc. It also lists 46 actions that workers should avoid from parking in unauthorized areas to theft. The company qualifies their list of prohibited behaviors by indicating that it is impossible to include all inappropriate behaviors. The violation of these work rules may result in disciplinary action, including worker termination. Meijer also has a Policy and Procedures Manual that contains more extensive information on the 46 actions, plus additional company policies and procedures. Workers indicated that some of the company rules were designed to reduce workers' cohesiveness. One service-desk worker explained: "In the store we weren't allowed to even talk to one another unless it was [during] a 15 minute break. . . . So you don't get too close to anybody, they [the managers] would schedule your breaks and lunches with different people at different times. . . ."

Although the Meijer's workforce contained low-level jobs, a store director suggested that Meijer expected their employees to internalize the company's goals and values—a control mechanism associated with high-level jobs (Edwards 1979). He told us that when interviewing applicants he tells them:

Meijer is a tough company [to work for] . . . they have very high standards. Meijer is a perfect place for someone if they have a good work ethic. When they go to work if they give 100 percent of themselves, Meijer is a terrific place for a person like that to work. Someone who works and likes to give 95 percent of themselves, they won't make it at Meijer.

However, this company that demands 100 percent from their workers hires predominately part-time employees. Union rosters of workers for all four Toledo-area Meijer stores show that two months after the strike was settled, 82 percent were classified part-time. A supervisor at one of Meijer's major competitors told us that Kroger stores in the area have approximately 60 percent of employees classified as part-time. In contract negotiation, the UFCW argued for less stringent requirements for full-time status, but with limited results.

The job of specialty clerk and its place in the job hierarchy also was a point of contention in the labor negotiations. These deli, bakery, seafood, and full-service meat-shop workers are among the poorest paid at Meijer—only baggers make less—reflecting their low status in the job hierarchy. In addition, Meijer's pre-strike policies limited specialty clerks' ability to move into better paying jobs (Pakulski 1994d).

Thus, Meijer uses bureaucratic control mechanisms associated with both low-level and high-level workers, part-time and full-time employment, and company rules and guidelines for employee behavior. Although the UFCW supported some modification in the structure of jobs, workers we interviewed found Meijer's list of prohibited behaviors the most frustrating dimension of bureaucratic control.

Customer Controls

Typically, employers and their managers/supervisors exercise control over workers. However, in interactive service jobs,

customers also act as agents of control (Leidner 1993). Fuller and Smith (1991) identified three customer control mechanisms: customer-instigated, company-encouraged, and company-instigated. Customers have always had the power to complain about substandard quality in products or services. When unable to gain satisfaction from sales workers, customers often ask to talk to a manager. The Meijer employee handbook (handbook also) also instructs workers to refer all complaints to the manager-in-charge. Meijer takes customer complaints seriously; a worker may be disciplined if his or her mistake results in a customer complaint.

Companies often encourage customers' input by providing comment cards or toll-free telephone numbers (Fuller and Smith 1991). Meijer has comment cards available at the service desk upon request and a sign that reads: "We care and we want to hear from you," with a toll-free telephone number that customers can call. Another company-instigated method that is popular among retailers is "secret shoppers," individuals hired to anonymously pose as customers to monitor and report on workers' performances (Fuller and Smith 1991). Workers and union officials were unaware if Meijer used secret shoppers. A store director we interviewed would not confirm or refute their use. He said: "Corporately, I cannot answer that question." Later, a university student told us that he had been a secret shopper at Meijer.

Prior research (Benson 1986) on salespeople found that workers often view shoppers "as the enemy," because customers have the potential of exercising control over salespeople. However, Meijer workers often viewed their customers as just part of the job or as their friends and neighbors. Many considered Meijer the outsider. A cashier talked at great length about Meijer's effect on workers, local businesses, and the community as a whole. She went on to say that "the country and the future of my children and their grandchildren are affected by [Meijer's actions]." Many Toledo-area shoppers refused to act as Meijer's agent of worker control by crossing the picket line, which would have undermined workers' power. Data from the University of Toledo 1995 Quality of Life Survey indicates that 58 percent of the respondents did not go to Meijer during the work stoppage (Survey Research Institute 1995). After the strike Meijer admitted to the press that business was off by about 10% ("Meijer, competitors . . ." 1994:

9). However, union supporters did not look kindly on customers who crossed the picket line to shop at Meijer. Picketers shouted at shoppers and tried to block cars from entering the parking lot. One Saturday, other union workers in the Toledo area held a rally to show their support for striking Meijer workers. After an hour-long gathering, hundreds of people moved to the parking lot of a near-by Meijer store. The local newspaper described their protests as raucous and reported shoppers filing complaints about union members' behavior. No serious injuries occurred, and the only arrest took place at another store when a union supporter struck a pick-up truck with his fist (Bates 1994)

At Meijer as in other companies (see Fuller and Smith 1991; Leidner 1993), customers contributed to the control of workers. Although workers did not object to customer controls in the workplace, both union and management understood that customer behavior during the strike was crucial to the interests of both sides.

Gender Controls

Lee (1993) argued that segregation of workers into different jobs may be the most important form of gender-based control, although other workplace contexts also may be gendered (Acker 1990; Martin and Harkreader 1993). Meijer workers are segregated by gender within multiple contexts. Although women constitute 64 percent of the workforce in the four Toledo-area Meijer stores, only three departments—liquor (60 percent female), toys, and gas station (both 67 percent female)—had similar gender compositions. Several departments were completely segregated. Four departments—infant and children's apparel, women's apparel, home fashion, and gifts and floral—were staffed exclusively by women workers. Plumbing, paint, and hardware had only had male workers. While other departments may not be totally male or female, they were far from integrated. In 27 of the 36 departments one gender dominated, comprising at least 70 percent of the workers (see Jacobs 1989).

The segregation that exists among Meijer workers mirrors the divisions between men and women in these sales occupations in the entire labor force. For example, women dominate apparel sales at both Meijer (97.9 percent female) and in the labor force

(81.3 percent female; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1992). Hardware and building supplies are predominately male. While men comprise 87 percent of the occupation's workforce in the labor force (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1992), they monopolize the positions at Meijer; the 23 hardware workers at the four Meijer stores are all men. Other Meijer departments vary from the national occupational statistics. Shoe sales is fairly well integrated, with women representing 62 percent of the U.S. workforce (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1992). However, at Meijer the shoe department hires predominantly women workers (88 percent female).

It appears that the division of men and women into different work areas at Meijer equals or exceeds the segregation that exists in the entire labor force. Segregation hides the fact that employers and managers use gender-specific control mechanisms (Smith 1994); workers are not treated differently because of their gender but because they work in different departments. Previous research (Talbert and Bose 1977) on retail clerks found that men reported less supervision and greater discretion in their work than female clerks. We found that men at Meijer complained slightly less than women about close surveillance—a form of direct control—at work.

The separation of men and women into different jobs contributes to a gender hierarchy in authority (Ehrenreich and Fuentes 1981; Lee 1993). On the Meijer organizational chart, departments are subsumed under four lines—grocery, service, soft lines, and hard lines. Each store has a manager that oversees these lines, and the manager often reflects the gender composition of the line's workforce. The soft line, the most highly segregated line with 81 percent women workers, is head by a female manager in each of the four stores. The service line that employs slightly more male workers than the soft line (70 compared to 81 percent female, respectively), is managed by a man in one of the four stores. In the other three stores, women head-up the service line. Hard-line managers, whose workforces are 53 percent female, are evenly split; two stores have a male manager, while the two other stores have a female manager in hard lines. One of the female, hard-line managers recently moved into that position from grocery, leaving the grocery-line manager position vacant. The three other grocery-line managers are men, while 59 percent of grocery workers are women.

Besides each store having four line managers, each also has a night manager and a store director. Men dominate these positions, occupying them in three of four stores. The store that had a woman director and a woman night manager also had predominately women line managers; only one line manager (i.e., grocery) was male. Thus, men and women managers are segregated between stores. Although women are over-represented in management in one store, in the other three establishments men dominate the top management positions. These male managers institute control mechanisms to direct, evaluate, and sanction a workforce that is 64 percent female.

If Meijer management thought hiring mostly female workers would make for more docile workforce, it appears they were mistaken. Many women workers at Meijer are strong union supporters and actively participated in the strike. Some took leadership roles, acting as picket captains and union stewards. In fact, women are more likely to be union stewards than men. Of the 15 stewards identified on the union rosters, 11 were women. Although the authority structure at Meijer is gendered, women workers are not reluctant to serve their unions or question the control mechanisms of management. Nevertheless, gender segregation per se never came up in interviews. To a remarkable degree, the highly gender-segregated, Meijer job structure elicited no comment from Meijer workers, nor were treatment issues framed in gender terms by our respondents.

The Impact of the Strike on Workplace Control

Strikes challenge and often interrupt management control, although as the Meijer case indicates management may continue to try to control workers' behavior through the course of a work stoppage. Workers differed in their assessment of the impact of the strike on Meijer's use of direct control. Some strikers thought that things had not changed much. One non-striker commented that the strikers "went out in vain." Some strikers also thought little had changed. After coming back to work after the strike, two workers in the cash office believed that management was punishing them for their strike activities by assigning them to cash registers. They were told that working in the cash office was a privilege, that it appeared they no longer deserved. Others

indicated that they were now treated more fairly. Some non-strikers also indicated a change among managers. However, from their perspectives it was for the worse. A man who moved from automotive to cashier said: "They more or less really treat you just like an employee, before [the strike ended] they kind of treated you like they were grateful you were working there." Thus, it appears that the strike reduced, although did not eliminate, aspects of direct control, to the approval of some workers but to the dislike of others.

Although striking workers did not complain as vehemently about other means of control, we found that some elements of technical and bureaucratic control did change. Meijer's size, structure, and work rules that minimized worker contact with each other produced a fractionalized workforce. However, both striking workers and union officials indicated that the strike brought workers from different shifts and departments together. As one worker explained, before the strike

you knew their name; you knew where they worked; and that's all you knew about them. On the picket line, we got to know them as people, as friends. We got to know their families, their husbands, how many kids they had, what their problems were. They listened to what your problems were. So it gave us a chance to get a lot closer. And I think Meijer is going to regret that.

Union representation also modified some bureaucratic control that management had instituted. Several workers reported that the elements of the contract that they liked dealt with grievance and arbitration procedures and seniority rules.

The UFCW was able to reduce some aspects of control that Meijer management had imposed on its workers. However, the union also placed restrictions on Meijer workers. The stores were "closed shops," requiring all workers to join the UFCW. Those workers whose pay did not increase under the strike settlement lost money, as they gave up part of their pay checks to union dues. Among those in the non-grocery areas in particular, workers did not feel the union was representing their interests because the UFCW did not push for as high of wages in non-grocery areas as in grocery departments. The union argued that Meijer should pay wages similar to their competition, both well-paying, union-

ized supermarket and non-unionized discount stores that paid considerably less. Unable to justify Meijer paying non-grocery workers more than its competitors, the union may have had no other choice but to support this two-tiered system and thereby undermine worker solidarity.

Other workers complained that the union's success in negotiating a provision that made it easier for a part-timer to become full-time actually hurt them. The settlement stipulated the number of hours an employee could work before management must change his or her status to full-time. During the strike, management allowed non-strikers to work additional hours to help staff the store. When the strike ended and the union supporters returned, non-strikers had their hours reduced. Instead of increasing the number of full-time workers, this clause in the contract resulted in management cutting workers' hours to keep employees from being reclassified as "full-time." In addition, management's more lenient overtime practices only lasted as long as the strike. One grocery employee who worked throughout the work stoppage reported getting as many as 75 hours a week. He blamed the union for the reduction in overtime and complained that he "can't survive on 40 hours" per week, while accepting the low wage rate paid by Meijer.

Other mechanisms of control were not points of contention and did not seem to change. Although we found that customer control reinforced other mechanisms of control, neither workers or union officials we interviewed complained about the use of customer controls. Customer satisfaction is such an essential part of the retail philosophy that perhaps workers view these mechanisms as fundamental to the maintenance of their jobs. In the same way, gender differences are so ingrained (Reskin and Padavic 1994), managers and workers seemed unaware of how gender affected the ways that the workforce was directed, evaluated, and sanctioned.

Conclusion

Mechanisms of control affected both the formation of the strike and its outcome. The strike was, in part, a struggle over the means by which management obtained work from its employees.

As expected, workers objected most strenuously to direct control mechanisms. Indirect mechanisms of control played a less visible role in the strike, yet they had an impact on the work stoppage. Meijer's size, structure, and work rules produced a fractionalized workforce that allowed management to take a tough stand in negotiations.

When the strike finally ended, the settlement provided workers with few gains. However, some elements of control were altered. UFCW representation gave workers some protection against management's arbitrary use of power and provided union input on grievance and promotion procedures. Being together on the picket line also gave union supporters the opportunity to become closer, reducing the isolation they had felt as workers before the strike. Although other mechanisms of control did not change after the strike, systems of control are dynamic. They are the outcome of the continuing struggle between management and workers (see Edwards 1986; Gottfried 1992). While the strike and its outcome affected some means of control, they were not permanently established. The future interaction between management, workers, and the UFCW will continue to define and redefine the system of control at these stores.

It is, however, interesting to speculate about how issues of control at these Meijer stores compare with other establishments. Like workers in general, the Meijer's workforce resisted direct control mechanisms (Edwards 1979). Indeed, as long as employers and individual managers act arbitrarily and inconsistently, we can expect workers and their unions to object. Historically, as workers began to rebel against direct controls, employers and managers instituted a variety of indirect means of control. Workers and their unions have attempted to resist some of these indirect mechanisms, focusing primarily on technical and bureaucratic controls. Similar to the victories unions have won protecting workers on assembly lines from technical control, we found that the UFCW provides protection from management's imposing high scanning rates for merchandise on cashiers. Unions, including the UFCW, have also gained input regarding bureaucratic controls through the shaping of promotion and grievance procedures. However, other elements of controls, such as the size of the store in the UFCW versus Meijer case, are less easily addressed in contract

negotiations. Furthermore, in retailing customer controls tend to be accepted by workers and their unions as “givens,” while gender segregation is so entrenched in the Meijer and national labor forces that neither side of the labor conflict recognized it as a means of worker control.

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Exposing and Reframing Welfare Dependency

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Defining the phrase welfare dependency from a feminist perspective offers a way to understand how the rhetoric around the use of this phrase continues to legitimize current changes in Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) while simultaneously diverting the public's attention from the real issues of poverty and discrimination against women. This article includes a detailed definition of welfare dependency, a brief history of its usage, and a reconceptualization of women's use of AFDC on a long-term basis. This reconceptualization expands on international dependency theory and reframes dependency as interdependency that builds on women's strengths, women's rights, and women's role in the public and private spheres. Specifically, it calls for a research and practice focus on understanding the daily lives of individuals and groups of women who receive AFDC on a long-term basis in an effort to understand women's strengths, situations, and needs.

Although not unique to social work, the language of dependency used by social workers includes phrases such as welfare dependency, drug dependency, chemical dependency, co-dependency, and client dependency. Having achieved the status of common usage, the meanings of these powerful phrases, along with the application of the term *dependency* to certain populations (namely children, the elderly, and women) are now taken for granted in social workers' literature and everyday communication.

Social work, with "roots as a profession primarily of and for women" (Davis, 1994, p. 1) and "the longest historic association with social welfare concerns" of all the human service professions (Romanyshyn, 1971, p. 55) is in a unique position to examine the phrase *welfare dependency* from a feminist perspective. Examining

the social, moral, political, and economic definition of the phrase *welfare dependency* offers an opportunity for reconceptualizing welfare dependency and providing an alternative explanation for long-term welfare use, one that builds on the strengths and interdependencies of women and the welfare system.

An Examination of the Definition of the Phrase *Welfare Dependency*

Composed of two vernacular words popular for centuries, the phrase *welfare dependency* has escaped definitional development. Rather, since the 1800s, this commonly used phrase continues to serve as political language that legitimizes governmental attempts to solve the "problem" of women's "dependence" on welfare while diverting attention from the real issues of poverty of and discrimination against women (Fraser & Gordon, 1994; Zinn, 1984). Political language is "abstract, vague, and simplistic" so that it "sanctifies action" that reinforces certain American values, in this case, independence (Zinn, 1984, p. 32). Since the assumptions behind the political language of welfare dependency are not explicitly stated, both the public and policy makers are left "to interpret the rhetoric in ways that reinforce their own preconceptions about the welfare system" (Zinn, 1984, p. 32). Feminist writers and welfare researchers have begun to question and reframe the political language of welfare dependency (Fraser & Gordon, 1994; Zinn, 1984). By exposing the meaning of the phrase, identifying the political interests it serves, and revealing its use as a diversion from the issues of discrimination toward poor women, the implicit becomes explicit.

In welfare reform discussions, the phrase *welfare dependency* is used primarily in reference to women and children who are long-term recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Fraser and Gordon (1994) move from this simplistic definition to an explicit definition of dependency including its racist and sexist stereotypes:

'Dependency' . . . is an ideological term. In current U.S. policy discourse it usually refers to the condition of poor women with children who maintain their families with neither a male breadwinner nor an adequate wage and who rely for economic support on a stingy

and politically unpopular government program called Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) . . . [W]elfare dependency evokes the image of 'the welfare mother,' often figured as a young, unmarried black women (perhaps even a teenager) of uncontrolled sexuality (p. 311).

In a similar vein, Bane and Ellwood (1994) admit the word *dependency* has become "synonymous for long-term welfare use" (p. 67–68), and that "[t]hose who are dependent are inactive, ineffectual, and even irresponsible in the eyes of many" (p. 68).

Today, liberals and conservatives agree that welfare dependency destroys recipients' motivation and leads to further isolation and stigmatization (Fraser & Gordon, 1994). Welfare dependency rhetoric from both major political parties suggests that the continual increase of female-headed families and the related increase of poverty among women and children is at least in part due to the existence of a system that provides assistance on a long-term basis. Despite evidence to the contrary (Duncan & Hoffman, 1988; Bane & Ellwood, 1983; Berrick, 1995), politicians and policy makers also use the phrase to imply that recipients caught up in this welfare dependency cycle would rather receive welfare than work. In this view, recipients drop out of school, cheat the government, and bear children outside of marriage for money (Abramovitz, 1994). The pathology of a system that creates dependence is transferred to the recipient within that system, and she is labeled "pathologically dependent" (Jencks & Edin, 1991). This negative stereotyping relates directly to the residual effects of the culture of poverty literature (Rank, 1994) which blamed victims for their own poverty (Ryan, 1971). Blaming both the system and the AFDC recipient herself for the creation of welfare dependency serves to justify the current punitive measures described as welfare reform (Abramovitz, 1994).

One of the main proposed solutions to welfare dependency is work in the paid labor market. Despite research which shows that over 40% of AFDC recipients work at paid jobs either by simultaneously combining work and welfare or by cycling between work and welfare (Spalter-Roth, Hartmann, Andrews, & Sunkara, 1991), false assumptions persist which assert that welfare dependent women do not work and do not want to work. Furthermore,

the assumption is that they will not work unless forced to do so (Mead, 1995). Whatever the intention, rhetoric to "end welfare as we know it" (Clinton, 1994, p. 172) by encouraging work suggests "images of welfare mothers who refuse to work and welfare programs that undercut the work ethic" (Abramovitz, 1994, p. 19).

Welfare dependency is also associated with generational poverty. The term *underclass* is used to describe second-generation AFDC recipients (Jencks & Edin, 1991) who live in female-headed households in neighborhoods characterized by long-term poverty, high crime rates, drug abuse, joblessness, and high rates of school dropout (Abramovitz, 1994; Reischaler, 1987; Rank, 1994). The underclass is supposedly created by children growing up in a home where welfare usage is common and not stigmatized; the presumed outcome is an adult more likely to use welfare. Despite no clear causal relationship between parents' and children's use of welfare and a suggested correlation instead due to lack of continual economic opportunity from one generation to the next (Rank & Cheng, 1995), the myth persists that growing up in a home where welfare is received encourages that child to grow up and receive welfare.

Social services for AFDC recipients have been both praised for preventing and accused of creating dependency. The goal of these services was to reduce rapidly expanding welfare rolls by "strengthening the family life and facilitating self-support" (Abramovitz, 1988, p. 330). Thus, social workers who aid a client in the receipt of AFDC have been accused of creating welfare dependency. The governmental response to the increase in the welfare rolls and the accompanying gains in the area of welfare rights during the 1960s was to focus on the social workers who "represented the dependent poor" by trying to get more money for them, resulting in both the clients and the social workers becoming "dependent on government" (Moynihan, 1973, p. 306). No matter what the intention, social workers and other social service workers are hired to provide services to alleviate dependency while simultaneously being accused of creating it.

Finally, welfare dependency is considered costly. Although most of the core assumptions about AFDC recipients apply to their behavior and their needs, there is purportedly a purely

financial reason to be concerned about long-term welfare recipients: They cost the government too much money. Bane and Ellwood (1983) showed that even though long-term welfare users constitute a 40% minority among the total population of welfare recipients, they receive a disproportionately large amount of AFDC resources over time. These long-term recipients are the primary focus of welfare reform discussions even though they comprise only a portion of the already meager 3.4% average state budget expenditures on all AFDC recipients (Polakow, 1994). This focus simplifies a complex situation and leads to viewing long-term recipients as one group which diverts attention from understanding the differences among the individual women.

The Evolution of Welfare Dependency

Having identified *dependency* as a key word in U.S. welfare policy, Fraser and Gordon (1994) trace the history of the word *dependency*, beginning with its preindustrial English usage which linked dependency more closely with economic class than with gender and equated it with subordination but not with an individual state of being. Since subordination to lords and masters was the condition of most people, dependency was considered a normal, natural, and non-negative state and independence referred mainly to large entities such as churches or nations. Although the English Poor Law of 1601 distinguished between the worthy and unworthy poor, it neither disapproved of dependence nor praised independence. Rather, this law enforced traditional dependencies by attempting to return poor people to their local independent parishes or communities (Fraser & Gordon, 1994).

With the rise of industrialization, capitalism, and Protestantism came praise for work, wage labor, individualism, and independence. By the mid-1800s, dependency had become a condition more frequently associated with women. Men, primarily white men, became wage-earners with civil and electoral rights. The related notion of civil citizenship meant owning property and earning a wage that allowed a man to support his wife and children (Fraser & Gordon, 1992 & 1994). In an effort to rationalize subjugation and poverty during a time when independence was revered, dependency also took on a moral/psychological

meaning associated with individual character flaws. Dependency became a more gender- and race-specific term as non-wage earners became paupers, colonial natives or slaves, and housewives.

Concern with women becoming dependent on the state originated in the mid-1800s when welfare policy sought to prevent the some potentially deserving poor women from becoming paupers. The U.S. welfare system initially took the form of outdoor relief—non-institutional relief given to those living in their own homes—which continued until the mid-1800s despite the contention that it injured poor people's morals and destroyed their desire to work and be independent (Rank, 1994; Abramovitz, 1988; Handler & Hollingsworth, 1971). Fueled by the disfavor of outdoor relief and the low-cost labor needs created by the rise of industrial capitalism, the nineteenth-century day care nursery movement consisted of private funds to provide mostly freestanding child care facilities so that poor women with children were able to work "under one room, where they could be fed, warmed, and supervised more economically and efficiently" than if they each worked in their own homes (Michel, 1993, p. 281). Purportedly, this arrangement would prevent "pauperization" as women would not become "dependent" on charity, public welfare, or prostitution (Michel, 1993, p. 281 & 283). *Pauperization* became the key word for what today is called welfare dependency.

Following the day care nursery movement, mother's pension programs tried to divert charges that charity/outdoor relief led to dependency. As mother's pensions moved relief from private to public funders, charges that pensions would create dependency now came from government and non-governmental groups (Michel, 1983). Supporters of mother's pensions responded with an argument concerning women's unpaid household labor that evoked the idea of social citizenship which guarantees the social provisions to obtain a decent standard of living and supports the ideas of rights, equal respect, solidarity, and shared responsibility (Fraser & Gordon, 1992):

Denying opponents' charges that the pensions were simply another form of relief (and thus pauperizing), they contended that it was a form of salary or wages for the 'work' of motherhood . . . motherhood had a civic value (Michel, 1983, p. 287).

The argument failed to win approval in the U.S. because the American power structure acknowledged civil citizenship with its ties to ownership of property (including women, children, and slaves) and to contractual exchanges, which was a white male privilege. Contrasted with women's natural, and thus non-contractual, role as wife, mother, and homemaker, the contractual labor associated with civil citizenship was an equal exchange (Fraser & Gordon, 1992). Viewed in the light of civil citizenship, mother's pensions must be viewed as charity—as an unequal and one-way exchange involving a praiseworthy “giver” and a stigmatized “taker.” This “welfare as charity” notion meant that although welfare recipients might deserve compassion, they did not have a right to social provisions. Rather they must bear the stigma of failure for not having a primary [male] breadwinner to provide for their needs (Romanyshyn, 1972).

The dichotomized and separately valued spheres of contract versus charity, civil citizenship versus social citizenship, male independence versus female dependence, and the public wage-earning market place versus the private non-wage-earning household set the stage for a two-tiered welfare system institutionalized by the 1935 Social Security Act. This two-tiered system mimicked the contract versus charity dichotomy. The first tier, similar to contractual relationships, guaranteed social entitlements to wage-earning workers, usually white working-class males. The second tier, similar to charitable relationships, gave aid in the form of pensions to white working-class and poor women with children (Fraser & Gordon, 1992; Nelson, 1990). This two-tiered system, one a more generous first-track for wage earners and the other a stingy second-track for childbearers (Nelson, 1990), differs in that welfare dependency language has been reserved for the second-tier.

The connection between welfare dependency and poor women was solidified with the establishment of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the most controversial public assistance program of the 1935 Social Security Act (Abramovitz, 1988). Like its predecessors, it was conceived as a temporary program of aid to women with children who were without the support of a male breadwinner due mainly to death. Divorced, separated, or never-married women were being ignored (Miller,

1990). They fell into the category of the “undeserving poor”—historically, those who lacked moral character and failed to earn a living due to moral weakness (Abramovitz, 1988; Handler & Hollingsworth, 1971). Thus, the negative view of welfare dependents as undeserving poor women who required long-term assistance was maintained with the establishment of the AFDC program.

The negative rhetoric of welfare dependency increased as more unmarried women and women of color began to apply for AFDC benefits. Much of the growth in the welfare rolls during the 1960s in particular is attributed to the efforts of grassroots welfare organizations such as the National Welfare Right Organization (NWRO). In the 1960s, this national network of local welfare rights groups, who demanded rights such as a living wage and greater access to education, succeeded in dramatically increasing the number of recipients, particularly black women who had previously been systematically denied access. NWRO increased eligibility for AFDC by “forcing the state to acknowledge and act on their entitlement” (Amott, 1990, p. 288). Despite its success, NWRO has received minimal attention from historians and social scientists (Piven & Cloward, 1977). NWRO was composed of poor, black women who used a feminist context in making welfare right demands and promoted raising children as work that deserved to be valued (Amott, 1990; Gordon, 1988).

As more women continued to depend on the state for at least part of their income and to become involved in additional collective organizing efforts (e.g., civil rights, women’s rights, and gay/lesbian liberation movements), the notion of welfare dependency moved from a negative to a toxic state. The Nixon administration’s advisor, now-Senator Moynihan, set the stage for focusing on welfare reform and ending welfare dependency as a solution for social unrest and economic injustice (Quadagno, 1994). Rather than connecting social unrest to high unemployment, poverty, and racial and sexual discrimination, Moynihan (1976) tied it to “the breakdown of the Negro family [which has] led to a startling increase in welfare dependency” (Moynihan, 1967, p. 58). Moynihan and followers proposed that the solution to the nation’s economic woes was to end women’s dependency on the state and increase their dependency on men. This “reform”

continued with the passage of the Omnibus Budget Reduction Act (OBRA) under the Reagan administration in 1981. OBRA restructured AFDC rules, dropping or reducing benefits for thousands of women, especially working women (Quadagno, 1994) and prevented many women from qualifying for benefits (Abramovitz, 1988). Women were to be dependent on men, relatives, employers, professionals, or any combination of the above instead of depending on the state for assistance (Zinn, 1984).

The current welfare reform movement with its welfare dependency rhetoric differs from the previous 25 years of welfare reform efforts perhaps only in the momentum it has gained. Ms. recently reprinted Tillmon's 1973 essay on welfare because of its applicability to the welfare situation today. The late Director of NWRO, which now operates in several cities as the NWRU, Tillmon (1995) articulates the relationship between welfare reform and dependency:

"Welfare is all about dependency. Welfare is the most prejudiced institution in this country, even more than marriage, which it tries to imitate. . . . AFDC is like a supersexist marriage. You trade in a man for **the** man. But you can't divorce him if he treats you bad. He can divorce **you**, cut you off anytime he wants. But in that case, **he** keeps the kids (p. 50).

Reconceptualization of Welfare Dependency: Focusing on Women's Strengths

A reconceptualization of welfare dependency begins by building on the feminist context of welfare rights started by the National Welfare Rights Organization in the 1960s. It combines the feminist values of renaming and defining the personal as political (Van Dan Bergh & Cooper, 1987) with the strengths perspective focus on resources and strengths instead of problems and pathologies (Saleebey, 1992). In a society that assumes dependence on men as women's natural state (Zinn, 1984), views welfare as charity, and defines long-term receipt of benefits as pathological dependence, the very act of applying for AFDC is political (Gordon, 1988). The fact that many long-term adult welfare recipients and their children survive on the very low benefits points to strengths more than to pathologies.

It is essential to articulate an expanded and more accurate definition of the term *dependency* since it continues to be used so frequently in discussing long-term welfare receipt. Sparer (1971) lays out the "real problem of welfare dependency" (p. 71) not as the typical definition of dependency on the welfare check. Rather, the applicant and recipient are dependent on the "whim" of the welfare worker (and the state regulations by which that worker must abide) due to vague and countless eligibility rules, lack of rights including legal redress for the denied applicant or recipient, and agency discretion.

Renaming welfare dependency involves both expanding the existing definition of dependency and altering the meaning by focusing on interdependency. Understanding the nature of interdependency between women and the state, between the public and private spheres, and between welfare and women's rights offers an alternative way of conceptualizing welfare dependency.

Dependency, Interdependency, Women and the State

The language of the dependency theory of underdevelopment which "attempts to explain the increasing gap between the rich and poor nations" of the world (David, 1987, p. 27) offers an example of connecting dependency to interdependency, which can then be applied to expanding the definition of welfare dependency. Dependency theory, by definition, includes a focus on "the relation of interdependence between two or more economies" (Dos Santos, 1970, p. 231) so that the dominant countries are able to expand and remain self-sustaining in part by exploiting the resources and labor of the "dependent" countries. Applying this idea to the notion of women's welfare dependency means that women "depend" on economic aid from the government; however, the government also "depends" on women receiving AFDC to raise children and perform housework under the stressful conditions created by poverty and, when needed, perform the cheap labor necessary to maintain capitalism.

Interdependency and the Public and Private Spheres

Although useful for understanding interdependencies between women and the state, dependency theory ignores women's connection to the private sphere. While crediting dependency

theory for recognizing the West's dominance in the world system, with its legacy of imposing colonialism and imperialism, Scott (1995) points out that dependency theory still deals with the public sphere only. The praise for science, technology, and industrialization underlying dependency theory continues to connect development with capitalism and the labor market while ignoring the private sphere—the household.

This extremely voluntaristic depiction of class struggle omits any consideration of the household. It depicts class struggle as occurring in the public sphere populated by men who seek to alter and challenge conditions of dependency. Women remain isolated in the household and thus are not situated to develop a collective consciousness and lack the capacity for organizing opposition to dependency. Challenging dependency is men's work (Scott, 1995, p. 97).

Scott recommends looking at the household and bringing the private into public discussion. This discussion lends support to a revival of the focus on women's unpaid labor. With the current focus for welfare reform on work in the paid labor force, the household has once again been relegated to secondary, if not invisible, status. Fraser and Gordon (1994) suggest that the development of the dependence/independence dichotomy and the predominance of wage labor surrounding this dichotomy has diverted the attention and led to devaluation of women's unwaged domestic and parenting labor.

To discuss women's work in both the private and the public spheres, it is essential to make individual and group distinctions among long-term recipients by addressing their strengths, situations, and needs. Such an analysis can also aid in identifying the similarities and differences between long-term AFDC recipients, short-term AFDC recipients, and women who are not in need of AFDC. Distinguishing long-term recipients who are either working or able to work but lack adequate salaries, child care, transportation, and/or health insurance from recipients who are unable to work due to mental or physical illness, lack of work history, inadequate education or training, or debilitating situations such as current or past abuse serve as a starting point for distinctions. Further scrutiny to determine differences in levels of

familial or community support as well as the amount of unpaid time spent caring for elderly or physically or mentally ill relatives is also necessary.

The research concerning welfare recipients has focused on long-term receipt and welfare dependency issues. In fact, Zinn (1984) suggests that research which uses "length of stay on welfare" as the operationalized measure of welfare dependency serves to reinforce the idea that welfare dependency is a fact. If we really want to end welfare as we know it, we must begin to change our *thinking* about welfare as we know it. Thinking about ways to understand this specific group of women in terms of their struggles in both the public and private spheres may decrease negative stereotypes as well as contribute to meaningful welfare reform. This focus calls for examining issues that relate to long-term poverty: lack of access to financial resources for day care, transportation, and health insurance; low-paying jobs without adequate benefits; domestic violence; sexual abuse; drug and alcohol abuse; lack of access to recovery programs and safe houses; inadequate housing; physical and mental illnesses; and lack of other means to pay for necessary education and skills training.

Long-term thinking about the connections between successful job training and support programs and the necessary support systems for AFDC recipients is necessary. For example, alternatives to low-paying jobs without benefits for AFDC recipients include self-employment programs (Raheim & Bolden, 1995), nontraditional occupations (Weidman, White, Swartz, 1988; Weidman & White, 1985; Pearce, 1994), and jobs that require college degrees. Understanding the conditions needed for women to successfully complete the programs for obtaining these jobs as well as the ongoing support for maintaining the employment over the long run is essential. Research shows a need to provide extensive support services for women in nontraditional job training (Weidman, White, & Swartz, 1988) as well as at the job site itself particularly in the area of dealing with sexual harassment (Cedar Rapids Gazette, 1995; U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1978). Working with women in groups to help them prepare for self-employment is important for the formation of networks between women who will be employed in positions that may isolate them from one another (Raheim &

Bolden, 1995). Successful strategies to move women from AFDC receipt and/or out of poverty on a permanent basis must include strategies for helping women stay employed as well as the initial strategies for helping women find work (Pavetti, 1993).

Interdependency of Welfare and Rights for Women

Advocating for the term *welfare* to be restored to its original meaning connects welfare rights to women's rights. Discussing the "welfare of the community and of the individual good . . . should be a basic tenet of the women's community" (Davis, 1994, p. 105). Sexual harassment, reproductive rights, child support, wages for work, and domestic violence affect all women; however, these issues do not affect all women in the same way. Davis (1994) points out that the ERA and abortion rights, though important, do not directly address questions of access and power necessary for poor women. Tillmon (1995) states that "welfare is a women's issue. For a lot of middle-class women in this country, women's liberation is a matter of concern. For women on welfare it's a matter of survival" (p. 50). Women's liberation is a matter of survival for women who do not "depend" on men:

"Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference; those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are black, who are older, know that survival is not an academic skill" (Lorde, 1983, p. 99).

Returning the focus to welfare rights as women's rights is vital during this period when many of the rights achieved in the 1960s and 1970s are threatened. Grassroots organizers and workers concerned with poverty during the 1970s advocated for rights for poor women which are still needed today: adequate grants, reorganization of the economy to provide decent pay and purposeful employment, professionals providing technical aid and service to organized groups of recipients as opposed to professionals determining strategies to help individual recipients (Sparer, 1971).

Working for welfare rights for women has continued on local and national levels. Professionals and recipients today work together on local, state, national, and international levels. On the

local level, community groups including activist women from both poor and non-poor economic circumstances include the Reform Organization of Welfare (ROWEL), a Missouri "organization of low-income people and their allies" who work to change public policy particularly related to welfare issues (ROWEL, 1994); Women for Economic Security (WES), a Chicago-based group comprised mainly of long-term welfare recipients working on a local and state level to get people off welfare and out of poverty "through adequate education, training, and supportive services" (O'Donnell, 1993, p. 631); and the Women's Economic Agenda Project on the West Coast whose members have organized conferences with NOW; California's Women's Economic Agenda Project, New Jersey's Together Against Poverty, Wisconsin's Welfare Warriors, and many others (Davis, 1994).

At the national level, feminist researchers and activists have offered proposals to incorporate an employment insurance system into welfare reform and recalculate the standard of need on which state AFDC benefit amounts are based (Pearce, 1994). The National Organization for Women (NOW) Legal Defense Fund has sponsored round tables with academics, low-income women activists, and other welfare advocates (Davis, 1994). Coalitions between such organizations as NOW, the National Welfare Rights Union, and the national Up and Out of Poverty movement are being forged (Davis, 1994).

On an international level, women have been working together for economic, political, and social freedom through the United Nation's conferences for women, the first held in 1975 in Mexico City and the most recent held in 1995 in Beijing, China (United Nations, 1991; Woman's Bureau, 1995). In 1995, priority U.S. issues included a particular focus on economic security and efforts to balance work and family responsibilities (Women's Bureau, 1995). Nichols-Casebolt, Krysik, and Hermann-Currie (1994) call specifically for an international focus by American social workers to "gain more knowledge about the effects of social policy and planning on the lives of women around the world" because of the potential for development as well as further exploitation of women brought about through the onset of a global economy and because of the power held by some women in the United States.

The efforts to build coalitions between poor and non-poor women are moving the focus away from the political language of welfare dependency and returning the focus to welfare rights and connecting welfare issues to women's rights. Calling for compassion and justice, Swigonski (1996) calls for social workers in particular to work in conjunction with welfare recipients in a way that emphasizes interdependency:

Compassion requires work to end suffering and to transform the consequences of suffering. It requires that work to be explicitly grounded in the standpoint of those who suffer and in an understanding of the interdependent relationships that connect all human beings (Swigonski, 1996, p. 106).

Perhaps serious efforts towards poor and non-poor working together to change welfare policy can redress the inequalities created by social welfare professionals (along with politicians and corporations) who have built a welfare state at the expense of welfare recipients. As former recipient, organizer, and special assistant to the Commissioner of New York State's Department of Social Services, Theresa Funciello, has explained, "social welfare professionals became effectively a fifth estate. Acting as stand-ins for poor people in the politics of poverty, they repeatedly traded off the interests of poor people, even as they purported to represent them" (Funciello, 1994).

As women work for welfare rights, the potential to create a welfare system that reinforces strengths increases. Building on the strengths of the AFDC program and the women who utilize it may enable even more women to take risks such as "resisting pressure to take any job at any pay or to engage in activities, such as strikes, that might improve wages and working conditions" or protect against "entering into or remaining in marriages regardless of their safety or security" (Abramovitz, 1988, p. 314). Recognizing that AFDC serves as a second income for poor women (Burbridge, 1994) validates many recipients' resourcefulness when they combine AFDC with paid labor market work, off-the-record wages, and support from family and friends to provide for themselves and their children. Women who receive AFDC for long periods of time are like most women of all classes and educational levels in that they depend on another source of income, such as child

support or a husband's income, along with their own earnings (Gowen, 1991).

The Strength of Interdependency Between Women

Moving away from the patriarchal and pathological definition of welfare dependency and confronting people with more accurate definitions of welfare and dependency and their connections with interdependency leads social workers to "work to validate women's strengths in areas which are central to [our] lives" (Davis, 1994, p. 22). Acknowledging the relationship among women, long-term welfare receipt, and the state and forging connections between welfare rights, women's rights, and women's relationship with both the private and public spheres encourages a more detailed understanding of the women who use AFDC for long periods of time. This understanding can offer ways of shifting the focus away from the political language of welfare dependency and its underlying misogyny. The goal is to move toward solving the real issues which welfare dependency language attempts to hide: poverty and the oppression of women.

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The Forgotten Many: A Study of Poor Urban Whites

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Being White in America is thought to ensure social and economic stability, but the lives of Whites who are poor run contrary to these assumptions. Members of this group, the focus group of this study, receive food stamps, public aid and general assistance payments on a monthly basis. And they rely on public health clinics and food pantries to get by—programs and services that are viewed by the larger society as being tapped only by Blacks. This paper examines the differences and similarities between the poverty experiences of Blacks and Whites. The research for this analysis consisted of participant observation and individual interviews performed in a predominantly White community of a major midwest city.

According to the poverty literature (Jarrett, 1994; Lieberman, 1980; Massey and Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1987), poverty effects vary according to the social situation of the individual. Understanding this, a comparative analysis of the historical and contemporary social situations of Blacks and Whites in this country stands to enlighten and inform us of the effects of poverty on each group. For instance, are poor Whites socially or spatially isolated in communities as are poor Blacks? What strategies do Whites employ to mitigate the effects of poverty on their lives? How do the resources available to Whites differ from those of Blacks? The objective of this research is to gain insight into the poverty experiences of Whites, and to subsequently examine how their experiences compare and contrast with those of Blacks.

Data for this study were collected using participant observation, individual interviews, and visual observations of the neighborhood. These activities were performed over a 180 hour period

during winter and spring of 1995. The twelve informants for this study receive some form of welfare assistance, or qualify for other programs targetted toward low-income families. All but two are able-bodied adults between the ages of 25 and 40, one is 48 years of age and the other is 54. These characteristics were targetted in an effort to eliminate issues of physical handicap and age, each of which are listed among the common discriminatory hiring practices in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) creed.

Introduction

The Bureau of Census reports that more than 61% of the nation's 6.9 million households receiving some form of public assistance, are White households. Twenty-eight percent are Black, and the remaining 10% are Hispanic, Asian and American Indian (1990 *Census of Population—Social and Economic Characteristics*). Despite this distribution, poverty is still perceived by many American citizenry as a condition unique to Blacks (Will, 1993). But over the last thirty years researchers have made significant contributions to the poverty discourses in efforts to dispel common-sense notions surrounding the subject. Of particular interest to this discussion is Wilson's perspective presented in his 1987 publication *The Truly Disadvantaged*.

Wilson (1987) writes of how poverty is influenced by structural shifts that have left fewer good-paying jobs for skilled workers. The resulting unemployment destabilizes communities that lack certain crucial resources. Wilson coined the term "social isolation" to characterize this condition, and he defined it as "the lack of sustained contact or interaction with individuals and institutions that represent mainstream society" (1987, p. 60). Access to mainstream role models and institutions are crucial for people living in poverty, for it serves to socialize them to the routines and practices of mainstream participation. Understanding this, sustained interaction and access with those who exercise mainstream behaviors are determinants of mainstream assimilation and socioeconomic mobility.

This paper argues two key points. First, Wilson's social isolation thesis does not account for poverty among Whites who

live in urban areas. On the contrary, the findings of this analysis indicate that poor Whites live in communities that have social and economic variation and the presence of mainstream individuals and institutions. Secondly, this paper argues that because of the social and economic variation in their communities, poor Whites have access to resources that serve to insulate them from the most extreme effects of poverty, such as homelessness, hunger and to some extent joblessness. Together these two factors, the absence of social isolation and access to resources, highlight the significant distinctions of poverty effects between Blacks and Whites.

To present the first argument, I will use Wilson's thesis of social isolation as a framework for demonstrating the extent to which poor Whites are socially isolated. For the second argument, I will use Jarrett's (1994) framework for identifying the dynamics and structure of social and familial networks to demonstrate the extent to which poor Whites make use of the resources available to them, and to discuss how their access to such resources serves to buffer them from the tenuous effects of poverty. As a third step of this analysis, I will discuss some of the barriers to mobility faced by poor Whites. The findings indicate that while this group has certain advantages over poor Blacks, their mobility is nonetheless impeded by similar structural factors and unique dispositional factors that interfere with their ability to move out of poverty. I will then conclude with a discussion of how the social and spatial situations of poor Whites ameliorate the effects of poverty for them, and how the absence of similar situations for poor Blacks intensifies these same effects.

Social Isolation Factors

Wilson argues that due to the economic downturn beginning in the late 1970s, race can no longer be considered a factor in determining poverty. Instead, poverty is influenced by deindustrialization and downsizing leaving fewer good-paying jobs for skilled workers. The resulting unemployment destabilizes communities that lack social and economic variation among the residents. Wilson defines the role of mainstream representations in communities as follows:

. . . even if the truly disadvantaged segments of an inner-city area experience a significant increase in long-term spells of joblessness,

the basic institutions in that area (churches, schools, stores, recreational facilities, etc.) would remain viable if much of the base of their support comes from the more economically stable and secure families. Moreover, the very presence of these families during such periods provides mainstream role models that help keep alive the perception that education is meaningful, that steady employment is a viable alternative to welfare, and that family stability is the norm, not the exception (Wilson, 1987, p. 56).

Mainstream residents bring stability to communities by virtue of their presence. They are involved in the schools and school programs. They attend church and support its programs with their time and donations. They use the recreational facilities and assure their children are involved in the organized activities. Finally they patronize the stores, and by doing so they maintain these services in the community and keep them accessible to all of the residents.

Wilson also states that access to role models and institutions facilitates the socialization of individuals to the routines and practices of mainstream participation.

In neighborhoods in which nearly every family has at least one person who is steadily employed, the norms and behavior patterns that emanate from a life of regularized employment become part of the community gestalt . . . In other words, a person's patterns and norms of behavior tend to be shaped by those with which he or she has had the most frequent or sustained contact and interaction (Wilson, 1987, pps. 60–61).

Waking to an alarm clock, supporting the schools and churches, and dressing appropriately for work are habits warranted, and in theory socially and economically rewarded in mainstream life. Understanding this, sustained interaction and access to "individuals and institutions that represent mainstream society" (Wilson, 1987, p. 62) are determinants of successful assimilation and ultimately socioeconomic mobility.

Socially isolated communities are characterized in part by what Wilson refers to as "concentration effects."

. . . the communities of the underclass are plagued by massive joblessness, flagrant lawlessness, and low—achieving schools, and therefore tend to be avoided by outsiders . . . I should also point out

that whereas poor blacks are frequently found in isolated poor urban neighborhoods, poor whites rarely live in such neighborhoods (1987, p. 58).

Flagrant lawlessness, widespread joblessness and low-achieving schools are symptoms of predominantly poor communities. In effect these communities lack the social and economic resources needed to stabilize individuals, families and institutions. Although Wilson does not cite housing policy or racial segregation as causal factors of social isolation, he does acknowledge the prevalence of these conditions in Black communities. And these conditions serve as barriers to job and educational opportunities that stand to improve the social and economic statuses of the residents who live there.

This section assesses the level of social isolation in Caroline, the target community of this study, by examining its level of socioeconomic variation, its community programs and its institutions. The findings indicate that Caroline's characteristics are opposite those of poor Black communities. Life in Caroline therefore carries with it implications of how poverty is mediated for Whites by the resources available to them, and how they are insulated from the concentration effects of social isolation. The findings of this study support this conjecture. To determine the extent to which Caroline is socially isolated, the level of socioeconomic variation is first addressed.

Socioeconomic Variation

Caroline is situated in the corner of a major midwestern metropolitan city. It is a predominantly White community (86% White) which consists largely of municipal employees and skilled workers. The collapse of several steel factories in the area and the layoffs of people at the nearby Ford assembly plant has had an effect on the economy of the community. The median family income dropped from \$43,041 in 1979 to \$36,797 in 1989. In 1980, 4% of the residents lived beneath the poverty line. In 1990, this proportion doubled to 8% (1990, *Community Area Fact Book*).

Caroline is comprised of three subareas: Easton, Parkway and Main Caroline. Easton is where the only trailer park in the city is located. The living here can be characterized as "unsettled", where the families move quite frequently and rely on government

entitlements and informal work to survive (Howell, 1973). Parkway consists of a subdivision of single family bungalow homes constructed in the early 1960s. The residents are skilled and white-collar workers who grew up in Caroline, or who moved here from other parts of the city to make the community their home. They are young couples just beginning families of their own, recently retired people who were former employees of local industry, and elderly people who comprise 10% of Caroline's population. The families in Parkway stay put, work formal jobs and participate in community programs and activities such as Bingo, Little League and softball. The living here can be characterized as "settled" (Howell, 1973).

Main Caroline is the oldest residential area in the community, consisting largely of frame and brick buildings and several small businesses. It is comprised predominantly of owner-occupied single residence homes, although a small percentage of the residences are multi-unit dwellings. Several of the homes have falling wood, worn shingles, broken steps and cluttered yards. The businesses consist of small shops in the form of a local restaurant, a cleaners, an ice cream shop, a meat market, and a health care center. There is one major fast food chain outlet, a Burger King located at the southern edge of Main Caroline. The families of Main Caroline are physically settled but economically shaken. Worn shingles, broken doors and steps are visible signs of the residents' struggle.

While some people in Caroline came to the community from elsewhere in the city, the community is for the most part self-reproducing. This is particularly true of Main Caroline. The people here are mostly elderly, who are life-long residents of the community, and/or their adult children or grandchildren who inherited the homes. The younger generation consists largely of skilled workers, some of whom are employed, and some of whom have lost their jobs due to lay-offs and plant closures in the area.

Despite the spatial and class divisions inherent in the three sub-communities, the residents do peacefully coexist. Moreover, the social and economic variation in Caroline indicates that the poor residents are buffered from the widespread joblessness aspect of the concentration effects of isolation. Only 8% of the community is documented as living in poverty. Even counting

the working poor, home ownership and the existence of a large majority of residents who work, the low level of documented poverty indicates that unemployment is not the norm. This serves to advance the perception that work is a viable alternative to welfare, and simultaneously, it facilitates assimilation to the practices and routines of work and career. In terms of socioeconomic variation, Caroline residents are not socially isolated.

Social programs are important to communities in that they promote growth and development of youth, and help to maintain social control by keeping them busy. The following discussion addresses the extent to which Caroline residents are socially isolated in terms of community programs.

Community Programs

Youth programs provide exposure to various areas of American culture (arts, craft, sports). These are needed to facilitate their socialization to the mainstream way. Little League and softball are among the programs available in Caroline. The local community center offers arts and crafts, ping-pong, dancing and movies both after school and in the evenings. Unlike Little League and softball, the community center's activities are free of charge, making them accessible to those who would otherwise be unable to afford them. Bingo parties are an example of fundraising events conducted by the center to raise money for its services. The center also relies on grants from private companies which offer them as part of their community services programs.

All activities at the center are supervised by adults. The children are on a first name basis with the staff, and efforts are made to keep the children busy, and interested in coming up with ideas for things to do. Ski trips, parties and a teen newspaper are just a few examples of the activities. Through these projects the community is able to maintain some semblance of social control by reducing the potential for idleness, boredom, and various forms of delinquency. This became particularly evident during discussions at the monthly neighborhood policing meetings.

During my visits to the community policing meetings, resident complaints consisted primarily of cars double parked in front of the schools during school dismissals, speeding cars, kids hanging out on the corners (before curfew), and the lack of police

response when a house was burglarized six months prior. There were no reports of shootings, robberies, assaults or murders—a far cry from the lawlessness in isolated communities. Social control of the youth is therefore a residual effect of youth programs. They serve to maintain civility in the community, while simultaneously promoting growth and development of the youth and socializing them to the culture of the mainstream. In this manner, poor Whites are buffered from the flagrant lawlessness aspect of the concentration effects of isolation. In terms of social programs and the functions they serve in communities, poor residents of Caroline are not socially isolated. In the following segment I discuss the availability of the institutions in Caroline and the role they serve in assimilating individuals into the mainstream.

Institutions

The role of the church and schools are examined in this segment to determine the extent to which Caroline residents are socially isolated with respect to institutions. The findings indicate that the institutions in the community are stabilized by families who are better off socially and financially than those who are poor. Because of these individuals, each institution is able to play a crucial role in insulating Whites from the extreme effects of poverty. I will first discuss the role of the church in this process, and then proceed to discuss the roles of the schools and stores respectively.

Churches serve secondary yet critical functions in communities. In addition to spirituality they provide facilities for various meetings and gatherings, and they offer programs and services that are directed toward the needs of the larger community. Specific to Caroline these programs and services include food distributions and educational resources.

The food pantry distributions are organized through the Saint Vincent DePaul Church, and carried out at the local catholic grammar school. On the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, the poor residents of Caroline go to the school gymnasium to receive groceries. During each of my visits there, 65 to 80 people came to the food pantry—approximately 10% of the residents in the community documented as poor.

The ability of the church to provide services for the needy is made possible through contributions made by the city's food depository as well as the monetary donations and volunteerism of church parishioners. In effect the support of mainstream residents enables the church not only to serve as a mainstay in the community, but also to provide for the needy segment of Caroline's population.

Another characteristic of non socially isolated communities is the presence of academically sound schools. Of the two elementary and one secondary public schools attended by Caroline residents, none was included on the list of academically troubled schools recently published in the city's newspaper. So the educational, spiritual and to some extent the food needs of Caroline residents are met within the community. The findings of this analysis suggest then that mainstream individuals do stabilize the institutions in Caroline, and this stability serves to buffer the poor from the concentration effects that typify predominantly poor communities. Therefore, with regard to access to institutional resources, the poor residents of Caroline are not socially isolated.

Summary

In terms of its variation in socioeconomic grouping, Caroline contains both blue collar and white collar workers, as well as a percentage (8%) of people receiving welfare in the form of medical care, public aid and/or food stamps. Youth programs both private and free of charge are available, and thereby serve to maintain social control of the youth while socializing them to America's culture. The generosity of church parishioners from the stable families in the community, enables the church to provide services that buffer the poor from the most extreme effects of poverty. Also the schools are academically sound. The presence therefore of mainstream individuals and institutions serves several key functions: to stabilize Caroline, to buffer the poor from flagrant lawlessness, widespread joblessness and low-achieving schools, and to facilitate the residents' assimilation into society by advancing the perception that education is meaningful, that family stability is the norm, and that work is an alternative to welfare.

This analysis has shown that residents of Caroline are not socially isolated. Understanding this, not only should the pro-

portion of poor Whites be small relative to the proportion of poor Blacks—as it is, but the lack of social isolation suggests that there are resources available to Whites that are not available to Blacks. These resources potentially serve to ameliorate the negative effects of poverty for Whites. The following section is a discussion of the resources available in Caroline, and how they influence the manner in which poor Whites “manage their lives” (Jarrett, 1994a). The findings suggest that these resources serve to insulate poor Whites from social dislocations such as homelessness, hunger and to some extent joblessness.

Community and Familial Resources

Jarrett writes that the social and economic conditions under which families live are influenced by neighborhood effects.

Coresidential or extraresidential extended kinship networks predominate in stable working class neighborhoods. (Jarrett, 1994b)

In other words, poor individuals who reside in stable working class communities such as Caroline have kinship networks with family and friends who live in or near their communities. In many cases these networks consist of individuals who are former residents of the community but have relocated to more well-to-do areas. In other cases they consist of individuals who still reside in the community but are better off socially and financially than those who are struggling to survive.

With access to such kin, poor individuals in stable communities are able in many ways to mitigate their social and economic circumstances. Borrowing money from family, performing odd jobs for neighbors, and purchasing a house through kin are some of the ways in which such networks are used. These mechanisms serve to ameliorate the effects of poverty for these individuals. The purpose of this section is to use Jarrett’s framework for network structure and dynamics to convey the extent to which poverty effects are mediated for Whites by the resources available in their communities. The two elements that comprise this framework are kinship ties and extended networks. With regard to kinship ties, Jarrett writes the following:

Membership in a socio—economically heterogeneous network provides emotional, social and childcare resources for poorer members.

Consequently economically insecure members are buffered from the full effects of their individual poverty. (Jarrett, 1994b)

Poor Whites have access to family members that help to meet some of their most basic needs. This segment discusses the differences these safety nets make in their lives.

During my time in Caroline I met several individuals who indicated that they would be unable to provide food for their children without the help they receive from family members. Grace depends upon the food pantry, but this alone is insufficient to meet the needs of her three adult children, a 16-year old son, and three grandchildren ages 11 to 13. After the death of her husband, she was forced to supplement her death benefit with food stamps and an intrafamilial arrangement with her adult children to assure their food needs were met. Every able member of the family needed to contribute by assuming responsibility for a bill or helping to pay for groceries.

Another example of intrafamilial assistance is provided by Rita. Rita's immediate family includes her husband and three children ages 9 to 16. When I asked of her biggest concern, she responded that it was food.

Food probably. It's mostly the food, because my kids always get hand-me-downs from my friends . . . It's just the food that I am concerned about.

Despite the groceries she receives monthly from the Saint Vincent DePaul food pantry, Rita is still unable to adequately meet her children's food needs. She says that her ability to do so diminished when the children began to eat meat as they grew older. Prior to this they ate vegetables and staples. The cost of meats added to the grocery bill reduced her ability to stretch her dollar. And while it embarrasses her to have family bring over food, she is forced to rely on their support to keep her children from going hungry.

. . . His (her husband's) dad brings food over every now and then you know. I feel kind of embarrassed because they bringing food over and I don't want everybody to know that we are low on food.

Rita also discusses how her in-laws' generosity allows her to secure housing for her family and jobs for her husband.

. . . if this house comes through that [my husband] father's going to buy, we're just going to rent to buy from him and we'll automatically move right in.

Yeah [my husband] has two jobs. Yeah he's working at . . . He works down there cause his uncle works there. He's a carpenter. He puts up show floors.

Rita's family insulates her from the tenuous effects of poverty. Her uncle facilitates employment by providing connections to jobs. Her father—in—law minimizes the chances of homelessness, and in turn increases their potential to move out of poverty through property ownership.

Jaime spoke of her father's role in obtaining a job for her at the steel mill. The job she held for eight years enabled her to purchase a home, but after the loss of the job to plant closure she found herself unable to continue the mortgage payments. Jaime describes the period in her life when she had run out of money and payments on her house were overdue.

I started by saying to my dad [that] I'm in a financial bind. I'm in some trouble and I need some help. I need to borrow some money, and he said okay.

Jaime's father loaned her \$2,000 to pay the mortgage, and she now owns the house free and clear. She added however that without the help of her father the loss of the house was not only inevitable, but it was imminent.

The ability of Whites to help family members has historical significance dating back to the second wave of immigration. Between 1880 and 1920 14 million immigrants from South, Central and Eastern Europe (SCE) came to America to work. They were pushed here by conditions of poverty brought on by famine in Ireland for example, and the inefficacy of the soil in other parts of Europe to induce growth. Although they were culturally different from Anglo—Americans, SCE Europeans encountered minimal resistance to obtaining factory jobs due to their physical similarities to the dominant group of English and German protestants, as well as America's need at that time for industrial laborers. Beyond this the immigrants formed unions to strengthen and solidify their positions within the factories.

Today the descendants of the immigrants find themselves in a quandary as America deindustrializes and moves toward a reliance on information management and processing. But while the ability of family members to provide connections to jobs has diminished due to factory closings and deskilling, the relative economic security of kin—which can be attributed to the past, serves to insulate many poor Whites today from hunger and homelessness.

Howell's 1973 study entitled *Hard Living on Clay Street* consists of the struggle of the Shackelford family, whose living the author characterizes as "unsettled" and "hard." They move quite frequently due to their inability to keep up with the rent payments. The husband Barry drinks heavily and is unable to maintain a steady job. The wife Bobbi Jean makes efforts to keep the family certified for welfare benefits, while she cares for her children and her diabetic uncle who lives with them. Despite her best efforts she is unable to maintain control over her young children as exemplified in their truancy from school and in the older son's failure notices received from his teacher. Unlike the families for this study, the Shackelfords lack familial and extended resources to insulate them from the tenuous effects of poverty. This is due in part because they came to the city from rural Appalachia where the families are very poor and therefore unable to provide assistance. Another explanation for the Shackelfords' predicament is their inability to get settled into a community.

Long—time residence in the community facilitates the development of exchange networks with neighbors who have learned to trust and rely on each other for various forms of support. Well—to—do neighbors provide informal work 'odd jobs' to those who are in need. Below are statements made by Michael with regard to the work he does for neighbors and family.

I didn't begin to do furnace work as a job. Somebody needed something done they'd tell so in so and so in so and then they'd all come down to me and 'would you go over and see what you can do for it.' I'll make a couple bucks here and there you know.

Since I was a jack of all trades, when [my sister] wants something done she calls me, you know, to do it for her.

The bonds formed by way of the stability of the community yield trusting and supporting relationships that serve to ease the social

effects of poverty for individuals who have fallen on hard times. In an effort to assure some level of financial security, individuals who have experienced hardship learn to do a number of practical and highly demanded tasks. I discovered Dan did car repairs on the side when he complained about his neighbor purchasing a wrong part.

I got the rack—and—pinion off and I opened up the box with the new part, and that's not the kind he needs . . . Now I got to go all the way out to [Barrington] now and get the part.

Vanessa explained that her boyfriend repairs televisions for extra money.

Vanessa: Dorothy's TV hasn't worked for six weeks because it needed a part and we finally got it in.

Interviewer: You know how to fix TVs?

Vanessa: No but my boyfriend does. We finally got her part. They kept sending us the wrong one, and they finally got it right.

Lawn mowing, car mechanics, plumbing, furnace and television repair constitute the variations of work performed for relatives and neighbors. For some individuals, their skills in these areas enable them to have some amount of money coming into the home when they fall on hard times. This money, although not substantial, allows them to keep groceries in the house, gas in the car, and at times extra spending money. The support offered by neighbors falls far short of a consistent income or an income sufficient enough to sustain a family. But it nonetheless serves to buffer individuals from some of the immediate effects of poverty such as poor cash flow. For others it serves to supplement their income. In short, the effects of poverty for Whites are mediated through kinship ties and extended networks. Such relationships facilitate the provision of work, money, housing and food.

With regard to declining communities such as those of poor Blacks, Jarrett writes that "families with unemployed or marginally employed male or female heads and those that rely on government assistance are found more frequently" (1994a). There are a number of explanations for this however as Lieberman so eloquently points out in his 1980 publication *A Piece of the Pie*. Not only were Black Americans disenfranchised due to Jim Crow

laws in the South, but they also arrived in the North after the good paying factory jobs were absorbed by the SCE groups. The racial preferences for Whites notwithstanding, Blacks fared better than in the South, but still a far cry from the Europeans. And with regard to the frequency of Blacks in unstable communities, Nicholas Lemann explains this phenomenon in the moving documentary *The Promised Land*, based on his book of the same name (1991). Through depictions of communities in Chicago and narrative by Morgan Freeman, Lemann explains that the densely populated poor communities are legacies of the migration of Blacks from the South to the North—specifically Chicago, in search of a better life.

In the 1940s America saw the start of a great migration that would change the nation forever. The migrants were Black. And they left the deep South where they had been tied to the land and denied equal rights . . . By the time the great migration was over, five million had stepped off the northbound trains . . . Like those before them, the newer migrants headed for the narrow strip of land on the south side. Its acreage hardly changed but the population multiplied. The result was an overcrowded slum. (Lemann, 1991)

When Blacks attempted to move into better housing and less crowded conditions in Chicago they encountered staunch and often violent resistance from Whites determined to keep them out of their communities. Black communities in turn grew more dense and isolated. Understanding this history, I can surmise that poor Blacks then and today lack extensive access to kinship networks similar to those of the White working class. Social and economic movement in Black communities is constrained due to the lack of resources that could at minimum help to lessen the strain of poverty, and at best promote socioeconomic mobility. The frequency of family members who are able to loan money or purchase property for relatives as a way of providing housing is relatively small. The frequency of individuals who are able to provide connections to jobs is relatively small. The frequency of neighbors who are able to compensate others for performing odd jobs is relatively small. While this situation is changing for Blacks in that the middle class for this group has grown, such families are still few and far between. The ability of even well-to-do Blacks to help less fortunate friends and family is constrained relative

to the ability and numbers of Whites to do the same. And the growing prevalence of homelessness among Blacks is indicative of this.

We now understand how poverty for Whites differs from that for Blacks. Moreover, through the examination of the individual circumstances of poor Whites, an appreciation has been gained for how access to certain resources serves to ameliorate the strain of poverty and in some cases increases the chance of socioeconomic mobility. However the extent to which the latter occurs today is rare, even with the help of familial and extended networks. It is also important to point out that while the social and spatial situations of poor Whites facilitate their access to mainstream representations and simultaneously buffer them from the most extreme effects of poverty, their socioeconomic mobility is still impeded in a number of ways. The proceeding discussion of **BARRIERS TO MOBILITY** addresses some of these impediments.

Barriers to Mobility

Besides the structural barriers of deskilling, the increasing professionalization of jobs, and the suburbanization of remaining factories, poverty is also influenced by other factors. In this segment I will discuss some of the additional barriers to mobility, among them the lack of affordable child care, and prejudice and discrimination.

The lack of affordable child-care serves as a barrier to both jobs and education for some individuals. Susan, a mother of four, explained her predicament.

I don't have my high school diploma. Every time I tried to get one I didn't have anybody to take care of my kids.

Finding child care is a difficult task regardless of the person's income or social class. But poor women in particular are limited in their choices due to their inability to pay. As a result, older siblings who are still minors and too young to handle the responsibility of small children are used as babysitters. Other individuals who are incapable or unfit to care for children are often used because no one else is available. Finally, leaving children home alone is another strategy used by women in the absence of affordable child-care. Despite the willingness or desire of women in particular to

pursue an education and participate in the labor force, the lack of quality child care prevents this aspiration from being realized. Of the child care centers available in Caroline, none was affordable for the community's low-income residents. Now I will discuss the roles of prejudice and discrimination in impeding the mobility of some individuals.

Caroline's community center offers job services for local residents. Tony, a representative of the city's Chamber of Commerce, runs the service which specializes in placing dislocated workers. Notification of the service is placed in the local newspaper which is distributed free of charge to Caroline and its surrounding communities. Tony sees people from Caroline and other areas nearby with regard to job opportunities, and he says they must have a high school diploma. But several statements he made along this line indicate that Tony is highly selective of the people he chooses to see.

I do not take walk-ins unless they are residents of [Caroline]. I prefer to see people by appointment.

If they do well on the [reading and math tests] I counsel them on appearance, interview technique like eye contact, communication, and the importance of showing they are a team player. Some of them are smart but they're not a team player.

Tony's assessment of the individual's likelihood of being a "team player" is a form of prejudice that is practiced by employers as well. It is an opinion based on little if any knowledge of the individual's work history or personality, and moreover it is unrelated to the person's ability to do a particular job well. Tony's strategy was to avoid the people he chose not to work with by putting them off or making them wait. I observed this repeatedly during my time at the community center, and it appeared to be directed at women more so than men. Donna's experience is just one example of this.

Donna arrived at the center for a 10:00 appointment with Tony. Over the next 30 minutes he called two men who were in the waiting area—one of whom arrived after Donna. At neither time did he acknowledge Donna's presence, and she became upset.

I have a 10:00 appointment to see him about a job. I have too many things to do today than to sit around waiting for him. I have to pick up my kids and take my dad somewhere.

She grew more angry and frustrated as time went on. When she left the reception area for a few minutes, someone mentioned to Tony that she was there. He responded curtly: "I know and I will be there in a minute." When he returned from his office he left an application on the table and said: "Have her fill this out." When Donna returned she was even angrier. She snatched the application from the table.

I'll fill this out at home and come back some other time. I have things to do.

The effects of Tony's methods are counter—productive to his objectives to help people become employed. And his inability to find qualified people to fill the "lot" of jobs he says he has available can at least in part be explained by his curious practices.

I have a lot of jobs . . . but I can't find anybody to fill them. To qualify for training on the job they have to show that they are at least capable of learning the trade.

Tony's actions in some respects are indicative of the economic situation we are in today. With the scarcity of jobs and the large pool of qualified people available to fill them, employers can be highly selective of those they hire. And the predicaments of Donna and others exemplify the effects of the various tactics used by employers to say 'no' to the job seekers they do not like.

Other barriers to mobility are dispositional in that they relate to the decisions people make to refuse service and assistance that are available to them. This amounts to a self—imposed constraint that serves to exacerbate their struggle. For example, with regard to getting to GED classes at a nearby college, Rita stated that she is "scared to death of traffic", so she will not drive. And she further added that public transportation is too expensive and she does not know her way around.

Right well see the bus, it costs to ride that and there's no way I'm going to get on there cause I don't know if I'm going to get on the right bus . . .

Eight of the twelve people I met had neither a high school diploma or a GED. In Rita's case, her fear of driving and concern for taking public transportation impede her ability to obtain one. But the most extreme case was that of 48 year old Michael.

Michael is a laborer who has held jobs with the park district, the steel mill, and an envelope manufacturing factory. Below he speaks of a job he had recently obtained at a steel mill.

. . . I can't read. I can operate the machines. I can set up the machines, change the size to whatever I can read on the micrometer. But the paperwork, I can't do the paperwork. So now they're gonna take me from that job and put me on an overhead crane, and I won't have to read as much. So hopefully that's gonna work out.

Although he cannot read, Michael says there are places where he can go to learn to do so.

Michael: Well they got more places for people like me to go you know to learn a better trade, to get the knowledge of how to read and stuff like that. Years ago they didn't have that. Schools, private tutors.

Interviewer: Do you use them?

Michael: The counselor found me a place to go to learn how to read . . . [Deer Gardens]. That's a black community but it's in a state of the same that (long pause) Cabrini—Green. It's about like that there. If you're white you don't go in there you know type deal. They're all in their little clan and somebody outside you know, even if you're black and you're an outsider and they know it you wouldn't want to be in there. So they sent me there to go to school. No way no way. So I never went.

Most Whites will not go into Black communities for fear of being hurt. These areas, particularly those that contain public housing projects, are believed to be havens of crime. But Frankenberg (1993) suggests that this fear needs careful analysis, writing that "the issue is not fear so much as maintaining a complex balance of association with differentiation from Black people." (1993, p. 52). In other words, the issue is not fear so much as it is racism. Avoidance of Blacks is simply a manifestation of this. Michael's racism keeps him from taking steps toward learning to read. This in effect constrains him socially and hurts him financially.

Michael is not unique in his perception of Blacks. Several individuals blamed racial minorities for their poverty, intimating reverse discrimination.

[My husband's] not prejudiced or anything because when we lived in Georgia we had a lot of black friends . . . Here they are so different than in Georgia . . . They try to run you over . . . I guess he's prejudiced up here because he said the blacks are out there to get what they can get and to hell with anybody else.

All of the city jobs go to minorities. The firemen are all black. The sewer workers are all hispanic. And the postal workers are all black. If you don't believe me I can take you around and show you.

I think the government is . . . bringing in a lot of people from overseas teaching them how to read english. But there was not that much for here, the persons that were already living here born here or whatever, they didn't have this. You know but they teach them. They give them houses. They give them jobs you know. The Mexicans that are trying to get over here . . . But that's . . . [making] us [an endangered] species.

Laws mandating preferential hiring are still in place in some states, but they pale in comparison to the practice of providing connections to jobs—a practice which Whites across socioeconomic class boundaries have enjoyed for many years. And while members of racial minority groups blame Whites for their impoverishment and their inability to obtain jobs, minorities—many of them of formerly colonized groups, have historically lacked social and economic empowerment in America. The difference between Whites and racial minorities lies in the fact that the Whites in Caroline represent a subset of the dominant group in America—at least in terms of race, and they therefore benefit from the social advantages that accompany being White. Conversely, Blacks, Mexicans and Hispanics represent subordinate groups. Poor Whites cannot attribute their condition to the racism that minorities in general and Blacks in particular have suffered in years past and present in the form of colonization, racial segregation, inferior schools and a litany of human and civil rights violations that have historically diminished their life chances. Poor Whites do however suffer other forms of prejudice and discrimination, and the style of management at the community center's employment office is exemplary of this.

During my time in Caroline, representatives from a local welfare advocacy group called Women for Economic Security (WES)

came to Caroline's community center to discuss reforms as well as the overall negative treatment of welfare recipients by social workers. Approximately twenty people attended the meeting, half of whom were individuals from Caroline who received some form of welfare assistance. WES representatives discussed their services which included GED classes and assistance with dealing with rude caseworkers. The meeting lasted approximately one hour and it was fairly interactive. Many complaints regarded the inadequacy of the welfare system.

My son needed glasses and it took six to eight weeks for him to get glasses when I would have had them in an hour if I could have paid for them.

My daughter was a teenage mother and she gave her baby up for adoption two years ago because she would have to go on my welfare claim. The system is terrible if you can't even keep your kids if you want.

Although the technical capability exists to make glasses in one hour, individuals who are poor are unable to realize the advantages of this because of the inherent notion of entitlement that surrounds America's social welfare system. The two-tiered system of privilege and non-privilege punishes members of the latter group for their impoverishment and rewards members of the former for their prosperity.

American culture fosters the idea that work and economic success are there for the taking. Those who do not work and/or have not achieved economic success are frowned upon by those who do and have respectively. And not only must poor families endure the economic struggles of poverty, they must also deal with the public opinion that their condition is their fault and they are therefore undeserving of America's riches. To emphasize this point, Christopher, a social services coordinator for the Comprehensive Economic Development Agency (CEDA) in a predominantly Black community, made the following statement to me during an interview about the CEDA program.

We want to encourage self-sufficiency; therefore we do not give out hand-outs, because people will feel that they are entitled to it . . . The majority of the clients do not have long term goals. They only

want what CEDA has to offer to ease the immediate hardship they are experiencing. I feel gratified when people use our resources to improve themselves, like get job training so they can become self-sufficient. The majority of the people don't use the programs in this way. They don't look at the long term.

Blaming the victim is fashionable in America, particularly when the victims are poor. But policymakers and conservatives ignore the structural influences that work to create poverty conditions in the first place. And by the time individuals reach the level of poverty, they are considered to be responsible for their own conditions—not the structural constraints.

With the declining industrial landscape where the number of factories that once employed upwards of 10,000 employees significantly diminished, working—class Whites find themselves living a reality that is far short of the American dream. And anyone who has experienced job loss realizes the tenuousness of any job today, as indicated in the following statement made by Vanessa.

You know you got President Clinton in there talking about well I'm going to help all these people and you know he's talking about welfare reform will get these people a job in two years. I know people who [have] a high school, college, you know master degrees [and] it ain't getting [them] nowhere. And you talking about having these people a job in two years or cutting all grants off. Come on you're not being, you're not being realistic. I mean you got jobs out there that are asking for high school diplomas, but of course they're paying shit. This guy right now brags because he's making 200 dollars a week. Well hey that's great, but if that job folds, what do you got? You got all the income that you made out of it. Big hairy deal. May work there this weekend and all of a sudden the place will close. (snaps fingers) Well you made 200 dollars, big deal.

Another individual, Jim, made a similar remark during the meeting at the community center with WES, stating that welfare reforms would just "put more people out on the street." The welfare reform law stands to significantly impact the lives of families in poverty. It requires that welfare benefits be withdrawn from able-bodied adults within two years of their initial benefits. The expectation of policymakers is that this will act as an in-

centive for individuals to obtain employment and become self-reliant. Unfortunately the law fails to adequately address the prerequisites to compete for the jobs available in the labor market. With manufacturing all but completely absent, individuals who are without educational credentials cannot compete for the new good—paying and benefit-laden jobs that remain in the professional white-collar sector. This leaves them to rely on the irregular economy and the service sector for employment—neither of which can provide the income or benefits necessary to sustain and secure a family. And with the exception of a fortunate few, the new welfare reforms all but assure that today's poor will become tomorrow's underclass. In the words of Wendy, a Black woman from a predominantly Black community: "A job is a hard thing to [obtain] when you got so many people out there trying to get the same thing you are." Wendy, Jim and Vanessa are not only fearful of welfare reforms, but they are also angry and exasperated at the prevalence of job instability and the increased competition for jobs today.

Many of the individuals I talked to certainly recognize the need to return to school in order to compete for the jobs available. Michelle is a single 24-year old Black woman with three children ages 1, 4 and 5. Currently she relies on her \$414 monthly welfare check to support her family. She does not live in Caroline but because her situation is similar, her perspective serves as a parallel to those in Caroline.

Michelle lives in a predominantly Black community just outside of the city. She stated that she was about to return to school to become a Certified Nurse's Assistant (CNA). When I asked why she was returning to school she stated with exasperation that she was "tired of being broke."

I'm tired. I get tired of being broke all of the time. I figure I'm going to stay broke if I don't get some other kind of income. I figure if I don't get into a training program and train to get a good chance, I won't do any better than I do working at a McDonald's or something like that.

Regardless of the factors that encourage people to return to school—whether it is job instability, fear of welfare reforms, or simple exasperation with their predicament, people have in one way or

another been motivated to reassess their situations to assure some economic security for their families.

There are several factors that impede social and economic mobility for Caroline's residents. First, dependable and affordable child care is absent in the community. Second, Tony's treatment of those who "are not a team player" and do not appear to be "capable of learning a trade" interferes with their efforts to get jobs. Third, many individuals impose constraints upon themselves by not exercising the choices available to them. Refusing to travel outside of the community on public transportation is a self-imposed limitation that restricts job and educational opportunities to resources that are available only in Caroline. Refusing to attend school in a Black community serves only to exacerbate the effects of illiteracy in terms of job stability and income. In these respects, some individuals, while they did not cause their economic condition, participate in their own subjugation to the policies and structures that create poverty. So while the institutions in White communities serve to mitigate the effects of poverty through community, educational and job services, prejudice, discrimination, self-imposed constraints, racism, and the lack of child-care all interfere with the ability of some to mobilize out of poverty.

Conclusion

Two findings of this research are preeminent. First, poor Whites are not socially isolated based on the criteria defined by Wilson. Secondly, their spatial and social situations insulate them from the most extreme effects of poverty. This differs from the circumstances of poor Blacks in that their communities lack such resources. Instead their strategies for survival include the formation of kinship networks (Stack, 1974), and living with friends and family during the difficult times. But the extent to which they are insulated from homelessness, joblessness and hunger is nonetheless limited compared to Whites.

A prominent distinction between the conditions for Blacks and Whites lies in the persistence and occurrence of intergenerational poverty for each group. The individuals in this study came from working or middle-class families. And because they do

not live in socially isolated conditions, their children and grandchildren have good chances of moving out of poverty. A similar future however is not as optimistic for Blacks. Because Blacks live in socially isolated communities, poverty is likely to persist beyond the current generation as it has for generations before them. Educational, social and economic resources are needed to increase the likelihood that the children in these communities will not remain in the poverty into which many of them are born. Even given what seems to be the imminent demise of Affirmative Action programs, the ability of Blacks to compete even on the unlevel playing field increases significantly with access to quality schools and other resources that promote mainstream assimilation and socioeconomic mobility.

It can be argued that the new welfare reforms offer opportunities for individuals to improve their situations. One of the programs developed is 'Workfare', which targets able-bodied adults with children ages 13 years and older. In short, it mandates that adults either find jobs within two years, or earn their welfare benefits through jobs that the program finds for them. On the one hand this employment can be viewed as an opportunity for individuals to learn a skill or gain expertise in some area. But on the other hand, Workfare can be viewed as a form of exploitation.

Early this summer the governor of Illinois signed the state's version of the welfare reform bill into law at a celebrated news conference held at Chicago's O'Hare airport. The airport was selected for the event as a way of thanking United Airlines for its plan to hire welfare recipients under the new Workfare program. The Airlines' plan exemplifies who the real beneficiaries of America's social welfare policies are. In addition to the ability to protect interest, dividends and pensions, the middle class and wealthy can now realize the tax advantages of hiring welfare recipients to whom they are only required to pay minimum wage. Rather than regular employees' salary and benefits, Workfare employees will earn substantially less and receive no benefits from the company since they work for government assistance. So the new welfare reform law effectively legitimates the exploitation of the poor, making it simply a transformed version of the same old ideology. In fact through Workfare, it is more likely that the informants for this study will be relegated to menial work in areas where the

potential for growth and advancement are slim. But in any case, this is certainly a matter to be addressed by researchers over the next five to seven years.

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Attitudinal Predictors of Preferred Policy Options: Contrasting AFDC with Work Programs

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Two studies were conducted in order to determine the attitudinal predictors of support for AFDC, work programs, and the option of the government playing no role in protecting the welfare of poor children whose families have no income. The first study evaluated this question in 362 students of Criminal Justice, Business, Urban Studies, and Public Administration at an urban university in Georgia. The second study evaluated the question in a telephone poll sample of 822 randomly sampled Georgians throughout the state. Majorities in both samples preferred work programs. In the student sample, all three choice groups were distinguishable on the variables of beliefs about the causes of poverty, the Work Ethic, concern over the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and belief that the government should play a role in protecting its citizen's welfare. In the poll sample, those opting for no government role were distinguished from those choosing AFDC or work programs, although the latter two choice groups did not differ. A measure of attitude toward work programs was included in Study 1. This attitude measure was not correlated with the Work Ethic, although it did correlate with other predictor attitudes. Over 70% of both samples identified AFDC as the most expensive policy option. However, even among those who perceived work programs to be the more expensive option the bulk still preferred this option. Implications for sustaining public support for high quality work programs are generated.

In August of 1996, President Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act. This bill effectively ends the federal entitlement program called AFDC. According to the provisions of the new legislation, federal funding for aid to families of low income children will provided in

the form of block grants to states. Federal legislation places a five year maximum life time limit on the federal allowance for any family receiving a cash grant and individuals must be involved in some form of gainful activity after two years receipt of benefits. States will have latitude in determining the form of the work requirements for families who have received less than five years of federal cash grant subsidies (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, 1996, P.L. 104-193). The devolution of decision making authority to each state forecasts sharp debate on these issues throughout the country.

Within the last thirty years, there has been a marked shift in public opinion toward programs for the poor as well as the visibility of liberal advocacy (Fredrickson, 1996; Lewin, 1995). Recognizing the shift in public opinion, Garfinkel (1985) has urged that social workers identify programs to address the needs of the poor which might be more readily supported by the public. Some studies suggest that there is greater support for public assistance programs which require participants to work than for cash grants alone (Ellwood, 1996; Garin, Molyneux, & DiVall, 1994; Hendrickson & Axelson, 1985; Ogren, 1973; Smith, 1987). Further, work programs are believed to be less stigmatizing (Williamson, 1974).

Perhaps the most extensive study of public opinion on alternatives for welfare reform was the project completed in 1993 by a group of five public-policy organizations. This consortium conducted eight focus groups and a national survey of 1,020 registered voters. The findings were summarized by Garin et al. (1994). This survey found that the public prefers government sponsored work programs of unspecified program length to a rigid two year limit on welfare benefits (seven to one). Although there was massive disappointment in then extant system (AFDC) captured in the perception that welfare programs support dependence, the majority also felt that the government should do more to assist poor children. The survey results suggested that the public is eager for new approaches for assisting poor children even though strong disillusionment for programs of the past is evident.

Identifying the Assumptions and Beliefs Associated with Support for Particular Programs

David Ellwood (1996), the Clinton administration's expert on public welfare, has suggested that the impending debate on

welfare reform should begin by "articulating core values" (p. 29). Strategies for addressing the needs of the poor, should emerge out of values. If the social work community is to effectively advocate for the poor, it is important to identify those core values in the American community which are manifested in particular programmatic responses to the poor. Choosing policy options that comport with the values, attitudes, and assumptions of the public should result in greater public support. Moreover, even when the majority supports a policy option, reservations against specific programs held by the minority should be identified so that effective counter arguments can be formulated.

Although the attitudinal and demographic predictors of support for the AFDC program have been explored, there has been little exploration of the attitudinal factors predicting support or opposition to alternative forms of assistance to children. Persons who take umbrage at providing direct cash payments to parents who are not engaged in gainful activity, might find that ensuring employment at viable wages to be a comfortable option for safeguarding children. Whether the same attitudes and assumptions which predict opposition to AFDC will also predict opposition to alternative policies (viz., work programs) for assisting poor children is an unexplored issue. Although Wilson (1996, p. 204) speculates that job training programs are less likely to challenge the American values of "individualism and the work ethic", little data exist for identifying the values related to support for work programs.

This study seeks to identify the assumptions and attitudes of individuals who are for and against various policy alternatives for addressing the needs of poor children. Attitudinal predictors of support for AFDC, work programs, and the option of no governmental involvement will be explored in this study.

Relevant Variables in Predicting Opposition to AFDC

Beliefs about the causes of poverty. In the general population, specific beliefs about the causes of poverty do predict support for cash grants to the poor. People who believe that poverty is caused by business recessions or discrimination as opposed to lack of individual effort (i.e., attributions to structural factors) are more likely to support funding for the poor. No one has however examined whether these beliefs also foster support for

work programs. This study will include a bipolar measure of beliefs about the causes of poverty with one end of the scale featuring individual qualities and the other capturing societal factors. This will enable an analysis of how beliefs regarding the causal factors producing poverty relate to support for various policy options.

The Protestant Work Ethic. A sturdy predictor of whether one is for or against AFDC is the individual's subscription to the Protestant Work Ethic (McDonald, 1972). Surprisingly, the correlation between the Protestant Work Ethic and opposition to cash grants is strong even among those who recognize that structural factors cause poverty (Feldman, 1983; Iyengar, 1989; Williamson, 1974; Zucker & Weiner, 1993). Apparently, even when people recognize that unfairness and factors beyond the control of the individual can contribute to poverty, belief in the Work Ethic fosters objections to the strategy of providing case benefits. Whether subscribers to the Work Ethic would also object to work programs for the poor has not been explored. Because work is being encouraged with government sponsored work programs, it may be that persons high on endorsement of the Protestant Work Ethic might be favorable toward such programs. The Mirels and Garrett (1971) measure of the Protestant Work Ethic will be included in this study to determine how this variable relates to support for the various policy alternatives.

Proper role for government. Many believe that the purpose of government is to provide a mechanism for pooling the efforts of many so that the lives of individuals are protected. The statement "America is a rich country" captures the notion of an aggregate rather than a collection of individuals whose outcomes are diverse and independent. Further, the concept of "brother's keeper" has a tradition in Christianity. Tourganeau, Rasinski, Bradburn, and D'Andrade (1989a & 1989b), have found that questions which raise the salience of the collective responsibilities increase support for welfare for the poor. Questions relating to government responsibility to citizens in general and children in particular will be included in this study to determine how this variable interacts with other variables in predicting support for various policy alternatives.

Populist Concerns about the Growing Disparity between the Rich and the Poor in this Country

The stagnation in American wages along with the widening gap between the rich and the poor has been documented (Head, 1996; Phillips, 1990; Thurow, 1996) and brought to public attention during the Republican primaries by Patrick Buchanan (Stark, 1996). Both the middle class and the poor are affected by the decline in American wages (Katz, 1989). The concern over the widening gap between the rich and poor is of relatively recent origin, and its relationship to support for various programs to meet the needs of the poor has not been examined. A scale assessing concern about the widening gap between the rich and the poor will be included in this study.

Unexplored Pragmatic Factors Relevant to Policy Decisions

Beyond attitudinal factors which might influence a specific individual's support for particular policies for the poor, a host of pragmatic considerations are relevant. It should be remembered that during the depression occurring in the beginning half of the 20th century (prior to the Social Security Act of 1935) states began providing cash grants to unemployed parents. This state response was motivated, at least in part, by the increase in the number of children in orphanages (Moynihan, 1996; NASW, 1995). Apparently, the states recognized that it is cheaper to pay unemployed parents to care for their own children, than it is to pay unrelated workers to care for children in state funded orphanages. The economic dynamic still operates. Currently, there is a documented inverse relationship between the level of welfare benefits in a state and the greater number of children living apart from their parents (Edin & Jencks, 1992). Regardless of other values and attitudes, the cost of alternative programs might be a factor in making policy decisions. This study will include a question asking subjects to select the policy option which they perceive to be the most costly. The purpose is to determine whether perceived cost operates as a factor when people select preferred policy options.

Inclusion of a Scale Assessing Negative Stereotypes of Welfare Recipients

Often studies assessing attitudes toward public assistance

have confounded items evaluating specific policies with items evaluating recipients of these policies. For example, the Anderson scale, a measure of attitudes toward public welfare, (Anderson, 1965) contains items which refer to public welfare programs and items which refer to recipients of public welfare. Attitudes toward governmental policies can be distinguished from attitudes toward recipients of these policies. In the present research, a measure of attitude toward work programs and a measure of attitude toward AFDC which only reference the policies themselves, will be included. In order to determine how attitudes about those needing to access governmental programs detract or contribute to support for programmatic policies, a separate scale assessing attitude toward welfare recipients will be included in the present research.

Study 1

Purpose of the Present Study

The purpose of this study is (1) to determine whether work programs are viewed more favorably than AFDC and (2) to determine how the various attitudes and assumptions relate to support for AFDC and work programs. Potential predictor attitude-variables included in this study are: Protestant Work Ethic, attributions for poverty to structural factors in the economy as opposed to individual factors, subscription to the belief that the government has a role in ensuring the welfare of its citizens, concern about the growing disparity between the rich and the poor, negative stereotypic views of welfare recipients, and perceptions regarding the cost of the various policy options.

The purpose of this study is to identify attitudes and assumptions that predict support for the various policy options. The study will examine the relationships among variables. Although survey information regarding the percentage of Americans who support various policy options would be useful, conducting a survey based upon a representative sample is beyond the scope of the Study 1. A convenience sample of college students which is appropriate for addressing how variables are related to each other, albeit inappropriate for population parameter estimation, will be employed for Study 1.

Study 1 utilizes a college student sample. The reliability of attitudes are likely to be greater in informed sample (Babbie, 1996). The choice of a college student sample was made because college students are more likely to be informed about current events, and thus are more likely to be informed about the AFDC and work programs issues. By employing a sample in which better reliability is achieved, the possibility of discovering true relationships among variables given that the variables are veridically associated is increased.

Method

Students enrolled in classes in Criminal Justice, Urban Studies, Public Administration, and Business responded to our questionnaire during their regular class period. Subjects were apprised that the questionnaire was confidential and contained no identifying information. Completion was voluntary and there was no penalty for refusal.

Before responding to questions regarding work programs and AFDC, students first read a brief description of each program. The work program, Work First, was described consistent with the program that operates in the state of Georgia (Georgia Council on Social Welfare, 1995), although similar programs operate in other states (Fein, 1994). The precise descriptions which subjects read are presented in Appendix 1.

A direct question asking subjects to select their preference for addressing the needs of poor children whose parents do not have an income was included in the questionnaire. Options were limited to AFDC, Work First (Georgia's version of work programs), or "no governmental role". Additionally, subjects responded to a scale evaluating the AFDC program and a scale evaluating Work First. The same scale (identical items) was used to evaluate both policies. Scale items were modeled after items from Alston and Dean, (1972); Anderson, (1965); Furnham and Gunter (1984); Kallen and Miller (1971); Ogren (1973); and Tourangeau, Rasinski, & D'Andrade, (1991). The order of presentation for two scales was counterbalanced. Half of the subjects were asked the AFDC questions first, whereas the other half were asked the work programs questions first. Subjects were randomly assigned to receive one of

two versions of the form. In both versions, questions about policy alternatives were presented first, prior to attitudinal predictor measures also included in the questionnaire.

Along with the policy alternative questions students completed the Protestant Work Ethic scale (Mirels & Garrett, 1971); a scale assessing the perceived causes of poverty based upon Feagin's (1972) approach supplemented by items from similar measures developed by Feldman (1982), Furnham (1982) and Nilson (1981); a scale assessing belief in the government's responsibility to ensure the welfare of its citizens developed from a measures by Rasinski (1987) and Tourangeau, Rasinski, Bradburn, and D'Andrade (1989a & 1989b); a scale assessing endorsement of the negative stereotype of welfare recipients constructed by isolating those items referring to welfare recipients as opposed to welfare programs from extant attitude measures (e.g., the Anderson, 1965, scale) of social welfare; and a scale assessing subject's concern about the widening gap between the rich and the poor. A question asking which approach (AFDC, no program, or work programs) would be most expensive for the country was also included. The original scales had been developed through extensive pilot testing to achieve relatively short scales with good internal reliability. Specific scales items are available upon request from the authors.

Results

The sample consisted of 362 students. Table 1 provides demographic information describing the sample. Across classes, approximately 20 students opted not to participate. The bulk of the non-participation occurred when the questionnaire was handed out at the end of class, when students were free to leave.

Reliabilities of the Measures

The internal consistency of the measures employed in the study ranged from .76 to .91. Coefficient alphas are presented in Table 2. Correlations among the measures are presented in Table 3.

Responses to Forced Choice Question Assessing Policy Preference

Responses to the forced choice question requiring respondents to indicate their preferred policy for supporting children whose parents are unemployed are presented in Table 4 along

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the student sample.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Average or % of Respondents</i>
Poor	4.2%
Working Class	28.9%
Middle Class	48.8%
Upper Middle Class	16.3%
Wealthy	5.0%
AFDC as Adult or Child	12.0%
Females	44.6%
Afro-American	25.4%
Euro-American	51.4%
Hispanics	1.7%
Asian-American	1.1%
International Students	3.0%
Age	32.6 years

with responses to the forced choice question requiring respondents to indicate which policy option would be the most expensive in terms of monetary cost.

Predictors of Responses to the Forced Choice Question Assessing Policy Preference

There was no evidence of a relationship between respondent choice of preferred policy option and perception of monetary cost of these options, Chi square (4)=7.19, $N=345$, $p=.126$. (Specific numbers are presented in Table 12 with comparison findings from Study 2).

The scale means for predictor scales in the three policy-preference groups (AFDC, work programs, no government role) are presented in Table 5. Group means sharing particular subscripts are not statistically significantly from each other. Basically, persons selecting the AFDC policy option were less conservative than all other subjects on all predictor variables. Persons choosing work programs as their preferred option were also distinguished from other groups. Persons choosing "no government role" as their preferred choice endorsed more extreme views than those

Table 2

Internal reliabilities of the predictor variables in student sample.

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Coefficient Alpha</i>
Attitude toward AFDC (15 items)	.88
Attitude toward work programs (15 items)	.87
Government responsibility for ensuring citizen's welfare (14 items)	.87
Concern about gap between rich and the poor (10 items)	.76
Negative stereotype of welfare recipients (8 items)	.91
Structural factors as opposed to individual factors cause poverty (17 items)	.84
Protestant Work Ethic (19 items)	.77

Table 3

Correlations among the predictor variables in the student sample.

	<i>Government</i>	<i>Gap</i>	<i>Negative Stereotype</i>	<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Ethic</i>
Government	1.00	-.70**	-.59**	.63**	.44**
Gap		1.00	.53**	-.67**	-.35**
Negative Stereotype			1.00	-.68**	-.46**
Reasons				1.00	.47**
Ethic					1.00

** indicates significance at the .001 level.

preferring AFDC and those preferring work programs on all measures.

Multivariate analyses with the forced choice response as the dependent variable. Results of a Logistic Regression comparing persons preferring AFDC to work programs are presented in Table 6. The dichotomous, dependent-variable comparing those preferring AFDC to those preferring work programs was regressed

Table 4

Choice of preferred policy option and perception of most costly choice in student sample.

	AFDC	Work Programs	No Government Role
Percentage Selecting as Preferred Policy	5%	80.0%	10.8%
Percentage Selecting as Most Costly Policy	63.3%	18.2%	14.1%

onto predictor variables. Results suggested that concern about the widening gap between the rich and the poor and a negative stereotypic views of welfare recipients contributed unique explanatory power in distinguishing the groups.

Results of a Logistic Regression comparing those preferring some role for the government (AFDC or work programs) in ensuring the welfare of children versus those endorsing "no government role" are presented in Table 7. Results suggested that the belief that the government is obligated to protect the welfare of its people and a negative stereotypic views of welfare recipients contributed uniquely in distinguishing those who prefer that the government play no role.

MANOVAs were conducted to determine whether the set of five variables differed significantly in the three choice groups (those selecting AFDC as their preferred policy option, those selecting work programs, and those selecting "no government role"). The overall test of difference among the three groups was significant, Wilks lambda (10,614)=.66560, $p<.0001$. The test of those selecting AFDC or work programs versus those selecting "no government role" was significant, Wilks lambda (5,307)=.68466, $p<.0001$. Additional pair-wise tests were also significant: AFDC versus "no government role; Wilks lambda (5,307)=.71360, $p<.0001$; AFDC versus work programs, Wilks Lambda (5,307)=.88069, $p<.0001$; work programs versus "no government role", Wilks lambda (5,307)=.75620, $p<.0001$.

Table 5

Comparisons of means of those selecting AFDC, Work Programs, or "No Government Role" as a preferred policy option on predictor variables in student sample.

<i>Predictor Variable</i>	<i>AFDC</i>	<i>Work Programs</i>	<i>No Government Role</i>
Attitude toward AFDC	4.92 _a	6.24 _b	8.20 _c
Attitude toward work programs	5.28 _a	4.28 _b	6.08 _c
Structural factors as opposed to individual reasons cause poverty	6.92 _a	5.59 _b	4.04 _c
Work Ethic	3.96 _a	4.68 _b	5.49 _c
Concern about gap between rich and poor	2.59 _a	4.33 _b	5.94 _c
Government's responsibility	4.30 _a	6.47 _b	7.98 _c
Negative stereotype of welfare recipients	3.29 _a	5.68 _b	7.87 _c
Age	39.7 _a	30.1 _b	28.3 _b

Means with different subscripts differ at the .05 level.

Responses to the Attitude Measure Evaluating AFDC

Zero-order correlations between the attitude-toward-AFDC measure and predictor variables are presented in Table 8. A more positive attitude toward AFDC was correlated with all predictors. When a Multiple Regression analysis was performed, ($R=.63$, $F(5,310)=39.74$, $p<.00001$) four predictor variables achieved significant semipartial correlations: a lesser endorsement of a negative stereotypic view of welfare recipients ($\beta=.4226$, $t(310)=6.58$, $p=.00001$); endorsement of structural factors as causes of poverty ($\beta=-.2672$, $t(307)=4.059$, $p<.0003$); the Work Ethic ($\beta=.1119$, $t(307)=2.34$, $p<.03$); and belief that the government should ensure the welfare of its citizens ($\beta=-.1284$, $t(307)=1.97$, $p=.05$).

Responses to the Attitude Measure Evaluating Work Programs

Order of presentation did affect responses on the attitude-toward-work-programs measure. Work programs are evaluated

Table 6

*Logistic Regression results of independent predictors distinguishing those preferring AFDC versus Work Programs in student sample.**

Model Chi Square (5)=39.865, N=282, p<.00001

<i>Variable</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Significance Level</i>
Negative Stereotypic View	.4870	.2126	5.2457	.0220
Concern about Gap	.7847	.3041	6.6595	.0099
Government's Responsibility	-.4263	.3041	1.2551	.2626
Work Ethic	-.0851	.3010	.0800	.7773
Structural Factors as Reasons for Poverty	.2228	.3383	.4337	.5102

* A forced entry procedure was employed

Table 7

*Logistic Regression results of independent predictors distinguishing those preferring some government role (lumping AFDC and Work Programs) versus "No Government Role" in student sample.**

Model Chi Square (5)=71.391, N=314, p<.0001

<i>Variable</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Significance Level</i>
Negative Stereotypic View	.3406	.1722	3.9127	.05
Government Responsibility	-1.0269	.2770	13.7393	.0002
Concern about Gap	.0242	.2392	.0103	.9193
Work Ethic	.2512	.2598	.9353	.3335
Structural Factors as Reasons for Poverty	-.2543	.2772	.8416	.3590

* A forced entry procedure was employed

Table 8

Correlation between the attitude-toward-AFDC-scale and predictor variables in student sample. (All correlations were computed on N=309).

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
Attitude toward work programs (15 items)	.38	.001
Structural factors as opposed to individual factors cause poverty (17 items)	.53	.001
Work Ethic (19 items)	-.24	.001
Concern about gap between rich and the poor (10 items)	.38	.001
Government responsibility for ensuring citizen's welfare (14 items)	.47	.001
Negative stereotypic view of welfare recipients (8 items)	.59	.001

more favorably when viewed in contrast to AFDC. The mean value when the work programs questions were presented before the AFDC questions was 4.82, whereas the mean value was 4.25 when the work programs questions followed the AFDC questions, $t(339)=3.73$, $p=.0001$.

Collapsing over order of presentation, responses to the work programs evaluation were contrasted to responses to the AFDC evaluation. The mean evaluation of work programs (4.53) differed significantly from the mean evaluation of AFDC (6.40), $t(336)=18.59$, $p=.0001$. Work programs received the more positive evaluation.

Zero-order correlations between attitude-toward-work programs and predictor variables are presented in Table 9. All predictor variables were related save for the Protestant Ethic scale. In a Multiple Regression analysis, attitude-toward-work-programs was regressed onto the predictor scales. This yielded a Multiple R of .46 ($F(5,305)=16.22$, $p<.00001$). Results suggested that three

Table 9

Correlation between the attitude-toward-work-program-scale and predictor variables in student sample. (All correlations were computed on N=309).

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
Attitude toward AFDC (15 items)	.38	.001
Structural factors as opposed to individual factors cause poverty (17 items)	.34	.001
Work Ethic (19 items)	-.08	ns
Concern about gap between rich and the poor (10 items)	.26	.001
Government responsibility for ensuring citizen's welfare (14 items)	.41	.001
Negative stereotypic view of welfare recipients (8 items)	.29	.001

predictor variables contributed unique explanatory power: belief that government should assume a role in ensuring the welfare of people ($\beta = -.6$, $t(305) = -5.39$, $p < .0001$); the Protestant Work Ethic ($\beta = -.21$, $t(305) = 2.82$, $p < .05$); and beliefs regarding the causes of poverty ($\beta = -.21$, $t(305) = -2.45$, $p < .005$).¹

Discussion of Study 1

Preferred Policy Option

The results of Study 1 suggest that our subjects favor work programs over other policy options. The forced choice finding was bolstered by the results from an attitude measure which suggested that work programs are viewed more favorably than is AFDC.

Only a relatively small fraction of our subjects (11%) indicated that they preferred government to play no role in ensuring the welfare of children whose parents were without an income. These individuals were more extreme in their conservative views on most attitudinal measures (Protestant Work Ethic, belief that the

government should ensure the welfare of its citizens, attributing poverty to structural factors in the economy, concern about the widening gap between the rich and the poor, negative evaluation of AFDC).

Predictors of Positive Attitudes Toward Work Programs

Some of the same predictors of a positive attitude toward cash grant programs emerged as predictive of a positive attitude toward work programs. Those who harbored greater concern about the widening gap between the rich and the poor, who attributed poverty to structural factors to a greater extent, who were less disdainful of welfare recipients, and who believed that the government has a responsibility to ensure the welfare of its citizens displayed more positive attitudes toward work programs. Persons selecting work programs as a preferred policy alternative tended to be more conservative in their views than those selecting AFDC but less conservative than those selecting "no government role".

In Study 1, there was no evidence that concern about the relative costs of various policy alternatives influenced subjects' choice of preferred policy option. Apparently, support for work programs is based upon considerations to ensure the welfare of citizens, to address the widening gap between the rich and the poor, etc. These considerations eclipse concerns regarding the relative costs of various program options.

In Study 1, the evaluation of work programs was more positive if the work program was evaluated after the AFDC program than when it was presented in its own right. Apparently, positive evaluations of work programs are enhanced by the contrast effect with the previous policy of AFDC. This finding may have implications for influential approaches to groups who might object to work programs. If work programs can be presented in contrast to AFDC, this policy option may receive a more welcome reception from conservative camps.

A sturdy predictor of opposition to cash grant programs is the Protestant Work Ethic. Apparently, for persons who strongly value initiative, industry, and effort, a system of rewarding inactivity is very distasteful. In Study 1, the attitude measure of work programs did not correlate with the Protestant Work Ethic scale.

However, persons selecting "no government role" were still more extreme on the Work Ethic scale than those opting for some form of government assistance for the poor.

Our findings suggested that views of welfare recipients and attitude toward the AFDC program are distinguishable. However, negative views toward welfare recipients do predict attitudes toward work programs and AFDC. Further, negative views of welfare recipients contributes unique explanatory power in predicting attitudes toward AFDC, but not toward work programs.

Study 2

We attempted to replicate our major findings with a larger, more representative sample. The Applied Research Center at Georgia State University conducts phone surveys of representative samples of Georgia citizens. Due to the costly nature of surveys, we were unable to repeat Study 1 in its entirety. Through the Applied Research Center, we were able to determine how preference for policies for addressing the needs of poor children related to (1) perceived costs of various policy options; (2) the Protestant Work Ethic; (3) concern about the widening gap between the rich and the poor; (4) beliefs about the causes of poverty; and (5) beliefs that the government should play a role in protecting the welfare of citizens.

Method

During the week preceding the November 1996 presidential election, 822 randomly selected Georgians responded to questions regarding their preferences for addressing the needs of poor children along with a series of other questions regarding election preferences contained in the larger Georgia Poll telephone survey. Subject selection was accomplished to create a representative sample of Georgians. Although oversampling of some groups occurred attributable to the fact that particular types of individuals tend to answer the phone, weightings were applied to results to correct for inadvertent non-representativeness. As in Study 1, subjects were given a brief description of Work First (the Georgia version of a work program) and AFDC before responding to

questions. The same forced choice questions employed in Study 1 were used to assess preference for addressing the needs of poor children and perceived relative cost of the various policies. Also included in the questionnaire were the 3 items to assess the Protestant Work ethic; 2 items to assess beliefs about the causes of poverty; 3 items to assess concern about the widening gap between the rich and the poor; and 2 items to assess the belief that the government should play a role in ensuring the welfare of citizens. Those items with the highest correlations to their respective total scale found in Study 1 were selected to represent their scale in Study 2.

Results

Demographic information regarding the 822 participants included in Study 2 are presented in Table 10. Responses to the forced choice question requiring respondents to indicate their preferred policy for supporting children whose parents are unemployed and responses to the forced choice question requiring respondents to indicate which policy option would be most expensive are presented in Table 11.

Predictors of Preferred Policy Choice

Perceived cost of various policy options was associated with choice of policy option, Chi Square (4)=81.12, $N=710$, $p<.0001$. (The specific findings are presented in Table 12). Surprisingly, of those 211 subjects (29.7% of the total sample) who perceived Work First as the most expensive policy option, 84% still selected Work First as their preferred policy option.

Attitude Predictor Measures

With respect to predictor variable scales, the correlations among the items believed to comprise a scale were evaluated. Items that failed to cohere with other items were deleted from the scale. In multivariate analysis six individual items and a two item composite of the Work Ethic were considered in the analysis. The mean values of predictor scales for the three groups (AFDC, Work First, No Government Role) are presented in Table 13. Groups with shared subscripts do not differ significantly.

Table 10

Demographic characteristics of the poll sample.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Average or % of Respondents Value</i>
Earned less than \$15,000	8.4%
Earned between \$15,000–\$24,999	13.5%
Earned between \$25,000–\$34,999	18.0%
Earned between \$35,000–\$49,999	15.8%
Earned between \$50,000–\$74,999	11.8%
Earned over \$75,000	15.7%
Females	59.6%
Afro-American	24.0%
Euro-American	59.4%
Hispanics	1.1%
Multi-Racial	8.8%
Native American	.9%
Age	40 years

Table 11

Choice of preferred policy option and perception of most costly choice in poll sample.

	<i>AFDC</i>	<i>Work Programs</i>	<i>No Government Role</i>
Percentage Selecting as Preferred Policy	11.5%	71.3%	9.6%
Percentage Selecting as Most Costly Policy	50.8%	26.5%	12.6%

Multivariate Analyses with the Forced Choice Response as the Dependent Variable

As in Study 1, a dichotomous variable was created comparing persons preferring AFDC to work programs. A Logistic Regression was performed. The identified uniquely contributing predictor variables are presented in Table 14. A dichotomous variable

Table 12

How Perceived Cost Relates to Choice of Policy.

<i>Poll Data:</i>			
<i>Perceived Most Costly:</i>	<i>AFDC</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>No Role</i>
<i>Choice:</i>			
AFDC	54	22	10
Work Program	318	177	53
No Government Role	28	12	36
<i>Student Data:</i>			
<i>Perceived Most Costly:</i>	<i>AFDC</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>No Role</i>
<i>Choice:</i>			
AFDC	8	6	4
Work Program	192	57	41
No Government Role	29	3	5

Table 13

Poll Data: The means for specific Likert Scale items in the Preferred Choice Groups. Scale values ranged from 1 to 10.

	<i>AFDC</i>	<i>Work First</i>	<i>No Government Role</i>
Lack of Effort Causes Poverty $F(2,720)=12.31$ $p<.0001$	3.66 _a	5.03 _b	5.89 _c
Two Item Work Ethic $F(2,583)=3.44$ $p=.03$	6.29 _a	6.58 _a	7.39 _b
Sponsor policies to reduce the gap $F(2,684)=7.35$ $p=.0007$	5.44 _a	5.35 _a	6.93 _b

continued

Table 13, *continued*

	AFDC	Work First	No Government Role
Democracy can survive with gap $F(2,687)=7.77$ $p=.0005$	5.48 _a	5.14 _a	6.61 _b
Gap is biggest problem in country $F(2,659)=8.622$ $p=.0003$	5.94 _a	5.14 _b	3.80 _c
Responsibility for children left to parents $F(2,726)=17.11$ $p<.0001$	5.46 _a	5.92 _a	7.96 _b
Government cannot be responsible $F(2,720)=21.17$ $p<.00001$	3.70 _a	3.60 _a	5.76 _b

Means with different subscripts differ at the .05 level.

comparing those preferring some role for the government (AFDC or work programs) in ensuring the welfare of children versus those endorsing "no government role" was created. The uniquely contributing predictors, which included considerations of cost, from a Logistic Regression are presented in Table 15. Beyond these analyses, a significant MANOVA finding suggested that the three policy choice groups (AFDC, Work First, Government Assumes No Role) differ on the set of seven dependent variables.²

Discussion of Study 2

Consistent with results from Study 1, the majority of Georgians do prefer work programs to cash grants for the poor or the government playing no role in supporting the families of poor children. Two items, one concerning beliefs about the causes of

Table 14

*Logistic Regression results of independent predictors distinguishing those preferring AFDC versus Work Programs in poll sample.**

Model Chi Square (9)=16.167, N=570, $p<.06$

<i>Variable</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Significance Level</i>
Lack of effort causes poverty	.1120	.0454	6.0825	.01

* A forced entry procedure was employed

The categorical, cost-variable was tested as two dummy-variable vectors with "work programs perceived as the most expensive" serving as the standard of comparison.

Due to the number of individual items included as potential predictor variables in the analysis only information for significant predictors is presented

poverty and another pertaining to concern about the gap between the rich and the poor contributed to the differentiation of those preferring cash grant programs compared to those preferring work programs. Those preferring no government role versus some form of government involvement differed in exhibiting decreased belief that poverty is caused by structural factors in the society, more endorsement of Protestant Work Ethic questions, lesser concern about the widening gap between the rich and the poor, diminished belief that the government should play a role in protecting the welfare of poor children.

Major findings regarding how attitudinal predictors related to policy preferences which emerged in Study 1 were replicated in Study 2. For the most part, those who chose "no government role in protecting the welfare of poor children" differed on all predictor variables in both studies. Of the variables differentiating between those choosing AFDC versus work programs in the student sample (the Work Ethic, negative views of welfare recipients, concern about the gap between the rich and the poor, beliefs about the causes of poverty, and endorsement of the government's responsibility to protect its citizens), fewer items distinguished these groups in the poll subjects. However, the distinguishability

Table 15

*Logistic Regression results of independent predictors distinguishing those preferring some government role (lumping AFDC and Work Programs) versus "No Government Role" in poll sample.**

Model Chi Square (9)=105.089 N=639, $p < .0001$

<i>Variable</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Significance Level</i>
Gap between rich and poor is big problem	-.1095	.0461	5.6356	.02
Government must leave responsibility for children to parents	.1662	.0592	7.8833	.005
Government cannot be responsible for children	.1288	.0544	5.0967	.02
Cost of work programs versus no government role	2.0238	.4061	24.9432	.00001

* A forced entry procedure was employed

Due to the number of individual items included as potential predictor variables in the analysis only information for significant predictors is presented

The categorical, cost-variable was tested as two dummy-variable vectors with "work programs perceived as the most expensive" serving as the standard of comparison.

of those choosing AFDC versus work programs was supported by multivariate analyses examining the set of variables in both samples. Concern about the gap between the rich and the poor emerged as a unique predictor of policy choice in both samples which implies that this concern is a conceptually distinct predictor in informing choice of preferred policy options.

A major problem was evident in the poll data. The fact that reverse scored items failed to correlate with other items intended to measure the same construct compromise inferences from the findings in Study 2. Response set (the tendency for some subjects to disagree or agree regardless of the content of the statement) may have influenced subject responses. The findings from Study 2

regarding attitudinal predictors of policy choices should be regarded as suggestive due to measurement problems. Measurement problems, of this sort, compromise reliability. Diminished reliability may have vitiated the power to distinguish additional differences between subjects choosing AFDC compared to subjects choosing work programs as a preferred policy option.

Consistent with results from Study 1, responses to the question asking poll subjects to select the policy option they believed was the most expensive indicated that the bulk of subjects perceive AFDC to be most expensive. Although there was no evidence that perceived cost influenced policy choice in the student sample, perceived cost was related to choice of policy option in Study 2 employing the wider, more representative sample. Moreover, perceived cost contributed uniquely to predicting the dichotomous variable of those preferring that the government play no role versus those preferring the government play some role. The discrepancy in results between the poll data and the student data suggests that the influence of perceived cost in influencing public policy should be further investigated. However, even in the poll sample, the bulk of poll subjects believing work programs would be most expensive, still preferred this policy option. This latter finding combined with the results from Study 1 suggest that greater relative cost will not exert a strong influence is tempering public enthusiasm for work programs.

General Discussion

Consistent with other studies, our findings suggest that work programs are favored by the bulk of Georgians. Support for work programs was correlated with concern over the widening gap between the rich and the poor, attributions to structural factors in the society as causes of poverty, a belief that government should play a role in supporting the welfare of citizens, and a less negative attitude toward welfare recipients. For the most part the same attitudinal predictors that distinguish persons supporting AFDC also distinguish those supporting work programs. However, those preferring work programs over other policies seem to be more middle of the road than those preferring AFDC (cash grant programs). Their attitudes fall between those who prefer

cash grant programs and those preferring that the government assume no role.

One impetus for present research was to determine whether those individuals who harbor a strong Work Ethic can support government sponsored work programs. The findings are somewhat equivocal. In Study 1, where a fifteen item, attitude-toward-work-programs-scale was employed, no association between the Work Ethic scale and this attitude measure emerged. However, in both Studies 1 and 2, those preferring "no government role in protecting poor children" were distinguished by their higher scores on the Work Ethic. Perhaps the conclusion to draw is that people high on the Work Ethic can accept work programs, although those scoring highly on this construct, at least as assessed by the Mirels and Garrett scale, still prefer "no government role."

The findings from our studies do suggest ways in which public support for work programs might be further enhanced. More awareness of the structural factors in society associated with poverty, more awareness of the emerging disparity between the incomes of the rich and the poor, more attention to the role of government in protecting the welfare of its people, and more positive views of poor people should strengthen support for work programs. Despite the broad-based current public support for work programs, factors are in place which might erode this support. In line with suggestions of Videka-Sherman and Viggiani (1996), the social work community must become as diligent in swaying public opinion as conservative think-tanks have been in advancing the conservative agenda. The social work community should continue to enhance public awareness regarding the widening gap between the rich and the poor, structural factors contributing to poverty, and positive views of poor people to maximize support for innovative programs to assist low income families.

In Study 1, there was no evidence that perceived cost influenced choice of preferred policy option, although a relationship was found in Study 2. In both studies, however, the bulk of those subjects believing work programs to be the most expensive option still selected work programs as their preferred option. This finding is consistent with other studies showing the public favors work programs even if they cost more than AFDC (Garin

et al., 1994). At this point, cost is a not a major factor diminishing support for work programs.

Concerns about the Future

Although Americans strongly favor work programs, objections can be envisioned in the future. The results of our studies suggested that most people believe the costs of AFDC exceed the costs of work programs. This finding is consistent with opinion surveys which also have found that the public underestimates the initial cost and sustained costs that putting welfare recipients to work will entail (Garin et al., 1994; Ellwood, 1996). Findings from the vaunted work program in Wisconsin implemented by Governor Tommy Thompson contradict these beliefs. This work program raised welfare expenditures from \$10 million to \$58 million. Expansion of the Wisconsin program was anticipated to require an additional 13% per year (Wills, 1996). Thus, good work programs will be costly, probably more costly than AFDC. Moreover, the expectation that work programs will only need to operate for a short period of time is unrealistic. Many considerations argue against the prediction that welfare mothers will, given two years worth of assistance, be able to provide for the care and feeding of their children. The jobs available to welfare mothers, at their current skill level, fail to pay hourly wages requisite to covering the costs of child care and most of the jobs in the unskilled sector do not offer medical insurance (Besharov, 1995; Gueron, 1995; Kerlin, 1993; Tilly & Albelda, 1994; Wilson, 1996). Furthermore, given that the jobs available to single mothers are often seasonal or temporary in nature, work programs may have difficulty in moving work program participants into sustained self-sufficiency (Edin & Jencks, 1992; Gueron, 1995; Hardina, 1996; Nichols-Casebolt & McClure, 1989).

A further problem is that jobs, at any wage level, may simply not exist. Although the economy has created new jobs, most of these jobs are in suburbs that are inaccessible to inner city welfare mothers, many of whom do not own cars (Orfield & Ashkinaze, 1991; Ong, 1996; Wilson, 1996, p. 154 & p. 221-225). Discrimination by employers against individuals with inner city, or public housing addresses, has been documented. Employers

prefer to hire immigrants rather than inner city residents, despite documentation showing that both groups are equally willing to work for low wages (Newman & Lennon, 1995; Wilson, 1996, 111–126). Despite welfare recipient's willingness to work, sufficient numbers of jobs may not be available.

Presently, part of the enthusiasm for work programs may emanate from public hopes that such programs will succeed in getting people to work. Should work programs fail to impact employment among the chronically poor, the broad based support for work programs might quickly weaken. As the cost factors become more widely recognized, the current broad support may dissolve. The social work community should be actively searching for future alternative policies.

Appendix 1:

Descriptions of the AFDC and Work First read by subjects before responding to questions.

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) is a program begun in 1935 to assist low income mothers with children. Through this program, mothers receive a cash grant so that they have an income to support themselves and their children. To be eligible for the program, mothers must show that they do not have adequate income from other sources such as their own work or child support payments from the father.

Work First is a program developed to increase the work-force participation of individuals who have been on cash-grant public assistance (AFDC). Under the Work First program the county maintains a list of job openings. Public assistance recipients are required to accept employment. Employers have an incentive to employ public assistance recipients because they receive both the food stamp benefits and the AFDC cash benefit which previously were paid directly to the program participant. Employers are then required to pay the additional amount needed to bring wages up to the "minimum wage" level. Cash payments to employers continue for six months after which the employer is expected to assume responsibility for paying the full wages of the program

participant. During the initial six months in the program, participants receive a voucher from the state for child care.*

* This description of Work First is consistent with the program that operates in Georgia (Georgia Council on Social Welfare, 1995).

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Notes

1. The fact that the Protestant Ethic scale contributed to the Multiple R despite a lack of zero-order correlation with the attitude-toward-work programs scale suggests that this variable operates as a suppressor variable (Nunnally, 1967). Suppressor variables "suppress, or control for, irrelevant variance, that is, variance that is shared with the predictor and not with the criterion, thereby ridding the analysis of irrelevant variation, or noise" (Pedhazur, 1982, p. 104).
2. The "Omnibus" Wilks lambda was significant, Wilks (14,1306)=.87919, $p<.0001$. The special contrast of the subjects selecting AFDC versus Work First was significant, Wilks lambda (7,653)=.97780, $p=.04$. The special contrast of those selecting Work First versus no government role was significant, Wilks lambda (7,653)=.90329, $p<.0001$. The special contrast of those

selecting AFDC versus no government role was significant, Wilks lambda (7,653)=.91616, $p<.0001$. Finally, the special contrast comparing those selecting either Work First or AFDC versus no government role was significant, Wilks lambda (7,653)=.89922, $p<.0001$.

Poor Children "Know Their Place": Perceptions of Poverty, Class, and Public Messages

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This qualitative study hears and clarifies some of the voices of children concerning how they feel their lives are circumscribed by living in poverty, by public messages about the poor, and by their views of their socioeconomic status. Twenty-four children between the ages of 5–12 years were interviewed using snapshots of different economic level homes in order to capture their uncensored responses. Findings reveal that the children view poverty as a deprivation, perceive societal messages as disparaging of the poor, and have some difficulty holding on to positive views of themselves. These children's thoughts about the realities of their lives helped to shape suggestions for social work practice.

Nine-year-old Stuart* and I bent over a dentist's chair, which I used as a makeshift table to conduct my research in a school-based health center. We were examining two pictures of houses. Stuart said that he would like to befriend both the boy who lives in the dilapidated home and the boy who lives in the middle-class home. When asked why he chose both children to be his friends, he stated simply, "'cus they both have feelings."

This paper reports on how Stuart and other poor children perceive their own socioeconomic status, the status of other children, and public messages about being poor. This qualitative study was conducted because an extensive review of the literature carried out by the researcher found no articles in the last 25 years about how poor children subjectively view their world. Although Jonathan Kozol in his books (*Amazing Grace, Savage Inequalities*,

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*The child's name was changed to protect confidentiality.

and *Death at an Early Age*) poignantly captures the views of some of the poorest urban children, professional social science journals have not included any systematic, qualitative research investigating what poverty of the 1990's looks like through the eyes of poor children. Although our literature is replete with facts and statistics showing the devastation of poverty, these alone fail to communicate the emotions and feelings of those who live in poverty. This study highlights the importance of listening to the voices of children articulating how they understand their experiences. Seeing the world through poor children's eyes places social workers in a position to support and empower them. In addition, based on the emergent themes from the children's responses, the paper suggests intervention strategies.

The Impact of Poverty on Children's Well-Being

Research reveals poverty's pervasive negative impacts on children's health, educational achievement, emotional well-being, behavioral functioning, and family interactions. Poverty compromises the health of children by increasing the frequency of low birth-weight and undernutrition, leading to disabilities such as mental retardation and to serious illnesses (Echavarría, Restrepo, & Meza, 1986; Halfon & Newacheck, 1993; Montgomery & Carter, 1993; Sherman & Children's Defense Fund, 1994; Starfield, Shapiro, Weiss, Liang, Ra, Paige, & Wang, 1991). Poor children have a higher mortality rate from sudden infant death syndrome, birth defects, suicide, and homicide (Neresian, Petit, Shaper, Lemieux, & Naor, 1985; Sherman & Children's Defense Fund, 1994; Spurlock, 1987; Starfield, 1991).

Compared to their more privileged peers, poor children experience more socioemotional and behavioral problems. These problems include depression, social withdrawal, peer relationship difficulties, low self-esteem, and severe behavior disorders (Cicerelli, 1977; Leadbeater & Bishop, 1994; McLeod & Shanahan, 1993; McLoyd, 1990; Meers, 1992; Nolen-Hoeksema, 1992; Raadal, Milgrom, Cauce, & Manel, 1994; Sarri, 1985). The stresses of economic hardship may precipitate these difficulties by straining family relationships and consuming parents' emotional resources. Depressed and depleted, they are more prone to use punitive discipline or provide erratic supervision, and less likely

to nurture strong parent-child ties (Dail, 1990; Halpern, 1990; McLoyd, 1990; Sampson & Laub, 1994; Sherman & Children's Defense Fund, 1994). The probability is higher that poor children will be neglected and abused, and more severely injured by the abuse, than their more advantaged peers (DiLeonardi, 1993; Sherman & Children's Defense Fund, 1994; Wolfner & Gelles, 1993; Wolock & Horowitz, 1984). Growing up in poverty appears to be linked with delinquency and a greater likelihood of committing violent crimes (Dubow & Ippolito, 1994; McLeod & Shanahan, 1993; Sampson & Laub, 1994; Sherman & Children's Defense Fund, 1994). Poverty's compounded, overlapping stressors feed into an ongoing stream of debilitating, relentless hazards that have cumulative impacts on children (Edelman, 1983).

Poor children who attend a substandard school and who are hungry, tense, and distracted by stressful familial interactions may frequently be absent due to illness (Sherman & Children's Defense Fund, 1994). Thus, their educational experiences may be jeopardized by the combined effects of poverty. Poverty is associated with lower IQ and achievement test scores, higher rates of special education, and higher rates of dropping out of high school (Dubow & Ippolito, 1994; Duncan et al., 1994; Korenman, Miller & Sjaastad, 1995; Sherman & Children's Defense Fund, 1994).

The poor children who were research subjects in this study with their soft faces, clear eyes and obvious desire to cooperate, speak in language that infuses these impacts of poverty with the reality of their personal pain and an understanding of their losses.

Research Design and Methodology Participants

The convenience sample for this study consisted of twenty-four (24) children between the ages of 5–13 (8 children in each of three age categories: 5–7, 8–10, 11–13), providing a fairly balanced spread of children across the age range. The total sample, as well as each of the age groupings, was equally divided between Caucasian and African-Americans, and between females and males. Half of the children lived in houses, the other half in apartments. Fifteen (63%) lived in single-parent households: twelve (50%) with their mothers and three (13%) with their fathers. Eight

youths (33%) lived in two-parent homes, and one child (4%) lived with relatives.

All the children lived in a low-income neighborhood of a small midwestern city (population 125,000). They attended an elementary school in which 90% of the student body qualified for free school lunches. Housed within this school is a new federal program providing health and mental health services to financially disadvantaged children. Almost all of the school children (96%) are eligible to participate in this program.

The school playground is bordered by a transportation company with a parking lot corral of school buses. Around the corner from the school is a waste management plant. Some of the homes flanking the school have junk in the yard, chained dogs, smashed fences, unsafe steps, torn screens, boarded-up windows, sheets for curtains, peeling paint, and litter that blows across yards into the streets. The neighborhood is one of five low-income areas in this city. The remainder of the city is made up of middle- and upper middle-class neighborhoods.

Sample Acquisition

The researcher asked personnel of the school-based health center to request participation from parents of children who were eligible to use their services (based on financial need). After personnel read a script describing the research particulars, they asked parents to sign a detailed consent form. Because of the prior trust established between the health center personnel and the parents, all of those contacted granted permission for their children to participate.

Preceding all interviews, the researcher explained the process to each child, asked for her/his assent, and clarified her/his option to terminate the interview at any point. Only one child chose to do so, identifying himself as poor midway through the interview ("That's like me, this is too hard"). Another child took his place. In all other cases when the parent consented, the child subsequently gave verbal assent and completed the interview.

Interview Questionnaire

Each interview began with showing two 9 x 11 photographs, one of a run-down home that looks comparable to houses in

the neighborhood where the students live, and the other of a suburban-style ranch with a well-manicured lawn. A realtor described the former house as a "fixer upper" that would list in the teens. The children thought the ranch house would be occupied by "rich people." The realtor estimated this house to be in the \$90,000–\$110,000 range, suitable for a middle-income buyer with a \$40,000–\$50,000 annual salary.

The questionnaire consisted of 18 items, ten of which referred to the pictures. The items were constructed and grouped according to three major areas: The child's (1) awareness and perceptions of socioeconomic status, (2) conception of societal messages concerning being poor, and (3) personal feelings about people who are poor. This instrument was piloted with a graduate student's two children (ages six and nine) to insure that the questions were clear and encouraged thoughtful responses. As a result of this pilot the instrument was shortened so that it would not tire the youngest participants.

Interview Process

The research subjects were accompanied to the "interview room" in the health center by a familiar staff member who introduced the child to the researcher. The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. The children were informed that the questions were to find out what children think about people who have more or less money than others. They were encouraged to express themselves freely and assured that there were no right or wrong answers.

When questions pertained to a child living in the houses, that child was given the same gender as the respondent's to allow identification with the imaginary child. Using pictures of houses let the researcher pose concrete questions. At the same time, it allowed the children to project inner feelings more freely because it seemingly wasn't about them but rather had an external focus. In the tradition of qualitative research the questions were predominantly open-ended, which is particularly suitable for children, providing for flexibility and making it more likely that their uncensored responses would be captured. Probes and follow-up questions helped children clarify or expand their responses. For example, when children were asked to tell about the

people in the houses, if their responses concentrated exclusively on the living situation of the family the researcher asked "What would the people be like?" "Would you like them or not?" "How come?"

Data Analysis

The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed, with the transcripts then being analyzed question by question across interviews for dominant themes. As a check for biased selections, three questions were independently analyzed by a social work practitioner for comparison with the themes identified by the researcher. The analysis of responses included a search for any differentiation based on the variables of age, race, and gender. However, no differences were found according to any of these characteristics. The major themes emerging from the group as a whole are the focus of this article, and the children have been quoted extensively to faithfully illustrate these themes.

Findings

The Experience of Poverty

Basic needs. The notion that poor children are not bothered because they live among other poor people and are therefore not aware of their common losses and distresses is inaccurate. These young respondents are acutely aware of the disparity of income and wealth in our society, and one can infer from their comments that they are aware of their own poverty. They perceive a life of poverty in the '90s as a crater of misfortune in the landscape of the more privileged. All the children identified persons living in the low-income home as poor and in the middle-income home as rich.

In response to questions about the lives of persons who live in the poor home, the children presented word pictures of deprivation and lives of crisis and hardship:

They have no money. No beds either. They have to sleep on the floor.

They might not have a lot of food because they gotta pay for the house payments and stuff.

Adults need to worry about how they will get their children clothes and send them to college.

Just as they could describe the adversity and pressures in the life of the envisioned poor family, the respondents were specific in their depictions of the living conditions within the more expensive house: "They have beds. And sheets," "They can feed their children," "dress nice, they have nice shoes, and they have lots of friends." In this manner, children describe a bird's-eye view of a life that is gentler and more abundant:

(They could ask their friends) to come over and if they want a popsicle—they would just go in their refrigerator and get a popsicle, and the poor people wouldn't be able to because they have to spend money on food . . . you can make your own popsicles out of water.

Worries about survival. Children who live in poverty carry a burden of worry. After being told that a child living in each of the houses stares out of the window worrying, the research subjects were asked what the child worries about. They had no difficulty conceiving what might trouble the poor child. Survival issues pertaining to having necessities, now and in the future, and the dreaded possibility of violence were predominant concerns. The imagined child worried about having to live "in a dirty house" and "want(s) the family to get out of the house" but wondered if "he is ever going to have a good house." Several children thought the gazing child worried "that somebody might just take their house away because they didn't pay rent" and consequently the parents would "have to go to jail" or they would be living "on the street." Some suggested that the child worried about having enough food and clothing in order to live or be able to attend school or feed pets. Alternatively, the child might be vigilantly "looking outside to see what's happening because she might live in a bad part of somewhere and she's just worrying . . . about everything." The invented child might also be troubled whether "people be doing drugs around the street" and "about gangs and stuff coming . . . or going outside and (he) might get beat up." Safety of the parents and siblings was another fear: "They might get killed" or be "getting beat up somewhere" or "maybe their parents are in the hospital and they don't know about it."

Worries about lacking toys, friends, and a future. Some young respondents also thought the child grieved and longed for some enjoyable possessions and friends: "Will she ever get to play Barbies?" or "... he would never be able to have other things like other people have." The children also worried about the social costs of having so little: "He might never feel that he has any friends or anybody likes him." Not only is the imagined child pained by these unsatisfied longings, but also s/he feels anxious that such shortages will result in loneliness and isolation. A few children worried about future troubles besetting a poor child: "(He's worried about) his life, how he lives," "What will happen to me when I grow up? Will I have any friends? Will I graduate and who will I be when I grow up?" Being so worried about survival and identity provides contrast to the notion that childhood is a playful, carefree, protected time of life. These children are telling us that the threats to their well-being and the excessive frustration of simple desires force them to worry about matters that children who are not in poverty may take for granted. Poor children may have periods of happy feelings, but these feelings appear to be intermingled with concerns about ridicule, isolation, and unmet needs for subsistence, security, and ordinary tangible pleasures.

Non-poor children are seen as worry-free. All the children without exception described worries that the poor child had, apparently articulating the realities that they themselves live with daily. They were harder pressed, however, to come up with worries for the child who was not poor. Eight children (33%) either said that the child wouldn't worry or would worry about the poor children who had a lot to worry about. Four children (17%) stretched to come up with possible worries for this child: "His parents won't let him buy a Jeep," "She wishes it could be summer." The remaining half (50%) attributed fears and concerns to this child that reflect the normal painful vulnerability of being a child: "They (the parents) could crash (in a car) and get hurt," "... if they're going to get out of fourth grade," "maybe her friend just moved or her dad and mom are getting divorced, or some other things like she's getting picked on at school."

It appears that the participants did not have friends who were not poor. This may explain why many of them seemed to perceive

better-off children as being entirely problem free, as if money obliterates all personal problems.

Children's Interpretation of Public Perceptions of Poor People

Messages that demean. The children seem to feel that public messages judge persons living in poverty as inferior moral beings. In response to the question, "What do other people think of the people in this house?", indicating the "poor house," twenty-two children (92%) said that "people" or at least "some people" strongly disapprove of persons living in this house. These children believed that other people equated the appearance of the house with presumed deficiencies of the people who live in it. The children expected others to describe members of the poor household as:

"messy," "dirty," "stupid or something because they ain't got a lot of money," "crazy cause they are poor," "ugly, nasty, disgusting, digging in their nose," "put knees on chairs, never tell people thank you," "not good people," "do drugs and just go around and steal trucks and steal cars," "don't take care of their family," "mean—could slap or punch somebody," "that they are gonna be troublemakers or something like that when they grow up," "mean, cruel, and unkind."

These children appear to sense that society devalues them in the present and expects them to be antisocial misfits in the future.

Messages that isolate and segregate. The participants perceived that the poor are condemned because of their poverty, ("because they don't have any money") or because of how they look and act due to poverty. One child who insisted that others would not like the people with "dingy clothes," explained:

Because . . . they might come out with no-name shoes or something, and those people, rich people wear Nikes or Filas or something like that. They might smell different than them . . . or look different.

These children believe that the poor are not welcome in a more affluent society and perceive themselves as potential outcasts.

Messages expressing a more balanced view. However, eleven children (46%) thought that a portion of the public would be able

to recognize that the shabbily-housed family are "nice people" beset by pressing struggles: "Some will probably just think they're normal people, it's just they don't have nicer stuff and everything and some will just be rude and say nasty stuff about them and be really mean." In the children's minds it was usually the poor or the once poor who could see the humanity beyond the broken fence and peeling paint: "They might have grown up in a place just like that and they might kinda just understand what it's like living there."

Messages that condemn and withhold. Some subjects consider the scorn and rejection of the poor as so extensive that the more fortunate do not even deem them worthy of any assistance. A third of the children (33%) spontaneously proclaimed that better-off people were in a position to help, but were unwilling to do so. These children suspected the comfortable to be vehemently unrelenting in their condemnation:

. . . rich people think they should spend their money on whatever they need, and they shouldn't spend it on other people because if the poor don't got money, they (just) don't have it!

The children seem to have come to realize that one reason the nonpoor do not like the poor is because they need help; the destitution of the poor is a potential burden to the more well-off.

" . . . nobody cares about nobody but themselves anymore,"

"They think that they have everything in the world . . . while poor people are living in the snow, they are sleeping in the snow and they have nowhere to go."

Thus the children voice their perception of an unfair and indifferent world.

Teasing messages. Through teasing, children not only reveal their personal insecurities but also their awareness of what traits are loathed or depreciated in society. When asked "What would the child in each house be teased about?" all the youths but one (96%) readily proposed vehement taunts that would be directed toward the financially deprived child: "You little black something, or you little white something, you should die. Somebody should burn your house up because you poor, if you poor you shouldn't be

alive," "you don't really have what it takes to get through life." When the question pertained to the child living in the wealthier house, most subjects (17/24, 71%) were completely stumped and finally exclaimed that the child would not be teased at all "because they're rich and they've got stuff." Seeking an answer, three children (13%) offered that the child would be teased for having "rich clothes" and "doing good in school," rather than for any class-connoted deficit. Well-off children might be teased, explained four respondents (17%), if they riled other children by acting like "a bully" or "stuck-up." While poor children were expected to be put down by at least a portion of their peers due to the stigma of their socioeconomic status, nonpoor children were only ridiculed if they behaved badly or unacceptably.

Children's Interpretations of Public Perceptions of People Who are Not Poor

The youthful subjects reflected that just as poverty is linked to character failings, those who are better off are seen by society as being morally superior. Every one of the children predicted that "others" would consider "having a rich house" either reflective of the positive character of its owners or of their privileged status. Overwhelmingly the children believed that "others" assumed these residents to be knowledgeable, effective, clean, worthy, and superior:

"They're good people," "nice," "kind, caring, and clean," "help them (their children) and punish them when they need to be punished," "keep their house clean," "not stupid," "smart because they have good jobs," "know how to do things," "they don't need any help," "well-dressed and go to school," "do manners."

However, some of the children did not expect everyone to give complete approval to those residing in the well-groomed house. Nine respondents (38%) volunteered that though the "rich" might immediately favor residents of the middle-class house, the "poor" might impute exclusiveness, self-centeredness, and a level of deceit to them:

(Others think) they're rich, . . . they're nice, they have money, they treat you with respect—but really they don't . . . they say they re-

spect you but when you go in their house and do something bad they start disrespecting you. You get a little bit of dirt on the carpet and they get mad at you and kick you out.

Children's Comparative Perceptions

Personal feelings about the affluent. Approximately half the children's opinions about the dwellers in the more affluent house dovetailed with their conceptions of how the public views these occupants:

"Probably nice people," "don't get in trouble," "be nice parents," "say their prayers," "clean," "mannered," "go to school every day"

The other half, or eleven elementary students (46%), voiced their suspicion that the more well-to-do are insincere, unsympathetic, even antagonistic toward the poor:

These people in this house might be rude 'cus they just think that they got the beautiful house so that they can do anything to people.

The rich people might think that poor people are crappy people, (and say to them) get off my property, we don't want people's footprints on our grass.

The elementary students were often struck by the power and influence of a more privileged class: "They can just go places and be treated nicer than some other people by giving them money." Clearly these children conclude that the nonpoor scorn the poor, while enjoying the pride, sanction, freedom, approbation, and affirmation attached to their high-status position.

Friendships limited by socioeconomic class. Participants' beliefs in the superiority of well-off children and feelings of being shunned by the rich also showed in their responses to being asked who would be their first choice as a friend—the child living in the dilapidated house or in the manicured ranch. Only four children (17%) thought the criterion irrelevant: "a friend is a friend." Half (50%) of the children selected the child in the low-income house because they assumed that the rich child would disparage them and the poor child would relate with greater genuineness and respectfulness: ". . . because I really don't want a rich friend that

thinks he's better than me," "the poor kid they wouldn't judge you on how you look, you talk, and the way you were." Eight (33%) of the children preferred to befriend the rich child since s/he had a "nicer house," "more toys," and would be a nicer person, "knows not to hit too much," "they listen to their parents."

Children's feelings about those who are poor. The children's own feelings towards the low-income family were more positive and understanding than their estimation of society's attitudes. Only three children (13%) communicated solely negative images: "They are lazy and unfortunate. (The kids) probably would be very bad, like busting windows and stuff." Nearly all the children, to some extent, saw beyond the impoverished front door:

They're probably good (people). Just because they're poor don't mean that they don't have a rich feeling. They might care about people and they might try helping out with people as much as they can.

Perhaps some children living amidst poverty tend not to devalue persons of limited means because they know the harshness of their own lives. They described poor people straightforwardly as in need of resources: "They need money, they need paint, maybe a job." The young respondents avoided, deflated, and contradicted stereotypes as they described persons living in the poor house as industrious, generous, and good parents: "They're hard working and try to keep themselves alive, and their kids if they have kids."

Poor children's feelings about self. In most of their descriptions they attach positive qualities to the poor, yet they may not be personally convinced enough to protect their sense of self from damage by public images. When asked how a poor child feels about him/herself only three children (13%) believed that such a child had positive self-feelings such as "he's nice" or "he's smart." Nine others (38%) chose to answer in terms of sad feelings because s/he doesn't have "things," "is teased," and holds little hope for the future. The respondents' feelings about an imaginary poor child seemed to blend with their own experiences. Twelve children (50%) portrayed the child as having negative self-valuations, regarding him/herself as intrinsically "bad," "dumb," "unequal":

"Man I'm bad, and I want to become rich but I can't because I'm raised up like that."

The possible force of public criticism is highlighted by how much more positively respondents estimated that children who were free from a life of poverty would regard themselves. Twenty-two subjects (92%) surmised that their well-off peers would like themselves, boosted by feelings of power and effectiveness as well as by expectations of the future. "He says, I'm the greatest one in the world, can't nobody do nothing to me," "Yeah I'm rich (now), when I grow up I'm going to be the same exact way (continue to be rich)."

Converting Children's Voices into Practice Strategies, Interventions, and Tasks

These voices of poor children may enhance our professional awareness of how children derive meaning from their experience in the world. Knowing that children are impacted by their social and societal environments requires social workers to learn and practice ways to empower them. The following practice suggestions build on what the children have told us:

1. *Explain the reasons for poverty.* By familiarizing children with the causes of poverty (in accord with their developmental capacity) social workers may help take inappropriate blame away from their parents, and themselves. Affirmation from each other as well as from professionals may help them internalize that being poor is not equivalent to being bad.

In addition to discussion about the fallacies of the societal messages underlying teasing about being poor, we can coach children how to deal with these bullying remarks. Arming children with responses for when they confront such teasing may counteract this verbal destruction.

2. *Help children understand their feelings about being poor.* Social workers can establish small groups that provide both emotional support and task projects to reaffirm caring and competence. Talking in a peer support group about the circumstances of their lives and the feelings they engender may especially help them feel that they are not alone in this struggle. Allowing poverty and difference to be "the elephant in the room that no one addresses"

leaves children unassisted. Alone they may wrestle with unmanageable feelings of anger, fear, frustration, sadness, or depression. Some will find inner resources and social support that will enable them to cope, but others will not. Small groups could help those who are struggling most.

However, solely dwelling on their negative feelings arising from poverty without a problem-solving approach to help children effect some actions in their own lives may be debilitating, as Nolens-Hoeksema (1992) cautions,

Helping a child living in poverty to express her anger that she cannot have things other children have will not get her out of poverty. If adults cannot respond to a child's expression of emotion in ways that satisfy the child, the child may feel betrayed and helpless. (p. 184)

3. *Direct children to focus on their strengths.* Children may be helped to appreciate the strengths they have developed. The respondent children were bright, analytical, and compassionate. They displayed heightened sensitivity to equity and value issues, as well as a savvy awareness of the world outside of themselves. Guiding the children to develop and routinely use positive self-talk would equip them with a tool for reminding themselves that though living in poverty, each is an important person. Frequent, meaningful external and internal reinforcement of their self-worth may help them maintain optimism about their lives.

4. *Promote powerful feelings through goal attainment.* Children should be supported in developing and reaching their own short-term goals. For example, children may want to earn money to buy toys and clothes, or to fund a play activity. They may be able to do so by holding a bake sale in the lobby of a local firm, making Christmas ornaments to sell at local bazaars, or holding a fun-fair, etc. Such activities can provide important learning about the possibility of controlling their own lives. Children need to experience getting what they want for themselves in spite of the barriers. By setting and reaching individual and group goals, poor children can reinforce their self-confidence and learn that through their careful planning and persistent hard work they can reap benefits.

5. *Lead parent groups.* Social workers should convene parent groups to talk about things that matter to them and to convey caring about them and support of their goals. These parents have likely gone through the same kinds of disparagement as their children and deserve to be recognized for their own worth, not just as helpers for their children.

While affirming parents' personal value, hopes, and competencies, social workers can encourage them to share their suggestions on how to help their children recognize that their value is not less because they are poor. Such discussions can assist parents in further understanding how poverty might impact children's (and their own) self-esteem and how to address related issues with their child in a constructive way that is healing and empowering to them both.

6. *Build connection to the larger society.* Social workers can develop activities that help children feel connected to the larger society. For example, one might pair a classroom, club, or group in a disadvantaged neighborhood with one in a more upscale area. The two classes could have separate experiential instruction addressing issues of class prejudice, preparing them to be receptive pen pals for each other. Through writing, they could share their perspectives about their worlds and affirm each other.

The results of this study suggest that poor children have bewildering and negative perceptions about rich children that begin early in life. Though not all their conceptions may be inaccurate, these attitudes may be self-defeating. Polarizing feelings potentially drain energy, reinforce their sense of being victims, and undermine their conviction that they can become responsible for their own lives. Affective exchange with more affluent children may lessen the isolation of poor children, making it more comfortable for them in the future to work and function within mainstream society.

7. *Tasks within the environment.* Social workers can help precipitate change through tasks aimed at the elimination of poverty. The views of these children make it incumbent on us to be more active advocates for the poor. This may include accessing the media. Social workers could submit their stories of work experiences to the press to give the public a more accurate picture of persons living in poverty. Other efforts, such as lobbying local congress-

members, developing new policies, running for office, promoting voter registration, and becoming involved in community development projects, are all part of a rich social-work history and are needed in the present.

If social workers would engage teachers in such projects, even very young children could be taught advocacy skills to empower themselves. For example, children could also write their own stories as "letters to the editor" and could prepare comments and questions to present before governmental representatives whom they invite to their classrooms.

Conclusion

Although these findings may be limited in their generalizability, critical, clear themes emerged. Systematically asking each child the same questions using pictures of houses definitely stimulated their thoughts and encouraged their spontaneous expressions. Their responses suggest that they know being poor makes them a belittled and disparaged population who are blamed for their plight. More importantly, they are beginning to turn demeaning perceptions against themselves. This internalization may occur simultaneously with a growing realization that their opportunities are limited and their identities compromised.

Unlike the children with whom Jonathan Kozol spoke, these respondents are not among the poorest of the poor. Finding that responses did not vary across gender, race, or age emphasizes the pervasive power of poverty. These children tell us that poverty, with its accompanying negative public and self-messages, profoundly impacts how they view their world.

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Rethinking Selectivism and Selectivity by Means Test

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This article casts doubt on conventional thinking about selectivism and its narrow focus on the selective process. It is argued that selectivity is fairly neutral; even universal access to welfare is not free from the attachment of social stigma to welfare beneficiaries. The increase in benefits standards, another common strategy advocated by egalitarians, may not produce the desirable de-stigmatized effect for beneficiaries. Our status ranking conception of social relations, reflecting the operation of the success ideology, holds the key to the transfer of social stigma in the social exchange of welfare benefits. In this regard, we need to study the relation between the selective process and its ideological and institutional context, as well as the case for the conditional use of selectivity by means test.

Introduction

The study of selectivism and universalism is often reduced to the study of selective means. This seems to arise from equating selectivism to selectivity, resulting in the focus on technical issues, such as the stigmatizing and divisive social effects of different selective means. Indeed, universality and selectivity are distributive methods. When relating distributive methods to values and beliefs, universality and selectivity are turned into universalism and selectivism respectively. If they are put into models of institutional arrangements, universalism is associated with 'institutional' welfare whereas selectivism is *often* referred to as 'residual' welfare. A literature review of these sets of concepts found that few scholars argued for selectivism, selectivity and residual welfare. This may

be due to the perception that selectivity, often regarded as equivalent to means test, is 'controlling, condescending, and dehumanizing' of the recipient (Kohlert, 1989, p. 303); it is also socially divisive by creating a stigmatized class of suspected scroungers (Alcock, 1987, pp. 118–122). It is also suggested that the means test and its associated problems of social division, low take-up rates and poverty traps are unlikely to diminish in the future; and paradoxically, despite its discredited past, the means test has an expanding future (Deacon & Bradshaw, 1983: 204). However, selectivity should not be taken to be equivalent to selectivism, and a means test is only one of the methods used in the selection process.

Despite all the perceptions of serious shortcomings associated with the selective stream of welfare, there are a few attempts to recast it with a positive image. Hoshino (1969, p. 254) noticed nearly three decades ago, that selectivity by means test on university students for financial aids (loans and grants) did not appear to attract stigma to them. Selectivity, even by a means test, is not necessarily dehumanizing and socially divisive. More recently, a comparative study on income transfers for families in eight countries by Kamerman and Kahn (1987, p. 279) found that selective means by the use of an income test was not necessarily stigmatizing and socially divisive.

Another approach to recast the selectivist stream of welfare with a positive flavor is to reverse negative selection by positive selection, and then deliberately to provide the beneficiaries with additional resources. In Britain, this endeavor is called positive discrimination; whereas in the United States, it is often put under the category of reverse discrimination or affirmative action (Edwards, 1988; Miller, 1973). The concept of positive discrimination came from the Plowden Report's recommendation for allocating additional resources to 'Educational Priority Areas' to combat social deprivations in Britain (Batley, 1978; Edwards, 1988, p. 211; Smith, 1977). As acclaimed by one prominent advocate, positive discrimination is 'the only form of selectivity compatible with the idea of a welfare society because its ultimate goal is the achievement of optimal rather than minimal standards' (Pinker, 1971, p. 190).

Despite all these attempts, selectivity is still widely conceived negatively (Butler & Weatherley, 1992; Kamerman & Kahn, 1988; Kohlert, 1989). Any attempt to use a means test or income test is often categorized as 'residualisation' especially in those policy initiatives classified as privatization (Flynn, 1988; Peach & Byron, 1994). Even positive discrimination, the well-intended social policy initiative to provide better resources for the deprived, is labeled in the public discourse as discouraging self-reliance, anti-meritocracy and denying the deprived groups 'the opportunity to make it without government's patronizing help' (*The Economist*, 15 June 1996, p. 36). It seems that the modification of the selective means or the gradation of benefits standards may not be the right answer to combat stigmatization of the poor and disadvantaged groups.

The negative conception of the selective stream of welfare may be due to the historical heritage embodied in the Poor Laws (Batley, 1978; Kohlert, 1989), and its association with the use of a means test in granting benefits to the poor (for example, see Deacon & Bradshaw, 1983; Kamerman & Kahn, 1987, p. 277; Mishra, 1977; Titmuss, 1968, 1974; Wilensky & Lebeaux, 1965). Despite its negative connotations in mainstream social policy analysis, the selective approach of welfare, residual welfare in particular, has not disappeared. On the contrary, it is gaining greater usage by Western governments. For instance, a means tested element is incorporated into the social security system in Britain by the justification of targeting benefits to those in greatest need (George & Miller, 1994, p. 30). The government reaction in the West could be seen as a response to some contextual changes of post-war Western welfare capitalism. First, it is the relative decline of economic competitiveness due to an increasingly globalised economy, thus, funds from the economy and taxes for public welfare are regarded as less economically and politically viable. Second, social class diversification due to the post-Fordist production pattern weakens support for universal welfare (George & Miller, 1994; Mishra, 1990; Murray, 1989, p. 46). In the East, without the post-war welfare state consensus and the developing nature of the economy, governments and the public alike, both seem to be more concerned about focusing public welfare on those

who are in greatest need. In this respect, the selectivist approach to welfare is apparently more welcome, East and West, than the universal one, primarily on the assumption that it is more cost efficient than the universal approach.

In other words, if the selective approach to welfare is here to stay and seems to be widely used despite its 'discredited past', a critical examination of it is necessary and valuable. On this understanding, this paper examines the arguments for selectivism, on both normative and utilitarian grounds; then, it critically examines selectivism in the objective to identify the source of its negative conception. The use of selectivism as the focus of analysis represents the core argument of this paper: the negative conception of selectivity and selective welfare (e.g. the residual approach and the means test) is related more to our ideological construction than to benefits standard and selective means. The focus of the selectivity study on the selective process seems to be too narrow.

Examining the Normative Arguments for Selectivism

A strong normative argument for selectivism derives from the Aristotelian notion of social justice (Edwards, 1987; Spicker, 1985, p. 6): the needs principle in distributing social resources and burden because people have different needs; it is socially just to treat alike as alike, unlike as different. Therefore, equal treatment can be socially unjust. This is very similar to the Rawlsian principle of justice which also embraces unequal treatment on the basis of the different conditions people have (Rawls, 1971, pp. 60–65). Rawls is concerned with injustice caused by the basic structure of society (Iatridis, 1994, p. 67). If social and economic inequalities are not to be arranged so that they are both reasonably expected to everyone's advantages or disadvantages, positive action for the needy or the disadvantaged is required for corrective justice. This structural approach to justice suggests that fair opportunities are not sufficient and the unfair distribution of fundamental rights and duties as caused by institutional arrangements have to be altered or even abolished. In other words, selectivity has an essential role to play in redistributing rights and duties for corrective justice.

The other normative argument for selectivism is derived from particularism, which can be categorized as a conservative approach. Particularism assumes that values and norms must be context-specific (Spicker, 1994, p. 7). They are evolved from specific social relations, networks and traditions. In other words, there can be inconsistent rules arisen from diversity in social context. Thus, selection on the basis of particularism shares the similar ideological root with the European idea of 'solidarity' (Spicker, 1991, p. 17), a communitarian ideology. 'Solidarity' as mutualism denotes the mutual obligations of those in the social network (Spicker, 1992). Belonging to the network is the prerequisite for benefits and mutual obligations, and these are exclusive to non-members. In this light, particularism suggests the notion that 'rights and obligations are not general, but dependent on specific links between people in different social contexts' (Spicker, 1994, p. 13). Apparently, inconsistent rules may result in discrimination against some based on selectivity.

The specificity of rights and responsibilities in relation to social context implies that social rights are conditional. This is in contrast with the notion that social rights are universal and intrinsic to the person who makes the claims (Drover and Kerans, 1993, p. 3). Apparently, the context-specific justification for selectivism would become problematic if it turns out to discriminate non-members or members of the community who are under-achievers or non-performers of certain community defined obligations. Separatism and racism are examples of the moral weakness of this approach (Spicker, 1994, p. 13). Apparently, a community with context-specific rights and obligations may be a system with notorious restrictions on freedom (Gunsteren, 1994, p. 42). Nevertheless, communities with political democracy are less restrictive on personal freedom because of the guarantees by civil rights, and the state acts as the protector of individuals' basic rights. The state can arbitrate and coerce lower level collectivities to comply with a number of basic guarantees for all. With all these state protections, individuals can have the freedom to join or leave a community at their will. In sum, it becomes clear that selectivism can be morally justified on the normative principle of corrective justice; however, its potentially discriminatory practice against non-members and under-achieving members has to be taken into account.

Examining the Utilitarian Arguments for Selectivism

The objection to selectivism primarily arises from the use of particular selective means, e.g. means test or income test, for distributing social services and benefits to beneficiaries. This is particular about the residual model of welfare, which relies primarily on the market and the family for the fulfillment of human needs, and the state comes into help only if these social institutions fail. In this welfare model, the means test is primarily used to differentiate the deserving poor from the undeserving ones. Indeed, its problems are the negative effects residual welfare is assumed to impose upon the beneficiaries (Batley, 1978, p. 311; Deacon & Bradshaw, 1983; Mishra, 1987). First, it offers the lowest possible minimum standards to recipients in order to discourage them from dependence on the dole. Secondly, recipients are down graded or humiliated by the means testing process. As suggested by Pinker (1968), this is the exclusive approach to selectivity with the objective of deterring potential applicants by attaching social stigma or even causing hardship on recipients. These objections to residualism are premised on the egalitarian principle, that welfare beneficiaries should also be fairly treated despite their lack of ability compared with the others in the market system. To correct these inequalitarian wrongs, another selective approach by the name of positive discrimination is called upon to redress the imbalance of treatments, opportunities and social resources between the disadvantaged groups and those of the larger society.

Because of the claimed objectives for social equality, positive discrimination as a selective approach gains wider acceptance. It is about the use of state intervention for enhancing social equality. According to Pinker (1971), this is an inclusive selectivity. For its protagonists, it can be a form of identifying recipients with 'a process of diagnosis and selection free from stigmatization' (Titmuss, 1968, p. 134). More important, positive discrimination aims at 'the achievement of optimal rather than minimal standards' (Pinker, 1971, p. 190). The assumption of positive discrimination as a non-stigmatizing selective process is the non-specificity of both beneficiaries and benefits (Edwards, 1987, p. 27). The achievement of this relies upon benefits and beneficiaries as exclusively communal or collective in nature. It is assumed that, on the one hand, by

giving benefits to a group based on some proxy of disadvantages or vulnerabilities as the criteria of selection, the stigmatized effect of means test on *individual* beneficiaries can be avoided. Thus, the issue of disincentive to take-up is likely to disappear. On the other hand, benefits that are collectively consumed can increase public acceptance (Edwards, 1987, pp. 26–27). This suggests that the social division, or dualism, between the stigmatized groups and the others of the larger society may vanish.

In this light, positive discrimination, as a selective approach, aims at avoiding social stigma and, at the same time, transferring additional resources to beneficiaries of the identified disadvantaged groups. However, positive discrimination intending as a non-stigmatizing selective approach has its problems. It does not have an objective method of measuring the disadvantaged status. It is because not all members of a group are needy; and the extent of the concentration of disadvantages or vulnerabilities to justify positive discrimination status is nevertheless arbitrary (Edwards, 1988). Apart from the measurement difficulties of the collective selective means, its primary objective as a non-stigmatized selective approach is also doubted. In the eyes of the majority, the groups may still be perceived as of lower status; even the groups may perceive themselves the same way (Edwards, 1988). Furthermore, it is also accused as anti-meritocracy, that is the lowering of performance standards (Miller, 1973).

Although positive discrimination is presented as a non-stigmatizing selectivity, it has not totally avoided the negative image imposed on selective means such as the means test and income test. This suggests that the efforts of affirmative action by allocating additional resources are not the effective solution to the problems of stigmatization and social divisiveness.

Selectivism and Stigmatization

In the above section, we briefly examined the normative and utilitarian arguments for selectivism. In residual welfare, it is the market-dominated system that predominantly dictates the labeling of welfare beneficiaries with a social stigma. Apparently, it is the reliance on the state as an indication of failure—the inability to compete—that is stigmatizing. The stratification of people according to market ability is the prime source of stigmatization. Even in

positive discrimination, the beneficiaries as a social group are not perceived in isolation of the institutional context they are located: they are regarded as less equal in market ability than the rest who depend on their own efforts and without additional resources transferred from the state. Ironically, the transfer of additional resources serves to reinforce the perception of the beneficiaries as less adequate, or equal, than the 'normal' category of people who do not require the 'patronizing help' of the state.

However, not all transfers by the state are perceived as embodying the attribute of dependence or the inability to compete in the economic market. For example, tax expenditures on the whole are not perceived negatively; thus, the beneficiaries are not stigmatized. Two reasons seem to account for the explanation of the non-stigmatizing nature of tax expenditures. First, they are primarily a hidden form of benefits; therefore, the beneficiaries are also hidden from public scrutiny despite there are enormous benefits involved in the transfer. For example, one estimate puts tax expenditures up to 14 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in Denmark (1989), 9 per cent and 6 per cent in the United Kingdom (1990) and in the United States (1990) respectively (Kvist & Sinfield, 1996). Second, many of them are related to employment status (e.g. tax-deductible unemployment benefits, tax free or deductive contributions to pension and health insurances); hence, their clear association with the concepts of contribution and ability to compete in the economic market is also non-stigmatizing for the beneficiaries. The above brief analysis of how and why beneficiaries are stigmatized or not stigmatized reveals the argument that status ranking according to competence seems to hold the key to our understanding of the attachment of social stigma on welfare beneficiaries in society. In this regard, we have to examine the part played by status in selectivism.

In residualism, stigma is attached to beneficiaries to discourage them from welfare dependence. Competence or ability primarily determines status ranking in the market system. Employment status is indicative. The non-employed such as the retired and housewives are generally regarded as less socially prestigious than the employed. In other words, their relation to the market system judges them. In the same light, if welfare beneficiaries can possess the quality of competence and ability,

they may not be stigmatized. Hoshino's (1969) observation on financial aid to low-income university students is a case in point. The means tested or income tested financial aid to university students may not produce social stigma because the beneficiaries also possess status-enhancing factors. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the means tested selection method is not stigmatizing. Students and their parents may feel stigmatized by the application process. However, this is unlike welfare benefits such as social assistance, which also transfer to beneficiaries a social status with the perceived quality of dependence on the state for basic living even after the selection process. In contrast, the selective process for applying loans and grants does not alter the status of a university student. The focus on the one-off selective process seems to be too narrow for the explanation of stigmatization.

The other way to avoid social stigma is by universal provision. Universal welfare assumes individuals within the community do not have the boundary (such as means test or income test) to get across for the accessibility of benefits. In this regard, the factor of population wide coverage, because of its equalizing effect, is helpful in diluting an image of inferior status: the more people in the community as beneficiaries, the more widespread the recipient status. In other words, stigma, in this context, is a result of the classification of people into hierarchical categories. This is definitely related to the use of selective means. In universalism, the accessibility to benefits is based on unconditional social rights; then, it is not necessary for any selective means, e.g. means test or income test, to differentiate the beneficiaries from the others within the same group of people. Even if selective means are used, the negative effects can be neutralized if a large section of the population can be included. Kamerman and Kahn's (1987) finding of the non-stigmatizing income transfer for families with vulnerabilities is a case in point. Singapore's public home ownership scheme is also illustrative: it is means tested, but except for a few high income groups, the large majority of the population are eligible for the purchase of the government built but subsidized properties.¹ Definitely, the coverage of the benefits is helpful in diluting or even eliminating social stigma attached to beneficiaries of public welfare. Once again, it is worthy to notice

that, the means tested selective process is not a sufficient condition for the transfer of social stigma to beneficiaries.

Nevertheless, a wide coverage is no guarantee of a stigma-free status for beneficiaries. It is because stigmatization also has another theoretical explanation. Indeed, it can also be regarded as reflecting the perception that the transfer of benefits is unilateral, that the beneficiaries do not have the corresponding obligation or ability to exchange (Pinker, 1971, p. 136; Plant, Lesser & Taylor-Gooby, 1980, pp. 22–24). Charities and social assistance benefits are examples of unilateral transfer: recipients are perceived as lacking the ability to reciprocate. In contrast, social stigma is generally not attached to bilateral exchanges in market transactions. For example, despite state subsidies for home ownership, beneficiaries of this kind are not perceived as lacking the ability to reciprocate in this social exchange in properties. In this regard, the perception that the possession of certain personal attributes, e.g. the inability to compete or the inability to pay, by the beneficiaries seems to constitute the basis of the hierarchical categorization of social status.

On this basis, even if welfare benefits are claimed as an unconditional social right, social stigma can still be attached to beneficiaries (Jones, 1980, pp. 140–142). Social stigma that has arisen from attributes related to welfare benefits can be diluted because the transfer can enhance their benefits standard. Poor housing, poor health, low income are examples of this range of attributes extrinsic to the beneficiaries. However, uplifting of housing, health and income benefits may not be totally helpful for the beneficiaries if they possess some personal characteristics, which are perceived as socially inferior. Take people with physical impairment for example; the attribute of disability is still stigmatizing. Similarly, the social stigma arisen from the perception of the lack of will power of the unemployed cannot be eliminated by generous benefits. In this regard, it is important to identify the kinds of attributes that contribute to the perception of social stigma. Some disadvantaged groups are perceived as less equal or less favorable as others (Jones, 1980: 140) because they are regarded as possessing some intrinsic attributes. The equalization of welfare benefits by the process of universality may not be able to eradicate social stigma attached to those attributes associated with the perception of

inferior personal qualities. Equally clearly, the increase in benefits standard may not be helpful. This does not mean that the standard of benefits is not important, it is important to improve the material and social conditions of the beneficiaries, but it is not relevant to their stigmatizing attributes.

It can be generalized that there are two types of attributes contributing to the stigmatization of beneficiaries as the possessors of inferior status. The first type is extrinsic attributes of beneficiaries such as income, health and education; they are primarily selectivity-related welfare benefits that can be redistributed by state action. People in poverty can be provided with better conditions in housing, health care, education and income; and their improved material and social conditions are very likely helpful for the lowering of their social stigma. However, the transfer of social services and benefits are not necessarily effective to eradicate social stigma attached to beneficiaries, if they are perceived as people without the ability to reciprocate (failure in the economic market) or with personal characteristics perceived as inferior (deficient natural endowment). The finding that social stigma is affected by the degree of beneficiaries' dependence on the benefits (Stuart, 1975) is a case in point. This means that, even beneficiaries are provided with adequate provisions for meeting all their social needs, social stigma is still attached to them. In other words, the value of self-reliance, underpinned by the social exchange thesis, plays an important role in stigmatization. This seems to suggest that social stigma is socially and ideologically constructed.

It is clear that intrinsic attributes of beneficiaries such as disability—either in the market system or with natural deficiency, are not necessarily directly related to the selective process. For instance, the degree of disability is a selective means for disability allowance; however, the beneficiaries seem to have already carried with them the social stigma *before* they come into the selective process. The selective process is apparently neutral to stigmatization: even it is non-discretionary and non-humiliating, the social stigma attached to beneficiaries does not go away. In this regard, redistribution of tangible social services and benefits are not effective to lower social stigma attached to beneficiaries who are perceived as with inferior personal characteristics.

The explanation of stigmatization as constituted from two different sources helps to encompass the value dimension in the analysis of this area. Take the example of unemployed benefits for illustration. If the unemployed have demonstrated their efforts to find jobs or taken up re-training programs, they are more likely to be perceived as the deserving beneficiaries despite the discretionary selective process. This illustrates that stigmatization is related to the perception of the personal attributes of beneficiaries, either held by the general public or conveyed to the stigmatized by the media or the government. Ability, attitude and behavior and the like are intrinsic attributes to define people into hierarchical categories by the extent of their possession of attributes. The hierarchical ordering according to these attributes reflects the value for ability, achievement, productivity and self-discipline. These are essential for the constitution of the 'success' ideology: 'individual success results from ability plus hard work and is a sign of virtue; failure results from laziness, incompetence, and is a mark of vice' (Coughlin, 1980, p. 16). In other words, this ideology personalizes individual success or failure; the social and economic preconditions for success or failure are not taken into consideration. People are not valued for being themselves; they are valued for what they achieve, and for how they behave in the process for attaining success or failure. This clearly illustrates that social stigma is affected by the success ideology. The hierarchical conception towards ability, attitude and behavior in relation to the selective stream of welfare is an area that requires more attention in social policy analysis.

Conclusion: Ideological and Institutional Context for Selectivity and the Conditional Use of Means Test

This paper started with a brief review of the mainstream social policy analysis on selectivism and identified its narrow focus on the negative social effects of the selective means, particularly by the use of means test and income test. Indeed, selectivism *can* be justified on normative and utilitarian grounds. Corrective justice and the linking of rights to obligations in the communitarian stream of welfare were presented to support selectivism as a defensible ideology for the organization of welfare. The examination of the utilitarian arguments for selectivism illustrated that,

selectivity, in the case of positive discrimination, could be used to select and transfer additional resources to the disadvantaged groups. When we constructed selectivism, it became clear that selectivity is not the only source of social stigma on welfare beneficiaries. Indeed, selectivity can be neutral. Status ranking is the key to our understanding how and why social stigma is transferred. In addition, the level of benefits is not necessarily related to social stigma. It is because the transfer by social policy is about resources for improving material and social conditions. It is not about any increase in capabilities of beneficiaries that can enhance their status ranking to that of the others who can be self-reliant, or able to engage in bilateral exchange in the economic system. We also identified two types of stigmatizing attributes: intrinsic and extrinsic ones. We found that intrinsic attributes are not related to the selective process. Beneficiaries are already stigmatized before they come to the selective process. This means that the use of 'universal access', coupled with differential fee-charging or taxing the benefits (Jacobs, 1993, pp. 202–206) cannot be totally successful in avoiding stigma derived from intrinsic attributes of beneficiaries.

In this light, the study of the selectivist stream of welfare by focusing on the selective process is apparently too narrow. We need to encompass the value dimension in the explanation of social stigma attached to welfare beneficiaries. It seems that 'success ideology' is the source responsible for the constitution of our status ranking conception of social relations. Success ideology stands for the virtue of hard work and ability, which is widely appreciated, even by egalitarians. Indeed, the acceptance of success ideology is widespread across countries with different types of welfare systems. Public attitude surveys found that people tend to rank personal characteristics such as hard work, ambition, natural ability and education as the important factors for 'getting ahead'; and the difference among countries does not occur along the pattern of political and economic system (Smith, 1989: 68). In this regard, we need not to polarize success and equality. People in social democratic welfare states, despite their willingness to pay heavier taxes as collective responsibility of their fellow citizens for establishing the institution of the welfare state, do not disregard personal efforts for success and achievement. In

communist societies, equality is greatly emphasized and success value plays a minor role; whilst in liberal and residual welfare states, success is the core value and equality is seen primarily as equal opportunity. In other words, equality (despite its many versions) and success values co-exist in the same structures of ideology and welfare institution; and they are in a pattern that is complementary to each other. The opposition by egalitarians towards success ideology is about the unequal material and social preconditions across sections of the population as the institutional base for success. This infers that we need to relate success to the institutional context of a society. This means that a means test will have very different meanings and social effects in a social democratic welfare state like Sweden from that of a liberal welfare state such as the United States because of their different ideological and institutional context. The social policy implication of the precondition to success seems to be the establishment of a universal base of welfare provision. It has been generally accepted that social policy in welfare states is underpinned by a 'mixed ideology of welfare' rather than either universalism or selectivism. The welfare state embraces a universal guarantee of social protection against illness, disability and loss of income; but it also uses contribution, means test, income test, and other social criteria to distribute social welfare. Apparently, even the most social democratic welfare state, Sweden, has work tested and means tested benefits. In other words, the operation of welfare states according to the 'mixed ideology of welfare' reminds us that welfare states are more pluralist than universalist or residualist (Pinker, 1992). The major difference among welfare states is the different ideological and institutional context, on top of it, selectivity is being used. In other words, an important precondition for a less-stigmatized selective approach for the 'mixed ideology of welfare' is one with a universal base of welfare provision.

However, it is clear that either advanced or newly industrial countries have to place great emphasis on the need to maintain economic competitiveness in an increasingly globalized economy. This means that conception of the fiscal base and corresponding political support for the use of universal social services has become pessimistic; thus, would there be any acceptable ground for the conditional use of selective means such as a means test?

In the following, two social policy measures inferred from the discussion in this paper are proposed. First, it was suggested that the selective process, even individual based selectivity such as a means test, is not necessarily stigmatizing; therefore, there is a case to streamline the application procedure to make sure that it is non-discretionary and non-humiliating as far as possible. For example, transfer of benefits can be arranged by bank auto-payment, a procedure more convenient to beneficiaries and free from social stigma than the one requiring them to queue up before the social security office. Moreover, beneficiaries should be given more power, such as hotline and review authority for them to redress grievances in case they are mistreated in the application process. Second, as argued in this paper, students getting loans and grants and public housing tenants in Singapore in general do not have the social stigma despite the means tested selective process. This implies that we can separate the selective process from the social status of beneficiaries. It was also argued that it is often the intrinsic attributes of beneficiaries and not the extrinsic ones such as income, health care and other welfare benefits that are stigmatizing. Hence, we should focus our attention to whether the benefits being transferred would affect social status of beneficiaries after the transfer. In other words, the concern of social policy is not simply on the selective process where the negative conception of means test derived, but also on the policy outcome, which affects beneficiaries much longer in terms of time span. This seems to be an area much neglected in the study of social policy.

To conclude, we need to expand our attention in social policy study of the selective stream of welfare from simply the selective process. The ideological and institutional context makes a difference to the effect of selectivity. Stigmatization primarily reflects our conception of social relations. If stigmatization results not simply from the selective process, there is the case to extend our study beyond the immediate process of the selective means. This paper is not to propose a comprehensive re-appraisal of social policy and welfare system, but it intends to cast a doubt on conventional thinking about selectivism, selectivity by means test in particular, of its narrow focus on the selective process. There is the need for a more thoroughgoing review of the relation between

the selective process and its ideological and institutional context, as well as the possibility of any conditional use of means tests in a socioeconomic environment that is not optimistic to the universal approach of welfare.

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Notes

1. When the author visited Singapore in 1993, the median household income there was one thousand Singapore dollars, but I was told that the top household income ceiling for the government's home ownership scheme was set at seven thousand dollars. This meant that nine out of ten Singaporeans were eligible for government built properties.

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Estimating Homeless Populations through Structural Equation Modeling

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This article overviews the results from a test of a model of homeless populations throughout the 3,141 counties of the United States. The data were extracted from the 1990 Census, a Census Bureau survey of its enumerators at completion of the census, and other governmental sources. The model was tested using the generally weighted least squares algorithm, as implemented under the Extended LISREL model. It was found that urbanization, servicetization, McKinney funding, and systematic error arising out of more vigilant enumeration efforts in urban areas, collectively explained 80% of the variation in rates of homelessness. The model was then used to correct for enumeration error and to estimate the actual levels of homelessness in both 1990 and 1995. The 1990 estimates were compared with the results of independent estimates for selected localities. After the adjustment for uneven enumeration efforts, the model suggests that a population of 479 thousand homeless persons in 1990, had declined to 383 thousand by 1995.

Estimating Homeless Populations through Structural Equation Modeling

During most of the 1980s research on homelessness was concerned with documenting its severity and describing its victims. This research provided a rich source of findings to lend credence to just about any theory about the origins of homelessness. However, because of the local focus of these studies and a host of methodological limitations, this body of research has raised more questions than have been resolved. Several recent studies (Burt, M., 1992; Elliot, M. & Krivo, L., 1991; Hudson, C.,

1993; Tucker, W. 1987) have involved multi-city or multi-county research designs, and thus have made it possible to explore the impact of differential social and policy conditions on rates of homelessness. The study reported here continues this line of inquiry and is the first to test a predictive causal model with techniques of structural equation modeling, incorporating social, policy, and methodological variables, on data from the full range of the 3,141 U.S. counties.

Methodology

This study is a secondary analysis of data from several governmental and other public data sources. It seeks to both identify and explain the major causal forces which are associated with variations in the size of homeless populations throughout the United States, as well as to use this knowledge in estimating and predicting levels of homelessness. After preliminary statistical preparations of the data, the study uses techniques of structural equation modeling (SEM), specifically the generally weighted least squares (WLS) estimation algorithm, to identify a model with a minimum of predictors. It then tests this model, not only with the standard SEM techniques, but also by generating predictions of sizes of homeless population from the model, adjusting them for systematic error, and then comparing the resulting levels with independent counts and estimates. Counties are used as the unit of analysis in this study as they are usually not so small, with a mean population of 79,182, as to be unduly influenced by the existence of a single homeless shelter or so large that important variations would be camouflaged. The decision to model the national distribution rather than just that in cities or in particular regions was based on a need to assess the extent of what is widely believed to be a substantial urban bias in the Census homeless counts. Furthermore, there is insufficient variation in key policy variables, such as deinstitutionalization, when multiple states are not included.

An extensive process of model formulation, testing, and re-specification resulted in two final models, one with 36 predictors which was useful for explanatory purposes (see Hudson, C., 1998), and a trimmed model with 4 variables which is reported

in this article. The second model reported here is based on the hypothesis that urbanization, when combined with servicetization, involving the expansion of the service-based portion of the economy, as well as the extent of services targeted toward the homeless, will substantially account for variations in existing homeless populations, even after differential levels of enumeration effort and random measurement error are controlled for.

The number of homeless persons for each county was obtained from an extract of the U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990 STF-2C tape series, based on the results of the Census Bureau's S-Night enumeration of homeless persons in March of 1990. The Census' figures included the numbers for each county for homeless individuals broken down type of location, sex, age, race, and sex by race. The primary measure of homelessness analyzed was the sum of the homeless individuals enumerated divided by the corrected 1990 population counts for each of the 3,141 counties in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, and then scaled as a rate per 10,000 population. The reliability of the homeless counts has been controversial. The Coalition for the Homeless first identified a probable undercount, especially in rural areas, and of the street homeless. Most observers have agreed, however, that the count of the sheltered homeless produced useful figures. These issues are reviewed in depth elsewhere (Hudson, C. 1993; 1998).

The four predictor variables in the trimmed model are as follows: (i) Urbanization was measured by the proxy variable, population density (1990 population per square mile) (computed from U.S. Bureau of the Census, STF1-C, 1990); (ii) Servicetization, or the percentage of all employed persons who hold jobs in the services job sector (computed from U.S., Bureau of the Census, *USA Counties*, 1990); (iii) McKinney (federal expenditures for the homeless) expenditures per homeless person (computed from Interagency Council on the Homeless, 1992); and, (iv) Extent of differential search effort or systematic error, as indicated by the number of sites to which S-Night enumerators were deployed, per 10,000 population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, unpublished). This final measure was selected only after an analysis of statistics on procedures used in the S-Night enumeration effort, obtained through the Freedom of Information Act.

Results

After an overview of the descriptive statistics generated from the unadjusted S-Night data, the trimmed model will be presented, followed by a presentation of the adjusted 1990 figures and finally, the 1995 estimates.

S-Night Counts. In March of 1990 the U.S. Bureau of the Census located 240,140 homeless persons, representing a rate of 9.7 for each 10,000 Americans. About one out of five (20.7%) of these people were located through the street count, and most of the remaining (70.1%) were enumerated in homeless shelters. The remaining tenth of this population (9.2%) was almost equally divided between shelters for runaways (4.3%) and for battered women (4.9%). Over two-thirds of the total (68.8%) were males, about equally divided between minorities and non-minorities. Similarly, half (50.6%) of the total were persons of color. Close to a fifth (18.9%) of the total homeless were 17 or younger, with this group found in battered women's (47.7% of youth) and runaway (82.3%) shelters, and only 4.9% found on the street. The remaining four-fifths were just about equally divided between the 18 to 34 age category (39.2%) and the 35 or over group (41.9%).

Variations in risk for homelessness throughout the various segments of American society can be examined through group-specific rates (see table 1). These involve dividing subgroups of the homeless population by the corresponding segment of an area's or the nation's population. Children have a slightly lower rate of homelessness (7.5 per 10,000) than that of the general population (9.7). In contrast, the 18 to 34 age group has a rate of 12.9, but this drops to 8.8 for the 35 and over population. Males have over twice the rate (13.7) as females (5.8). This disparity, however, is not fully reflected in the county-level zero-order correlation of .12 between the percent of males and the homeless rate. Even more noteworthy, is the fact that minorities of color have over three times the rate (21.9) as do non-minorities (6.5), a correlation of .42 ($\alpha < .01$) on the county level. This disparity is consistently replicated in further breakdowns for the four types of settings. The rate can also be broken down by gender, revealing that the 21.9 rate presents a combination of 14.6 for minority females and 29.5—almost a third of a percent—for minority males. In

contrast, 9.3 per 10,000 white males were homeless, and 3.7 white females.

Rates of homelessness also vary dramatically between levels of urbanization, whether defined by population density, county population size, or percent of population that is in an urbanized area. Rural areas have a 2.9 rate, whereas counties with over five million population have a rate of 18.0. These rates, in part, represent the more vigilant search efforts conducted in the largest urban areas. The differential rates among the gender, age, and racial groups are fairly consistent throughout urban and rural counties. One exception is a slight sex-urbanization interaction—

Table 1

Rates of Homelessness for Selected Groups, By Type of Site (Per 10,000)

	<i>Homeless Shelters</i>	<i>Shelters for Runaways</i>	<i>Visible on Street</i>	<i>Battered Women's Shelters</i>	<i>Total</i>
AGE					
0-17	4.9	1.4	0.4	0.9	7.5
18-34	8.7	0.2	3.3	0.6	12.9
35+	6.7	0.2	1.9	0.2	8.8
GENDER					
Male	9.8	0.5	3.2	0.2	13.7
Female	3.9	0.4	0.8	0.7	5.8
RACE-GENDER					
White Male	6.6	0.3	2.3	0.3	9.3
White Female	2.4	0.3	0.6	0.5	3.7
Minority Male	21.7	1.2	5.8	0.8	29.5
Minority Female	9.9	0.9	1.6	2.2	14.6
RACE					
White	4.5	0.3	1.4	0.4	6.5
Minority	15.7	1.1	3.7	0.9	21.9
TOTAL	6.8	0.4	2.0	0.5	9.7

Notes: Rates are computed based on total population in designated group, i.e. 7.5 rate for 0-17 year olds means that there are 7.5 homeless 0-17 year olds for each 10,000 persons of this same age group.

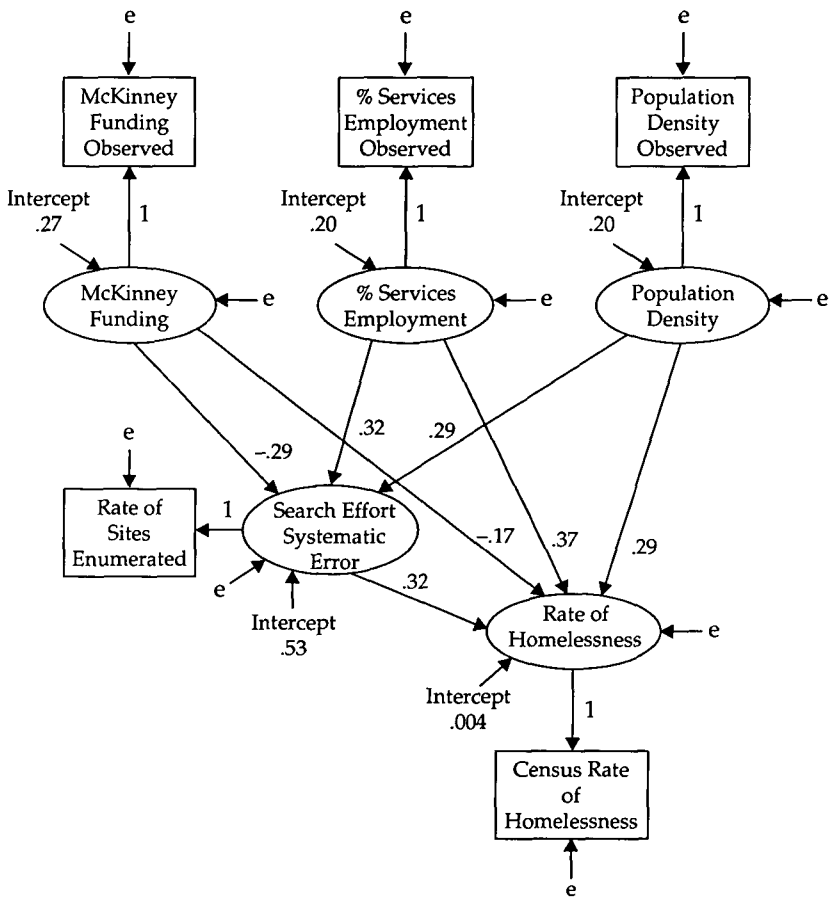
Source: Computed from 1990 U.S. Census (STF-2C Data Tape).

the disparity between the male and female rates is greatest in the mostly urbanized areas. Similarly, the disparity between minorities and non-minority groups grows from a odds ratio of 3.4 (9.1 vs. 2.7) in rural areas to 3.7 (35.8 vs. 9.8) in the largest urban counties. The total zero-order correlation between the homeless rates and population density is .43 ($\alpha < .01$), reflecting the same impact of urban conditions.

The Trimmed Model. One of the final steps in model development is the pruning of all variables which do not add meaningfully to the model. What this process resulted in is a dramatically simplified model which consisted of only three predictor variables—density, service sector employment, and McKinney funding—and one methodological variable, rate of sites enumerated, and these collectively accounted for about 80% of the variation ($R^2 = .799$) in the homeless rates. This is a model which incorporates not only the systematic error, as represented by rate of sites visited, but also random error. In addition, it used information regarding the means of each of the variables so as to enable the computation of figures referred to as intercepts, which are required for any projections made from the model. This final, trimmed model was developed by selecting the most important predictors, based on preliminary analysis, and then by further reducing them one at a time until all remaining predictors and specified relationships were significant.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual structure of the resulting model. It is based not only on the premise that each of the variables is an imperfect representation of a latent variable or concept it is intended to measure, but also that systematic error—the differential search effort—both influences what is eventually found, and in turn, is influenced by the demographic and economic conditions of the various parts of the nation. Differential search efforts, in and of themselves, are an insufficient basis to conclude systematic error since the Census Bureau may have had good reason to believe more homeless people would be found at given locations, and thus, justified in assigning more sites and staff to certain locales. For that reason, it was assumed necessary to control for the same kinds of conditions, such as urbanization or history of homeless programs, that the Census Bureau would

Figure 1
The Trimmed Model of Homelessness



Notes: Paths are labelled with standardized regression coefficients, whereas intercepts are not standardized. Error terms were fixed, based on the following estimates of error: Homeless rate, 10%; site rate, 2%; density, 1%; services employment, 5%. See table 2 for indices of goodness of fit and other statistics.

have had data on and possibly used in assigning staff. Whether or not these particular variables were used by the Bureau, is not critical; these variables would be expected to be correlated with those actually used by the Bureau. Inquiries were made of the

Census Bureau about the actual formula used for these decisions, but the Bureau declined to divulge this information. Thus, paths were tested for each of the predictors of the search effort variables, and each of these was confirmed to be important. Controls for such conditions, do indeed explain some of the differential search efforts. However, the variation in these efforts is not entirely explained, as the correlations with the results of the Census are reduced, but not eliminated. In addition, tests were made for the possibility of a two-way relationship between the homeless and the enumeration rates, and though significant, in the end the specification only served to weaken the model. It was based on the premise that informal and preliminary reports on the actual levels of homelessness served to influence the search effort, for example, through a preliminary survey that the Census Bureau conducted to locate likely sites where homeless persons could be found. This possibility was also tested through preliminary correlations with the rate of response to the preliminary survey, and while the bivariate analyses indicated an effect, it quickly disappears when multivariate controls are used.

In the final model, the single most critical predictor variable was the proportion of the county's population employed in the services sector of the economy, and this accounted for over a quarter (25.5%) of the variation in the homeless rates; for each standard unit change in percentage of services employment, there was about two-fifths ($\beta = .37$) unit change in the homeless rate. Why services employment would be so deleterious for the homeless is not entirely clear, but since service positions usually require at least a high school diploma, and whether professional or semi-skilled, contact with the public, it is clear that persons with little education and those with behavioral disabilities will be especially affected. Likewise, according to Census Bureau surveys these positions are disproportionately filled through temporary means, commonly referred to as "temping". The resulting instability and competitiveness of the marginal employment market, no doubt, represent particularly detrimental conditions for those with minimal educational preparation, a group also beset with substantial levels of disability. Almost a quarter (23.4%) of those with less than an eighth grade education have a severe disability, whereas this percentage drops consistently as county rates of education

increase, with only 1.3% of those with 16 or more years of school having a severe work disability (computed from U.S. Census, STF3C, 1990). This represents a strong zero-order correlation of .77 ($\alpha < .000$). Similar patterns can be found in the examination of individual-level data (Taerber, C., 1991, p. 224). In addition, those employed in the services sector have a substantially above average rate of mental disability (computed from U.S., D.H.H.S., 1993).

That population density, a key indicator of urbanization, should be the second most important predictor, accounting for almost a fifth (18.2%) of the variation in the homeless rates, should come as no surprise ($\beta = .29$). Much of the public's experience of the homeless comes from the streets of major cities such as New York, Washington, DC, and San Francisco. For each standard unit change in population density, there was almost a third (29%) unit change in the level of homelessness. We now can say with some confidence that the much higher rates of homelessness found in urban areas are not merely a reflection of the nominal search efforts conducted by the Census Bureau in rural areas. Indeed, part of the differential rates and the resulting correlation are explained away through such statistical controls, but not entirely. It is clear that something about the most highly urbanized areas directly contributes to homelessness. The preliminary analyses suggested that minorities, young adults, men, and single people are most at risk, especially those with minimal education and family ties. Whether it is the increasing stratification, anomie, or economic competitiveness, it is apparent that many from these groups become singled out and ultimately excluded from whatever communities they might have initially been part of. A missing ingredient, for which it has not been possible to statistically model, may be cultural changes which take place above a given population density threshold, ones which emphasize independence, meritocracy, survival of the fittest, and a sharp distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor.

Together urbanization and servicetization account for more than two-fifths (43.7%) of the variation in homeless rates, suggesting that this combination of conditions is particularly dangerous for the populations identified earlier—minorities, men, young adults, uneducated, and single people. The one variable in the

model for which it is possible to impact on is the level of McKinney funding, and this accounted for just over a tenth (10.4%) of the variations in homelessness in the predicted direction: For each standard unit increase in funding, there was a decrease of about a sixth in a standard unit of the rate of homelessness ($\beta = -.17$). Unfortunately, it was not possible to identify which of the many McKinney programs which has made the most difference, but it may be the continued support for transitional programs to move homeless from shelters, as well as adaptations in mainstream programs, which may be making a difference.

Finally, it should be noted that just over a quarter (25.7%) of the variation in homeless rates can be accounted for by the fact that the Census Bureau looked harder some places than others for homeless persons, even after the rational component of this differential search effort is taken into account ($\beta = .32$). And specifically, the model supports the conclusion that the Census Bureau looked a lot less in sparse rural areas than the data would justify. Many of these were no doubt areas for which the Bureau did not get a response back from their preliminary planning survey, or for which the responding officials did not know of any likely sites for enumerators to visit. In future efforts, considerably more care will be needed in these preliminary planning efforts to base the deployment of enumerators on statistical studies such as this one, with provisions for substantial variations from the predicted levels. A majority of the problems identified in the S-Night ultimately involved too many sites and homeless persons for too few enumerators.

Model Fitting and Testing. The trimmed model fits the data quite well, explaining about 80% of the variation in the homeless rates. Of the 10 indices of goodness of fit examined, only one suggested a lack of fit, and that was the Chi-square probability level of .000, indicating a very high probability that the sample and model implied covariance matrices did not come from the same population. However, it is generally agreed that such probability levels are only appropriate for samples up to 300 to 500, and that beyond this level, true models will often be inappropriately rejected (see Hu, L. & Bentler, P., 1995, p. 81; Hayduk, L., 1987, p. 168). This interpretation is supported by the fact that most

of the other indices, such as the AGFI and CFI, which correct for sample size, strongly support the acceptance of the model. Alternatively, the same model was tested, as recommended by Hayduk, with a sample size specified as 200, and this resulted in a highly significant ($\alpha < .05$) probability level for the Chi-square (see Hayduk, 1987, p. 168). The model was also cross-validated using the ECVI index which permits a comparison of the ability of two similar models to pass the split-half cross validation test, and this was found to be .02, smaller than that of the prior models for which this index could be computed (see table 2).

An examination of residuals permits identifying particular areas where the model fits or fails to fit the data. The first type of residual examined were those representing the differences between the sample covariances and the those implied by the model, some of which are set to zero. An average of these differences is reflected by the standardized root mean square residual which is only .068, well within acceptable limits. The median was .0091, with the residuals ranging from $-.005$ to $.172$.

A final test of the model involved a comparison of rates from the model, after enumeration error is adjusted for, with the results of independently conducted estimates and studies from the same period. Instead of using the observed rate of enumerators, the adjusted estimates are based on the assumption that had the Census Bureau deployed enumerators to sufficient sites such that there would be no evidence of enumeration error, they would have obtained more accurate counts. This level is a type of saturation point where additional search efforts would not make any difference in the results, and this was computed from the data to be at the level of 2.9 sites for each 10,000 persons. This saturation rate was calculated using elementary differential calculus, by setting the derivative to zero, and solving for site rate, and then visually confirming it by inspection of a scatterplot with the regression curve included. Estimates from entering the 2.9 figure into the model and recomputing the predicted rates are summarized in table 3, in the column "Adjusted Model Estimate".¹ A comparison of the independent and adjusted model rates suggests considerable variation, but nonetheless confirms that impression given by the residuals. When sub-national areas are considered, there is considerable variation characterized by possible over-prediction

Table 2

WLS Regression Coefficients and Goodness of Fit Indices for Reduced Model of Homelessness

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Unstandardized</i>		<i>Standardized</i>		
	<i>Direct</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>Direct</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>Total</i>
Population Density	0.06	0.02	0.29	0.09	0.38
Percentage Employment in Services	0.38	0.10	0.37	0.10	0.48
McKinney Funding	-0.10	-0.06	-0.17	-0.09	-0.26
Rate of Enumeration Sites per 10,000	0.04	—	0.32	—	0.32
<i>INDICES OF GOODNESS OF FIT</i>					
Chi-square, with 3 degrees of freedom	26.0, $p=.000$				
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	.062				
Expected Cross Validation Index (ECVI, Saturated Model: .00955; Independence Model: 7.107)	.020				
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual	.068				
Goodness of Fit (GFI)	.988				
Adjusted Goodness of Fit (AGFI)	.910				
Parsimony GFI (PGFI)	.132				
Stability Index (SI)	.002				
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.999				
R ² for Rate of Homelessness	.800				

Notes: All direct and indirect effects are highly significant, below the .01 level.

in the rural areas and under-prediction in the urban areas. The last part of table 3 compares national estimates with those generated by the model. With the exception of the Census Bureau's 240 thousand figure, all the other figures range from 324 to 735 thousand, all revolving around the 479 thousand predicted by the model, after adjustment for enumeration error. This research, thus, supports and strengthens previous estimates of approximately a half million persons who were literally homeless in 1990. It should be noted that each of the independent studies and

estimates were based on different definitions of homelessness and methodologies, and for this reason alone it would be expected that there would be considerable variation around any actual rate as this study has attempted to estimate.

1995 Model Projections. One of the advantages of modeling social problems such as homelessness is that updated estimates can be obtained by entering current data, and recomputing the predicted values from the model. For this reason, updated population estimates were obtained for each county for 1995. In addition, projections of services employment were computed, based on 1979 and 1989 data, and although 1995 McKinney expenditure amounts were not available for each state, a total was available. State estimates for the proportion for 1995 were based on 1992 and 1993 data, applied to the 1995 total. Finally, the 2.9 site enumeration rate was also used as a correction for the inadequate enumeration efforts made by the Census Bureau in most areas of the nation. While population and services employment continued to rise during this five year period, they did so only nominally, thus their effect would not be expected to be dramatic. At the same time, there were dramatic increases in McKinney Funding, from a total of \$581 million in 1989 to \$1.495 billion in 1995 (Interagency Council for the Homeless, 9/92, p. 38 & telephone contact), a 157% increase; thus, clear declines in homelessness might be expected during this period. In fact, the model projects 383,079 homeless persons in 1995, a decline of 20% in the five years, from 478,993 in 1990. This decline parallels that estimated by Jenck for the 1987/1988 to 1990 period, from 402,000 to 324,000, also about 20% (1994, p. 17), as well as an analysis of 1987 to 1992 shelter data in Massachusetts.

Discussion. This study reveals that contemporary homelessness has resulted largely from a convergence of urbanization with the restructuring of the economy, in particular, with the growth of the services sector, an outcome of the continuing globalization of economic activity. In addition, it provides evidence that the expansion of targeted funding for services for the homeless through the McKinney program, more than mainstream service and income programs, has provided a powerful antidote for homelessness, possibly reducing it by 20 percent between 1990 and 1995. It also

Table 3

Comparison of Census, Independent, and Model Estimates of Homeless Populations in Selected Jurisdictions

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Census Count</i>	<i>Independent Estimate</i>	<i>Adjusted Model Estimate</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Type of Study</i>
COUNTIES					
California counties ¹ (Alameda, Orange, Yolo)	4,144	1,601– 1,730	8,162	1987	Community Survey
Los Angeles County ²	12,631	38,420– 68,670	20,659	1990	Community Survey
Ohio rural counties (n=21) ³	177	919	1,575	1990	Community Survey
Tennessee counties (n=7) ⁴ (urban and semi-rural)	2,119	2,597	4,675	1985– 1989	Community Surveys
STATES					
Colorado ⁵	3,114	5,500	6,279		Estimate
Florida ⁶	10,900	2,200	25,690		Aggregation of Estimates
Illinois ⁷	9,272	29,216	22,950	1989	
Massachusetts ⁸	6,207	10,000	13,400	1990	Administrative Statistics
Oregon ⁹	4,069	10,000	5,184	1987	

continued

Table 3, *continued*

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Census Count</i>	<i>Independent Estimate</i>	<i>Adjusted Model Estimate</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Type of Study</i>
Tennessee ¹⁰	2,451	3,203	8,210	1986	Aggregation of Estimates Key Informants Survey
Texas ¹¹	10,520	41,833	29,306	1985	
Utah ¹²	1,250	1,700	3,191	1985	Aggregation of Estimates Key Informants Survey
Virginia ¹³	3,161	64,592	11,186	1986	
Washington ¹⁴	5,634	6,000	8,379	1987	Aggregation of Estimates Key Informants Survey
NATION	240,140		478,993		
Burt, M. ¹⁴		496,000— 600,000		1987	Aggregation of Local Surveys
Jencks, C. ¹⁵		324,000		1994	Reanalysis of 1984 HUD Study
National Alliance to End Homelessness ¹⁶		735,000		1988	
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development ¹⁷		500,000— 600,000		1988	Reassessment of 1984 Study

Note: Whenever a range was given in the state and county estimates, the mid-point was used. The above are counts of persons in both shelters and in street locations.

continued

Table 3, continued

Sources:

- ¹ Burnam, M. A. (March 1991). Estimation of the number of homeless and mentally ill persons in three California counties. In, Tauber, C. (ed.). *Conference Proceedings for Enumerating Homeless Persons: Methods and Data Needs*. U.S. Bureau of the Census.
- ² Shelter Partnership, Inc. (May 1992). *The number of homeless people in Los Angeles City and County, July 1990 to June 1991*.
- ³ First, R. Draft report of NIMH Ohio rural study. Table 3.2.
- ⁴ Lee, B. Homelessness in Tennessee, p. 181, in Momeni, J. (ed.). (1990). *Homelessness in the United States: State Surveys*. New York: Praeger.
- ⁵ *Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan, 1987*, cited in Momeni, J. (ed.) *Homelessness in The United States*.
- ⁶ Kovisto, in Momeni, J. (ed.). In, Momeni, J. (ed.). *Homelessness in The United States*, p. 63.
- ⁷ Timmer & Knotterus. In, Momeni, J. (ed.). *Homelessness in The United States*, p. 55.
- ⁸ Executive Office of Human Services, Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (1990). *Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan 3, Winter 1991-1992*.
- ⁹ Banzer. (1987). Cites U.S. Conference of Mayors (1986a). In Momeni, J. (ed.). *Homelessness in the United States*.
- ¹⁰ This projection for the state is less than that for the subset of counties since a number of counties had negative projections. Lee, Barrett, Homelessness in Tennessee, in Momeni, J. (ed.). *Homelessness in The United States*.
- ¹¹ Baker, S.G. and D.A. Snow. Homelessness in Texas: Estimates of Population Size and Demographic Composition. In, Momeni, J. (ed.). *Homelessness in the United States*.
- ¹² Maurin, J. and L.S. Russell. (1987). Homelessness in Utah: Utah Homeless Survey Final Report. Salt Lake City Utah: The Task Force for Appropriate Treatment of the Homeless Mentally Ill (Unpublished Report).
- ¹³ Bromlesy, B.B., D. M. Johnson, D. Hartman, and A. L. Ruffin. Homelessness in Virginia: Dimensions of the Problem and the Public Reaction. In, Momeni, J. (ed.). *Homelessness in the United States*.
- ¹⁴ Burt, M. R. Developing the estimate of 500,000-600,000 homeless people in the United States in 1987. In, Tauber, C., (eds.). (March 1991). *Conference Proceedings for Enumeration Homeless Persons: Methods and Data Needs*. Bureau of the Census.
- ¹⁵ Jencks, C. (1994). *The Homeless*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- ¹⁶ National Alliance to End Homelessness, cited in Institute of Medicine. (1988). *Homelessness, Health, and Human Needs*, Washington DC: Academic Press, pp. 3-4.
- ¹⁷ Robert P. (March 1, 1988). Data are elusive on the homeless. *New York Times*.

reveals that, even after the tendency of the Census Bureau to visit more sites in urban areas is considered, the disparity of rates between urban and rural areas persists, though to a less dramatic degree. Although homelessness in the United States is first and foremost an urban problem, its existence in rural areas has been routinely minimized and ignored.

Many explanations might be offered as to the role of urbanization and servicetization in the origins of homelessness. Several have already been advanced here: that the services sector does, in fact, require higher educational credentials, it provides little job stability due to the high rates of "temping", or that higher than average rates of mental illness may be a factor. The former explanations may be the more probable, as the high rates of mental illness may be in part an outcome of low education and job instability. Deindustrialization, *per se*, was found to have almost no correlation with servicetization, and to have only a slight impact on homeless levels. It may be that layed off industrial workers who relocated in distant counties displace many of those in the low-end of the services sector, causing a ripple effect, leading some of these people to become homeless. In fact, when the homeless have been previously employed, they have been employed more often in the services sector than in manufacturing. Ropers, for instance, found that in a Los Angeles sample, 26.6% of the homeless had been service workers, while 22.7% had been laborers; 15.6%, operatives; 14.8% technicians or professionals; 10.2%, craftspersons; 7.8%; and 1.6%, from farm labor (1988).

Other explanations for the impact of urbanization and servicetization are suggested by the preliminary descriptive analyses of the homeless data reported earlier. These indicate that those at greatest risk of homelessness are minorites, males, young adults, and urban dwellers. And, perhaps most pertinent, is the tendency of minorities and males to be at greatest risk in urban areas. These findings suggest that such groups, especially those in multiple jeopardy such as young black adult males, are most adversely affected by the combined conditions of the large urban areas with economies in which jobs are shifting to the services sector. The interaction of racism with intensifying social stratification, instability, and anomie appears to be particularly virulent, especially for those with marginal educational preparation and work histories.

Perhaps some of the most significant findings of this study involve the many variables which did not contribute sufficiently to be included in the trimmed model reported here. These include indicators of individual disabilities, family fragmentation, problems in mainstream service coverage, including the deinstitutionalization of mental health services; and housing unaffordability. While each of these areas was found to explain some of the variation in homeless rates, those which contributed the least consisted of individual disabilities and mainstream social services. These conditions, however, have not been the focus of this article; their analysis and a full discussion of their implications are reported elsewhere (Hudson, C., 1998, in press).

One of the most important findings of this study is that it is not only feasible to adjust census data using known sources of variation and bias to produce synthetic estimates, which can in turn be confirmed or disconfirmed. Both astronomers and criminologists have been effective in predicting the existence of unobserved but later-to-be verified phenomena by using the flimsiest of data, the most disreputable of informants, or the most abstract theoretical conjectures as their starting point which are then subjected to error correction methodologies and critical analysis. The ability of social scientists to productively use the so-called "fatally flawed" data from the Census to study the dimensions of homelessness should not be an insurmountable task. This attempt to do so has met with a moderate degree of success, but one which will require refinement of its methodologies and replication.

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Notes

1. The algorithm used to compute this was (in SPSS syntax):

```
if (siterate lt 2.9)homadj=((.3782*empser89)+(.0600*(density*.01))
    -(.1023*(mckinhom*.0001))+(.0439*2.9)+.0043)*100.
if (siterate ge 2.9)homadj=((.3782*empser89)+(.0600*(density*.01))
    -(.1023*(mckinhom*.0001))+(.0439*siterate)+.0043)*100.
```

KEY: siterate=Rate of sites enumerators visited; homadj=Adjusted homeless rate, per 10,000; empser89=% Working in services sector; density=Population density; mckinhom=Rate of McKinney spending

NOTE: .01, .0001, and 100 figures were for rescaling data after scale had been changed by LISREL8 program. ".0043" is the intercept term.

Women "Reading the World:" Challenging Welfare Reform in Wisconsin

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The latest iteration of welfare reform, the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), endorses work requirements and time limits on benefits, while giving greater discretion to individual states in developing welfare programs. Linking personal responsibility with work indicates that policy makers believe that it only takes proper guidance and minimal training for welfare recipients (predominately women) to make the transition from welfare to work. We suggest, however, that focusing on incentive, sanction, or compulsion ignores the structural features of poverty, especially as they impact the multiplicities of poor women's lives. In order for the welfare system to deal with women on their own terms, there must be a reconceptualization of the type of knowledge women require. Thus we argue for the development of a more critical literacy among welfare recipients so that they can uncover the (limited) options and alternatives available to them under current welfare reform programs. Wisconsin's latest welfare reform program, Wisconsin Works (W-2), is the model used to demonstrate the extent to which such programs fail to address the needs of women as they attempt the transition from welfare to work.

The latest iteration of welfare reform, the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), endorses work requirements, time limits on benefits,

measures to discourage women from having children while receiving benefits, and greater discretion for individual states in developing and implementing welfare programs. The solidarity of the 104th Congress in passing this legislation reflects the fear of many Americans that welfare has become the way of life for too many individuals. Linking personal responsibility with work indicates that policy makers believe that it only takes proper guidance and minimal training for welfare recipients (predominantly women) to become self-sufficient.

It is apparent from the language of the bill that one of the main purposes of welfare reform is to eliminate perceived personal weaknesses that hinder individuals from supporting themselves and their families. We suggest, however, that focusing on incentive, sanction, or compulsion as a way to alter behavior deemed unacceptable ignores the economic, political and social flaws that produce poverty. Distanced from the discussion are the structural aspects of poverty that are generated from our current economic and political arrangements, as well as the de-skilling and elimination of jobs, and systematic racism and sexism (Hull, 1993, p. 28). This is not surprising as policy debates occur far from the economic, political, and geo-social spaces occupied by welfare recipients.

We agree with many of the arguments supporting the structural thesis (see Abramovitz, 1992; Pearce, 1993; Piven, 1995). We realize, however, that current welfare reform initiatives are framed by an ideology that defines poverty as a pathological condition affecting the individual. It is apparent that the welfare system has its own characteristic ways of interpreting women's needs as evidenced by the ongoing debate about how welfare should be transplanted with work (see Murray, 1984; Mead, 1992). For this reason we suggest that there are two ways to phrase the "welfare question:" first, and the more narrow of the two, is how do we move poor women off the welfare rolls thus, reducing welfare expenditure and "dependency?" Second, and more broadly, how do we improve the quality of life for single mothers and their children and help these families move beyond poverty? Policy makers are focusing on the former while stating that new reforms will accomplish the latter.

Regardless of which question we choose to address, the analysis of poor women and their families must occur within the

context of employment and the need for child care, health care, and housing. The intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, and space must also be explored as they affect poverty (Sidel, 1986; Amott & Matthaei, 1991; Pearce, 1993, Mulroy, 1995). These issues are manifested in the pressures faced by poor women such as crowding, segregation, high crime rates, deterioration of public services and infrastructure, an overabundance of low wage labor, and the geographic mismatch in urban and rural areas between the location of any job. None of the future initiatives that individual states will develop and implement under the auspices of this latest reform legislation will be successful unless policies and regulations address these structural issues. Even more critical is the need to recognize that the move from welfare to work requires an understanding of how women negotiate their worlds of work, family, community, and school. If the welfare system is to deal with women on their own terms, there must be a reconceptualization of the type of knowledge that women need to make this transition.

To that end, this paper will first posit a more holistic definition of knowledge which articulates the distinction between ideology and the reality of women's lives. We suggest that assisting single mothers to seek education and training that has as a beginning point the realities of their daily lives, and whose purpose is to produce knowledge in the context of action, will enable them to develop the skills necessary to participate in the economic, political, and socio-cultural aspects of their communities (see Fasheh, 1990). In this way, they will be able to uncover alternatives and options, allowing for greater identification and access of community resources. Thus, there is a need to foster critical thinking, which becomes more than a reading of the word, but a "reading of the world" (Friere & Macedo, 1987; also see Freire, 1970; McLaren, 1988; McCaleb, 1994).

Second, we outline the welfare demonstration project recently enacted by the state of Wisconsin: "Wisconsin Works" (W-2). This policy initiative is being heralded by policy makers as the prototype for other states who must develop individual programs as mandated by PRWORA. Federal responsibility for providing cash assistance for poor children has shifted to block grants that will fund each state's specific welfare and work programs. Any welfare monies received are tied to the work efforts of the

parent(s), not the financial needs of the child. We chose to evaluate Wisconsin's program not only because of its high visibility but because this state is committed to quickly enacting the program state-wide and already has many of the program components in place.

Third, although we find fault with a welfare reform ideology that focuses on the individual as the root cause of poverty and dependency, we realize that we are working within a policy arena that is not likely to shift its emphasis in the near future. Given these emphases, we are fearful, however, that when welfare rolls do not decrease as quickly as policy makers and administrators anticipate, when women slip in and out of work, or when women are not able to be gainfully employed at the end of the imposed time limits, welfare recipients themselves will be blamed for their inability to move from welfare to work. Only by understanding how single mothers interface with their world will we truly be able to ensure that welfare benefits become less important to the financial support of poor women and their families. The first step in this process would be to incorporate the life experiences of welfare recipients into the knowledge base that informs policy. Next, policies and programs should be designed and implemented that would assist poor women in developing better and more effective survival strategies for themselves and their families. Thus, we offer an analysis of various segments of W-2 framed by this concept of "reading the world."

Gendered Context of "Reading the World"

The character of welfare affects women's material situations, shapes gender relations, structures political conflict and participation, and contributes to the mobilization of specific interests and identities (Orloff, 1993). Recognizing the gendered domain of the welfare state is an important corrective to mainstream research and literature which, for the most part, has been genderblind (or gender-obscuring). The lack of gender analysis is evident by the very nature of social policies which exhibit a double standard of welfare provision for men: social insurance, which is more generous and popular; and women: public assistance, which stigmatizes and is less generous (see Skocpol, 1992; Gordon, 1994).

A lack of gender analysis is also evident in the mixed signals that women are now being sent. On the one hand, it is argued that women should be responsible for domestic duties and be supported by men. On the other hand, single women heads-of-households are told that they must now enter the paid workforce. Blaming women for being poor (e.g., not having a husband to support them and their children) or characterizing their status as being dependent is only a description of their financial circumstance, not an explanation for their poverty.

In addition, an analysis of poverty that begins and ends with family structure and marital status does not address the crux of the problem: the overwhelming number of poor single mothers who are now in poverty were poor before they became mothers (Amott, 1990). In any case, the argument seems to be that women's chances for moving out of poverty are tied to their attachment to a man (Scott, 1984; Wilson, 1987). This kind of thinking is evident when we examine the language used when discussing welfare policies. The first few sentences of the PRWORA are illustrative:

- Marriage is the foundation of a successful society
- Marriage is an essential institution of a successful society which promotes the interests of its children
- Promotion of responsible fatherhood and motherhood is integral to successful child rearing and the well-being of children (110 STAT.2105)

These statements clearly reflect misgivings about social reproduction among the poor: that families headed by women are weak and disorganized, if not dysfunctional. Rather than focus on the institution of marriage, we argue that self-sufficiency, as sought after by this newest welfare reform, needs to be defined as self-determination within a "web of interdependencies" that would maximize the capacities for individual independence (Orloff, 1993, p. 320).

It follows that a key to self-determination is for poor single mothers to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to negotiate the changing system of welfare-to-work in order to determine which resources, options, and alternatives are available and to select those which are optimal for them and their families.

The central question thus becomes, what kind of knowledge do women need to be able to successfully transition between welfare and work? Further, what kind of knowledge do women need to be successful in the world of work?

Traditional definitions of literacy center around having the skills to read, write and do calculations (McLaren, 1988). However, simply emphasizing the functional aspects of literacy, in which the student passively receives information from the teacher, ignores basic tenets of successful adult basic education, which tend to stress the importance of dialogue between teacher and student (Vella, 1994). Dialogue helps students see the links between literacy, context and meaning, or as Heath (1993: 36) has said, it helps them to make the "essential leap . . . from knowing what the words say to understanding what they mean."

Critical literacy helps women make sense of what they are learning by grounding it in the context of their daily lives. They are able to test that knowledge through action and reflection as they come to understand that both the word and the world are specially constructed. By strengthening these connections and enhancing the process of learning, acting, and reflecting, women can more clearly define the strengths they already have as well as the obstacles that hinder their efforts to move from welfare to work. The process of critical literacy serves to enable individuals to further develop the competencies necessary for critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making. In the ambiguous political and economic climate being created by changing welfare legislation, it is even more important that women be able to negotiate the worlds of work, family, and community while responding to opportunities as they materialize.

There is, however, an ever-widening gulf between recognition of the importance of critical literacy in transforming one's world and the task-oriented welfare regulations which focus directly on moving individuals off the welfare rolls and into the labor market. Sanctions, not critical thinking, hold sway. Training and education programs now play a limited role in the programmatic structure of welfare reform. As reported by an advocacy group in Mississippi, "[Governor Kirk] Fordice's position is that the only job training that welfare recipients need is a good alarm clock" (Sack, 1995, p. A-1).

Our argument calls attention to the missing links between the reality of a single mother's world and welfare policies. The following discussion outlines the Wisconsin initiative and offers a critique of various elements of the legislation as framed by the concept of critical literacy. We speak to these various components with the understanding that poor women have little choice but to respond to the welfare system that now states "the solution to single mothers' poverty is not the freedom to raise children but the medicine of work" (Backer, 1995, p. 400).

A New State Initiative: Wisconsin Works (W-2)

The welfare system as it now exists is now one of the root problems of the breakdown of the family which has caused the breakdown of the community. Set up originally to be a temporary program, the only real radical change that has been made to it has been to make it permanent. A system that doesn't support the family or encourage work and doesn't encourage personal responsibility is bound to fail." (Governor Tommy Thompson as cited in Eggers & O'Leary, 1995, p. 29)

In December, 1993, Wisconsin Governor Thompson signed into law a redesigned state welfare program. Calling for a replacement of welfare with work, the new legislation ends authorization for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program within Wisconsin, effective January, 1, 1999. The philosophy of the program centers on the concept that work fulfills a basic need by connecting individuals to society and its values and that providing income without the need to work has isolated welfare recipients from the rest of society. The solution to these destructive influences is seen to be the rejoining of work and income. Proponents of W-2 state that this will be achieved through the consistent application of the following principles:

- For those who can work, only work should pay
- Everybody is able to work within their abilities
- W-2's reward system is designed to reinforce behavior that leads to independence and self-sufficiency
- W-2's objectives are best achieved by working with the most effective providers and by relying on market and performance mechanisms

- Policies should be judged by how well they strengthen the responsibility of both parents to care for their children
- W-2 will operate in ways that enhance the way communities support individual efforts to achieve self-sufficiency
- W-2 will provide only as much service as an eligible individual asks for or needs (Office of the Governor, Wisconsin, 1995).

The state initiative will provide cash assistance and supportive services only for those individuals involved in one of the following four work options as reflected in Table 1.

Listed in order of preference, the intent of the Self-Sufficiency Ladder is to assist individuals in "moving up" to the next level. As outlined by Wisconsin's Office of the Governor, (1995, pp. 6-7), the preferred option, Unsubsidized Employment, would guide participants to the "best available immediate job opportunity within the private sector." Matching personal capabilities with work options is preferred to "diverting [participants] to extended education and training programs."

The second category, Trial Jobs or Subsidized Employment, is seen as a way to help individuals transition to private employment; women meeting this criteria would be those who "enter W-2 with a willing attitude but without a work background." Community Service Jobs (CSJ), the third option, is for those individuals who need to practice the work habits and skills necessary to enter the private workforce. Women will be provided with "structured, meaningful work settings which will allow [them] to practice good work habits and learn skills which are readily transferrable to the private sector."

The last category, W-2 Transitions, is reserved for those individuals "who are unable to perform independent self-sustaining work even in a community service job." Individuals must participate in workshops and activities including "vocational rehabilitation and treatment" necessary to facilitate the move into private employment.

Eligible families are those consisting of custodial parents and their children age 18 or younger, who also have incomes below 115 percent of poverty and have low assets. Minor teenagers who become parents are not required to work but will be expected to remain in the homes of their parents and finish high school

Table 1
Movement Up the Self-Sufficiency Ladder

	Basic Income Package	Likely Income	Weekly Work-Week	Program Time Limits
Unsubsidized Employment	Market wage + food stamps + EITC	\$14,500.00 (post tax) and food stamps*	40 hrs/week standard	None
Trial Jobs	At least minimum wage + EITC + \$300 maximum wage subsidy to employer	\$12,000.00 (post tax) and food stamps*	40 hrs/week standard	3 months with an option for a 3 month extension per job; 24 months maximum
Community Service Jobs	\$555 cash grant + food stamps (no EITC)	\$6,660.00 and food stamps*	30 hrs/week standard; and up to 10 hrs/week in educational and training activities	6 months with an option for a 3 month extension per job; 24 months maximum
W-2 Transition	\$518 cash grant + food stamps (no EITC)	\$6,216.00 and food stamps*	28 hrs/week in work activities standard; and up to 12 hrs/week in educational and training activities	24 month limit; extensions permitted on a case-by-case basis with Department approval

* Food stamp allotments will be determined based on individual income level.

Source: Office of the Governor, Wisconsin (1996)

with the goal of employment immediately thereafter. The basic financial responsibility of supporting the minor parent and child will rest on the parents of the teen. Minor teenage parents who can not reside at home will be placed in a supervised living arrangement such as a foster family or a group home.

Supportive services such as child care, medical insurance, and transportation reimbursements are still in place. There is, however, a new twist; recipients are held liable for some portion of the cost of such services. First, subsidized child care will be available to all families with low-income or low-assets. All families will contribute to the cost of child care services calculated on an income sliding-scale. It is anticipated that increased demand will encourage new child care providers to enter the marketplace, ensuring that services will be available for all who need them in order to work. Existing categories of licensed and certified providers will remain, but added to these will be a new, less restrictive category of provisional child care.

Second, health care coverage will be available to all low-income families through a system of managed care. Families will be assessed a health care premium based on income. If an individual is eligible for employer-provided coverage, then such coverage must be accepted in lieu of the state policy.

The W-2 delivery system will be managed and operated by single agencies who will bid for the opportunity. In turn, the state will exercise its management responsibilities through performance contracts with these agencies. In fact, the entire tone of the social service delivery system has changed as evidenced by the welfare division having been transferred from the Department of Health and Human Services to the Department of Industry, Labor, and Human Relations. The intent is to replace "the automatic welfare check with a comprehensive package of work options, job training, health-care and child-care services, and even financial planning" (Thompson, 1996, p. 12).

Finally, child support payments will now go directly to the *working custodial parent* [*italics added for emphasis*]. As there is no longer an entitlement system in place, W-2 states that there is no need for these payments to offset the cost of providing cash assistance.

Discussion of the W-2 Initiative

The language of management and technical efficiency expressed within W-2 does not recognize the complexities of the lives of poor women and their families. The proposed programmatic solutions reflect a belief that rational and scientific interventions will solve the articulated problem of welfare dependency (Piven, 1995). Encouraging the work norm among single mothers is considered to be the answer to family decline and the growth of an isolated subculture or underclass (see Gilder, 1981; Murray, 1984; Mead, 1992). Society's collective responsibility for the poor has shifted to an enforcement of individual responsibility. The various components of W-2, in particular, the legislation's Self-Sufficiency Ladder, are directed toward assisting the individual welfare recipient to overcome structural impediments to employment, as opposed to addressing the structural barriers themselves (Bowen, Desimone, & McKay, 1995).

The intent of categorizing women by their job skills is so they may be assigned to the proper job category. To accomplish this, W-2 has created a different type of caseworker—an individual who is a skilled financial and employment advisor (FEP). This person's task is to commit state resources while providing advice and personal attention to women clients to ensure their upward mobility.

If the relationship between client and FEP develops effectively then, theoretically, so should the opportunity to move from denouncing a woman for her poverty to understanding her in terms of skills, abilities and experiences. Under such circumstances, caseworkers would work with women to develop the skills needed to negotiate the world of work, family, and community. Contradictions exist, however, because the elements of W-2 are not set within the context of single mothers' lives. Nor is there a recognition of the need for education and skills beyond those defined by traditional literacy (if that much). In the following discussion, we outline the conflict and barriers that will continue to prove problematic, and we suggest how introducing the concept of critical literacy into policies and programs might help ameliorate some of these concerns.

Employment as the Solution

The crux of W-2 is to place welfare recipients in a job—not necessarily a good job, or a satisfying job, or one on the first rung of the career ladder. Rather, any job will do. There is no emphasis on training or education, except during brief transitional periods. We are concerned that trial jobs will be exactly that; women will be funneled into low-wage jobs, with no benefits, and which will terminate in a few months. If the recipients are unable to find permanent employment at the end of this transitional phase, they will be labeled as failures. The time limits on welfare assistance would remain in place, whether a woman has been terminated from work or not.

There is no indication as to where these jobs are to be found. Although the legislation requires that the managing agency form a steering committee responsible for creating, and encouraging others to create, subsidized and on-the-job training jobs, this mandate is not likely to meet the massive demands for employment. It is estimated that through W-2, Wisconsin will move 53,700 former AFDC recipients into the labor market. An additional 2,000 new W-2 enrollees will be seeking work each month for the foreseeable future (W-2 Watch, 1995). Even if a comprehensive job creation program is put in place it is unlikely to be able to respond to the need within the time limits that welfare recipients will be facing. This is yet another example of how labor policies are not tied directly to social policies aimed at reducing poverty or the welfare of poor women (Kamerman, 1984; Bowen, Desimone, & McKay, 1995).

There is also little evidence that women will find jobs that will allow them to support themselves and their families. The types of jobs that unskilled and semi-skilled women are able to secure in the private marketplace not only fail to meet their basic needs, but do not lead to better jobs later on regardless of how diligently or how long women work at them. These jobs do not produce the necessary human capital (educational and occupational skill levels) nor the social capital (contacts) needed to obtain better jobs. Low-wage jobs often require work at odd hours, do not guarantee a reliable number of hours of work per week, and are subject to frequent layoffs (Spalter-Roth, Hartmann, &

Andrews, 1990; Edin, 1995). Research on single mothers' work histories reveals that many can recount varied experiences as they moved from one low-wage job to the other—seeking better wages, more hours, better benefits, more convenient transportation, better circumstances for child care—yet rarely, if ever, improving their earning level in the long term (Edin, 1995; Miranne, forthcoming).

In the changing welfare environment, there is no recognition of the strategies that welfare recipients employ to support their families. Initiatives such as W-2 see welfare and work as mutually exclusive, rather than understanding that while "dependent" on AFDC, women package income from welfare and wages because neither alone provides an adequate income (Spalter-Roth and Hartmann, 1993; Miranne, forthcoming). The result has been that welfare mothers support themselves and their children by putting together income from a multiple of sources. Women combine income from men (current or ex-husbands/partners), income from the market (wage labor), and income from the state (both means- and non-means tested). Not only does this strategy allow women to increase their families' economic well-being, it can result in a decreased dependency on only one source, thereby reducing the potential for exploitation.

Finally, W-2 does not recognize that work history patterns differ between women and men. Women face a complex mix of economic disadvantage in the labor market and a disproportionate responsibility for reproductive labor and caretaking—responsibilities that traditionally make up women's work (Baca Zinn, 1989; Sidel, 1986; Tickamyer, 1995–96). Responsibility for the caretaking role, and its ensuing interruptions in work history over a woman's lifecourse, can lead to poverty or exacerbate poverty conditions for low-income women (Glazer, 1990; Baines, Evans, & Neysmith, 1992; Kingston & O'Grady-Leshane, 1993). Even with record numbers of women entering the workforce, there is still the expectation that women will continue to provide care to their families and communities. We would argue that the newest welfare reform still implies this assumption. For example, if unmarried teenage mothers and their children are to remain at home, who will support them? The expectation is that the mothers of these young women will contribute what is needed, thus adding to the

financial, psychological, and emotional stresses that already exist within poor households.

Given the complexities of poor women's lives and the world of work, it would seem to their benefit (and society's) that they be encouraged to continue developing strategies of income packaging. In addition, women need to determine when and how they can attain the education and training needed to improve their chances of entering the labor market and excelling once there. Introducing critical literacy into the process of moving individuals from welfare to work would help sharpen their problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Education and Job Training

W-2 discounts the need for educational or training programs. Yet, education is a critical element affecting labor force participation. Women with more education have more human capital to invest in employment and are thus more likely to continue working once they have jobs. The one category in W-2's Self-Sufficiency Ladder that is geared toward job training is Community Service Jobs. These jobs, however, will pay only 75 percent of the minimum wage (currently \$3.86 an hour), with the difference in salary subsidized by food stamps. The intent behind the lower wage scale is to make these jobs unattractive enough so that participants are motivated to move up the job ladder as quickly as possible. The lack of adequate financial and educational support, however, will lead to individuals not being able to advance beyond low-paying community service jobs. Focusing on sanctions and penalties also does not address the gap between skills and job demands (see Burtless, 1995; Holzer, 1996). Many participants simply do not have the kinds of skills for jobs which would pay a living wage. Yet, there are no provisions which would enable participants to acquire adequate skills. These would include basic academic skills as well as those which help individuals develop problem-solving, decision-making, and leadership skills. In fact, the U.S. Department of Labor and the American Society for Training and Development have compiled the following list of basic skill groups that employers see as important (Hull, 1993):

- Knowing how to learn
- Reading, writing, and computation

- Listening and oral communication
- Creative thinking and problem solving
- Self-esteem, goal setting/motivation, and personal/career development
- Interpersonal skills, negotiation, and teamwork
- Organizational effectiveness and leadership

The basics of traditional literacy; reading, writing, and computation, are just one skill group among the seven listed. Job performance (and we would suggest even the image of employability) depend on workers acquiring this broad range of competencies—the elements of what we have been defining as critical literacy. If education and training programs are reduced by W-2, how can we expect poor single parents to meet the demands of the labor market? If those transitioning to work are not given the opportunities to develop the kind of critical literacy that employers increasingly see as important, then how can we expect them to succeed?

Time Limits

The time limits tied to the receipt of benefits (see Table 1) assume that all single parents are able to work full-time. Within the general population of married women with preschool children, however, only 60 percent are in the work force, and of all women who work, only two out of three work full-time (Ozawa, 1994). Why should we demand more of low-income single mothers than we do of other mothers? In addition, policy makers have not recognized that even without the imposition of a time limit, 48 percent of AFDC families no longer receive benefits after two years, and only 17 percent remain on the welfare rolls eight years or longer. The remaining 35 percent leave AFDC within three to seven years (Ozawa, 1994). It would appear that when presented with employment opportunities and adequate support services (primarily child care and transportation), the majority of single mothers will accept responsibility for paid employment and child rearing. Time limit sanctions will only negatively impact those individuals who need the additional time to gain the skills and training that will make them marketable. Instead of sanctions, giving these women the opportunity to develop and strengthen

the skills necessary for negotiating the complexities of this changing environment will be more successful in the long run.

Young Parents

W-2 has declared that, in the past, too many long-term welfare recipients started on welfare as teen parents. Thus under the new regulations, teen parents who are minors will not be allowed to set up their own households. They must live at home or with a legal guardian. For those who cannot live at home, three options will be available: live in a foster home, live in a group home, or as a last alternative, live in a supervised independent setting (Thompson, 1996).

There is no evidence that teenage girls become pregnant in order to receive welfare benefits. Once on AFDC, the birthrate among welfare recipients is lower than that for all women in the same age bracket (Ozawa, 1994; Rank 1994). We need to seek elsewhere for the solution to the problem of teenage pregnancy and childbearing, such as in the improvement of public education. We know that teenage girls who feel they have reliable options before them (such as a good education, recreational activities, and/or a mentor) are less likely to become pregnant. W-2 does allow minor teenager parents to complete high school before they have to enter the workplace. Yet, it is expected that young parents must go to work immediately after graduation or lose all benefits. There is no encouragement for these individuals to seek further education including college, vocational, or technical training.

Teenage mothers are disadvantaged in the job market because they usually lack experience and training by virtue of their youth. Again, because of their age, these mothers will also have young children who require full-time care, a stumbling block for any mother trying to enter the labor market. Finally, family resources may become strained as these young mothers are most likely coming from impoverished backgrounds. Clearly, mothers who enter the work force with little training and minimal education will struggle to support their families at low-paying jobs with little chance for advancement. If younger mothers are encouraged to develop critical literacy skills above and beyond traditional training and education, they will be better prepared to identify those alternatives and options that will ensure a productive future.

Supportive Services

In order to concentrate on their work responsibilities, women must be assured that their children are receiving safe and adequate child care. In response, W-2 has loosened the criteria that providers need to meet in order to allow for a less rigid system of child care with the anticipation that there will be adequate subsidized child care facilities available. What is not understood, however, is that women need more than just a paid-for place for their child. They need child care that is easily accessible, is open when they need it to be (many of these new jobs will require shift work during a time of day when formal child care is not available), and that provides the care and nurturing they think is important for their child (Miranne and Young, 1995).

In regard to health care, W-2's requirement that an individual participate in a private employer's health care program may not be economically feasible. Insurance costs borne by employees can be quite high, especially for those working in smaller businesses. This is a problem already seen in the workplace; the implementation of W-2 will not change the private marketplace within the health care field. If the premiums are too expensive, single mothers will have no choice but to forego health insurance for themselves and their children. Yet, we know that access to health care is one of the major reasons that mothers opt to stay on welfare.

Creating the best alternatives for their families among the supportive services offered will take great skill on the part of these women as well as their caseworkers or FEPs. Discretion has been, and will continue to be, inherent in welfare service delivery, even in rule-bound systems such as W-2. How caseworkers respond to each client, and the level of individualization that occurs, will determine how readily women can move into the work arena. Since W-2 will provide only those services that clients ask for or need, then it is extremely important that these women in transition understand the system of benefits and be in a position to develop strategies that will provide them with the relevant benefits as their situations change.

Child Support

W-2 participants will still need to identify the fathers of their children as part of the eligibility process and the non-custodial

parent will still be required to pay child support. Although W-2 will allow women to keep 100 percent of their child support there are still inherent problems. On the surface, telling women that they can keep all their child support would appear to be a step toward financial independence. We know, however, that many women would prefer to make their own child support arrangements without the benefit of formal intervention. Mothers know that the relationships between the fathers of their children and the extended network of kin that he brings is often more important than the few dollars collected in child support (Miranne, forthcoming). State intervention may mar this relationship.

Another important issue not addressed by W-2 is the pervasive violence in many of these women's lives. Mulroy (1995) suggests that single women parenting alone are employing a survival strategy within violent neighborhoods where the "streets are taking the men" (p. 73). Therefore, telling women to marry or stay married may not be to their best advantage. Breaking off from a violent relationship should be seen as a responsible act by women who flee situations that are dangerous for themselves and their children. These types of survival strategies, which allow women to maximize resources for themselves and their children, should be encouraged. As a process, critical literacy provides women with the opportunity to sharpen decision-making skills (which include determining available options and alternatives) both during and after their transition from welfare to work.

Language of Sanction

W-2 states that participants can be deemed ineligible for a component of the Act if they voluntarily leave appropriate employment or training without good cause or are discharged from a position. Again, there is an assumption that women will put their job responsibilities before all else. Within their own everyday lives, women weigh alternatives and choose options that are not part of the work process as defined by W-2. Despite the pressures of their daily lives, women remain committed to their children. They do not see themselves as providers struggling to be parents, rather, they see themselves as mothers, and within that context, they decide to be providers (Schein, 1995, p. 42). If the processes of critical literacy were recognized by policy-

makers and administrators, the types of sanctions outlined in W-2 would not be in place. Rather, the multiplicities of women's lives would be respected and women would be provided the means to accomplish their goals. More education and training would necessarily be a part of this process.

In addition, the time limits assigned to each employment category as seen in the Self-Sufficiency Ladder indicate that policy makers assume that the threat of being dropped from W-2 if "upward mobility" is not accomplished is all that stands in the way of regular employment. If women are given the proper training and supportive services, they will seek employment on their own and there would be no need for sanctions to be put in place.

Conclusion

Just stop for a moment sometime today and think about how much of your daily life is organized around work—how much of your family life, how much of your social life, not to mention your work life. Think about the extent to which you are defined by the friends you have at work, by the sense that you do a good job, by the regularity of the paycheck. (President William Clinton as cited in Backer, 1995, p. 379)

This statement by the President reflects an ideology of work that is not part of the world of poor single mothers and their families. These women do not organize their lives simply around paid employment—it is but one component of their complex world. Mandating that they place work at the center of their existence, with no discussion of the varied aspects of their lives, forces women to bear the costs of their myriad responsibilities alone and in silence. There is no effort to develop a critical literacy that will strengthen their abilities. By arguing for the short-term fix, is W-2 adding to the social and economic costs of reproducing the next generation of productive workers?

We have argued that welfare policies should facilitate critical literacy among women. Just as there are financial and employment planners who are to be put in place to work one-on-one with participants, so can there be others who would focus on helping women maximize the options and alternatives available

to them within this transitional period from welfare to work. The women most impacted by welfare reform are the ones who have the clearest, and perhaps the only, accurate understanding of their needs and priorities. Working from this knowledge base, and learning how to critically evaluate and exploit their environment, should allow women to enhance their own resources. In the end, is that not what welfare reform is meant to achieve? Thus, rather than focusing on policy from the top down, we would be better served to look at welfare reform from the bottom up.

We have also outlined concerns about the various components of W-2. The structural problems of our society's economy, polity, and social organization negatively impact single mothers and their families living in poverty. Yet, welfare reform initiatives such as W-2 are driven by the belief that "putting the employable poor to work is a problem in social administration, not social reform" (Mead, 1992, p. 171). Hardly anywhere in the W-2 legislation is there a commitment to education and training, and nowhere is there a recognition of the need for critical literacy. Yet, only with critical literacy will participants be able to fully realize and exercise their options and alternatives—getting women "off of welfare" is but one step. To be truly successful, W-2 and similar state initiatives will need to assist women in learning life-time skills that impact all aspects of their lives. Poor women must be allowed the opportunity to determine their own life circumstances and to have their efforts validated and recognized. Only then will we begin to see women leaving welfare assistance behind.

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Book Reviews

Katarina Wegar, *Adoption, Identity and Kinship: The Debate over Sealed Birth Records*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997. \$22.50

In recent years, much has been made in the popular media of the adoptive "search," wherein adult adoptees (and sometimes birth parents) find and reunite with their families of origin. At the same time, and partly as a result of pressure from searchers, controversy over state laws prohibiting opening records in adoption cases has simmered in many states, with social workers on both sides of the issue. This book uses these two phenomena, the adoptee search and the sealed records controversy, to launch a discussion of adoption that purports to focus on the broad sociological and cultural constructs of adoption, but also spends a good deal of space on a more individually-focused perspective, for example, the "differentness" attached to families constructed by adoption rather than birth.

Indeed, the author's own experience as an adoptee (discussed directly but briefly in the introduction) comes through clearly, despite the somewhat ponderous sociological jargon that characterizes the tone of the book. There is often a bitter undercurrent directed at social workers and adoption agencies, both of which she believes to promote their own interests in the adoption process. Indeed, she seems to dismiss whether science and scientific expertise have a role to play in the adoption process at all.

While it is probably impossible for a researcher's life experiences and biases to be completely absent from his or her scholarly work, the personal seems overdone in this time, although this may be a matter of personal taste and different perspectives of the author and this reviewer. For example, the author's concern for unwed birth mothers is apparent and appropriate, but her fears that the disadvantages of single parenthood are overstated are not balanced by an appreciation for the empirical evidence of the very real disadvantages of children who are raised in single-parent homes. Similar and unacknowledged biases emerge in several other topic areas.

Perhaps the greatest weakness in the book lies in the author's failure to maintain a sociological distance that would seem appropriate. For example, she finds fault with society's emphasis on biological ties as the only means of constructing "real families," to the detriment of adoptive families. Social workers can certainly sympathize with this position, but her criticism seems to extend to all official involvement in adoption. Most social workers would recognize society's stake in adoption and family in general, even if they question specific adoption laws and agency practices.

Social workers in the field of adoption need to be knowledgeable about all aspects of adoption, including adult adoptees' and birth parents' perspectives. This book, while presented in a sociological framework that may not be familiar to most social workers and despite some flaws, provides background and data for social workers that broadens the base of knowledge for practice. For example, it provides a good review of the portrayal of adoption in the media, including television talk shows, movies, and books. The author also calls attention to the lack of valid data on the numbers of adoptive searchers, reminding us not to over-estimate their number based on the volume of their voices.

Adoption workers might take this book as a cautionary tale. If nothing else, it provides incentive to the profession to question practices that imply adoption to be a second-rate way to build a family and adoptive parents to require therapy during the application process. It is a lesson worth learning.

Terri Combs-Orme
The University of Tennessee

Norma K. Phillips and Shulamith L.A. Straussner, *Children in the Urban Environment: Linking Social Policy and Clinical Practice*. Springfield, IL. \$57.96 hardcover, \$43.05 papercover.

Children in the Urban Environment is an edited collection which deals with children living in those endlessly fascinating enclaves which we call cities, with all their diverse population, noise, activity, cultural opportunities, violence, overcrowding, social programs, pockets of wealth and power, and wastelands of poverty. Growing up safely and happily in these bustling centers of humanity is challenging at best, devastating at worst.

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The authors of this volume examine children in cities from a variety of angles. They discuss social and economic factors—such as poverty, immigrant status, violence, and gang activity—that create and exacerbate stress in children's lives. The authors also look to the family and its tremendous affect on children, particularly when the family is headed by teen parents or is tainted by parental violence toward children. Family members with difficulties, such as AIDS or substance abuse, create emotionally trying and sometimes dangerous situations for children. The housing situation of children is not neglected: chapters on homelessness, out-of-home placement, and run-away children highlight the child's need for a place to call home. Throughout all the chapters runs a common theoretical thread: the ecosystems model, with its implication that both nature and nurture interact to affect children.

This book views these various subjects through the lenses of connecting social policy and clinical practice. Such a perspective is long overdue. Social work, and particularly children's services, has a crying need to see policy and practice, not as two separate entities, but as factors which operate in circular motion, feeding into and shaping one another. Richard Holody, the author of this book's chapter on children in out-of-home placements, asserts that "policy both frees and constrains the practitioner: it gives focus to the work but limits possible interventions and objectives . . . like all social welfare policy, foster care policy is a creation of history, reflecting the often conflicting components of American ideology. In short, it reflects tendencies that are wise and humane as well as short-sighted and self-serving" (p. 135).

Looking at policy and practice as interactive and mutually dependent allows clinicians, or front-line workers, to realistically expand their horizons, seeing their clinical work as part of a larger reflection of social beliefs and public inclinations. Conversely, for those whose main focus is policy creation and implementation, the perspective of this edited collection provides insight into how policy is translated into face-to-face interactions between workers and clients. In her overview of how children grow up in cities, Norma Kolko Phillips delineates ways that practitioners can operate on the micro, mezzo, or macro level to serve children. Though social work education has espoused the marriage of

policy and practice, works which demonstrate a happy union are few and far between. This collection, however, does link policy and practice effectively, combining policy assessment with practice guidance. A number of the authors are practitioners and, as Joel H. Straussner and Shulamith L.A. Straussner demonstrate in their chapter on how children are affected by community and school violence, the authors have been deeply involved in creating community and agency-based programs dealing with the issues which they address. The book's dual focus, however, is not equal; policy issues outweigh practice techniques in the book.

Children in the Urban Environment centers on youngsters in the big city, a reasonable focus, since many children's services are largely urban phenomena. However, many of the nuggets of wisdom in this book can be translated into smaller city settings or even rural areas. For instance, while the numerical majority of immigrants congregate in large cities, there are sizeable pockets of immigrants in non-urban areas, such as Vietnamese shrimpers in sparsely-populated southern coastal areas, or Mexican farm workers all along the migrant trail from border states to northern and midwestern states. Graciela M. Castex's article on immigrant children in the United States outlines many of the difficulties peculiar to youngsters who have been uprooted, but virtually every insight and intervention is applicable to immigrant children in urban centers, smaller communities, or rural areas.

Like all books dealing with contemporary issues in a changing society, this volume was outdated almost immediately in one respect: welfare. This volume was written in an AFDC world; the brave new world of TANF will look different, though we are unsure of the nature of those differences now. Clearly, recent welfare reforms will affect urban children and will surely be a subject of study in the coming days. The book also does not specifically address environmental pollution, a grave danger to children in some urban areas where children are exposed to toxins in the air, water, or physical structures. Nor does the book directly deal with lack of medical care in some urban areas, where many children are uninsured, clinics face staffing problems and constricted hours, and the hospital emergency room is often the only realistic choice for primary care.

Children in the Urban Environment is a well-edited book. Unlike many edited collections, this one reads well and evenly, so that the reader is not jolted from one writing style to another. The book is an excellent source of information about children's concerns. It can serve as a strong teaching tool for people struggling to understand and intervene in the challenges children face in contemporary society.

Dorinda N. Noble
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James Midgley and Michael Sherraden (Eds.), *Alternatives to Social Security: An International Inquiry*. Westport, CT: Auburn House, 1997. \$49.95 hardcover.

Commonly called "Social Security," the United States' most successful social policy—the Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance program (OASDI)—faces a significant financing problem.

The financing facts are relatively straight-forward. Here, as elsewhere, population aging, increased longevity, and a declining ratio of workers to retirees is putting the nation's largely pay as you go Social Security program "in the red." The best estimates project the combined OASDI trust fund as meeting all its obligations through 2028. Thereafter, anticipated revenues are sufficient to meet three-quarters of estimated trust fund obligations.¹

The interpretation of these facts is more complex. Some—defining the projected shortfall as evidence of impending collapse—see in the financing problem a window of opportunity to advance means-testing and privatization proposals as vehicles for shrinking the public sector. Others—including the author of this review—anticipate the need for moderate benefit reductions and revenue increases, but see no reason to radically alter the basic structure of this program which provides widespread protection to America's families. Still others—like the editors of this volume—are engaged in a serious search for new approaches.

The editors search has produced an excellent collection of essays, intellectually accessible to students and informative to experts and policymakers alike. Importantly, the introduction, authored by James Midgely, discusses the development of Social

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Security in the United States and reminds readers that "Social Security" takes other forms throughout the world, reflecting historical circumstances, economic possibilities, politics and cultural traditions. In most nations, the very term "Social Security" is more broadly defined than in the United States, often encompassing approaches to social protection that include all social insurance programs, demogrants, public assistance, provident funds, occupational welfare and other private savings schemes.

As stated in the introductory and concluding chapters, one of the main premises of the volume is that "progressive principles are possible in forms other than social insurance" and that those concerned with advancing these principles have much to learn from the experience of other nations.

Six chapters present a clearly written analysis of the historical development, structure, issues and lessons that follow the experience of nations taking very different paths toward Social Security. Linda Rosenman discusses the Australian approach to income security for the aged which combines a very liberal means-tested Age Pension (58% of older Australians receive it) with a Superannuation Guarantee Charge (a mandated employer contribution toward a privately managed occupational pension) designed to reduce reliance on the Age Pension. She also notes that older Australians have access to highly-subsidized or free health and long-term care and to discounts on taxes, telephone and other services. We learn that receipt of the means-tested Age Pension does not carry stigma, but that "the issue of equity between Age Pensioners and self-funded retirees has become a major issue as the number of older people retiring with employment-based superannuation grows." Michael Sherraden discusses Singapore's Central Provident Fund, a compulsory form of state-sponsored savings accounts which can be used for retirement, purchasing a home, health care, education and investment, and which is often credited with serving as an engine of economic and housing development. Sherraden suggests that this approach provides an important form of individual and societal asset accumulation and that Western welfare states should give more attention to asset building. In discussing Hong Kong's Social Security system which relies on its means tested Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme and a universally-available Social Security Allowance Scheme to

protect the poor, the aged and the disabled, K.L. Tang reminds readers that a demogrant can be an effective supplement when used in conjunction with social insurance or public assistance.

Silvia Borzutzky discusses Chile's comprehensive privatization of its approach to Social Security under the authoritarian Pinochet regime, suggesting that this approach which established a system of privately managed pension funds was designed to reinforce a radical free market ideology among the populace. She observes that the system magnifies existing economic inequalities and that it "is unworkable in other more democratic societies." Mathew Owen and Frank Field discuss the evolution of Britain's two tier approach which includes a universal flat benefit and a payment based either on earnings-related contributions into the state pension scheme or an employment-based occupational scheme or "I.R.A.-like "personal pension plans." While recognizing significant short-comings of the current approaches, they advocate providing progressive and widespread protection through an expansion of private protections, including a mandatory universal occupationally-based pension for all workers. Franz von Benda-Beckmann, Hans GsScaronnger and James Midgely discuss the four pillars of Keyna's indigenous Social Security, including provision based on individual efforts, membership in families, neighborhoods and other networks, membership in self-help and mutual aid groups, and benefits provided by nongovernmental organizations. They suggest that effective Social Security policy should seek to integrate with and facilitate the indigenous system and that "First World nations" would benefit from wider knowledge of the experience of "Third World nations" with indigenous systems of support.

Although the introductory chapter and Michael Sherraden's concluding chapters are both valuable and thought-provoking, I disagree with a key assertion—that social insurance approaches, most particularly OASDI, are dated and unsustainable, given demographic change and a shift toward an information as opposed to an industrially-based economy. I do not think the book gives sufficient attention to the extraordinary achievements of the existing program, nor do they provide enough information for the reader to develop their own opinion about more traditional reform options under discussion (e.g., benefit formula changes,

further taxation of benefits, extending coverage to all new state and local workers, retirement age increases, etc.). While acknowledging that a shift toward an asset-based approach might be harmful to the poor, Michael Sherraden says this need not occur if progressives promote policies that meet the needs of all members of society. While unquestionably well-intentioned, this view does not address the real politics of Social Security reform. In advocating the "end of Social Security as we know it," good intentions notwithstanding, there is much risk that low and even middle income persons will not benefit from a new approach. In putting aside a system that does more to protect against poverty and maintain incomes than any other social program or tax provision, there is much danger that—given the U.S. context—adopting asset-building approaches to Social Security reform would prove the maxim that "the pursuit of the perfect is the enemy of the good."

In sum, while disagreeing with some of the arguments advanced, I think the editors, James Midgely and Michael Sherraden, have compiled an excellent volume and made an important contribution to the Social Security literature and the forthcoming debate about the future of Social Security.

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Note

1. Under intermediate assumptions as reported in the 1997 trustees report, the combined OASDI trust fund is estimated to be able to meet its commitments until 2029. However, it is not in actuarial balance for the 75 year period over which long-range estimates are made. Tax returns (payroll tax receipts and receipts from taxation of benefits) will be exceeded by outlays in 2012. Total income, including interest earnings, is expected to exceed expenditures through about 2018 and the combined OASDI trust fund is able to meet its commitments through 2029. Under the most commonly-accepted intermediate assumptions there is a projected 2.23 percent of payroll short-fall (–5.54 percent of payroll shortfall under the high cost assumptions and a +0.21 percent of payroll surplus under the low cost assumptions.) This deficit represents a roughly 14 percent shortfall over the 75-year estimating period; a 25% shortfall after 2028. Since the deficit years fall in the middle and end of the estimating period, the short-falls in the out years are substantially larger than suggested by the overall 2.23 percent of payroll estimate (i.e., –4.88 percent of payroll from 2047–2071).

Ronald L. Angel and Jacqueline L. Angel, *Who will Care for Us: Aging and Long-Term Care I Multicultural America*. New York: New York University Press, 1997. \$29.95 hardcover.

Current and projected shifts in the demographic aspects of aging have inspired a wide range of policy and program related analyses that are readily available in the literature. The topic has wide appeal because aging populations are challenging public policies in most societies in terms of moral dilemmas and economic considerations. Included in most discussions about policies addressing the rising proportion of the elderly is the question of how to provide for long term care in an affordable, yet humane, fashion. Even though there is only a small percentage of the elderly living in long term skilled care facilities, there is clearly a need to continually explore better ways of helping individuals who do not require institutionalized care to remain in the community. The pressure to seek and find alternative or complementary means of care will expand as the informal sector's capacity for providing care is threatened by the loss of primary caregivers. Many societies are experiencing a shortage of primary caregivers due to increases in physical isolation of children from parents, working couples, single parents, and a reduction in siblings.

This situation is well known among policy makers at national and local levels and has been the focus of attention by any number of research and demonstration projects in the United States and around the world. Indeed, there are numerous prominent programs in place that have significantly increased the capacity of individuals, families and communities to provide care for their frail elderly outside of institutions or skilled care facilities. There are plenty of successful examples which suggests that it is often less of question of knowing what works than a question of getting nations and communities to make the necessary commitment of resources to implement and maintain viable programs.

Some of the political and economic barriers to program development are discussed in this text, but its real contribution to providing us with a better understanding of the processes involved in establishing desirable and workable programs is the focus on the multicultural factor. The strength of the text is its convincing argument that "failure to consider the ways in which cultural,

economic and health care system factors influence the extent of need for long term care and specific home health services" leads to an inefficient and ineffective system. Too many policies in the United States are currently predicated on the assumption that the aging population is a homogenous group with little apparent regard for the diversity of ethnicity, race, class or gender. This often leads to one-size-fits-all policies, allowing for marginal flexibility and few programmatic options conducive to diverse attitudes, perceptions and approaches to care. This is an increasingly serious problem given the rapid rise in the proportion of diverse populations among the elderly.

The authors argue that it will take much more than mere recognition of this diversity in order to enhance formal and informal care systems. The key is to facilitate intense interaction between program designers and community in order to generate ongoing public discourse and public involvement in planning and implementing programs that are sensitive to ethnic, race, class and gender issues, as well as the critical need for multi-discipline approaches to long-term care. The text is clear, concise and cogent. It informs with objectivity and insight, giving the reader ample material for reflection and consideration without being pedantic. While the focus is on long-term care, it would be useful in a college aging studies policy class as an example of how policies are often developed within a cultural, ethnic and gender vacuum. In addition, it includes thoughtful and accurate discussions on social security, private pensions, Medicare and Medicaid, the role of the family, the provisions of the Older Americans Act, and the well-known On Lok community-based, multi-disciplinary system of care in San Francisco.

Martin B. Tracy

Southern Illinois University

Richard M. Alperin and David G. Phillips, *The Impact of Managed Care on the Practice of Psychotherapy: Innovation, Implementation and Controversy*. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1997. \$31.95 hardcover.

Alperin and Phillips offer an overview of managed care in a tripartite conceptual framework. They first consider innovations

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managed care brings to psychotherapy practice, including technological advances, options for reorganization of service delivery, case management, and the increasing use of psychoactive medications. Second, they look at implementing managed care in a psychotherapeutic practice, focusing on treatment approach/managed care fit, the difficulties encountered and the changes required. Finally, they consider controversies including issues of compromised confidentiality, incentives to provide minimal care, and inappropriate restrictions on treatment duration. The final chapter, an analysis and critique of managed care policy, proposes a new model to address the needs of patients who's problems go beyond the treatment limitations of brief psychotherapy.

Alperin and Phillips' overview introduction offers a historical view of the development of managed care principals in health maintenance organizations from altruistic socialized medicine to corporate medicine. They cover the major principals of utilization review and prepayment of care, as well mentioning the issue of moral hazard involved in the provision of over treatment, a major concern of managed care advocates. Perhaps, in attempting to be user-friendly, they avoid terms such as capitation, case rates, and prospective payment systems, which are at the heart of managed care and would be useful for a psychotherapist to at least have in their vocabulary.

Looking first at the innovation section, two papers by Kelley Phillips provide a nice overview of the parameters associated with updating clinical practice with new knowledge and the skills. The reader is introduced to cost benefit analysis, behavioral health care carve-outs, and fourth party clinical management organizations and their role in utilization review. Incorporation of new technologies based upon increased access to information through use of computers, standardized assessment protocols, and the application of critical pathways-algorythms are discussed. We are then treated to Sidney Grossberg's paper on the mechanics of building a successful group practice in a managed care environment. Finally, we consider the role of case management in managed care which is nicely illustrated by the Birne-Stone, Cypress and Winderbaum paper. This section provides a good introduction and overview of each of the topics addressed, and its citations offer leads to other primary sources. Its appended

glossary of terms is also helpful, but might have been expanded and used as an appendix to the whole book.

In the next section, implementation, Kenneth Frank discusses Focused Integrated Psychotherapy, a new approach incorporating cognitive behavioral principals within a psychodynamic framework of short-term psychotherapy. Though he notes that this is not a substitute for long term treatment, he views it as an efficient way of providing therapy to an appropriately selected subgroup of patients. His approach offers the analytically minded therapist a direction and framework for organizing their practice in the time limited, brief and focus-demanding environment of managed care coverage. Wright and Rosenberg then consider and illustrate how brief group therapeutic interventions are well suited to the needs of patients in managed care. In papers by Altman, Balen and Jarratt, contributions of family systems therapy and hypnotherapy in a managed care environment are discussed. The latter two papers emphasize the compatibility of these interventions with managed care goals, and both seek a wider use of their techniques in the managed care arena.

The final section looks at controversial issues in managed care. David Phillips considers legal and ethical issues deriving from changes in practice attributable to managed care or more specifically utilization review. He defines the legal concept of "standard of care" and discusses the attribution of negligence to professionals in the delivery of care. Having given the reader a basis for understanding their responsibilities under the law, he discusses how limitations on care resulting from utilization review are leading to new responsibilities for practitioners, most notably, "economic advocacy" and "economic disclosure" responsibilities. He further considers the changes in the development of provisions for informed consent and inpatient care which are occurring in the managed care context.

Both Alperin and Edward then present papers strongly illustrating the negative impact utilization review and treatment time limitation have on the therapeutic relationship in psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy. Their points are well illustrated through case example. These authors show the challenge that managed care poses to the conduct of long-term psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy.

Finally, William Herron, in his chapter on restructuring managed mental health care, poses a challenge to some of its basic assumptions, namely economic savings associated with limitations on the duration of psychotherapy and the definition of medical necessity for outpatient psychotherapy as limited to "necessity" vs. "improvement" and "potentiality." Herron argues that the costs of outpatient psychotherapy are not so great as to justify the limitations based upon its usage. He points to dosage effects of psychotherapy which would indicate justification for longer periods of approval. He further indicates that the average cost for allowing people to select their own therapist and to continue without any limitations (though he does accept copayments and caps on benefits) would be minimal. He challenges the policy makers to an experiment on the grounds that in the long run, allowing for "improvement" as a goal in psychotherapy as opposed to the satisfaction of simple medical necessity—would be more cost-effective. Harrin's chapter is challenging and reflects the need for change, reorganization and experimentation in the managed care field. His chapter and the book as a whole open conceptual areas for psychotherapists and give them some insight into the options and changes that will come about as the adoption of managed care principals proceed.

Steven P. Segal

University of California at Berkeley

Book Notes

Ted R. Watkins and James W. Calicutt (Eds.), *Mental Health Policy and Practice Today*. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 1997. \$ 58.00 hardcover, \$ 27.95 papercover.

Mental health policies and services have changed dramatically over the last thirty years. De-institutionalization, budgetary reductions and the involvement of mental health consumers in the formulation of programs are just some of the developments that have significantly altered the way that the needs of people with chronic mental illnesses have conventionally been addressed.

This edited collection of original chapters on current mental health issues by Watkins and Callicutt provides an up to date account of the field of mental health policy and practice. Consisting of some twenty chapters, the book ranges over topics as diverse as community care for people with mental illnesses to the role of managed care in service provision. The book is divided into four parts. The first provides an introductory overview of key mental health policy issues including a discussion of issues such as de-institutionalization, the role of the courts, politics in mental health and the utilization of personnel. Part II consists of four chapters that address the knowledge base on which mental health services depend. Part III focuses on the mental health needs of special groups such as children, the homeless, women, the elderly and minority groups. The final part contains three chapters that speculate on the future of mental health services in the coming century. These chapters pay particular attention to issues of technology, managed care and the intersection between the criminal justice and mental health systems.

Although Watkins and Callicutt's book is designed primarily for students in social work programs, it will be a useful addition to the literature and should be widely used in related fields such as psychiatry, nursing and health services administration. It will also be helpful to members of the lay public who are interested in mental health policies and programs. Its uncomplicated style and comprehensiveness will ensure that it is widely used.

Leon H. Ginsberg, *Careers in Social Work*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1997. \$ 16.50 papercover.

Despite the fact that social work has now evolved into a recognized profession, there is still confusion about social work's role, scope and mission. All too often, social work practitioners, faculty members and students complain that social work is poorly defined and it lacks a coherent identity. One often gets the impression that many social workers today do not know with certitude what social work is and what social workers do.

Leon Ginsberg's book should be consulted by those who continue to have questions and doubts about the nature of professional social work. It provides a straightforward account of the characteristics and history of social work, the role of professional education for social work practice and the employment (and self-employment) opportunities for qualified social workers. It examines six major fields of practice in which social workers are widely employed and which are often regarded as defining areas for professional intervention. These are the public social services, health and mental health services, services for children and older people, correctional programs, community organization and social work administration. Included in this discussion is brief but useful information on social work careers in international agencies, employee assistance programs and research institutes. The book also provides helpful information about job satisfaction, licensing and other credentials, salaries and employment conditions, burnout, union membership and many other aspects of a professional career in the field.

The book is brief but comprehensive and while some of the sections are rather truncated, it is an excellent introduction to the field. It should be widely read not only by those interested in becoming social workers but by those who already hold social work qualifications. There is much in this highly informative book which will be of interest and enlighten even those who have long experience of working in the field.

Neil Gilbert (Ed.), *Combating Child Abuse: International Perspectives and Trends*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. \$ 45.00 hardcover.

In recent years, the neglect and maltreatment of children has become a major public policy issue. While only the most serious

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In recent years, the neglect and maltreatment of children has become a major public policy issue. While only the most serious

cases were previously dealt with by statutory agencies, growing public concern that children are being physically harmed on a significant scale has resulted in many more investigations and interventions that often result in the removal of children from their homes. This development has been fueled by often sensationalized media reports which have purportedly uncovered a hidden incidence of child abuse of epidemic proportions. As case after case has been brought to the attention of the public, more and more abused children have been identified and pressures on the authorities to be ever more vigilant have increased. While these developments have been most marked in the United States, there have been similar trends in other European countries. The recent sexually motivated murders of young teen-age girls in Belgium created a national scandal while in Britain, child sexual and physical abuse cases are perennial topics in popular national newspapers.

Neil Gilbert's edited collection of articles about child abuse policies and programs in Canada, the United States and eight European nations seeks to identify the different ways in which these industrial countries deal with the problem. It shows that there are significant differences in the incidence of child abuse between these countries and very different approaches to dealing with the problem. These differences reflect complex factors such as the definition of abuse, variations in statistical reporting and different cultural approaches which defining child maltreatment in different ways. The book's major conclusion is that the problem of child abuse is not simply a matter of responding to objective cases of maltreatment but a complex one which reflects broader societal conditions. It shows that the relative nature of the way child abuse is defined and dealt with is not widely appreciated by social scientists or policy makers. Although the book does not propose how these differences can be accommodated within a comprehensive approach for preventing and treating child abuse, it contains a wealth of interesting information about public child welfare programs in the industrial nations. As such it makes a useful contribution to the development of comparative social policy research.

P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn (Eds.),
Escape from Poverty: What Makes a Difference for Children?

cases were previously dealt with by statutory agencies, growing public concern that children are being physically harmed on a significant scale has resulted in many more investigations and interventions that often result in the removal of children from their homes. This development has been fueled by often sensationalized media reports which have purportedly uncovered a hidden incidence of child abuse of epidemic proportions. As case after case has been brought to the attention of the public, more and more abused children have been identified and pressures on the authorities to be ever more vigilant have increased. While these developments have been most marked in the United States, there have been similar trends in other European countries. The recent sexually motivated murders of young teen-age girls in Belgium created a national scandal while in Britain, child sexual and physical abuse cases are perennial topics in popular national newspapers.

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P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn (Eds.),
Escape from Poverty: What Makes a Difference for Children?

Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1997. \$ 49.95 hardcover, \$ 24.95 papercover.

There is widespread pessimism among child welfare advocates, social scientists and social workers that the recent so-called 'welfare reform' developments will have a negative impact on the well-being of children. The legislation enacted in 1996 strictly limits the time that needy families can be provided with income support, and while it requires that efforts be made to place clients in employment, many experts believe that those in receipt of income support will simply be left to fend for themselves without the investments and services that will, in fact, ensure that they become self-sufficient. Since the great majority of families receiving income support are headed by single women with children, it is anticipated that the incidence of child poverty will increase sharply and that many more children will ultimately be removed from their families and be brought into the child welfare system. The incidence of child poverty in the United States is already shockingly high by international standards. The prospect of a further increase is indeed distressing.

It remains to be seen whether these ominous predictions will, in fact, materialize. While numerous long range studies are currently being implemented to track the fortunes of families on income support, it is vital that social workers and social service administrators use the available scientific knowledge to prevent more children from falling into poverty. It is in this regard that this book will be particularly useful. Summarizing the research evidence about those interventions that effectively reduce child poverty, it will be a useful resource for dealing with the problem.

The book consists of 14 chapters that deal with a variety of policies and programs that facilitate the escape of poor families from poverty. The chapters are written by some of the nation's leading experts in the field. They deal with issues as diverse as maternal employment, child care, the role of fathers in reducing poverty and the provision of health care. The final section considers future policy and research directions for poverty reduction efforts. Although the quality of the book's chapters is somewhat variable, there is much in the collection that will be of interest and value to those who are concerned with the pressing problem of child poverty today.

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Correction:

"Welfare "Reform": Com'in Up On The Rough Side of the Mountain"; Loretta Williams, Chelsea/Dudley Partnership; Rolanda Ward, Boston University School of Social Work; Attieno Davis, Chelsea/Dudley Partnership Steering Committee.

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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 Frederick MacDonald, School of Social Work, Western Michigan University, 1201 Oliver Street, 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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