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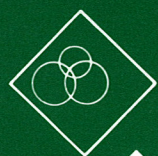
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The Changing American Mosaic: An Introduction

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This article, in addition to introducing the special journal issue on the changing American mosaic, provides a synthesis of issues associated with changing demographic trends as the number of people of color increase between 2000–2050. Welfare reform, structural inequality, and the convergence of race, class and gender issues are discussed in a civil rights context. A brief summary of the other journal articles by Glen Loury; Stanley Eitzen and Maxine Baca Zinn; Ruth Sidel; Mary Krist, Douglas Gurak, Likwang Chen; Doris Wilkinson and Margaret Gibelman is also provided.

“While they’re standing in the welfare lines
Crying at the doorsteps of those armies of salvation
Wasting time in the unemployment lines
Sitting around waiting for a promotion.

“Poor people gonna rise up
And get their share
Poor people gonna rise up
And take what’s theirs”

—*Talkin’ Bout A Revolution*
Tracy Chapman

At the beginning of the decade of the nineties, the phrase “the changing American mosaic” was frequently used to characterize the anticipated demographic changes in large urban centers between the years 2000–2050. Population projections for the new millennium have shown dramatic shifts in the number of people of color such that people of color will out number the white majority in some communities. Much of this shift is associated

with immigrants who are people of color and adds new dimensions to early civil rights efforts to increase opportunities for African Americans and curtail job and other forms of institutional and individual discrimination against them. Such demographic shifts not only increase ethnic and racial diversity, but the labor force changes, concerns arise about the political economy and access to opportunities for all people of color and tensions arise over the preservation of the identity of American society. (See Reimers, *Unwelcome Strangers: American Identity and The Turn Against Immigration*.) More conservative attitudes about governmental responsibility and the use of public funds for low income families and the poor accompany these shifts. Large urban communities have the highest welfare population and have had the highest number of immigrants on welfare. Public assistance and essential services for immigrants add still another dimension to governmental responsibility and public assistance myths. Many of the myths about the use of public benefits have historically been negative stereotypes about poor, welfare dependent black female heads of households. (See Sidel, *Keeping Women and Children Last*, 1998). However, In addition to targeting black mothers with children born out of wedlock, welfare reform actually resulted in anti-immigrant provisions as well. Dill, Baca Zinn and Patton (1999) have described the conservative narrative manifested in anti-immigrant campaigns which included, for example, negative stereotypes of Latino families as welfare dependent with dysfunctional family lives. (pp. 265–66). The same authors describe these political narratives as “racialized”, and blaming “poor single and immigrant mothers for social ills like drug addiction, poverty, crime, and gang violence.” (p. 264). Such political factors perpetuate social inequality in our society and changes in the American mosaic raise critical concerns about social justice and the quality of life for the growing number of people of color, many of whom are poor. These projected population changes are not accompanied by changes in structural inequality in American society.

ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

The Hamiltons (1997) in *The Dual Agenda* remind us that the civil rights movement which began more than three decades ago

was not only concerned about racial justice, but the economic needs of poor families as well. Socioeconomic concerns of the civil rights movement became obscured by the necessary thrust and emphasis on racial discrimination. In their discussion on welfare reform and full employment in the 1970's, the Hamiltons note that "a full employment policy continued to represent an ideal welfare reform plan for civil rights organizations because it would be universal and provide jobs with no public assistance stigma attached to them." (p. 175). By the same token, the Hamiltons note that civil rights organizations were adamantly opposed to mandatory welfare-to-work legislative reform, the implications of such legislation being that welfare recipients did not want to work. The distinction here is made between a full employment policy and welfare reform, jobs in the "regular work force" versus mandatory workfare programs. The 1963 March on Washington was a march for both jobs and freedom—a march for federal legislation to promote economic expansion, federal programs to provide jobs for all the unemployed, federal fair employment and labor standards to curtail job discrimination and the establishment of a national minimum wage. (p. 126). Economic opportunity and civil rights were not viewed dichotomously. The civil rights movement has always been concerned about the adequate provision of social programs, access to health care, job opportunities and benefits.

The so-called New Federalism has created uneven patterns in the economic well-being of low income families needing public benefits. Under current welfare reform measures, there has been a decrease in federal responsibility for social programs, devolution to the states, and an emphasis on welfare-to-work. While southern states and states in the West, in general, tend to have greater poverty, the population shifts noted earlier have primarily created an increase in the immigrant population in large northeastern cities. Many of these immigrants are people of color, are poor, and in need of social programs, jobs, and other opportunities. It should be noted that the success of welfare-to-work programs also vary from state to state. And while reports released by state and federal governments document a reduction in the welfare rolls and a growing number of employed former welfare recipients, the employment of welfare recipients is still of grave concern.

The United Way of America, for example, has documented that lack of transportation and other pragmatic problems associated with employment have caused difficulties for welfare recipients trying to comply with mandatory work requirements. However, initiatives which encourage welfare-to-work partnerships with the private sector have reported some success. Such private initiatives, while not universally available, do improve economic well-being of the low income individuals who participate and those programs are worthy of note.

Even prior to the 1996 welfare reform act, companies that developed business agenda around social needs, had successful welfare-to-work partnerships which included training programs for welfare recipients with employment commitments attached. The Marriot and United Airlines are examples of businesses that developed partnerships with welfare-to-work programs. Bank Boston's inner-city development initiatives and the public education initiatives of Bell Atlantic and IBM are others. In her article, *From Spare Change to Real Change: The Social Sector as Beta Site for Business Innovation*, Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1999) described various corporate social innovations such as the Pathways to Independence program developed by Marriot in 1991. "The program, which currently runs in 13 U.S. cities, hones the job skills, life skills, and work habits of welfare recipients, and Marriot guarantees participants a job offer when they complete the program." (p. 125). Kanter further notes that the Pathways program has also "created new jobs in poor communities." (p. 126).

While these pre-welfare reform business social innovations described by Kanter have produced successful outcomes for participants, as noted earlier, these programs were limited in scope. Similar attempts to transition welfare recipients into the workforce under welfare reform, have generated horror stories of welfare recipients doing monotonous, demeaning state created work assignments and still other welfare recipients who have been unable to locate decent jobs, leaving ill-equipped extended family members to pick up the pieces. Many of the work assignments available to welfare recipients under the new welfare-to-work programs are not the civil rights movement advocated "regular work force" described by the Hamiltons in the *Dual Agenda*.

Economic well-being for welfare recipients is not the only source of tension. Our society continues to struggle with unresolved tensions associated with equality of opportunity for African Americans and other racial minorities, the redistribution of wealth and power, and the increased emphasis on maintaining cultural identity and a host of other interpersonal responses associated with presumed disadvantage and stereotypes. The demographic shifts noted earlier create even more complex issues in relation to equality of opportunity, access to resources and cross-cultural understanding. My colleague, Glen Loury (1997) made a salient point about economic inequality which is germane to this discussion and the content of this special issue. Loury states:

People are members of nuclear and extended families; they are part of communities rooted in geographic localities. Because opportunity is conveyed along the synapses of these social networks, inherited social position is a major determinant of an individual's ultimate economic success. (Loury, p. 27)

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Racial barriers still persist in American society which impede full access to education, employment, and other opportunities for the poor, women and people of color. For example, the removal of some federal benefits from immigrants caused, in many communities, a lack of access to health care, nutrition, and job training as well as other resources which promote well-being. Similarly, African Americans still face employment barriers and other forms of institutional discrimination. While the 'colored' and 'white' signs of *de jure* segregation have been dismantled in the south for over 30 years, *de facto* segregation continues to persist in both the south and the north. The racial and social division which was once legislated is now more insidious, unwritten and informal, or exists in the form of public policy which has a negative impact on minorities. The need for reparation strategies for the historically racially disadvantaged African American population and special policies to provide access to opportunities for other people of color, the poor, and women persists.

Those of us who grew up in the south in the late forties and early fifties have the historic and anecdotal memory of segregation customs. In addition to the "colored" and "white" water

fountains and other posted apartheid signs, certain jobs such as those in janitorial services were considered black people's jobs and other jobs such as white collar jobs were those for white people. Shopping in more expensive clothing stores was off limits, black Americans were seated and served last in public accommodations, if at all. In some instances, black customers were served at the back door of eating establishments. Just as I was about to graduate from college in North Carolina, civil rights legislation prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations was passed. A restaurant, now closed, across the street from the university I attended, began to seat black customers. Under *de jure* segregation customs, black customers ordering a hamburger from this restaurant, for example, were given a hamburger wrapped in waxed paper in a paper bag at the back door. Initially, the white community was still adjusting to the new civil rights legislation and while black customers no longer ordered from the back door, white waitresses would still serve the seated black customers a hamburger on a piece of waxed paper instead of a plate. This example is but one of the many ways black Americans were publicly humiliated. Black Americans have often been expected to "do more for less" or to work harder and be more overloaded than others to achieve similar outcomes. Often watched and overly criticized, the aspirations of many black Americans were stifled. The current conservative political narrative described by Dill, Baca Zinn, and Patton is reminiscent of the stereotypes and negative projections from the old days when stereotypes that Black people were unclean, smelled bad and had over-active sex drives were used to thwart desegregation attempts.

Socially defined rules as well as negative and debilitating stereotypes not only dominate the conservative political narrative about welfare recipients, but persist at many other levels in our society and negatively impact employment, educational opportunities and other means of improving the quality of one's life. Feagin (1998) in describing the "codefinition" of racism and class subordination indicates that "characteristics of the racial sphere are also determined by the economic sphere." That is, racism, and sexism as well, are influenced by economically defined roles in the larger society. In keeping with black historical memory, Feagin states that "higher paying jobs have for more than three centuries

been assumed to be the prerogative of white people and lower paying jobs the position of blacks." (p. 327). Job competition and stereotypes, working in tandem, influence employment outcomes and success on the job.

People of color, women, and welfare recipients are not infrequently the object of negative projections in the general society and in the workforce. For example, an article by Kilborn (1995) related to glass ceiling phenomenon in labor force participation described the stereotypes white business men held about minorities and women which created presumptive attitudes causing these groups to be excluded from higher paying corporate positions. Perceptions about women involved "not being tough enough" and tied down to one location. Black men were viewed as "undisciplined and always late"; and Hispanic men seen as "heavy drinkers and drug users who don't want to work". As might be expected, Asians were perceived as "more equipped for technical than people-oriented work". Describing the negative influence of stereotypes on creating a diverse work force, Kilborn states: "Some white men are frightened and angry that people unlike them are vying for their jobs. But for many other men, higher level executives, simple inertia sustains the stereotypes and keeps top management white and male". (p. 329). As our society becomes more diverse grappling with others "seeing the wrong thing" becomes tantamount. Similar stereotypes and presumptions can cause hypercritical attitudes and behaviors as well as cultural and gender insensitive remarks and interactions which may impede the success of minorities and women in the work force at all job levels.

Addressing lack of cultural awareness and understanding in the workforce, a recent article in the *Health Care Review (Southern New England)*. "Over the Rainbow: The Many Hues of Today's Corporate Culture" notes that:

Stereotypical perceptions of culturally different individuals often push minority employees into less visible and secondary positions within organizations, ultimately limiting the inclusionary process and the potential of those employees. . . . People will not contribute if they are not recognized and respected for who they are. (Louis and Maloof, 1999, p. 10).

Negative perceptions and projections can potentially have serious consequences for families who are trying to comply with welfare reform regulations and become integrated into the regular workforce. For example, very similar to Louis and Maloof's (1999) comments about integrating culturally different employees into the corporate culture workforce, working styles, attitudes and values among the TANF job trainees who are high school drop-outs are very different from the traditional job trainee in programs such as those of the Urban League designed for high school graduates.

Presumptions about others based on stereotypes also influence outcomes for the poor, women and people of color who try to advance themselves through the educational system. This is particularly true for African Americans and exists within the middle class.. In a recent article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Claude Steele (1999) described the impact of stereotypes on the success of black students and calls our attention to the fact that the disadvantages of race are not overcome by higher socioeconomic status. Steele and his colleagues used the term "stereotyped threatened" or stereotyped vulnerability" to describe the threat of being perceived based on a negative stereotype or the fear of behaving in such a way as to confirm that stereotype. Those who are stereotyped threatened also have a low degree of racial trust associated with social attitudes and stereotypes about race. Subtle cues can cause performance difficulties in test situations, taxing the mental abilities of black students who have the ability to perform better. Steele also suggests that this situation requires special policy and practices by educational institutions. As we are reminded in the article, similar analogies apply to women in advanced math and the poor in certain academic situations. These issues are intrinsically woven with the current affirmative action debate and educational admissions policies. The need for social remedies for the historically disadvantaged groups persists.

While the major thrust in this issue of the journal is on social justice for lower socioeconomic groups, we need to acknowledge that other social injustices which involve racial disadvantage are quite prevalent in our society. For example, Feagin (1998) describes in his research on antiblack discrimination in public places, both contested and uncontested forms of discrimination

against black college professors, black physicians and other middle class black adults and their children. These transgressions were documented in public facilities as well as in educational and work place sites. (pp. 267–294). Often, such transgressions, in addition to involving racial prejudice and intolerance, are based on societal stereotypes about all black people. Presumed disadvantage because of race or about affirmative action benefits feed into these stereotypes. Cultural insensitivity and lack of understanding in the changing American mosaic is exacerbated by this persistent and continued discrimination against African Americans so long after the civil rights movement of the sixties. Stereotypes and myths persist at all levels of our society, but to paraphrase Sidel (1999), “the convergence of American stereotypes about race, class, and gender” causes the poor, especially the welfare recipient, to be denied access to American wealth. (p. 15).

CLASS, GENDER, AND RACE/ETHNICITY INTERSECTING.

Tracy Chapman’s *Talkin’ Bout A Revolution* characterizes the welfare recipient’s lack of “regular work force” opportunities and lack of access to the American wealth. A disproportionate percentage of welfare recipients are people of color, both native born and immigrant. Most people of color would like to be gainfully employed. However, with limited education and discrimination, access to decent employment has been limited. Danziger, et. al. in their research on welfare reform and mental health call attention to the many barriers which influence the employability of welfare recipients. They state:

Many single mothers have problems with physical health, depression, substance dependence, domestic violence, and child care responsibilities that make steady work difficult. When these problems are combined with lack of education, work experience, and job skills, the cumulative effect can be overwhelming. Women, especially minority women, also often face discrimination and harassment in the workplace. (Danziger, et. al., p. 4).

Jobs available to welfare recipients are often menial forms of employment and menial employment tends to pay less than public assistance. These low wages are further complicated by

inadequate child care and lack of access to health care. (It is helpful here to acknowledge that a large number of working poor are also without insurance coverage and adequate child care.)

Current mandatory welfare-to-work programs are political strategies designed to reduce the welfare roles and not address full employment policies for the underclass. Devolution of the welfare state with the passage of the Personal Responsibility Act of 1996 focuses on employment for welfare recipients, but not necessarily employment in the regular work force. While the civil rights movement endorsed greater job opportunities for the poor or underclass, many scholars and public policy analyst view current welfare-to-work programs as punitive, a form of racial politics and primarily designed to attack black female headed households. Based on stereotyped assumptions about welfare recipients not wanting to work, welfare reform limits the time a recipient can remain on welfare and removes the safety net for those who are unable to comply with new regulations. Persistent poverty remains a concern and while some welfare recipients have obtained employment, researchers have stated that the poorest families have been driven deeper into poverty and the others are only slightly better off. (See Boston Globe article reporting on reactions from the Liberal-Leaning Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, August 22, 1999).

As expected, 1997 poverty statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that the percentage of poverty is still greatest among those families of Hispanic origin and among black families. Among female headed households with no husband present, black women and women of Hispanic origin have the highest percentage of poverty. The poverty rate among Asian and Pacific Islander families, while lower than other minority groups, is still higher than the rate for white families. While these numbers were down in 1997 compared to 1996 and 1989, the percentage of families in poverty remains high, 39.8% for black female householder families and 47.6% for female householder families of Hispanic origin. It should also be noted that poverty rates among foreign born and non-citizens is disproportionately higher than the native population living in poverty. While there has been improvement relative to persistent poverty among black Americans, in 1993 black individuals remained in poverty significantly longer than

other racial groups. In 1998, the number of African Americans living in poverty declined, and the Census Bureau reported an overall increase in income. However, both the African American and Latino poverty rates are still disproportionately high. (Census Bureau, 1999)

The safety net for immigrants varies from state to state and differential state policies create concerns about immigrant economic well-being since immigrants tend to be concentrated in certain geographic locations. Under welfare reform immigrants initially lost entitlement to case assistance, food stamps, health benefits and other public programs. While some of these benefits have been restored, food stamps are only available to children, the elderly and the disabled and new immigrants have to wait five years to qualify for federal assistance.. (Zimmerman and Tumlin, 1999). Advocacy groups continue to work for policy changes which have negatively impacted immigrants. Zimmerman and Tumlin note that the response to immigrants under the new federalism raises a number of policy questions. They state:

... since the federal government determines how many and which immigrants are admitted to the United States, does the federal government have a special obligation to provide for them? What are the implications of this new devolution given that most of the immigrant population is concentrated in only a handful of states? Is the federal goal of promoting self-sufficiency achieved by devolving eligibility decisions to the states (Zimmerman and Tumlin, 1999, p. 3)?

The new federalism has created a decline in the welfare rolls among immigrants as well as citizens. Much of this decline in large urban centers is associated with the immigrant population and it is difficult to fully understand the significance of this decline on family economic and emotional well-being for immigrants as well as citizens. For example, Fix and Passel (1999) of the Urban Research Institute document dramatic declines in approved applications in some California counties when eligibility has remained unchanged. In this regard, Fix states, "It appears that these chilling effects originate in confusion and fear among immigrants and lack of understanding on the part of providers over who is eligible for benefits." (p. 1). This study further noted

that low-income immigrant households were less likely to receive welfare benefits than low-income citizen or native households. These research findings have serious implications for low-income as well as other immigrant households where individuals are being cared for in extended family arrangements. (See Krist, Gurak, Chen, This Journal). In such arrangements, family networks may be stretched and overburdened.

In May, 1999, the Boston Globe reported on data released by the federal General Accounting Office. This media data paints a very healthy public picture of the social outcomes of welfare reform with 67 to 87 percent of former recipients having been employed at some point after leaving welfare. However, again, issues are raised not only about whether these former welfare recipients are or were in the "regular work force", but issues are raised about the safety net and social consequences for families. The periodic reports in the New York Times on family household well-being are good cases in point. In February, 1999 the New York Times described the burdened placed on families as the welfare rolls shrink. (p. 20). Examples of life for those who left welfare included grandmothers with meager resources in "skip-generation" households raising their grandchildren in unsupported kinship care arrangements, young welfare recipients unable to retain or locate private jobs and unable to qualify for welfare, others caring for substance abusing relatives and exposure to highly conflictual household arrangements. These were just a few examples of troubled households as families, most of them female headed households, struggle for economic and social well-being. These struggles for economic and social well-being exist while the media gives reports of many unspent welfare dollars. (*New York Times*, 1999, p. 1)

This special issue of the *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* is intended to help us understand the current nature of structural inequality, and the relationship between socioeconomic conditions citizenship, class, gender and race. The social construction of minority status and its relationship to public policy formulation is also addressed. We have emphasized economic well-being and social justice for people of color.

The first article by noted economist, *Glen Loury*, a comparative analysis of census and other statistical data, provides insight into

the social and economic well-being of the black and white populations. Trends in the changing nature of the historic disadvantage of African Americans are presented over time. While the number of single parent households is disheartening, Loury's analysis points out the increase in income and educational attainment among African Americans during the past 25 years.

Stanley Eitzen and Maxine Baca Zinn give an overview of the current welfare reform legislation and its consequences. Their essay includes a historical synthesis of welfare provisions from 1935–1996 and describes the gradual dismantling of the welfare system since the Reagan administration. Conservative assumptions undergirding welfare reform, consequences of the legislative provisions for individuals and families, inadequacies of welfare reform and a more progressive solution to welfare are discussed.

Ruth Sidel, author of *Keeping Women and Children Last* (1998), has developed a polemic on the impact of welfare reform on women and children. She calls our attention to the role of political conservatism on poor, single mothers and describes how race, class and gender stereotypes converge to exclude poor women from access to American resources.

The article by *Mary Kritz, Douglas Gurak, and Likwang Chen* is a quantitative analysis of the household composition of elderly immigrants using two samples of the 1990 U.S. Census. Comparative data is provided on living arrangements as well as demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. The cross cultural implications of their findings show that living arrangements of elderly immigrants from developing countries are significantly influenced by economic resources and family social support is prevalent. Policy implications for elderly immigrants living in extended family households are discussed as well as English language fluency, and other implications associated with labor force participation and immigrant status.

People of color have increasingly become concerned with preservation of group identity and differentiation from other groups. *Doris Wilkerson's* evaluation of the social construction of the word minority is quite timely for the changing American mosaic. Professor Wilkerson notes that our use of the term minority does not promote understanding of the cultural and racial

diversity in American society. She challenges social scientists and practitioners to rethink the conceptualization, use and relevance of the term minority which is "nonscientific and devoid of conceptual clarity and empirical validity." (p. 115, *This Journal*).

In his social ethics essay, "Who Cares About Racial Inequality", *Professor Glen Loury* develops a moral argument in support of using race as one of a number of other criteria of excellence to take into account in admissions and hiring procedures. He suggests a form of "developmental" affirmative action to maintain diversity in educational settings and the workplace.

Margaret Gibelman's article is a synthesis of longstanding issues associated with affirmative action. A social justice perspective is presented and emphasizes is placed on the mission and values of the social welfare community. She proposes reframed affirmative action strategies which focus more on the economically disadvantaged.

These authors provide thought provoking perspectives on social inequality, and insight into the social construction of gender, race, and poverty in America as well. Social scientists and practitioners alike are challenged to rethink the social construction of minority status.

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Twenty-Five Years of Black America: Two Steps Forward and One Step Back?

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The nature of social and economic inequality as it exists now between Blacks and Whites in the United States is explored in this paper. Summary statistics on education, earnings, employment, family structure, incarceration and life expectancy are presented by age, sex and race. It is suggested that, while progress has been made in narrowing the racial gap in social standing, there remains a significant disparity that warrants continuing concern.

I. INTRODUCTION

The data concerning the state of America, black and white, over the past 25 years is both disheartening and encouraging. Disheartening are many measures of the opportunities and difficulties faced by black children and, to a lesser extent, white children. Infant mortality has declined, but black children are less and less likely to be raised by both of their parents.

Many objective measures of achievement—exam scores (national proficiency exams as well as SAT exams), levels of education, and income—are more encouraging. Even as scores on several exams have remained roughly constant for white children and young adults, scores for blacks have increased. More remarkable is the fact that these increases seem to have occurred while the black exam-taking population has *increased*.

Based on a report of the former Center for New Black Leadership compiled by Russell D. Murphy, Jr. under the supervision of Professor Glenn C. Loury, and with the assistance of Kasimir Nwuke, at the Institute on Race and Social Division, Boston University.

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So, looking at black America over the past quarter century, there is much for both optimists and pessimists.

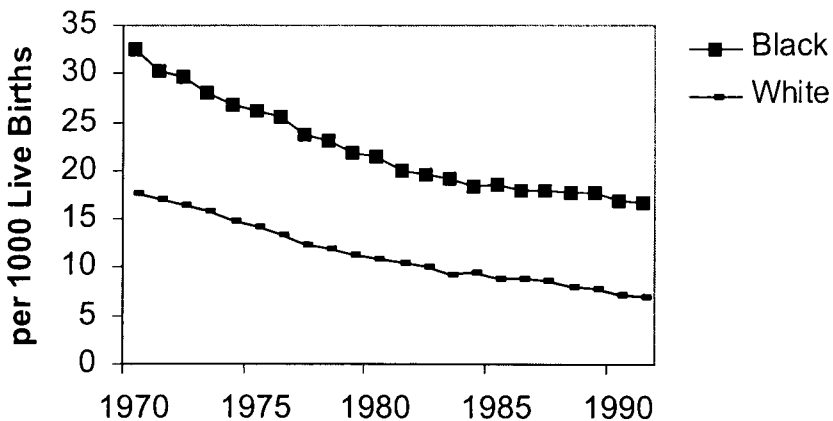
II. CHILDREN

Birth is much safer today than it was 25 years ago (Figure 1), but arriving in this world is still more hazardous for black children than for white ones. The infant mortality rate¹ for black children was 17.0 in 1990, while for white children it was only 7.3. This difference has persisted over time even though substantial progress has been made. In 1970, rates for both were considerably higher: 32.6 for black children and 17.8 for white ones.

A. Family structure

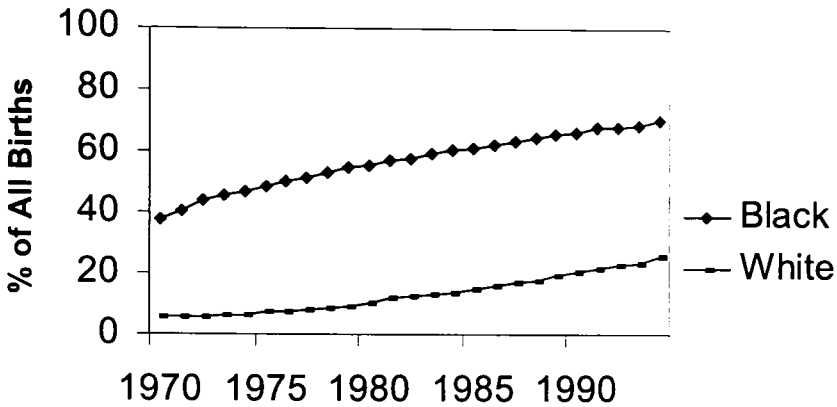
The families into which these children are born are fairly different than the ones of their counterparts of 25 years ago. Among black women, unmarried mothers accounted for 68% of all births in 1992 (Figure 2), while in 1960 they accounted for only 22%. For white mothers, the increase has been even more

Figure 1
Infant Mortality



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Public Health Service, 1996, Table 2-2; race of the child.

Figure 2
Births to Unmarried Mothers



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Public Health Service, 1995, Table 1-76; race of the child through 1980, race of the mother 1981-1992.

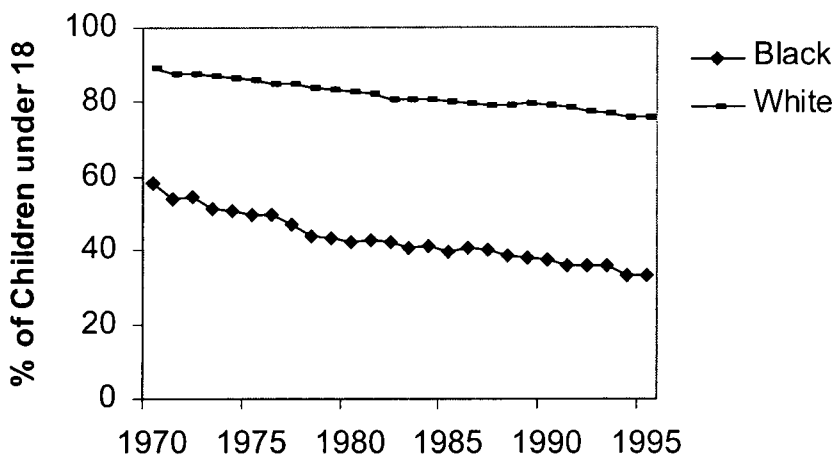
dramatic, although from a smaller base: from 2% in 1960 to 23% in 1992.

Not surprisingly, as fewer children are born to married mothers, fewer live with both of their parents. The decline has been steady for both black and white children, but black children face a much larger problem: less than 40% of black children lived with both of their parents in 1994. Children of educated parents are more likely to live with two parents (Table 1). There remain significant differences between whites and blacks at all education levels, but the most dramatic differences are for those children whose parents have a high school education or less.

B. Poverty

Poverty rates for both black and white children have increased slightly, but most of the increase has been among white children. Although poverty rates for black children have not changed much over the past 20 years, the rates are strikingly high: 42% in 1995 (Figure 4). Rates for white children *have* increased: from 10.5% in 1970 to 15.5% in 1995.

Figure 3

Children Living with Both Parents

Source: Saluter, 1994 and previous years.

Table 1

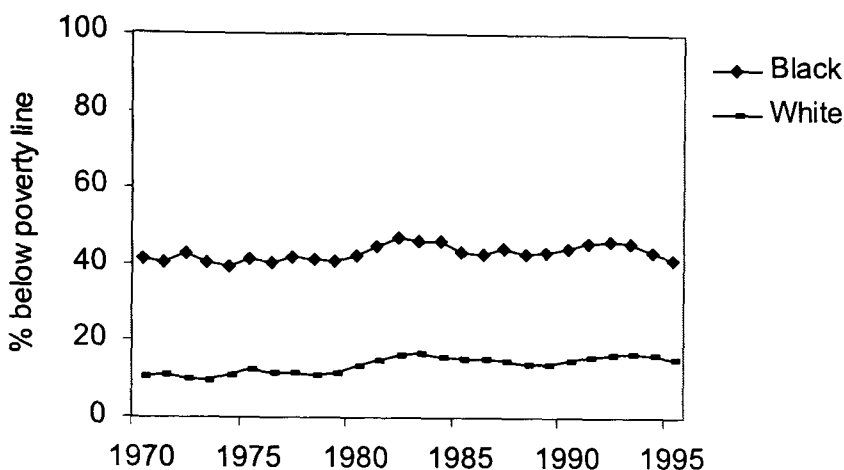
Children under 18 living with both parents (% in 1995)

<i>Parent's Education</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>
Less than 12	35.0	73.8
Grades 9–12 (no diploma)	18.1	62.1
High school graduate	38.8	74.1
College: Associates degree or none	40.0	77.6
Bachelor's degree	62.8	90.3
Graduate or professional degree	66.9	92.6

U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996, Table No. 82.

For children, a major factor associated with living in poverty is living in a family headed by a woman. The poverty rate for these families is quite high: roughly 60% for families headed by black women and roughly 40% for families headed by white women (Figure 5a, 5b). Although the risk has improved somewhat for

Figure 4

Poverty Rate: children under 18

Source: Stubbs, 1996, Table C147B01.

black families over the past 20 years, it is still larger than the comparable risk for families headed by white women. For married couple families, the risk is much lower. Black families still face higher risks than white ones, but the gap has narrowed.

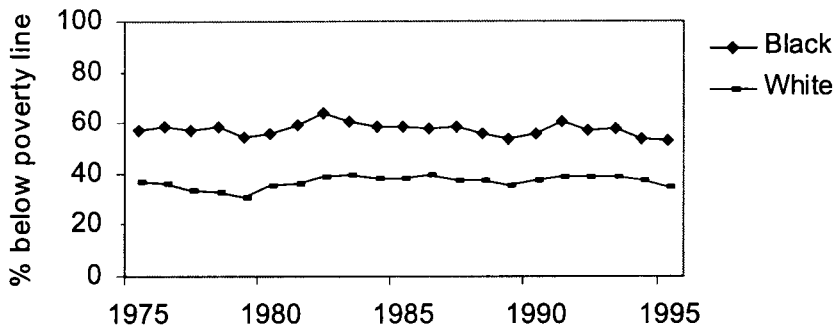
C. School enrollment

Preschool enrollment rates for 3 to 4 year old black children increased from 18.7% in 1973 to 29.8% in 1993. For white children, enrollment rates increased more: from 17.8% to 38.0% (Figure 6a, 6b). By the early 1990s, enrollment of 5 year olds in kindergarten had increased slightly while enrollment in first grade decreased slightly (Figure 7). Both kindergarten and first grade enrollment rates are similar for black and white 5 year olds.

D. School progress

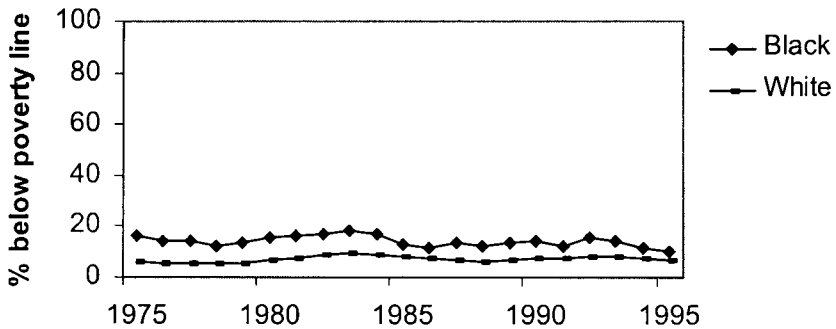
National assessment tests of proficiency in reading and mathematics have shown fairly steady improvements since 1970 (1973 for mathematics). Increases in average scores for black students

Figure 5a

Poverty Rate: female headed families (with children under 18)

Source: Stubbs, 1996, Table C147B01.

Figure 5b

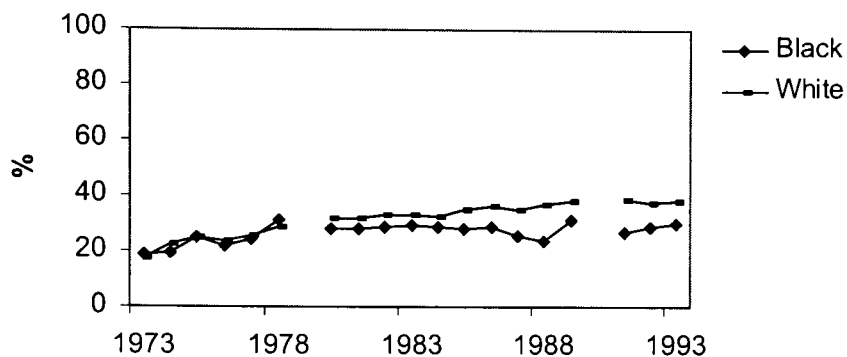
Poverty Rate: married couple families (with children under 18)

Source: Stubbs, 1996, Table C147B01.

aged 9, 13, and 17 have been fairly impressive, particularly relative to increases in average scores for white students (Table 2). In 1973, the average mathematics score for black students aged 17 was 270 (out of 500); by 1994 it had increased to 286.

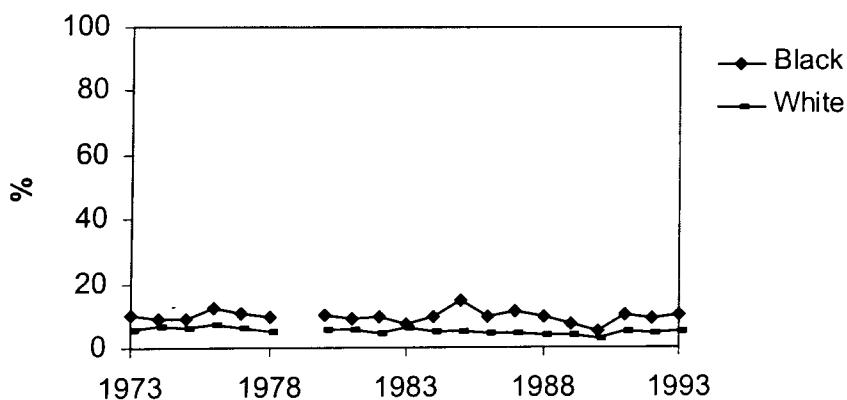
Average reading scores for both white and black students fell in the 1980s. For black students, the decrease came later (between

Figure 6a

Enrollment, 3–4 year olds: Pre-school

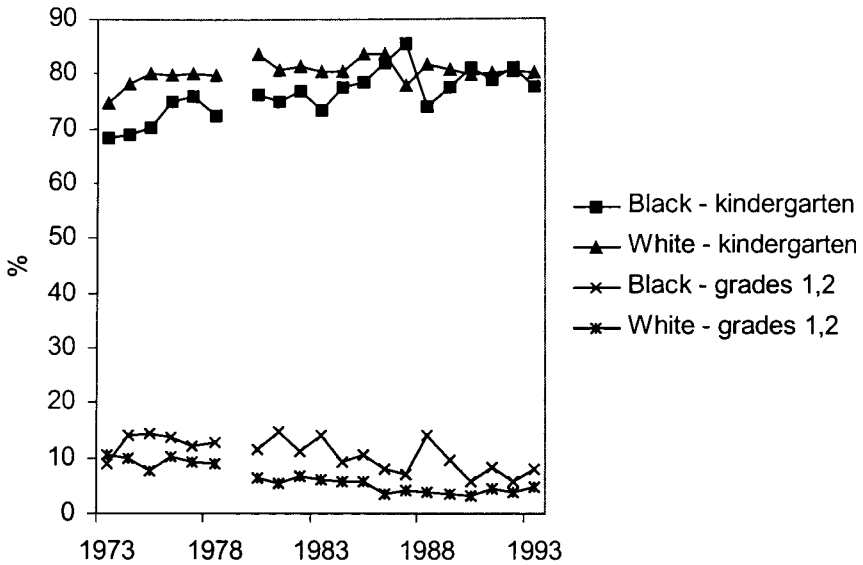
Source: Stubbs, 1996, Table C002D01; Pre-school enrollment is full- and half-day enrollment in nursery school.

Figure 6b

Enrollment, 3–4 year olds: Kindergarten

Source: Stubbs, 1996, Table C002D01; Pre-school enrollment is full- and half-day enrollment in nursery school.

Figure 7

Enrollment of 5 year olds

Source: Stubbs, 1996, Table C002D02.

1988 and 1990 instead of between 1980 and 1984) and was larger. The scores of black 13 year olds reached a peak of 243 in 1988 and fell to 234 by 1994; the scores of white 13 year olds fell from 264 in 1980 to 261 in 1988.

The distribution of scores suggests that improvements were widespread: the scores of black students at the 5th, 50th, and 95th percentile all climbed (relative to those of white students) from 1978 to 1994 (Table 3). Unfortunately, the gaps between black and white students seem to have been smallest in the 1986 to 1990 period (for the older students) and appear to have increased again after that.

E. Conclusion

The story of American childhoods is a mixed one. In some respects, black children face large and growing deficits compared to white children:

Table 2
Average proficiency scores

Mathematics						Reading							
Black			White			Black			White				
Age 9	13	17	Age 9	13	17	Age 9	13	17	Age 9	13	17		
1973	190	228	270	225	274	310	1971	170	222	239	214	261	291
1978	192	230	268	224	272	306	1975	181	226	241	217	262	293
1982	195	240	272	224	274	304	1980	189	233	243	221	264	293
1986	202	249	279	227	274	308	1984	186	236	264	218	263	295
1990	208	249	288	235	276	310	1988	189	243	274	218	261	295
1992	208	250	286	235	279	312	1990	182	242	267	217	262	297
1994	212	252	286	237	281	312	1992	185	238	261	218	266	297
							1994	185	234	266	218	265	296
Scale from 0 to 500:						Scale from 0 to 500:							
150 – Simple arithmetic facts						150 – Simple, discrete reading levels							
200 – Beginning skills and understanding						200 – Partial skills and understanding							
250 – Numerical operations; beginning problem solving						250 – Interrelate ideas and make generalizations							
300 – Moderately complex procedures and reasoning						300 – Understand complicated information							
350 – Multi-step problem solving and algebra						350 – Learn from specialized reading materials							

Stubbs, 1996, Tables C013B02 and C015B02.

Table 3
Differences in percentile scores (black-white)

Mathematics										Reading					
Percentile	1978	1982	1986	1990	1992	1994	Percentile	1980	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994		
Age 9:							Age 9:								
5	-32	-31	-25	-26	-27	-22	5	-38	-31	-25	-29	-34	-33		
50	-32	-28	-25	-28	-27	-25	50	-31	-33	-31	-36	-36	-35		
95	-20	-29	-27	-26	-25	-24	95	-29	-32	-29	-34	-27	-27		
Age 13:							Age 13:								
5	-42	-34	-24	-26	-31	-29	5	-30	-25	-13	-22	-34	-30		
50	-43	-34	-24	-28	-28	-31	50	-33	-27	-20	-20	-29	-31		
95	-42	-34	-27	-27	-28	-25	95	-31	-24	-17	-19	-27	-29		
Age 17:							Age 17:								
5	-35	-28	-24	-15	-26	-24	5	-50	-18	-19	-28	-41	-30		
50	-39	-33	-28	-23	-26	-26	50	-50	-27	-21	-30	-31	-30		
95	-37	-32	-31	-19	-26	-33	95	-50	-32	-19	-29	-26	-26		

Calculations from data in Stubbs, 1996, Tables C015D03 and C013D03.

- the likelihood of being born to an unmarried mother
- the likelihood of *not* living with both parents
- the likelihood of living in poverty

However, not all is bleak:

- the poverty rate for black children in married couple households has fallen (even while that for their white counterparts has increased)
- school enrollment rates for young children have increased
- national measures of mathematics and reading proficiency show both absolute and relative progress for black children at all ages
- the proficiency gains are widespread: they are *not* limited to only high or only low achieving students

III. TEENS

A. Educational choices

Up through the age of 17, the school enrollment rates of black and white teens are roughly equivalent (Table 4). Rates are also similar for those over the age of 25, with black enrollment rates often slightly higher than white ones. For the late teens and early twenties, however, black enrollment rates have tended to be lower than white ones. Over the 20 years since 1975, the gaps between black and white young adults aged 18–19 and 20–21 have grown. In 1975, black and white 18–19 year olds had almost identical school enrollment rates (46.8% and 46.9%). By 1994, however, the rate for white 18–19 year olds had risen to 62.6% while the rate for black 18–19 year olds had risen to only 53.4%. Similarly, while black 20–21 year olds were only 5.4 points less likely to be enrolled than their white counterparts in 1975, by 1994, the gap had grown to 14.8 points.

High school dropout rates have varied from year to year for both black and white teens (Figure 8). While the single year event dropout rate (proportion of those in grades 10–12 dropping out within a given year) has fallen slightly for white students (from 5.7% in 1973 to 4.1% in 1993) it has fallen sharply for black students (from 10.1% in 1973 to 5.4% in 1993). Status dropout rates (all

Table 4

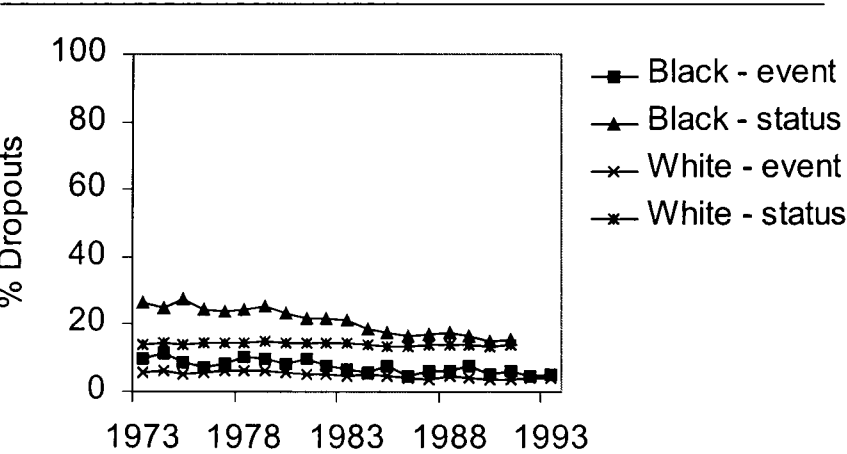
Enrollment rates (% of population group)

		16-17	18-19	20-21	22-24	25-29	30-34
1975	B	86.8	46.9	26.7	13.9	9.4	7.1
	W	89.5	46.8	32.1	16.4	10.1	6.6
1980	B	90.7	45.8	23.3	13.6	8.8	6.9
	W	89.2	47	33	16.8	9.4	6.4
1985	B	91.8	43.5	27.7	13.8	7.4	5.2
	W	92.5	53.7	37.2	17.5	9.6	6.2
1990	B	91.7	55	28.3	19.7	6.1	4.5
	W	93.5	59.1	43.1	21.9	10.4	6.2
1994	B	95.3	53.4	35.3	22.8	10.5	7.3
	W	95.1	62.6	50.1	24.9	10.8	6.7

Stubbs, 1996, Table DTAB007.

Figure 8

Dropout rates: event and status



Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States.

of those aged 18-24 who are neither in high school nor have completed high school) have also fallen significantly for black students while rates for white students have remained roughly

constant. The rate for young black adults is now (1991) only slightly higher than that for young whites, while in 1973 it was more than 85% higher.

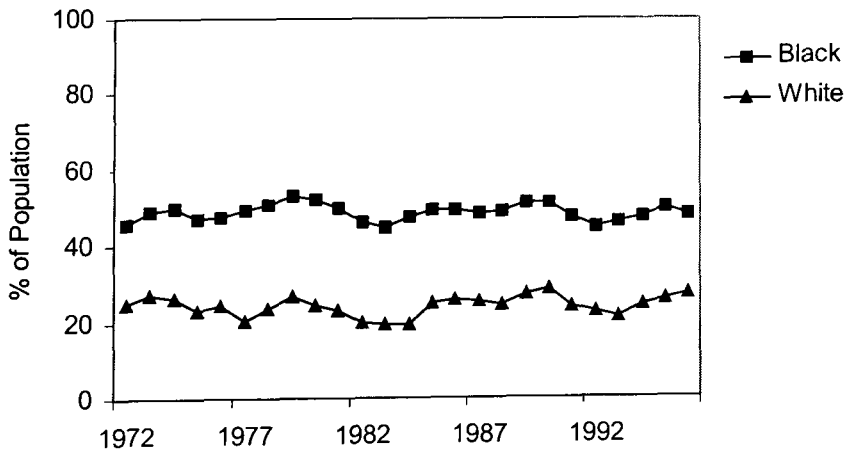
B. Labor force

The employment rates for teens have fluctuated up and down without much apparent trend. However, the rate for black teens has generally been about 20 points lower than that for white teens (Figure 9).

C. Dropouts and the labor force

Dropping out of high school seems to be an increasingly bad signal about one's future prospects. Between 1973 and 1993, employment rates (and labor force participation rates—both relative to population) for recent high school dropouts² (as proportions of the 16–24 year old population) dropped (Figure 10a). For young black adults, the declines have been relatively large: the participation rate fell from 59.4% to 43.6% while the employment rate fell from 43.9% to 26.9%. For young white adults, the declines

Figure 9
Employment to Population Ratio: 16–19 year olds



Source: BLS data on-line; Series LFS1600830, LFS1600810.

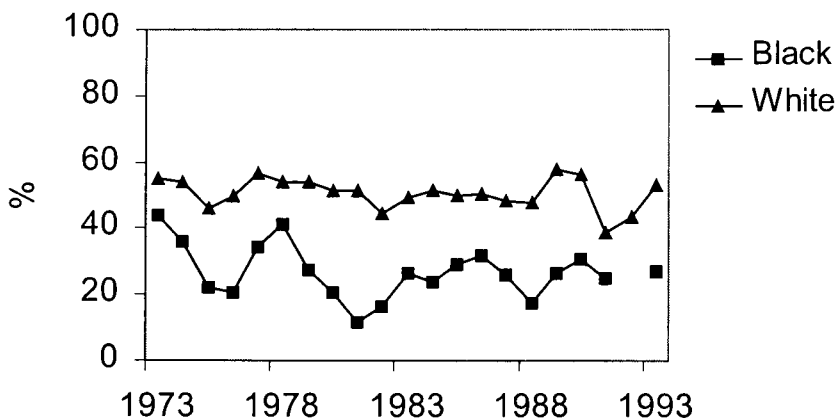
were much smaller: from 71.0% to 68.0% in participation and from 55.1% to 52.8% in employment. As the labor market prospects of dropouts has worsened, the likelihood of their calling upon government transfer programs has increased (Figure 10b). For young (25–34 year old) black adults with 9–11 years of education, the use of AFDC or public assistance has increased by almost 50%: from 23.2% to 35.6%. For similarly situated whites, use has almost doubled: from 6.0% to 11.3%.

D. High School graduates and the labor force

The overall labor market experiences of recent high school graduates who do not enter college have remained fairly constant over the past 20 years. The labor force participation rate for recent (within the year) black and white graduates has remained roughly constant, perhaps declining a little for black graduates. Employment rates for recent graduates have declined somewhat for both black and white graduates (Figure 11a). Both participation and employment rates for black graduates remain significantly lower than for their white counterparts. Use of government transfer programs among both black and white high school graduates

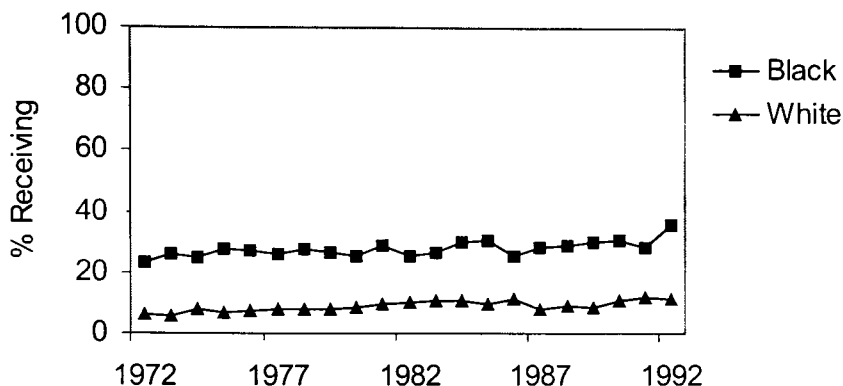
Figure 10a

Recent High School Dropouts: employment



Source: Stubbs, 1996, Tables C028D04 and C032D02.

Figure 10b

AFDC or Public Assistance: 25–34 year olds with 9–11 years of education

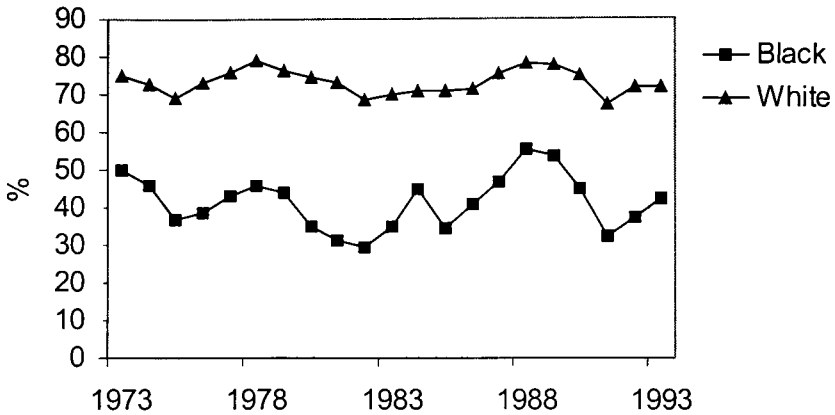
Source: Stubbs, 1996, Tables C028D04 and C032D02.

(individuals aged 25–34 with exactly 12 years of schooling) has been relatively low and constant, although the rate for white graduates has been increasing slowly (Figure 11b).

E. College

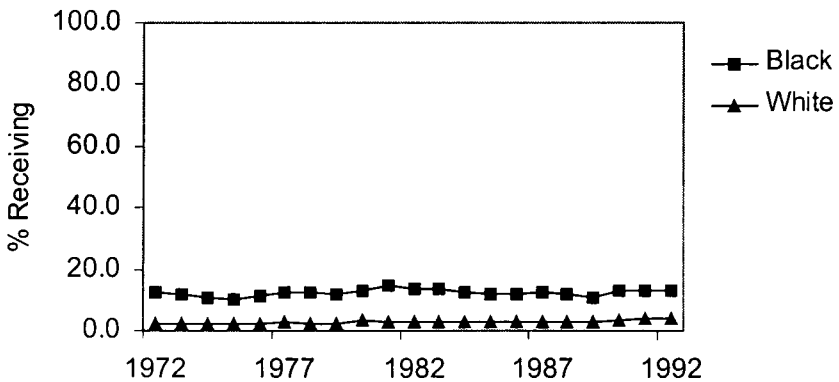
SAT scores suggest a pattern similar to that of high school dropout rates: both the dropout rates of white high school students and the SAT scores of white college-bound seniors have remained roughly constant over the 1976–1994 period (before re-norming). However, the dropout rates of black high school students have dropped *and* the SAT scores of black college-bound seniors have steadily increased (Figure 12). Mean scores of black seniors remain below those of white seniors, however. The total score³ for black college-bound seniors was 78.9% of the total score for white college-bound seniors in 1994, up from 72.7% in 1976. Over this period, the proportion of all SAT test-takers who were classified as members of a minority group increased from 15.0% in 1976 to 31.0% in 1994. The overall mean score has declined as the share of minority students in the test-taking population has increased. However, black students taking the SAT have done *better* over time—even as the pool of black test-takers expanded.

Figure 11a

Recent High School Graduates: employment

Source: Stubbs, 1996, Tables C028D03 and C032D02.

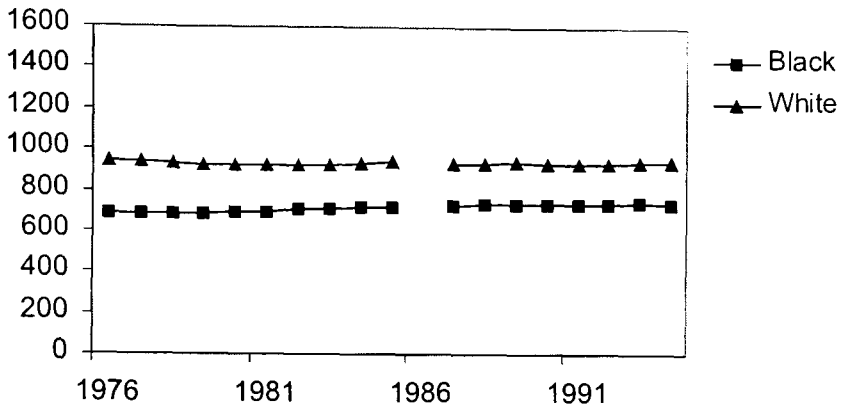
Figure 11b

AFDC or Public Assistance: 25–34 year olds with 12 years of education

Source: Stubbs, 1996, Tables C028D03 and C032D02.

Higher education has expanded dramatically over the past 35 years and the expansion has been most dramatic for black Americans. White enrollment (full-time) in 1993 was 6.7 million,

Figure 12
 Mean Total SAT (Verbal+Math) Scores



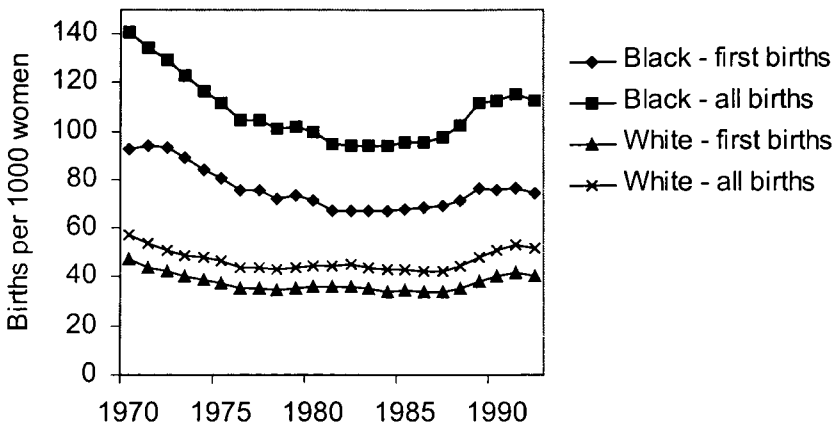
Source: Stubbs, 1996, Table C020D02.

an increase of 64% over its 1965 level. For blacks, enrollment in 1993 was 0.9 million, an increase of 319% over its 1965 level. While black students represented only 4.9% of total enrollment in 1965 and 7.4% in 1970, by the mid-1970s, they reached 11.4%.

F. Teen pregnancy

Teen age (15–19 years old) black women are more than twice as likely to give birth than are white teens (Figure 13). Both in relative and in absolute terms, this is an improvement over the early 1970s. In 1970, black teens had a birth rate almost 2.5 times as large as white teens (140.7 per 1000 versus 57.4). By 1992, the rate for black teens had dropped to 112.2 while the rate for white teens had only fallen to 51.8. For both black and white teens, rates dropped by the mid-1980s to even lower rates (94.1 for blacks and 42.9 for whites in 1984). By 1988 the rates were rising again. Part of the difference between black and white teen birth rates arises from the increased likelihood of more than one birth for black teens. The first birth rates of black and white teens are closer than are the total birth rates: 74.3 per 1000 for black teens in 1992 versus 40.5 for white teens.

Figure 13

Teen births (women 15–19)

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Public Health Service, 1995, Tables 1–9, 1–10.

IV. ADULTS

A. Educational attainment

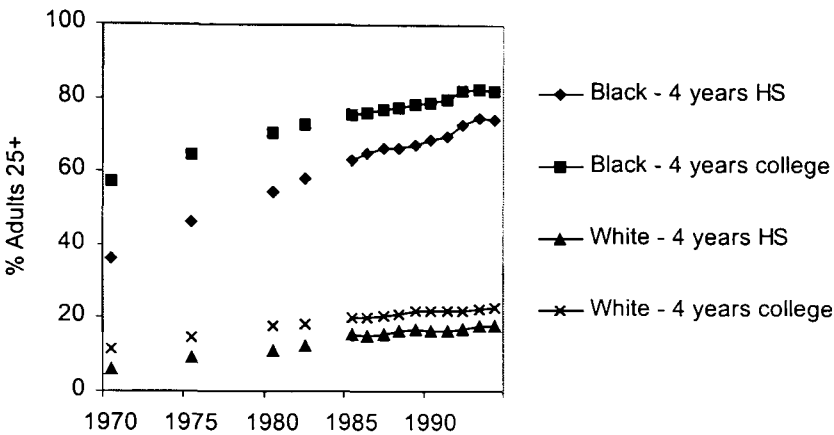
Both the white and black populations are increasingly well educated (Figure 14). The proportions of those with at least 4 years of high school or at least 4 years of college have increased dramatically for whites as well as for blacks, but the increases for blacks have been larger—both in absolute and in relative terms.

B. Employment

Employment rates for women have risen considerably over the past 25 years for both blacks and whites (Figure 15). For men, rates have fallen slightly. Employment rates for black men were only slightly lower than rates for white men in 1972, but the gap widened in through the mid-1980s. After 1985, the gap tended to narrow, with a small retreat in the early 1990s. Black and white women have almost identical employment rates.

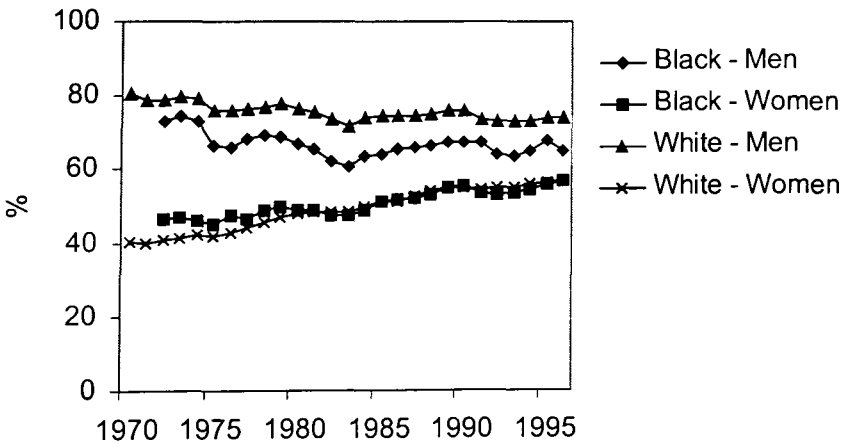
Black men and women tend to work in different occupations than do white men and women (Table 5). Black men are more

Figure 14
At Least 4 years of High School, College



Source: Stubbs, 1996, Table DTAB008.

Figure 15
Employment to Population Ratio: 20+ years old



Source: BLS data on-line; Series LFS1601731, LFS1601732, LFS1601711, LFS16011712.

Table 5
Employed Men and Women 16+ (%)

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>
Managerial and professional specialty	14.7	27.5	20.1	29.9
Technical, sales, and administrative support	17.6	20.6	39.4	43.2
Service	20.0	9.8	26.9	16.8
Farming, forestry, and fishing	2.0	4.3	0.2	1.2
Precision production, craft, and repair	15.0	18.5	2.5	2.1
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	30.7	19.3	10.8	6.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Current Population Reports, 1995, Table 2.

heavily represented in the *Service* and *Operators, fabricators, and laborers* categories than are white men (51% vs. 29%). White men are more represented particularly in the *Managerial and professional specialty* but also the *Technical, sales, and administrative support* and *Precision production, craft, and repair* occupations than are black men. Black women are also more heavily represented in the *Service* and *Operators, fabricators, and laborers* categories than are white women.

Employment status has a significant effect on the likelihood an individual will face poverty. Among individuals employed year-round, poverty rates are generally less than 10%, although not for teens (Table 6). The poverty rate for blacks employed full time is slightly higher (roughly 2 points) than for whites. Among those who did not work, not only are poverty rates much higher (37% for white 25–34 year olds), but the rates for blacks relative to whites are also higher (59% vs. 37% for 25–34 year olds).

C. Economic well-being

Inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient⁴, has increased over the past 25 years (Figure 16). Among black families, inequality has been generally higher than among white households and this has persisted over time. At the same time, official measurements of poverty status show some year to year variation.

Table 6

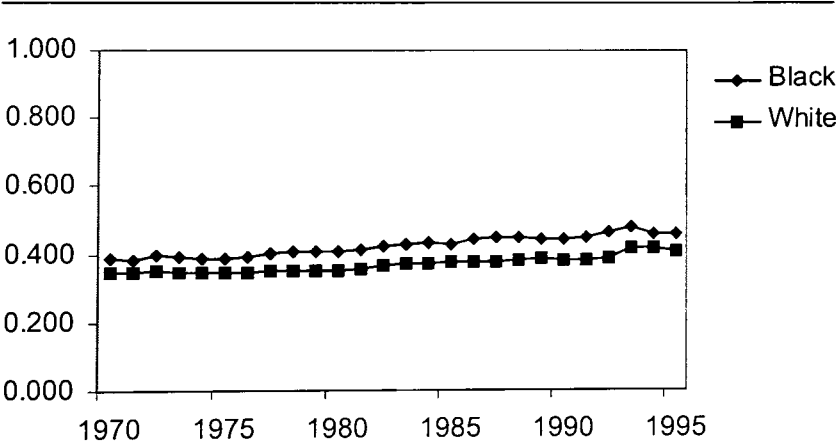
Below Poverty Level (%)

	Black			White		
	Worked Full time	Worked Part time	Did Not Work	Worked Full time	Worked Part time	Did Not Work
16-17 years	NA	29.3	40.8	18.7	7.3	19.3
18-24	6.7	24.7	48.2	4.4	15.0	36.2
25-34	6.7	34.5	59.0	2.8	16.6	36.7
35-54	4.5	18.6	44.8	1.7	8.1	18.0
55-64	4.1	18.6	44.8	1.7	8.1	18.0
65 and over	0.0	12.8	30.5	1.5	2.6	11.6

Current Population Reports, 1996, Table 10.

Figure 16

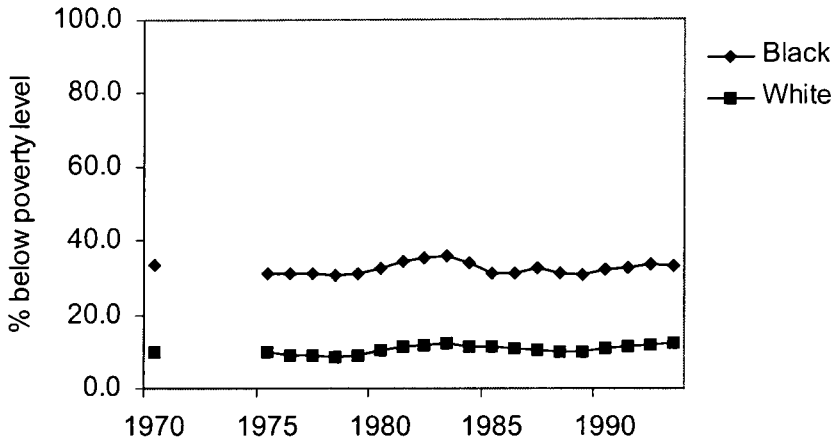
Inequality—Gini Coefficient: Families



Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-60; (WWW: Historical Income Tables-Households, Families).

The poverty rates for blacks is roughly where it was 25 years ago while the rate for whites is somewhat higher than it was (Figure 17).

Figure 17

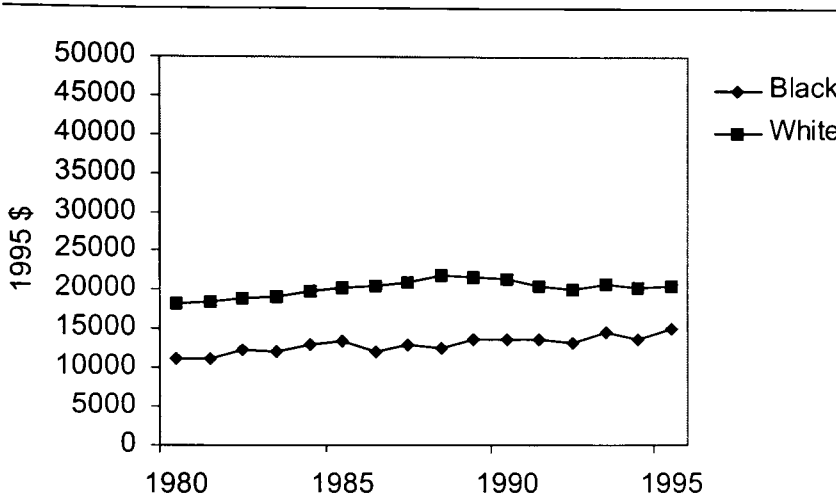
Poverty Status of Persons

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 189, Income, Poverty and Valuation of Noncash Benefits (1994) Table B-6.

Non-family households have lower incomes, in general, than do family households. Over the past 15 years, however, the median income in non-family households has increased by more (proportionally) than has the median income in family households (Figures 18a, 18b).

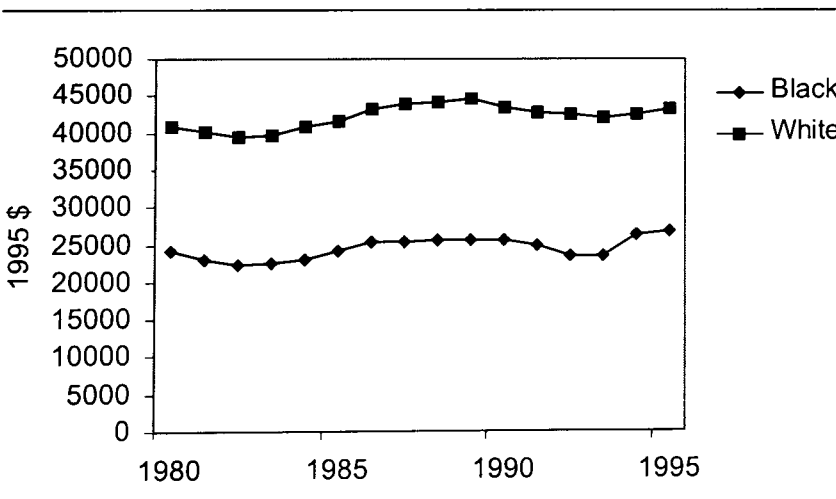
Among year-round, full time workers, the gap between whites and blacks is narrower, particularly for workers with similar levels of education (Table 7). Median earnings for black men with at least a bachelor's degree were 76% of median earnings for their white counterparts. For black men with less than a high school education, the ratio was higher: 85%. The increase in earnings associated with moving from the less than high school group to the high school group is significantly lower for black men than for any other group (11% vs. 26% for black women). Moving from a high school education to some college is associated with large gains for black men and women; for white men and women, the gains are a third to a half smaller. All groups have large gains associated with moving from some college to at least a bachelor's degree, although the gain for black men is smaller.

Figure 18a
Median Income—Non-family Households



Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-60, (WWW: Historical Income Tables-Households, Table H-12C).

Figure 18b
Median Income—Family Households



Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-60, (WWW: Historical Income Tables-Households, Table H-12C).

Table 7

Median earnings—1993; Year-round full time workers

		<i>Less than High School</i>	<i>High School</i>	<i>Some College</i>	<i>Bachelor's or more</i>	<i>Total</i>
Thousands of \$						
Men	—Black	18.6	20.6	26.6	35.9	24.1
	—White	22.0	28.4	32.4	47.2	33.8
Women	—Black	13.1	16.5	21.1	31.2	20.3
	—White	14.7	19.8	23.4	32.9	23.5
Black/White ratio:						
Men		0.9	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7
Women		0.9	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.9
% Increase over next lower educational level:						
Men	—Black	—	11.0	29.0	35.0	
	—White	—	29.0	14.0	46.0	
Women	—Black	—	26.0	28.0	48.0	
	—White	—	35.0	18.0	41.0	

Current Population Reports, 1995, Table 12.

For educated workers in the same age group, the difference between blacks and whites is narrower still. Among college educated workers who are employed one year after graduation (year-round, full time), the ratio of black to white salaries was 0.96 in 1990, up from 0.92 in 1977. As a comparison, the similar ratio of women's salaries to men's was 0.87 in 1990 (up from 0.77 in 1977).

Black households tend to have fewer assets than do white ones. Even by income quintile (quintiles defined for all households), households headed by blacks tend to be poorer (Table 9). Furthermore, black households are more heavily represented at the lower income quintiles.

D. Household and family formation

Marriage is declining in the United States (Figure 19). Among black women over age 15, less than 30% were married in 1994; in 1970, more than 40% were⁵. Among white women, the decline has been just as steady, although not quite as fast. The corresponding

Table 8

Median salaries: college graduates employed full-time, 1 year after graduation (1992 \$)

	Black	White	Men	Women
1977	23,018	24,975	28,108	21,649
1978				
1979				
1980	21,515	23,105	26,334	20,318
1981				
1982				
1983				
1984	20,995	23,556	25,974	21,387
1985				
1986	22,653	25,021	27,153	23,054
1987				
1988				
1989				
1990	22,676	23,637	25,825	22,343

figures for black and white men are similar to those for black and white women, although the proportions of men married tend to be several points higher than for women (roughly 7 points higher for black men and 5 points higher for white men).

Interracial marriage has increased significantly over the past few decades. Although still only a tiny fraction of all marriage (0.41% of all married couples in 1990), black-white interracial marriages were still more than 3 times as likely in 1990 as in 1960 (0.41% vs. 0.13% (U.S. Bureau of the Census (1996), *Statistical Abstract of the United States*)).

Fertility has also declined over the past 25 years among American women; births per 1,000 women aged 15–44 declined sharply in the early 1970s (Figure 20). Since 1975, fertility has fluctuated a little, but has been largely constant. Black and white women have become more similar in their overall child bearing: in 1994 the rate for black women was roughly 12 births higher than for white women, while in 1970, the rate for black women was roughly 31 births higher.

Abortion rates remain fairly high for both black and white women; roughly one quarter of the pregnancies⁶ of white women

Table 9
Asset ownership by Income Quintile

	Median net worth (1993 \$)				Households (000s)			
	1991		1993		1991		1993	
	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White
1 st Quintile	0	10,743	250	7,605	4,041	14,480	4,066	14,662
2 nd Quintile	3,446	26,665	3,406	27,057	2,436	16,006	2,663	16,162
3 rd Quintile	8,302	35,510	8,480	36,341	2,124	16,388	2,126	16,591
4 th Quintile	21,852	55,950	20,745	54,040	1,353	17,043	1,454	17,218
5 th Quintile	56,922	128,298	45,023	123,350	814	17,492	937	17,558
All Households	4,844	47,075	4,418	45,740	10,768	81,409	11,248	82,190

Census <http://www.census.gov/hhes/wealth/wlth93f>.

end in abortion and roughly 40% of the pregnancies of black women do as well⁷ (Figure 21). Crude estimates based on these frequencies and other Centers for Disease Control data suggest that, over time, significant fractions of both black and white women may have abortions. Among white women, perhaps more than a third will have at least one abortion by the age of 44; for black women the fraction may be considerably larger—well over one half.

E. Health

Maternal mortality, the rate at which mothers die in childbirth, has improved dramatically during the 20th century. In the early years of this century, more than 700 women died for each 100,000 live births. By 1940, the overall rate had dropped to 376 per 100,000 births, but the rate for the mothers of black children was 782 (for mothers of white children it was 320 (National Center for Health Statistics, Public Health Service, 1996)). Considering those levels, the current figures -less than 20 per 100,000 for both blacks and whites—are almost miraculous, although the rate for black mothers is still more than twice that for white mothers (Figure 22).

F. Victimization

Men are more likely than women and blacks more likely

Figure 21

Abortion Rate—Women 15–44

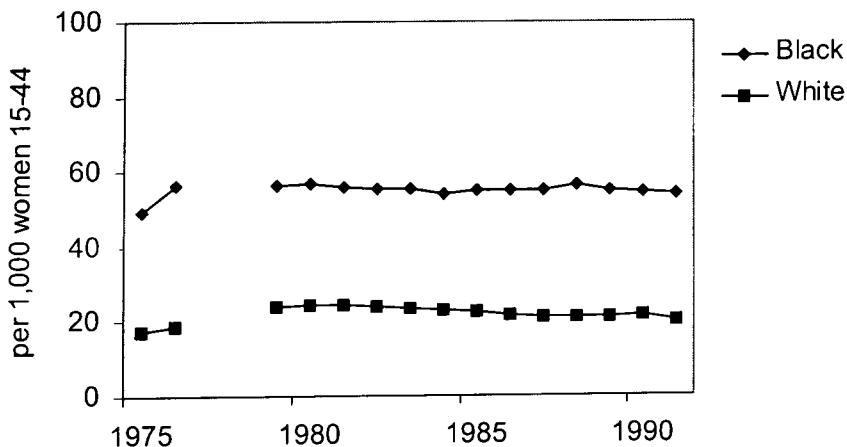
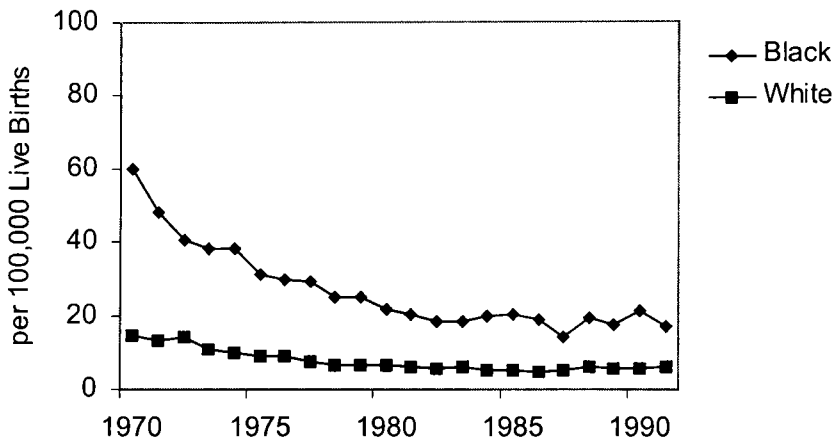


Figure 22
Maternal Mortality

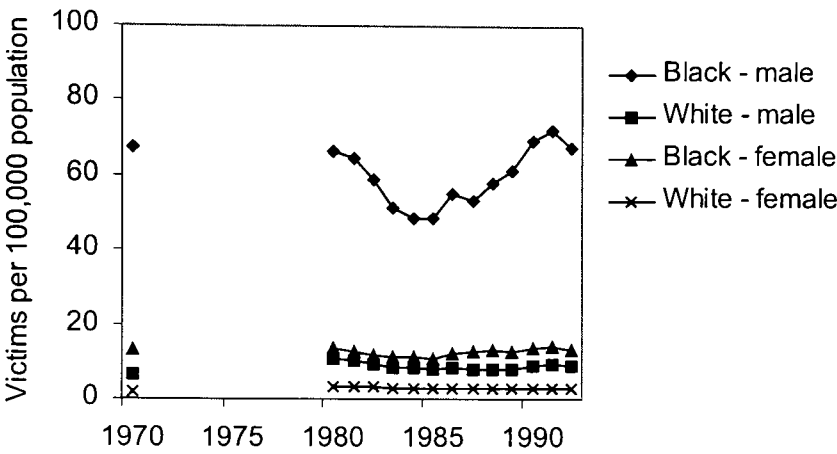


Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Public Health Service, 1996.

than whites to be homicide victims. Black men in particular face homicide rates well in excess of those faced by other demographic groups (Figures 23a, 23b). In the first half of the 1980s, homicide rates for black men dropped sharply; the rate for white men fell simultaneously, but from a smaller base. Unfortunately, the rates climbed again after 1985. The rate of less serious violent crime (rapes, robberies, or assaults) has been relatively steady, with a slight decline through 1990 for both blacks and whites. During the 1990s, however, the rate faced by black men and women rose sharply.

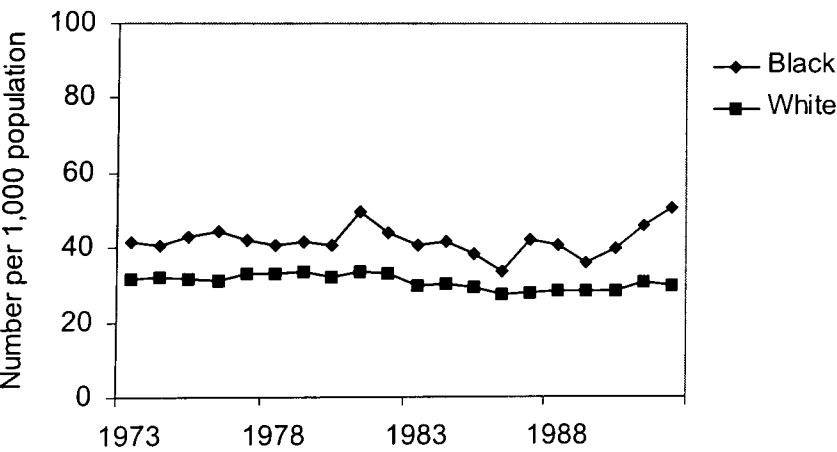
Victimization rates for violent crimes other than murder (Table 10) suggest that black men and women along with white men are particularly likely to be victims at young ages (through age 25). After 25, victimization for women, black and white, falls rapidly, from 127 per 1,000 black women age 20–24 to 44.5 per 1,000 age 25–34. For white men, the victimization rates fall quickly among the older groups as well. For black men, victimization rates do not fall as far and more importantly, the rates remain high even among older age groups (75 per 1,000 for black men age 35–49).

Figure 23a
Homicide Rate



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1994.

Figure 23b
Crime Rate: rapes, robberies, assaults



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1994.

Table 10

Violent crime (not murder): victimization rate per 1,000 population (1993)

<i>Victim's Age</i>	<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>
12–15	146.0	148.4	112.3	93.2
16–19	91.9	144.5	145.6	90.4
20–24	99.2	104.3	127.0	79.0
25–34	74.5	69.6	44.5	49.0
35–49	75.4	43.0	43.4	39.1
50–64	33.1	21.1	3.8	13.8
65+	14.3	5.4	12.2	4.5

Table 11

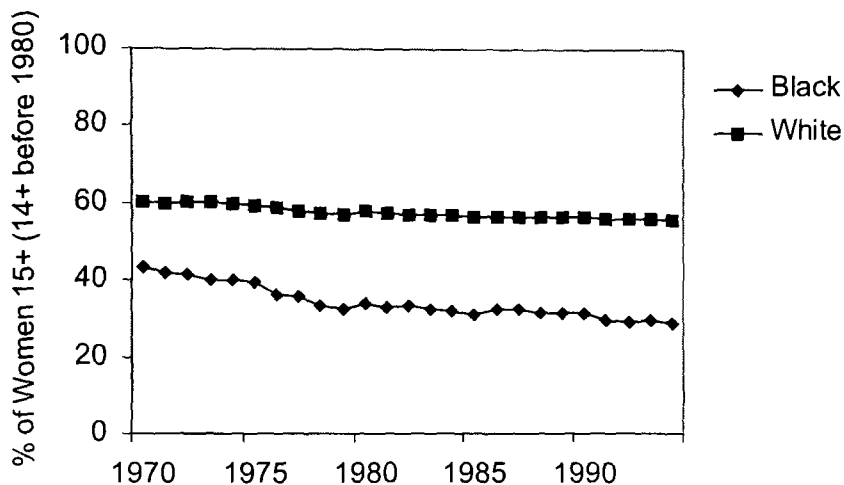
Adults per 100,000 population held in local jails, state or federal prisons (1993)

	<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>
1985	3,544	528	183	27
1986	3,850	570	189	29
1987	3,943	594	216	35
1988	4,441	629	257	41
1989	5,066	685	321	47
1990	5,365	718	338	48
1991	5,717	740	356	51
1992	6,014	774	365	53
1993	6,259	805	403	56
1994	6,753	860	435	60

G. Incarceration

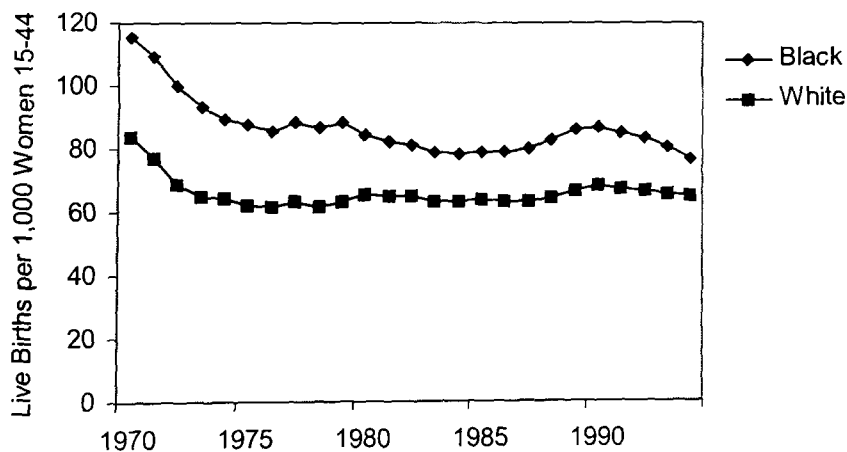
Adults, men and women, are increasingly facing the criminal justice system as adversaries (Table 11). Relative to population sizes, black men and women have been more likely to be imprisoned. In 1994, the rate of imprisonment for white men was 1.6

Figure 19

Women: Married, Husband Present

Source: Saluter, 1994.

Figure 20

Fertility: Women 15-44

Source: Centrs for Disease Control and Prevention, Monthly Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 44, No. 11(S) (1996) Table 1.

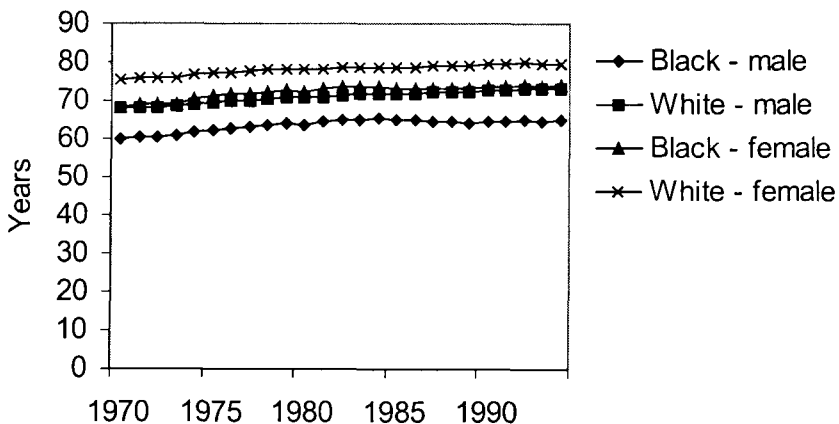
times the 1985 value; for black men the 1994 rate was 1.9 times its 1985 value. For black women, the 1994 imprisonment rate was 2.4 times the 1985 rate, while for white women the 1994 rate was 2.2 times the 1985 rate.

H. Health and life expectancy

Life expectancy at birth has increased fairly dramatically over the past few decades. Since 1940, the expected life for a black man has increased⁸ by almost 14 years and for a black woman, it has increased by almost 20 years. For whites, the increases have been slightly less dramatic, but still impressive: roughly 11 years for white men and 13 for white women. The increases have continued over the past 25 years (Figure 24), although for black men, life expectancy seems to have plateaued shortly after 1980 at roughly 65 years. Life expectancy at different ages shows generally the same patterns, although the differences between black men and white men and between black women and white women are less pronounced at age 65 than at younger ages.

This analysis has used census and other statistical data to describe the nature of social and economic inequality as it exists

Figure 24
Life Expectancy at Birth



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Public Health Service, 1996, Table 6-5.

Table 12

Life Expectancy

	<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>
At birth:				
1969-71	60.0	67.9	68.3	75.5
1979-81	64.1	70.8	73.9	78.2
1991	64.6	72.9	73.8	79.6
At age 1:				
1969-71	61.2	68.3	69.4	75.7
1979-81	64.6	70.7	73.3	78.0
1991	64.9	72.5	73.9	79.1
At age 20:				
1969-71	43.5	50.2	51.2	57.2
1979-81	46.5	52.5	54.9	59.4
1991	46.9	54.1	55.4	60.4
At age 65:				
1969-71	12.5	13.0	15.7	16.9
1979-81	13.3	14.3	17.1	18.6
1991	13.4	15.4	17.2	19.2

National Center for Health Statistics, Public Health Service, 1996, Section 6, Table A.

between Blacks and Whites in the United States. Attention has been given to trends over time to illustrate how the nature of the historic disadvantage suffered by blacks has changed in the last generation. As noted earlier, while some measures of difficulties, such as the number of black children being raised by single parents, are disheartening; the increases in levels of education and income among black Americans over the past 25 years are encouraging.

NOTES

1. Infants are less than one year of age; rates are per 1000 live births and are based on the race of the child. See National Center for Health Statistics, Public Health Service (1996).

2. Those who were neither enrolled nor high school graduates, but were enrolled 12 months earlier.
3. Mean verbal plus mean math.
4. A measure of concentration of income that varies between 0 and 1; larger values indicate *more* concentration. The measure sums up—over each level of the income distribution—the difference between the group's population fraction and its income fraction. If income is perfectly evenly distributed—i.e. $x\%$ of the population has $x\%$ of the income, then the differences will be 0 and the Gini coefficient will be 0 as well.
5. From 1970 to 1979, the figures are for people over age 14; from 1980, the figures are for those over age 15. (Saluter, 1994 and earlier issues).
6. Measured pregnancies—live births and abortions—but not miscarriages.
7. 1991 estimates: 303 abortions per 1,000 live births for white women; 661 per 1,000 live births for black women.
8. For 1940, the figure is for *All other races*; for 1970 and later, figures are for *Black*

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The Missing Safety Net and Families: A Progressive Critique of the New Welfare Legislation

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This is an overview essay on the 1996 welfare legislation and its consequences. The paper is divided into five parts: (1) The basic elements of the legislation; (2) The conservative assumptions undergirding this legislation and the progressive responses to them; (3) The consequences of the legislation for individuals and families; (4) The missing elements in the new welfare legislation; and (5) The progressive solution to welfare.

From 1935 to 1996 the United States had a minimal welfare program for those in need. Since the Reagan administration this welfare program has gradually been dismantled. This dismemberment accelerated in 1996 when the federal government made welfare assistance to families temporary and withdrew \$55 billion of federal aid to poor people. Thus, the federal safety net under the poor has been shredded especially for poor families with children (Schorr, 1997: 163). This is an overview essay, drawing together the current information on the general and family-specific consequences resulting from the recent welfare legislation. It is divided into five parts: (1) the basic elements of the 1996 welfare legislation; (2) the conservative assumptions guiding that legislation and the progressive response; (3) the consequences of the legislation for individuals and families; (4) the missing elements

in the new welfare legislation; and (5) the progressive solution to welfare.

THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1996

The welfare system prior to 1996 needed an overhaul. Its provisions encouraged dependency since recipients leaving welfare lost medicaid. It provided disincentives to work because money earned was subtracted from welfare payments. By leaving the distribution of benefits for many programs to the states, there were wide disparities in benefits by geographical location. And, the benefits provided were never enough to lift people out of poverty. The welfare system, however, did help many on the economic margins to get above the poverty line. A study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities found that

without such assistance, 57.6 million people would have been poor in 1995. "But when government benefits are counted, including food stamps, housing assistance, school lunch support and benefits provided through the earned-income tax credit, *the number of poor people drops to 30.3 million*" (emphasis added). (Reported in Herbert, 1996: 68A)

While this difference is certainly meaningful, the government could do much better. For example, France and the United States both would have child poverty rates of about 25 percent if it were not for government assistance. With the generous government assistance provided in France, the child poverty rate is reduced to just 6.5 percent. The minimal U. S. welfare program, on the other hand, reduces the child poverty rate to about 21 percent (Raspberry, 1997).

In 1996 the Republican-dominated Congress and a middle-of-the-road Democratic president passed a sweeping welfare law that *ended the 61-year old safety net for poor people, completing the Reagan Revolution* (Watts, 1997: 409; Sciacchitano, 1999). The major provisions of this law (as later amended) include the following (much of the description of the new welfare law and its consequences are from the Children's Defense Fund, 1997: Edelman, 1997; Schorr, 1997; Watts, 1997; and Eitzen, 1996): First,

the law eliminated Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), setting up a temporary program in its place. Second, states, through federal block grants, were given a fixed sum of money and considerable flexibility in how to spend it. Third, the law insisted on work. States were required to demand that parents work within two years of receiving cash assistance, although states had the right to shorten the period before recipients must work. Fourth, the law mandated a five-year lifetime limit on the receipt of assistance, which states can reduce if they wish. Fifth, the law required that unmarried teen parents must live with an adult and attend school to receive assistance. Sixth, various federal assistance programs targeted for the poor were cut by \$54.5 billion over six years. Included in these budget cuts were \$27 billion from the food stamp program, \$7 billion from the children's portion of the Supplemental Security Income program, and \$3 billion over six years for child nutrition, and federal funding for social services was cut by a six-year total of \$2.5 billion. Cuts were also made by tightening the qualifying criteria for being defined as a disabled child. Ironically, the narrowed eligibility requirements "result in the loss of coverage for some children who if they were adults would be considered disabled" (Edelman, 1997: 48). Seventh, the welfare law denied a broad range of public benefits to legal immigrants. Concerning this last point, although there is some variation from state to state (since the states administer the programs), all legal immigrants were cut off from food stamps and those who entered the country after the welfare bill was signed were ineligible for federal programs such as Supplemental Security Income and state run programs such as temporary welfare and Medicaid. And, eighth, the federal money given to the states was capped at \$16.4 billion annually. This is significant because it means that there is no adjustment for inflation or population growth. In effect, by 2002 states will have considerably less federal money to spend on welfare than they did under the old welfare provisions.

In sum, this new welfare legislation ended the entitlement which guaranteed that states must give help to all needy families with children (Quadagno, 1999). Now assistance for poor families was temporary with parents required to work. Lamenting the

passage of the 1996 Welfare Act, *The Nation* editorialized: "There is now a bipartisan agreement that the United States bears no responsibility for its poorest families" (*The Nation*, 1995: 371).

THE CONSERVATIVE ASSUMPTIONS GUIDING CURRENT WELFARE POLICY AND THE PROGRESSIVE RESPONSE

Assumptions from conservative ideology provide the bed-rock of the 1996 Welfare Law (Sciacchitano, 1999). First, there is the conservative assumption that welfare programs establish perverse incentives that keep the beneficiaries from working and to have babies outside of marriage. That is, welfare is so generous that it makes sense to stay on welfare, rather than go to work. Moreover, since the benefits increase with each child, women on welfare make the rational decision to have more children. Progressives argue that this reasoning is fallacious because it ignores five facts: (1) The average monthly AFDC payment, accounting for inflation, has withered by almost 50 percent since 1970, yet the birth rate for unmarried mothers has soared during this period; (2) The average monthly AFDC payment plus food stamps provides benefits that are much below the poverty line; (3) States with low welfare benefits have higher illegitimacy rates than states with higher welfare benefits; (4) New Jersey's 1993 law that ended the practice of increasing a welfare check when a recipient had another baby did *not* drive down birth rates among women on welfare (Healy, 1997); and (5) The much more generous welfare states of Canada, western Europe, and Scandinavia have much lower out-of-wedlock birth rates than found in the United States.

A second assumption of the lawmakers is that when poor people are confronted with a "sink or swim" world they will develop the determination and the skill to stay afloat (Murray, 1984). By shoving welfare recipients off of the dole, their only recourse will be to work, resulting in productive rather than parasitic people. Progressives, however, note that under current societal conditions many of the poor will "sink" even if they wanted to "swim." There are not enough jobs and many of the jobs that are available do not lift poor people out of poverty. And, many who are being pushed "into the pool" cannot "swim" because they lack the skills and experience required.

Third, there is a moral condemnation of those on welfare because their poverty is assumed by conservatives the result of their attitude, their way of life, and their choice to reject the work ethic. Progressives argue, to the contrary, that the problem for most welfare recipients is not the lack of a work ethic but a lack of jobs that pay enough to enable them to become independent (Handler and Hasenfeld, 1997: 12; for empirical invalidation of the culture of poverty argument of the conservatives see, for example, Edin and Lein, 1997). Moreover, they see a tendency on the part of the conservatives to reserve this moral condemnation of poor people "for those who are not only poor but different—in terms of race, ethnicity, country of origin, or religion—or who violate patriarchal norms" (Handler and Hasenfeld, 1997: 9).

Progressives argue that the willingness to work on the part of poor people is not the problem. Research from a number of studies shows that most welfare recipients do work, bringing in extra money from various activities such as house cleaning, doing laundry, repairing clothing, child care, and selling items that they have made. For example, sociologist Kathleen Harris, summarizing her findings from a nationally representative sample of single mothers who received welfare, says:

I found exclusive dependence on welfare to be rare. More than half of the single mothers whom I studied worked while they were on welfare, and two-thirds left the welfare rolls when they could support themselves with jobs. However, more than half (57 percent) of the women who worked their way off public assistance later returned because their jobs ended or they still could not make ends meet. (Harris, 1996: B7)

This outside work to supplement welfare is necessary because welfare payments are insufficient to make ends meet. In 1991, for example, the average AFDC payment and food stamps averaged \$565 a month, while the average monthly expenses were \$876—a deficit of \$311 (Koretz, 1996). In Mississippi, for example, the benefits for years have been only 17 percent of the poverty line and with food stamps added, only 40 percent of the poverty line (Edelman, 1999). This difference is made up through various strategies including income-producing work and help from family, friends, neighbors, boyfriends, and absent fathers.

A question arising from the requirement that all welfare recipients work is whether a single mother is "able" to work (McLarin, 1995). Traditionally, she was not considered so. AFDC was created in 1935 with the goal of keeping women at home with their children. The new legislation has changed that, forcing poor women with children to work, often without the training, sometimes without the jobs, and usually without the child care. Through twisted logic, many of the same politicians who want poor mothers to work, want middle-class mothers to give up their jobs because a stay-at-home mother is positive for children.

Another issue regarding work has to do with its availability. During the Great Depression the federal government provided jobs for poor people. These jobs included the construction of roads, bridges, and buildings, clearing forests, planting trees to stop wind erosion, and the like. The jobs provided society with important projects and needy individuals and families with income and skill development. The situation is different now. The new legislation mandates that poor people will work but *without* providing the jobs.

This punitive overhaul [of the welfare system] sends [welfare recipients] off on their own to secure work in a world of downsizing, layoffs and capital flight. Where are the welfare recipients going to find stable jobs? How can they pay for health insurance and child care when they earn the minimum wage? What will happen to their children? (*The Nation*, 1995: 372)

Fourth, welfare dependency is assumed by conservatives to be the source of illegitimacy, laziness, crime, and other social pathologies. Progressives, however, point to the nations with a much more generous welfare system than in the United States, noting that cities in those countries are much safer, and that violent crime is very much lower than in the United States, as is the rate of teenage pregnancy. Also, from 1970 to the mid-1990s AFDC benefits declined sharply (from \$792 per month in inflation-adjusted 1994 dollars in 1970 for a family of four to \$435 per month in 1994. If welfare benefits affect marriage and fertility, then one would expect that the drop in welfare benefits would have made marriage more attractive and childbearing outside of marriage less attractive. "Yet divorce, cohabitation,

and the percentage of births that occurred outside of marriage all increased during this period" (Cherlin, 1998: 124).

Most important, progressives argue that when welfare is seen as the cause of societal ills, the remedy is to get rid of welfare rather than confronting the structural sources of poverty. The causes of poverty are complex, involving the structural inequalities of class, race, and gender, the changing economy, the lack of good jobs, the maldistribution of resources for schools, and inadequate pay and benefits for low-end jobs. All of these conditions occur within the ideology and practice of capitalism, which celebrates competition, selfishness, domination, and exploitation. Thus, a cure for poverty involves much more than greater individual effort and getting rid of the welfare system. It requires structural changes in society.

Finally, there is a racial subtext in the welfare legislation. Underlying the debate on welfare, were the dominant but erroneous notions about certain groups, their families, and the women who seek public funds and services to support and maintain families. The conservative ideology posits that these groups have no claim to these resources because they do not conform to traditional family values. Fueling this assumption is the false belief that African American women dominate the welfare rolls. Similarly, "negative images of Latinos and other immigrants fueled debates in the states and paved the way for denying benefits to legal immigrants nationwide" (Dill, Baca Zinn, and Patton, 1998: 21).

The conservative response, in short, is that the welfare state is bad and should be eliminated. But just what is it that the policy-makers are in the process of killing off? What will its death mean for society? The U. S. welfare state, which is the most modest of the industrialized nations, emerged in the 1930s as a reaction to the instability of the Great Depression and capitalism run amuck (the following is from Moberg, 1995). Motivated by a fear of radical unrest by the economically disadvantaged and disaffected and the need to save capitalism from its own self-destructive tendencies (economic instability, rape of the environment, worker exploitation, lack of worker and consumer safety), the creators of the New Deal under Roosevelt and the Great Society under Johnson instituted Social Security, the minimum wage, federal aid to education, health and nutrition programs, subsidized housing,

and Aid to Families with Dependent Children. These welfare programs go too far, say the conservatives. Progressives, on the other hand, argue that they do not go far enough.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE 1996 WELFARE LEGISLATION FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Although the time is relatively short since the 1996 welfare legislation, we can examine some preliminary results and anticipate its longer term effects. As of September 1998, the welfare rolls had declined from 12.2 million to about 8 million since the enactment of the welfare legislation. This dramatic reduction has led supporters of the new welfare law to declare that the new law was working as intended. This interpretation is erroneous for at least four reasons. To begin, those who left the welfare rolls first were likely the easiest to place in jobs, that is, they have some secondary education and job experience. But, while the bulk of these former welfare recipients found work, their work, typically, offered little room for advancement and a high risk of being laid off (Burtless, 1998). Most important, the wages were usually too meager to lift them out of poverty (Albelda, 1999). The Children's Defense Fund and the National Coalition for the Homeless found that for those who recently left welfare only 29 percent had wages above the poverty line and 51 percent had wages that did not even reach 75 percent of the poverty level (reported in Jackson, 1999). The much more difficult task will be to find jobs for those who have multiple obstacles to success (relatively uneducated, inadequate work experience or job skills, or who are functionally disabled). Second, the welfare legislation was passed at a propitious historical moment—during an economic expansion when jobs were being created and unemployment was low. Two years later the unemployment rate had dropped to 4.3 percent, the lowest rate in 27 years. Because of a growing economy the number of AFDC recipients declined by 2.2 million in the 30 months *before* the 1996 legislation (DeParle, 1997a; Wolf, 1998b).

But even with the booming economy and many still receiving welfare because their time limits had not been reached, there are reports of rising rates of hunger and homelessness (*Population Today*, 1999). The U. S. Conference of Mayors collected data from

30 major cities from November 1, 1997 to October 31, 1998 and found that 78 percent of the cities had an increase in the number of requests for emergency food assistance and 84 percent reported an increase in the number of families with children who requested emergency food assistance (United States Conference of Mayors, 1998). These requests were 16 percent higher than in the previous year (the largest increase since 1992)(reported in Loven, 1998). Another survey by Second Harvest, the nation's largest network of food banks, found that more than 21 million people used emergency food programs in 1997, 40 percent of whom came from working households (reported in Wolf, 1998a). Low-cost housing has also become more scarce because of gentrification, soaring housing prices, and the reduction in subsidized apartments. As a result the Department of Housing and Urban Development revealed that a record 5.3 million families with low incomes face a crisis of unaffordable rent—defined as rents exceeding 30 percent of one's income (Associated Press, 1998). The U. S. Conference on Mayors reported that in 1998 there was an 11 percent increase in emergency shelter demands over the previous year in the 30 cities surveyed (reported in Ratnesar, 1999).

These realities raise serious questions about job availability, hunger, and homelessness, when the unemployment rate goes up to seven or eight percent, or worse, when there is an economic recession. In either situation there will be layoffs, which means that the last to be hired (the workers only recently off welfare) will be the first to be fired. If these former employees had used up their time limits for welfare, they will be on their own without a safety net with nowhere to turn for rent, utilities, food, and health care.

Third, the availability of low end jobs is distributed unevenly. Some social categories have more difficulty getting low-wage employment than others. "Not surprisingly, in the fierce competition for jobs in that sector, individuals who are young, black and non-college educated fare the worst" (Herbert, 1997: 70A). When the unemployment rate was 5.2 percent in 1996, unemployment among young African American women (ages 15 to 25 with a high school diploma was 19.7 percent (Economic Policy Report, cited in Herbert, 1997).

Work by itself is not the solution. Latino women and men participate in the labor force at nearly the same rate as Whites

(66.5 percent compared to 67.2 percent (U. S. Department of Labor, 1997), yet the poverty rate in 1996 for Latinos was 29.4 percent, compared to 11.2 percent for Whites (Dill et al., 1998). Moreover, 10 percent of poor people worked year-round, full-time in 1996. Underscoring one of the above points: working for the minimum wage, which most former welfare recipients do, gives a full-time worker an annual income that is more than \$2000 *below* the poverty line for a family of three. Obviously, then, it takes adequately compensated work to climb out of poverty, a provision missing from the welfare legislation.

The 1996 legislation was especially harsh to immigrant families (Cherlin, 1998; Eisinger, 1998), who are mostly people of color. New legal immigrants, except for those of refugee status, are now ineligible for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (the mechanism that replaced AFDC), food stamps, and most other federally funded benefits until they become citizens, which takes a minimum of five years. Under these conditions, it seems more than reasonable to assume that hundreds of thousands of immigrant families will be pushed into poverty by the provisions of the 1996 welfare legislation.

Regarding marriage Stephanie Aaronson and Heidi Hartmann conclude that the "preponderance of research suggests that welfare has no impact on women's marital and childbearing behavior. .."(Aaronson and Hartmann, 1996: 586). Poverty, on the other hand, does. After reviewing the literature, family historian Stephanie Coontz summarizes what previous research predicts:

Poor couples are twice as likely to divorce as more affluent ones. Jobless individuals are three to four times less likely to marry. And teens who live in areas of high unemployment and inferior school systems are six to seven times more likely to become unwed parents than more fortunate teens. Dozens of research studies show that the most effective deterrent to early childbearing is access to, among other things, good schools and steady jobs (Coontz, 1994: 19).

The recent welfare legislation is going to put more children at risk as they and their mothers no longer receive AFDC, food stamps, and other welfare benefits. Many of their mothers will now work at minimum wage jobs with new expenses (transportation, child care, and clothing), and likely no health insurance.

And, we know that many who work will not escape poverty. Columbia University's National Center for Children in Poverty, reported, for example, that in 1996 some 5.5 million children lived in poverty and 63 percent of them lived in families with at least one working parent (reported in Healy, 1998). Many of their mothers are difficult to employ because they suffer disproportionately from mental health problems and they often lack quality education and work experience. Thus, many former mothers on welfare will likely be unemployed *and* without the safety net after two years. Clearly, without raising the minimum wage, providing training programs, guaranteeing work, and subsidizing child care, more children will be raised in poverty under the new welfare rules. Daniel Lichter's review of children in poverty shows that *before* the 1996 welfare legislation went into effect, the rate of child poverty was at a 30-year high, and the income gap between rich and poor children greater than at any time in recent memory (Lichter, 1997: 141). It is obvious that the new welfare legislation will increase the child poverty rate and the income inequality gap. The Urban Institute estimates that an additional 1.1 million children would become poor as a result of the 1996 legislation (The Urban Institute, 1996; see also Albelda and Tilly, 1997: 127). Moreover, more than eight million families with children would lose an average of \$1,300 per family (cited in Edelman, 1997: 46). Thus, more children than ever will be further impoverished, which will have serious debilitating consequences for them (for documentation of the later life outcomes of childhood poverty see Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 1997).

We ask: Is it appropriate to take \$28 billion over six years in food assistance from poor women and their children? As Marian Wright Edelman has stated: "The elimination of the national guarantee to protect children is a moral outrage . . . a massive betrayal that places the lives of many of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens in grave danger" (Edelman, 1996: 1).

WHAT IS MISSING IN THE NEW WELFARE LEGISLATION

Foremost, the legislation ignored the conclusions of social science research (Astone, 1997). This research documents, for example, that 70 percent of ADFC recipients leave welfare within

two years. We also know that nearly three-fourths of those who leave end up back on welfare because of inadequate pay, the lack of medical benefits, or their lack of job skills. Only 15 percent of recipients stay on welfare continuously for five years or more. Social science research also informs us of the detrimental effects of poverty on marriage relationships, the increased probability of spouse and child abuse, and the dismal future for many children of the poor.

Second, while focusing on the replacement of work for welfare, there is no provision for jobs and if one finds work there is no assistance for transportation (two-thirds of all new jobs are in the suburbs, while three-quarters of welfare recipients live in central cities or rural areas; just one in 20 welfare recipients owns a car, Bailey, 1997); and there is no child care subsidy or provision of high level day care for the children of working parents. Moreover, this law contains no provisions requiring the states to provide educational or job-training programs for those displaced from welfare. Especially hard hit are women. Without education:

women's wages will not grow, and without growth in their wages, welfare mothers will never be able to afford child care or health care. . . . Eliminating welfare without improving the pay and benefits of the jobs they can get—or improving their ability to get better jobs—can have only one result: an increase in poverty among women and children. (Harris, 1996: B7)

The 1996 welfare legislation assumes that jobs are uniformly available. But the availability of low-wage, entry-level jobs depends on time and place. Some regions (e.g., the coal mining region in Appalachia), states such as California and cities such as New York City have to overcome a mismatch—huge numbers on welfare and relatively few jobs. In New York City, for example, the ratio of welfare recipients to jobs is four times the national average. From 1992 to 1996 in that city there was a net gain of only 88,000 jobs. "At that slow rate of growth, if every job gained by the local economy were given to a New Yorker now on welfare it would take 21 years for all 470,000 adults to be absorbed into the economy" (Finder, 1996: 17). Similarly, by mid-1999 when most welfare recipients will be forced to find some type of work, Detroit expects a shortfall of 75,303 jobs and Philadelphia will

fall 53,400 jobs short (Associated Press, 1997). There are many pockets of rural poverty where jobs are few and poverty high. In East Carroll Parish, Louisiana, for example, 55 percent of the residents live below the poverty line, the unemployment rate is three times the national average, and the median household income is less than one-third the median for the country. There is no industry other than farming (Kelly, 1996). Nearby in the eleven delta counties of Mississippi, the poverty rate is 41 percent and unemployment more than double the national rate. Frank Howell of Mississippi State University has estimated that for every 254 families leaving welfare in those counties only one new job will be created (cited in DeParle, 1997). Or consider the case of California, where the state's economy is generating 300,000 jobs a year (many of which are high tech jobs not suitable for the underschooled and undertrained), which is insufficient for the 1 million current welfare recipients who have to be moved into a job market and where 2 million people not on welfare are currently looking for jobs and another half-million part-timers want more work (*USA Today*, 1997).

A major concern with the welfare legislation is that by pushing the poor into an already crowded workforce, wages for low-end jobs will be driven down. This hurts those leaving welfare as well as the working poor. There are 38 million working poor who receive \$7.50 or less an hour for work and usually have no health insurance. What will happen to their wages and jobs when 4 million people (50 percent of all adults on welfare assistance) are added to the workforce by 2000, as mandated by the law? Employers are prohibited from firing existing workers to hire welfare recipients whose compensation is subsidized by the state. But employers can reduce working hours, wages, and benefits for existing workers, a likely occurrence. The plight of the working poor, always marginal, thus, becomes worse because of welfare reform. Researchers at the Economic Policy Institute estimate that with the addition of one million new low-wage workers the income of the bottom 30 percent of earners will be reduced on average by 11.9 percent. This drop in wages will be even more severe in those states and localities with large numbers of people on welfare (McCrate, 1997; Street, 1998). This has at least three additional negative consequences. First, it weakens those labor

unions that organize low-pay workers such as janitors, municipal workers, and food handlers. This weakness reinforces low wages and minimal benefits for the economically marginal. Second, the anger of the working poor, most likely, will be directed at the former welfare recipients, not the economic system that limits their opportunities and exploits them. Third, and related to the second, the anger of the working poor will likely be overtly racist as the working poor perceive their economic situation reduced by racial minorities and immigrants who they believe are the majority of welfare recipients (a belief that is false, by the way, as 56 percent of first-time female-headed welfare recipients from 1990 to 1992 were White; Center on Social Welfare Policy and Law, 1996: 28).

The third missing ingredient in the new welfare legislation is an understanding of the structural sources of poverty and meeting the challenges of a rapidly changing economy.

Fourth, the legislation offers no safety net for the people who are unable to find jobs or who are not able to get their children into day care. When the economy slows down, as it inevitably will, many of the working poor and former welfare recipients will lose their jobs. What will happen to them when they cannot pay their rents or house payments, or their utility bills, or medical bills? Under the previous welfare system, many families were just a lost job, divorce, medical disaster, or rent hike away from losing their housing. The fastest growing category of homeless during the late 1980s and early 1990s were families (Timmer, Eitzen, and Talley, 1994). Under the new welfare law, and especially when society experiences an economic downturn, increasing numbers of families will have to move into substandard housing or even into homeless shelters. According to Peter Edelman:

There will be suffering. Some of the damage will be obvious—more homelessness, for example, with more demand on already strapped shelters and soup kitchens. The ensuing problems will also appear as increases in the incidence of other problems, directly but perhaps not provably owing to the impact of the welfare bill. There will be more malnutrition and more crime, increased infant mortality, and increased drug and alcohol abuse. There will be increased family violence and abuse against children and women, and a consequent significant spillover of the problem into the already

overloaded child-welfare system and battered-women's shelters. (Edelman, 1997: 53)

To illustrate addressing just the issue of welfare's effect on crime rates, Hannon and Defronzo (1998) found that higher levels of welfare assistance *reduce* the strength of the positive relationship between the size of the disadvantaged population and crime rates (for the theoretical understanding of this effect see Messner and Rosenfeld, 1997).

Fifth, a major concern with the 1996 welfare legislation is the abdication of federal responsibility for welfare. By turning over welfare to the states, there are fifty welfare programs. This devolution has the effect of making benefits very uneven as some states will be relatively generous and others will be much less so. Tufts University's Center on Hunger and Poverty surveyed the fifty states to study the implementation of federal welfare reform. The study found that only fourteen states had revamped their systems in such a way as to likely improve the financial condition of the poor. Two-thirds of the states actually made changes that threaten even greater poverty (reported in *The Nation*, 1998). States' rights have not always worked in the past. "States failed in the past to take the lead in trying to end racial discrimination or to alleviate unemployment and poverty. That's why the country need the New Deal, civil rights legislation, and social welfare programs . . ." (Hettleman, 1997: 24; see also Schlesinger, quoted in Shanker, 1995: E7).

Moreover, the federal block grants do not reflect economic reality, since they do not adjust for inflation, for economic change, or for demographics (Primus, 1997: 20). This oversight ensures that the spending on poor people will not only vary by state but that the amount will be increasingly inadequate.

Sixth, the welfare legislation does not protect children of poor parents. How are they to escape poverty without adequate supports for their health and education?

Seventh, the welfare legislation did not address the real issue—ending poverty.

Many of us had assumed that welfare reform was fueled by a desire to eliminate poverty. This is not the case. Under the new law, welfare is seen as an issue in and of itself, divorced from issues

of poverty. *Ending welfare had nothing to do with addressing poverty.* (Watts, 1997: 412)

THE SOLUTION

Is the answer to these poverty-related problems a more feeble welfare system or a more robust one? In our view the only way to help poor people is to spend more money, not less as the government has done since the Reagan administration (Wellstone and Dauster, 1999). This money would be spent on helping people with child care, increasing the minimum wage, providing job training and education programs, universal health care (at present we provide some health care for the poor through Medicaid, but do not help the working poor—clearly, a perverse incentive system), guaranteeing jobs, and reducing the tax burden on the poor who are trying to work their way out of poverty. In Wisconsin, for example, the welfare rolls have been cut by 65 percent over ten years. This effort to get people working rather than on welfare has cost the state more, not less for health care, child care, transportation, and training. In 1987, for instance, Wisconsin spent \$12 million a year on child care. By 1998, it was spending \$180 million annually (Dionne, 1997).

Is there a way to restructure the welfare system to apportion money and services more fairly to the needy? Is there a way to move people away from welfare dependency and toward autonomy, responsibility, and self-sufficiency? Is there a way to strengthen families on the economic margins? Is there a way to protect the children of the impoverished? Is there a way to meet the needs of the working poor as well poor people? Is there a way to structure such a federal program so that it attacks the causes of poverty, not the symptoms? An editorial in *In These Times* provides the progressive solution to these important questions:

Welfare as we know it should surely be ended. But it should be ended in a way that provides every person capable of working with an equal right to employment, and everyone who is employed with a living wage. In the long run, that would also require equal educational opportunity for all at all levels of instruction, universal health care and quality child care for working mothers. Such a program should be federally mandated and funded, but administered by the states or by elected community councils. And it should be available

to all citizens and legal residents up to a comfortable income level, and paid for by graduated income taxes on those above that level. (*In These Times*, 1996: 2; see also Edelman, 1997)

The current political climate (from both political parties and much of the public) runs counter to these proposals. Instead of a society that emphasizes community, cooperation, equality of opportunity, and fundamental human rights, the politico-economic system of the United States celebrates individualism, competition, and domination. The vast majority of political leaders and their constituents oppose increasing the minimum wage to a living wage, universal health care, and an adequate safety net for poor people. Thus, to eliminate poverty its roots in the market economy must be eliminated.

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The Enemy Within: The Demonization of Poor Women

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The denigration and demonization of poor women was central to the effort to repeal Aid to Families with Dependent Children by the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The utilization of negative stereotypes involving race, class and gender effectively marginalized impoverished women and their children, who were blamed for virtually all of the social problems of the United States during the 1990s. Despite the massive concentration of wealth and income in the hands of the wealthiest Americans and the ever-widening gap between rich and poor, the United States continues to ignore the need for fundamental economic and social reform.

They are despised, denigrated, ostracized from mainstream society. In earlier times, they were known as the "dangerous classes;" today they are labeled the "underclass." They are pictured as virtually irredeemable, lazy, dependent, living off the hard-earned money of others. They are poor single mothers. They are welfare recipients. They are the enemy within.

The demonizing of poor, single mothers has been an integral part of the recent onslaught on the safety net, meager and inadequate as it is. Poor mothers have been deemed unworthy, the "undeserving poor;" millions of welfare recipients were painted with one brush, were relegated to that area in society that is beyond the Pale. Systematic stereotyping and stigmatizing of "welfare mothers" was necessary in order to dehumanize them in the eyes of other Americans before the harsh and tenuous lifeline of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and the other bare-bones social programs could be shredded. The

implicit and often explicit message is: if welfare recipients are so unworthy, perhaps such harsh treatment, such punishment is warranted, even necessary, in order to modify their social and reproductive behavior. Perhaps, it has been said, removing cash and other benefits, forcing mothers to work even at dead-end jobs for poverty wages, and denying aid to children of teenagers and to additional babies born while the mother is receiving AFDC is the only way to deal with this "deviant" and "irresponsible" group. Many politicians claim, moreover, that they promote these Draconian measures against the poor as a form of "tough love," "for their own good." These cuts in assistance and services may be painful at first, this reasoning goes, and some suggest that this current generation of poor parents may have to be written off, but in the long run these harsh measures will enable the next generation to "stand on their own two feet." Congress, the tough but responsible parent, will force the poor, as though they were rebellious adolescents, to shape up, to reform their delinquent ways.

Just over a decade ago, social scientist Charles Murray, author of *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950-1980*, articulated the values, priorities, and underlying agenda of America's war against the poor: "Some people are better than others. They deserve more of society's rewards, of which money is only one small part. A principal function of social policy is to make sure they have the opportunity to reap those rewards. Government cannot identify the worthy, but it can protect a society in which the worthy can identify themselves," (Murray, 1984, p. 234). Thus Murray was calling for government to legitimize the existing social and economic hierarchy by safeguarding the affluence and lifestyles of those whom he has deemed "better" and more "worthy."

The rhetoric that accompanied and paved the way for the continuing assault on programs for poor women and children was fueled by a pledge made by candidate Bill Clinton during the 1992 presidential campaign to "put an end to welfare as we know it," (DeParle, July, 1994). As Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat from New York, stated, "The Republicans took him at his word" and went much further. But the only real way to end welfare as we know it, Moynihan continues, is "just to dump the children on the streets," (Pear, 1995).

Prior to the repeal of Aids to Families with Dependent Children by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, the litany of criticism against poor, single women was relentless. Mother-only families were blamed for virtually all of the ills afflicting American society. Out-of-wedlock births were blamed for the "breakdown of the family," for the crime rate, drug and alcohol addiction, poverty, illiteracy, homelessness, poor school performance and the rending of the social fabric. The labeling of some citizens as "dependent"—that is, dependent on social welfare programs rather than on spouses, parents or other family members, or other, more acceptable Federal programs—has been used indiscriminately to discredit an entire group of women and children without regard to their character or their specific work and/or family history.

As the political tide turned rapidly against the poor, particularly poor women, rhetoric escalated to previously unimagined levels of hyperbole and vitriol. At a 1994 news conference called by the Mainstream Forum, a group of centrist and conservative House Democrats affiliated with the Democratic Leadership Council, the political organization President Clinton helped found and headed when he was Governor of Arkansas, Representative Nathan Deal, a Georgia Democrat, declared that welfare was dead. He went on to state, "The stench from its decaying carcass has filled the nostrils of every American," (DeParle, May, 1994).

The very words that are being used tell us what to think and how to feel. Poor women are characterized by their "dependence," an absolute negative, a polar opposite from that valued American characteristic, "independence." This label presumes that *they* are "dependent," that *they* passively rely on the government for their day-to-day needs while *we*, the rest of us, are "independent," "pull ourselves up by our bootstraps," are out there "on our own." These designations leave no room for the considerable variation and complexity that characterize most people's lives, for the fact that virtually all of us are in varying degrees dependent on others and on societal supports during our adult lives—that many of us have been recipients of financial or other kinds of help from family members, that many have been helped by inheritance, by assistance in finding (and sometimes keeping) a job, by tax

deductions for mortgage payments, or the Federal subsidy of farm prices or highways, or by programs such as Medicare or Unemployment Compensation or disability assistance.

Dividing people into "us" and "them" is facilitated by the resurrection of terms such as "illegitimacy" that encourage the shaming and denigration of mothers and their out-of-wedlock children, for it is far easier to refuse aid to "them," to people who engage in disgraceful, stigmatized behavior than to people who seem like "us." David Boaz, executive vice-president of the Cato Institute, a libertarian organization, even hoped to resurrect the term "bastard:" "We've made it possible for a teen-age girl to survive with no husband and no job. That used to be very difficult. If we had more stigma and lower benefits, might we end up with 100,000 bastards every year rather than a million children born to alternative families?" (Wines, April, 1995).

Poor, single mothers, particularly AFDC recipients, have been portrayed as the ultimate outsiders—marginalized as non-workers in a society that claims belief in the work ethic, marginalized as single parents in a society that holds the two-parent, heterosexual family as the desired norm, marginalized as poor people in a society that worships success and material rewards and marginalized as people of color when in reality millions of whites live in poverty. One of the key myths in the demonizing of poor women is that most of the impoverished, single, child-bearing women are black. This image of the poor, inexorably intertwined with the long-standing baggage of racist ideology, facilitates their being perceived as deviants, as the ultimate outsiders. As anthropologist Leith Mullings has stated, "Women of color, and particularly African-American women, are the focus of well-elaborated, strongly held . . . ideologies concerning race, class, and gender." She goes on to state that "the images, representation, and symbols that form ideologies often have complex meanings and associations that are not easily or readily articulated, making them difficult to challenge," (Mullings, 1994, pp. 265–89).

Historically, African-American women have been described on the one hand by the image of "'Mammy,' the religious, loyal, motherly slave . . ." and, on the other hand, by the image of "'Jezebel,' the sexually aggressive, provocative woman governed

entirely by libido." As Mullings states, this Mammy/Jezebel stereotype is a variation of the widespread madonna/whore dualism but the issue of race adds an even more pernicious element to the classic stereotype. The view of African Americans as a different species, what Mullings and others have termed the "otherness of race," has "justified the attribution of excessive sexuality." That "sexuality continues to be a major theme in the discourse about race" assures that it is also a major theme in the discourse about poor women. Moreover, the Mammy image, so prevalent through the first half of the twentieth century and memorialized in popular culture by the film *Gone With the Wind*, has been replaced, according to Mullings, by the image of the "emasculating matriarch," (Mullings, 1994, pp. 265–89). Therefore, whether through overt sexuality or through control within the family that supposedly robs black men of their authority and power, black women are portrayed as deviant and as the primary cause of the problems within the black family and within the black community.

Patricia Hill Collins, author of *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, analyzes the ways in which these deeply rooted images of black women underlie and buttress the harsh treatment of poor women over the past two decades and particularly during the 1990s:

Portraying African-American women as matriarch allows the dominant group to blame Black women for the success or failure of Black children. Assuming that Black poverty is passed on intergenerationally, via value transmission in families, an elite white male standpoint suggests that Black children lack the attention and care allegedly lavished on white, middle-class children and that diverts attention from the political and economic inequality affecting Black mothers and children and suggests that anyone can rise from poverty if he or she only received good values at home. Those African-Americans who remain poor are blamed for their own victimization (Collins, 1990, p. 74).

Since the 1994 election, attacks on other groups in the United States—particularly on criminals and potential criminals and on immigrants—have also escalated sharply. This process has included verbal denigration as well as cruel and unusual treatment of those who are traditionally perceived as outsiders. There has

been harsh rhetoric against documented and undocumented immigrants, as well as attempts to deprive them of essential human services. Prisoners who are mentally ill, functionally illiterate, and otherwise usually exempt from such inhumane punishment are being executed. Chain gangs and forced labor have returned to the Alabama penal system. It is surely no accident that all of these groups are made up largely of low-income people of color. But the harshest rhetoric and most sweeping policy changes have been reserved for the poor, particularly poor women. It is the convergence of class, gender, and race that makes this sweeping attack on one segment of society possible.

This denigration of poor welfare recipients is based in large part on dichotomous thinking and on the repetition and reiteration of commonly held myths about poor women and their children. The dichotomous thinking underlying much of the so-called welfare debate divides people, primarily women, into "good" and "bad;" "workers" and "idlers;" those who abide by the traditional "family values" and those who do not; good caring mothers and those who have been characterized by Charles Murray as "rotten mothers." Even children are being characterized by this either/or language: "legitimate" versus "illegitimate" (or "bastards"); young people who become productive citizens as opposed to those who are truant, drop out of school, or engage in early childbearing and other forms of "anti-social" behavior.

As Elaine Pagels points out in her book, *The Origin of Satan*, many cultures throughout the world and over the span of recorded human history have divided people into "we" and "they," "human" and "nonhuman." The "we" is often correlated with the "human" while the "they" are envisaged as "nonhuman." Pagels claims this kind of dichotomous thinking is deeply embedded in the Judeo-Christian tradition (Pagels, 1995, xviii).

The scathing stereotyping of poor mothers has severe consequences for them, for their children, and for the society as a whole. As sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) has pointed out:

By definition, of course we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human. On this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his life chances. We construct a stigma-theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger he represents . . . (p. 5).

Perhaps the most dehumanizing and degrading references to welfare recipients occurred on the floor of the House of Representatives on March 24, 1995 during the debate on a bill that would cut \$69 billion in spending on social welfare programs over the next five years. Welfare recipients were compared to animals by two Republican members of the House. Representative John L. Mica of Florida held up a sign that said, "Don't Feed the Alligators." He explained, "We post these warnings because unnatural feeding and artificial care create dependency. When dependency sets in, these otherwise able alligators can no longer survive on their own." Mica then noted that while "people are not alligators . . . we've upset the natural order. We've created a system of dependency," (Pear, March, 1995).

Representative Barbara Cubin of Wyoming carried the analogy still further:

The Federal Government introduced wolves into the State of Wyoming, and they put them in the pens, and they brought back elk and venison to them every day. This is what I call the wolf welfare program. The Federal Government provided everything that the wolves need for their existence. But guess what? They opened the gates and let the wolves out, and now the wolves won't go. Just like any animal in the species, any mammal, when you take away their freedom and their dignity and their ability, they can't provide for themselves . . . (Pear, March, 1995).

Toni Morrison (1974) in her book *The Bluest Eye*, a novel that deals explicitly with the denigration of black women in white America, describes the impact of demonizing an entire sector of society:

Outdoors, we knew, was the real terror of life . . .

There is a difference between being put *out* and being put *outdoors*. If you are put out, you go somewhere else; if you are outdoors, there is no place to go. The distinction was subtle but final. Outdoors was the end of something, an irrevocable, physical fact, defining and complementing our metaphysical condition (p. 18).

The persistence of myths about welfare recipients and the resistance of policy-makers to the true facts despite repeated reiteration of them by experts in the field of social welfare are noteworthy. It appears that the United States *needs* to have someone

to blame, people to hate, a group to rally against. For nearly a half century Americans had a clear-cut enemy—Communism. Throughout the Cold War, there was an ideology we could despise, countries to fear, foreign leaders to demonize. We had external villains whom we could blame for many of the world's ills and whom we could identify as evil in order to define ourselves as good. With the virtual world-wide breakdown of so-called Communist countries (with the exception of Cuba and North Korea), who would be the enemy now? Whom could we distrust and despise? Who would be the devil that in comparison would make us feel righteous and worthy? Who would be the "them" to help us to feel more truly "us?"

Moreover, over the past two decades we have seen a dramatic economic shift within the U.S.—a massive concentration of wealth and income in the hands of the richest among us. In 1977, the highest fifth of all households received 44 percent of total national income, the middle three-fifths received 51.8 percent while the lowest fifth received 4.2 percent. By 1993 the income of the highest fifth rose to 48.2 percent, the highest percentage of income on record for that group; the income of the middle three-fifths dropped to 48.2 percent, the lowest share on record; and the bottom fifth only received 3.6 percent, also the lowest share ever recorded. Over the same decade and a half, the income of the top 5 percent rose from 16.8 percent to 20 percent (Center of Budget and Policy Priorities, 1994). Furthermore, according to Kevin Phillips (1994), author of *Arrogant Capital: Washington, Wall Street, and the Frustration of American Politics*, "the 100,000 American Families in the top tenth of one percent enjoy by far and away the greatest wealth and income gains in the 1980s" but despite their enormous affluence "the Clinton tax increases of 1993 did not concentrate on the high-income, high-political-influence, investment dollar rich, the people making \$4 million or \$17 million a year," (pp. 206–07). There is consequently a greater gap in income today between rich and poor than at any time since such data have been collected and, as Phillips points out, those profiting the most are the top tenth of one percent.

If we examine differences in wealth among the U.S. population, we see an even more dramatic differential. In 1989, the top one half of one percent (the "super-rich") owned 31.4 percent of

total household wealth, an increase of five percentage points since 1983. Moreover, the top 20 percent of the population owned 84.6 percent of total wealth. Since one-fifth of Americans owned 84.6 percent of total wealth, the remaining four-fifths of Americans owned only 15.4 percent. More specifically, the top one-half of one percent owned nearly twice as much wealth (31.4%) as the bottom 80 percent of all Americans (15.4%). Moreover, preliminary estimates indicate that between 1989 and 1992, 68 percent of the increase in total household wealth went to the richest one percent—an even greater gain than during the 1980s (Wolff, 1994, pp. 143–174).

Despite the economic boom and low unemployment rates of the 1990s, millions of families have seen their neighborhoods deteriorate, the quality of schools, public transportation, health care and other services decline, their feelings of physical insecurity rise, and their overall quality of life plummet. Whom can they blame? During the past twenty years when the working class and the middle class were losing ground, a period during which the rich and “truly rich” were increasing their income and share of the nation’s wealth to what many consider obscene levels, we have seen a strategy on the part of many politicians, policy makers, and conservative strategists to encourage the middle and working classes to blame the poor and the powerless, particularly women and people of color, rather than the rich and powerful for their losses.

As Thomas and Mary Edsall, authors of *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (1991), point out:

Racial polarization, in effect, helped create a political climate receptive to an economic agenda based on the conservative principle that sharply increasing incentives and rewards for those people and interests at the top of the economic pyramid and decreasing government support for those at the bottom would combine to spur economic expansion and growth . . .

Insofar as those in the bottom quintile of the income distribution can be identified as disproportionately black and Hispanic—making possible the isolation of the poor as conceptually separable from the white majority—racial polarization facilitates the enactment of regressive redistributive policies. And insofar as the government programs serving those in the bottom of the income distribution

simultaneously divide the poor from the working class and black from white, whose programs are highly vulnerable to conservative assault (p. 13).

Blaming the poor and powerless for America's social and economic problems is far more comforting and acceptable than blaming the rich and powerful. Blaming the poor upholds a fundamental tenet of the American Dream: that individuals can dramatically alter the course of their own lives, that they can rise in the class hierarchy on their own initiative. To maintain our own dreams of success we must blame the poor for their failure; if their failure is due to flaws in the structure of society, these same societal limitations could thwart our dreams of success. The notion that the failure of the poor is due to their characterological weaknesses enable others to blame the impoverished for their own poverty while simultaneously preserving the faith of the non-poor in the possibility of success.

The times are therefore ripe for scapegoating. Scapegoats have been used throughout history to solve societal problems. In ancient Greece human scapegoats (*pharmakos*) were used to ward off plagues and other calamities. In early Roman law an innocent person was allowed to take on the penalty of another who had confessed his/her own guilt. In the Old Testament ritual of Yom Kippur, a goat was symbolically burdened with the sins of the Jewish people and then sent into the wilderness to rid the nation of its iniquities. Scapegoating has become national policy in the United States. We are indeed heaping the sins of a violent and unjust society on the poor and sending them out into the wilderness.

The problems the United States must address as we move into the next century are widespread poverty amidst incredible affluence, massive hopelessness and alienation among those who feel outside of the boundaries of the society, and a deeply-felt despair among the poor and the working class that is increasingly expressed through violence. There is no question that the welfare system in particular and the society in general has not addressed these issues and, in fact, has exacerbated them—not through generosity, not through making poor people dependent on a panoply of services but rather by not providing the essential

education, job training, child care, health care, and perhaps most important, jobs by which families can support themselves at a decent standard of living. The central problem American society must deal with is not the character of poor women and the structure of the welfare system; the central problem is poverty and the multiplicity of ways that it is embedded in the structure of American society. We must recognize that people are not poor due to characterological defects but rather that the poverty that plagues so many Americans has been socially constructed and therefore must be dealt with by fundamental economic and social change.

Over three decades ago, Michael Harrington ended his powerful expose of poverty in America, *The Other America*, with the following words: "The means are at hand to fulfill the age-old dream: poverty can now be abolished. . . . How long shall we look the other way while our fellow human beings suffer? How long?" (Harrington, 1963, p. 170).

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Elderly Immigrants: Their Composition and Living Arrangements

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This paper describes how the composition of elderly immigrants is changing and how elderly immigrants differ from natives in terms of living arrangement and demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. The determinants of living alone are investigated for 11 ethnic origin categories and natives. The analysis utilizes data from two samples of the 1990 U.S. Census: the PUMS-A 5% sample and an independent 3% sample of households containing at least one member 60 or more years of age. Between 1970 and 1990 immigrants from Asia and Latin America moved from forming a minor component of the elderly to being a significant and rapidly growing part of the elderly population which is also expanding rapidly. Elderly immigrants from developing countries have distinctly different living arrangement profiles from natives and from other immigrant elderly. They are significantly more likely to be living with children as well as with others, and distinctly less likely to be living alone or with spouse only. However, there is no single pattern for all immigrants and even within the broad categories of developing and developed origin groups there is considerable heterogeneity of living arrangements. The most important source of differences in the odds of elderly living alone is the degree of integration, indexed by English language fluency, duration of U.S. residence, and citizenship status. Economic resources also significantly influence the odds that elderly from developing countries live alone. Demographic and physical limitation factors, while important in influencing type of living arrangement in general, do not contribute significantly to immigrant group differentials in living arrangements.

The aging of the U.S. population has captured increased scholarly and policy attention in recent years and will undoubtedly capture more in the years ahead as the elderly population grows from one in eight Americans in 1995 to one in five by the year 2030 (Treas 1995; Treas and Torrecilha 1995; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1996). The ethnic composition of the U.S. elderly population is also changing rapidly and this shift and the implications of that change have attracted some research attention (Jackson et al. 1993; Kramer, Stanford, and Torres-Gil 1994; Stanford and Yee 1991). Very little research attention, however, has been given to elderly immigrants, except for an article by Wilmoth, DeJong and Himes (1997), or to the role of immigration as a contributor to the shifting ethnic composition of the elderly population. We seek to address that omission in this paper by looking at how the composition of elderly immigrants is changing. We also examine how elderly immigrants differ from native non-Hispanic whites in their social demographic characteristics, economic resources, health status, and living arrangements. In addition to examining these dimensions for elderly immigrants as a whole, we look at patterns for the ten largest immigrant groups. Finally, we assess the extent to which differences between natives and elderly immigrants in living arrangements stem from the national origins of immigrants, from differences between elderly immigrants and natives in demographic characteristics, economic resources and health status, and/or from the extent of integration of elderly immigrants into U.S. society.

SHIFTING COMPOSITION OF U.S. ELDERLY POPULATION

According to the U.S. Administration on Aging (1996), the two most rapidly growing segments of the elderly population are Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders. In the 1995 to 2010 period, for instance, Asians and other races¹ are expected to grow by 55.4 percent, Hispanics by 52.7 percent, Blacks by 21 percent, and whites by 9.9 percent (U.S. Administration on Aging 1996). The fact that these differential growth rates will be heavily influenced by immigration becomes clear from projections of the growth of the native and foreign-born components of the U.S. population prepared by Pitkin and Simmons (1996); their projections show

that from 1995 to 2010, the elderly of foreign-born origin will increase by 68.5 percent, compared to a 16.7 percent increase for the native-born population. Given these differential growth rates of native-born and foreign-born elderly, it is hardly surprising that the ethnic composition of the elderly population will change rapidly in the years ahead. For instance, Hispanics are expected to increase their share of the elderly population from 4.5 percent in 1995 to 17.5 percent by 2050; Asians, Pacific Islanders and other races will increase from 2.3 percent in 1995 to 10.9 percent in 2050; Black Americans will increase slightly, from 8.1 percent in 1995 to 10.9 percent in 2050; and non-Hispanic whites will decrease proportionately (U.S. Administration on Aging 1996).

An examination of changes in the national origins of foreign-born elderly from 1970 to 1990, drawing on census data, illustrates further the shifting composition of elderly immigrants. Table 1 identifies the top ten countries of origin for foreign-born elderly aged 60 and over in 1970 and 1990 and gives the percentage change in size of those populations in that period. Foreign-born elderly who come from a country other than a top ten one are aggregated into an "Other Foreign Born" category (last row of Table 1). Table 1 shows that while 69.6 percent of elderly immigrants originated in a top ten country in 1970, that percentage dropped to 61.9 percent in 1990. This drop is consistent with increasing diversification in the origins of U.S. immigrants, a trend that has been well documented (Bouvier 1992; Reimers 1985).

In addition, the countries in the top ten listing changed during the period. Whereas Mexico was the only developing country on the list in 1970, by 1990 it was the second largest source of elderly immigrants and three other developing countries—Cuba, China and the Philippines—were also among the top ten senders. In contrast, European countries in the top ten dropped from eight in 1970 to five in 1990. More importantly, the percentage change in the population size of elderly immigrants from different countries in the 1970–90 period, shown in the last column of Table 1, indicates that elderly immigrants from the five European countries, i.e. Italy, Germany, United Kingdom, Poland and USSR, experienced an absolute decline in size from 1970 to 1990 while those from the four developing countries greatly increased in size—Chinese, Filipino, Cuban, and Mexican elderly increased

Table 1

Population size, distribution and change in ten largest foreign born groups, 1970 and 1990

Origin	1970			1990		
	Origin	Population size	% of all foreign born	Origin	Population size	% of all foreign born
Italy		564,676	14.6	Canada	303,333	8.5
USSR		354,141	9.2	Mexico	301,290	8.5
Germany		329,462	8.5	Italy	280,351	7.9
Poland		325,371	8.4	Germany	263,687	7.4
UK		296,086	7.7	Cuba	221,506	6.2
Canada		272,052	7.0	UK	216,843	6.1
Mexico		157,979	4.1	Poland	182,289	5.1
Austria		148,799	3.9	USSR	153,009	4.3
Ireland		137,548	3.6	China	146,483	4.1
Hungary		101,546	2.6	Philippines	133,865	3.8
Other foreign born		1,175,643	30.4	Other foreign born	1,352,534	38.1
Total foreign born		3,863,303	100.0	Total foreign born	3,555,190	100.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1973, *Census of Population: 1970, Subject Reports, Final Report PC(2)-1A, National Origin and Language*, Table 10, pages 66-71; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993, *1990 Census of Population, The Foreign Born Population in the United States*, Table 1, pages 1-64.

^a In 1970, Filipinos were not identified as an elderly origin group. Based on other information on persons of Filipino ancestry in 1970 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1973), we estimated that there were 25,000 elderly born in the Philippines in 1970 and use that figure to calculate percentage change from 1970 to 1990.

by 441.1 percent, 435.5 percent, 342.9 percent, and 90.7 percent, respectively, from 1970 to 1990. In contrast, Canadians were the only group of predominantly non-Hispanic white origins that experienced an increase in size, albeit only a modest one (11.5%).

Dynamics from two immigration waves are shaping the shifting ethnic composition of elderly immigrants. The first wave occurred during the first two decades of this century when the United States was receiving annual inflows of about 700,000 immigrants, largely from European countries. The second immigration wave started in the late 1960s, reached annual levels of 800–900,000 by the early 1990s, and continues today. In contrast to the European origins of most first wave immigrants, the bulk of today's immigrants come from Asia or Latin America. Indeed, in 1990, only 14.6 percent of new immigrants were of European origin (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1991). Given these trends and the fact that most Europeans from the first wave have already reached their elderly years, it is clear that the numbers of elderly immigrants of European origin will continue to decline rapidly in the years ahead while those from Asia and Latin America will increase (Pitkin and Simmons 1996).² In addition, growth of the foreign-born elderly population is being sped up by the fact that growing numbers of new immigrants admitted to the United States are already elderly or at older ages. Greenwood, Hussain and McDowell (1997) calculated, for instance, that only 8.1 percent of newly admitted immigrants in 1972 were aged 50 and older but that 15.5 percent were of that age in 1991.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS ARE IMPORTANT

Mindel (1979) and others (Wolf 1990; Wolf and Soldo 1988) show that independent living arrangements are increasing among the elderly and co-residence with kin decreasing. This trend toward independent living, defined as living alone or with spouse only, is usually interpreted as reflecting individual preferences (Soldo, Wolf, and Agree 1990). A number of factors are known to be important correlates of independent living, including age, sex, ethnicity, and economic resources. In addition, functional limitations and availability of kin (Burr and Mutchler 1992 and 1993; Waite and Hughes 1997; Zsembik 1993) shape living arrangements. It is often claimed that elderly who live alone are

in a more vulnerable situation than those who live with a spouse and/or own children (Himes 1992; Waite 1997). Mui and Burnette (1994) found that while elderly who live alone have better physical and functional health than elderly living with others, they also experienced more depression, loneliness, and social isolation than the latter.

Given the increasing numbers of elderly immigrants, a key question is whether they will follow the trend of native-born elderly toward increased independent living. Although several studies of living arrangements among minority elderly show that Black Americans, Hispanics, and Asians are significantly more likely than non-Hispanic whites to live in extended households (Burr and Mutchler 1992, 1993; Choi 1991; Kamo and Zhou 1994; Lubben and Becerra 1987; Mutchler and Frisbie 1987; Zsembik 1993), most of these studies do not differentiate between the native-born and foreign-born components of the minority groups studied. Thus, although immigrants are a large and growing component of elderly Asian and Hispanic populations, we do not know the extent to which their living arrangements differ from those of minority native-born or from native-born non-Hispanic whites. A study by Kamo and Zhou (1994) suggests, however, that immigration status is an important factor that accounts for differences between native whites and Asians in living arrangements.

Wilmoth, DeJong and Himes (1997) did examine the living arrangements of elderly immigrants of European, Latin American and Asian origin and compared how they differed from those of their native-born counterparts of same ancestry (i.e. non-Hispanic whites, Hispanics, and Asians). For all three minority groups, they found that elderly immigrants are significantly more likely than their native-born counterparts to live in extended families. Wilmoth et al.'s study (1997) also suggests that elderly immigrants' degree of integration influences outcomes since they found that those who spoke English poorly or were 60 years of age or older when they migrated to the United States were significantly more likely to reside in extended families than other elderly immigrants.³ They did not, however, examine other integration indicators or assess how the living arrangements of minority immigrants compare to those of non-Hispanic whites. A study by Boyd (1991) of elderly immigrant women in Canada also shows

that immigrants are more likely than natives to live in extended families in that context.

In this study, we extend these earlier analyses by examining first how elderly immigrants differ from native non-Hispanic whites in their characteristics and living arrangements. We then focus on the patterns for the ten largest immigrant groups, in addition to all other foreign born who are treated as an 11th group. Previous studies of elderly minorities have focused on Hispanic and/or Asian minorities. In this study, however, we look at discrete national origin groups because we assume that there is considerable heterogeneity within the elderly immigrant population and that groups defined as of similar ethnicity based on language (Hispanics) or region of origin (Asians) may differ considerably from each other in socioeconomic characteristics and living arrangements. Just as earlier studies allowed us to appreciate differences in integration processes between Europeans of British, German, Irish, Italian, Polish and other heritages (Abramson 1973; Jiobu 1990; Lieberman 1963), we expect that comparative studies of contemporary immigrants will reveal important differences between Mexicans, Cubans, Dominicans, Salvadorans, Colombians and other groups usually aggregated together as Hispanics or among others (Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Koreans, etc.) who are aggregated as Asians. At the very least, it is important to determine the extent to which there are significant differences across recent immigrant groups before treating them as homogeneous populations.⁴

CHARACTERISTICS AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE ELDERLY POPULATION

Since we are interested in analyzing how the living arrangements of immigrants in specific origin groups differ from each other and from natives, we need a database that has a large number of cases. The only databases that satisfy this condition are the Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS) from the 1990 U.S. Census. In this study, we merge data from two 1990 Public Use Microdata Samples—PUMS-5% and PUMS-O. The PUMS-5% is a 5 percent sample of the total population counted in 1990 and the PUMS-O is an independent 3% sample of households in 1990

that had at least one member aged 60 or over. Since the PUMS-5% and PUMS-O files are independent samples and have comparable data on individuals, households, and geographic areas, they can be merged to form an 8% sample of elderly persons in the 1990 U.S. population.⁵ To assure a sufficient number of elderly immigrants from different origins in the database, our analysis sample includes all foreign-born persons aged 60 and over (N=278,174) in the merged PUMS-8% file. In addition, we drew a 0.0075 sample of natives from the PUMS-8% (N=24,229) and use weights for population estimates.⁶ We assume that foreign-born persons identified in the census are permanent residents of the United States and use the terms foreign born and immigrants interchangeably in the paper.⁷

Individuals are our unit of analysis. We focus on specific nativity groups in our descriptive analysis and use dummy variables in our multivariate analysis to classify immigrants by country of birth. Table 2 provides demographic, socioeconomic, immigration and integration statistics for all native-born and foreign-born elderly in 1990 and for the ten largest origin groups and an 11th category composed of all other foreign born. For summary purposes, we classify the top ten source countries according to conventional categories of "developed" and "developing."⁸ While a perusal of Rows 1 and 2, Table 2, suggests that foreign-born and native-born elderly are relatively similar in their age, sex, and education characteristics, it becomes clear when we examine statistics for the different national origin groups that there is considerable diversity among elderly immigrants.

On average, elderly immigrants from China, Cuba, Mexico, and the Philippines tend to be younger than elderly immigrants from the six "developed" countries. Although over 50 percent of elderly immigrants in all origin groups are female, elderly immigrants from China and the Philippines are least likely to be female, 53.3 and 53.9 percent, respectively. In contrast, over 66 percent of German and British elderly are female. The socioeconomic profiles of elderly immigrant groups also differ considerably. While Mexican elderly have only 4.7 years of schooling, on average, British, Canadian and German elderly have over 9 years. Moreover, the "developed/developing" origins of elderly

Table 2

Demographic, socioeconomic, immigration and integration characteristics of non-Hispanic white native-born and foreign-born elderly by national origins, 1990

	Mean age (years)	% female	Education (mean years of school)	% with no Social Security	Mean personal income (\$)	% with functional limitation	% arrived before 1950	% citizen	% who speak English well or very well
Native born	70.8	58.4	9.0	28.8	16,067.11	19.5	—	100.0	99.2
Foreign born	72.3	60.1	8.0	40.3	13,739.38	24.7	45.8	68.5	74.1
"Developing" origin groups	70.2	55.1	6.7	55.0	9,810.96	22.4	23.0	46.7	44.8
China	69.7	53.3	7.5	62.5	10,905.09	18.4	18.6	47.3	33.6
Cuba	70.1	56.6	7.7	46.7	11,187.42	22.8	6.1	48.4	34.9
Mexico	70.6	55.4	4.7	47.2	7,903.09	24.5	40.0	39.9	43.7
Philippines	70.2	53.9	8.7	67.0	10,571.80	21.6	18.1	58.3	76.0
"Developed" origin groups	73.9	61.9	8.5	27.2	15,918.22	24.9	64.1	83.0	89.8
Canada	72.9	64.3	9.2	24.8	16,209.22	18.5	71.9	78.2	98.5
England	72.4	68.3	9.7	29.7	16,648.22	17.6	62.1	74.7	99.8
Germany	72.7	66.2	9.3	29.9	18,069.26	25.0	60.0	89.3	97.4
Italy	75.2	57.2	6.4	25.2	13,233.65	28.1	69.1	86.5	79.1
Poland	73.9	55.4	7.7	25.9	17,177.03	27.2	57.4	85.8	84.6
USSR	76.3	60.1	8.6	29.2	14,690.67	33.2	58.2	80.7	78.4
Other foreign born	72.0	61.3	8.2	45.6	13,840.29	25.8	40.6	66.6	75.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1990 PUMS, combined sample from 5% and PUMS-O 3%).

immigrants are not closely associated with the educational levels of the different groups. Table 1 shows, for instance, that elderly immigrants from Italy, a developed country, have the second lowest level of education (6.4 years), while those from Mexico have the lowest level of education (4.7 years). In contrast, elderly immigrants from the Philippines, a developing country sender, are relatively well educated. The national origins of elderly immigrants are related to average income levels since Table 2 shows that elderly immigrants from the "developing" country groups have lower average income and are less likely to receive Social Security than those from "developed" countries. Indeed, Social Security, a principal income source for the elderly, is not received at all by 55 percent of elderly immigrants from China, Cuba, Mexico and the Philippines compared to 27.2 percent of those from "developed" countries. Filipino elderly are least likely to receive Social Security (67.0%).

The percentage of elderly immigrants who have a functional limitation, defined as either a physical mobility limitation or a personal care limitation, tends to be higher for elderly immigrants, on average, than it is for native-born elderly—24.7 versus 19.5 percent, respectively. More than 27 percent of Italian, Polish and Russian elderly had a functional limitation in 1990 but other groups, namely Chinese, Canadian, and British elderly, were less likely than native-born to have a functional limitation. The last three columns of Table 2 show the percentages of elderly immigrants in each group who migrated to the United States before 1950, who are citizens, and who speak English only or very well. As expected, the four groups from developing regions have relatively low percentages who migrated to the United States before 1950, are less likely to be citizens, and have lower percentages who speak English only or very well. But there are important differences across the groups. While 40 percent of Mexican elderly arrived before 1950, only 6.1 percent of Cubans were in the United States by that year. Among the groups from "developed" areas, on the other hand, more than 57 percent immigrated before 1950, over 74 percent are citizens, and over 78 percent speak English very well.

The living arrangements of the same eleven groups of elderly immigrants can be compared to those of natives in Table 3.

Table 3

Living arrangements of elderly non-Hispanic white native-born and foreign-born groups from largest origin countries, 1990^a

	Alone	Spouse only	Children ^b	Others ^c	Institutionalized
Native born	25.7	45.1	16.7	8.2	4.2
Foreign born	21.8	33.7	30.3	9.9	4.3
"Developing" origin groups	12.8	23.8	46.7	15.0	1.6
China	11.2	26.0	51.6	9.4	1.7
Cuba	16.5	31.4	32.3	18.3	1.5
Mexico	14.2	20.4	49.1	14.4	1.9
Philippines	5.5	16.6	60.1	16.8	1.0
"Developing" origin groups	27.9	42.9	18.4	6.3	4.5
Canada	28.5	47.2	14.0	6.1	4.3
England	27.6	47.0	15.5	5.9	4.1
Germany	29.1	46.4	14.5	5.6	4.4
Italy	24.5	35.7	28.9	6.8	4.0
Poland	26.8	43.7	18.8	6.5	4.2
USSR	31.3	37.9	17.6	7.3	6.0
Other foreign born	21.0	30.1	32.6	10.4	5.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1990 PUMS, combined sample from 5% and PUMS-O 3%).

^a All numbers are percentages and rows sum to 100 (some rows may not sum to 100 due to rounding errors).

^b Elderly who live with at least one child are included in this category; 57.8% of these families also include a spouse or an unmarried partner.

^c Elderly who live with other related or unrelated persons are included in this category; 28.9% of these households also include a spouse or an unmarried partner.

We classified the total elderly population by five types of living arrangements—the percentages living alone, living with spouse only, living with children, living with others, and living in group quarters or institutions. Categories one and two, i.e. living alone or with spouse only, are self explanatory, since no person, other

than those noted, is included in those families. Elderly living with children, however, may have a spouse present and others may also be present. We assume that elderly living with children have a potential care-giver present and, therefore, allow that condition to override the importance of a spouse also being present. A similar situation holds for elderly living with "Others." These "Others" may be a relative or a non-relative of the elderly person and no further condition is specified with regard to the age profile of "Others" in our analysis. A spouse may also be included in these families but we assume that the important condition from the standpoint of care and support for the elderly person is the fact that at least one other person is also present. We know that 57.8 percent of elderly living with children have a spouse present and that 28.9 percent of elderly living with "Others" do.

Table 3 confirms that foreign-born elderly are less likely than native-born elderly to live independently (i.e. alone or with spouse only) and more likely to live in extended families (i.e. with children or with others). Those patterns vary sharply, however, for different origin groups. For instance, while only 5.5 percent of elderly Filipinos live alone, 16.5 percent of elderly Cubans do, and over 27 percent of elderly Canadians, British, Germans and Russians live alone. Italians are the least likely of the "developed" country groups to live alone (24.5%). The percentages who live with only a spouse range from 16.6 percent of Filipino elderly to over 40 percent of Polish, Canadian, British and German elderly. Relatively small percentages of Mexicans and Chinese, on the other hand, live with spouse only (20.4 and 26 percent, respectively).

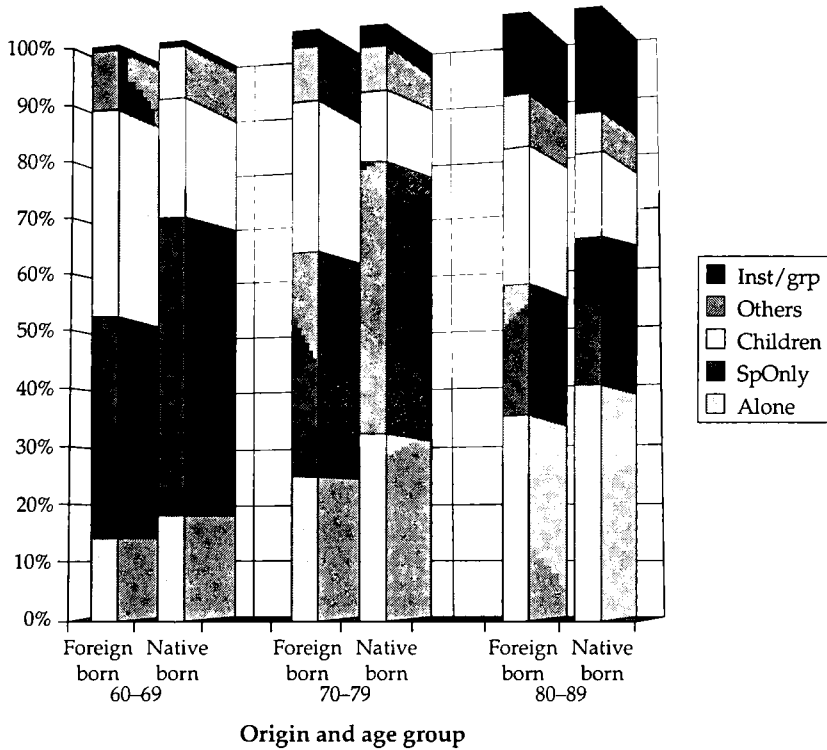
Although foreign-born elderly as a whole are almost twice as likely as native-born elderly to live with children, 30.3 and 16.7 percent, respectively, those rates also vary considerably by national origin. Elderly immigrants from the Philippines are most likely to live with children—60.1 percent do so—but only about 14 percent of the elderly from Canada and Germany live with a child. All of the "developing" country groups are more likely than "developed" ones to live with children but there is some diversity within these groupings. For instance, Italians, a "developed" group, are almost as likely to live with children as Cubans, a "developing" country group, with rates of 28.9 and 32.3 percent, respectively. While only 9.9 percent of all elderly immigrants

live with "Other persons," that number rises to 18.3 percent for Cubans and drops to less than eight percent for the "developed" groups. Finally, the incidence of group or institutionalized living among foreign-born elderly from "developing" areas is less than 2 percent but rises to 4 percent or more for the "developed" groups. Elderly immigrants from the USSR are more likely than those from other countries to be institutionalized (6.0%).

Age and gender are two key dimensions that are known to be closely associated with living arrangements. For three age groups (60–69, 70–79, and 80 and over), Figure 1 shows the percentage in each type of living arrangement for native-born and foreign-born elderly. Although foreign-born elderly are less likely than native-born elderly to live alone at each age level, it is clear that both groups respond similarly to the aging process. For instance, for both natives and immigrants, the percentages in their 80s who live alone are more than double what they are for elderly in their 60s. In contrast, the percentages living with spouse only or with children decline with age for both natives and immigrants and the percentages living in institutions increase with age in both groups. Figure 2 shows how living arrangements differ for men and women by nativity status. Regardless of nativity, women are over twice as likely as men to live alone and much less likely to live with spouse only. Whether the elderly live with children, however, depends largely upon their nativity status. Foreign-born men and women have comparable percentages who live with children and both are more likely to be in that living arrangement than native-born elderly. However, women are more likely than men to live in institutional or group quarters and those rates do not vary by nativity status.

To explore whether period of immigration makes a difference for elderly living arrangements, we prepared a line graph that shows the percentage of elderly immigrants living alone by age, sex, and immigration period (Figure 3). Immigrants are disaggregated by sex into three immigration cohorts—immigrants who came to the United States before 1950, between 1950 and 1969, and between 1970–1990. For comparative purposes, the living arrangements of native-born elderly are also displayed (bold lines). Figure 3 suggests that immigration period is very closely associated with whether elderly immigrants live alone, especially among women. We find, for instance, that elderly immigrant

Figure 1

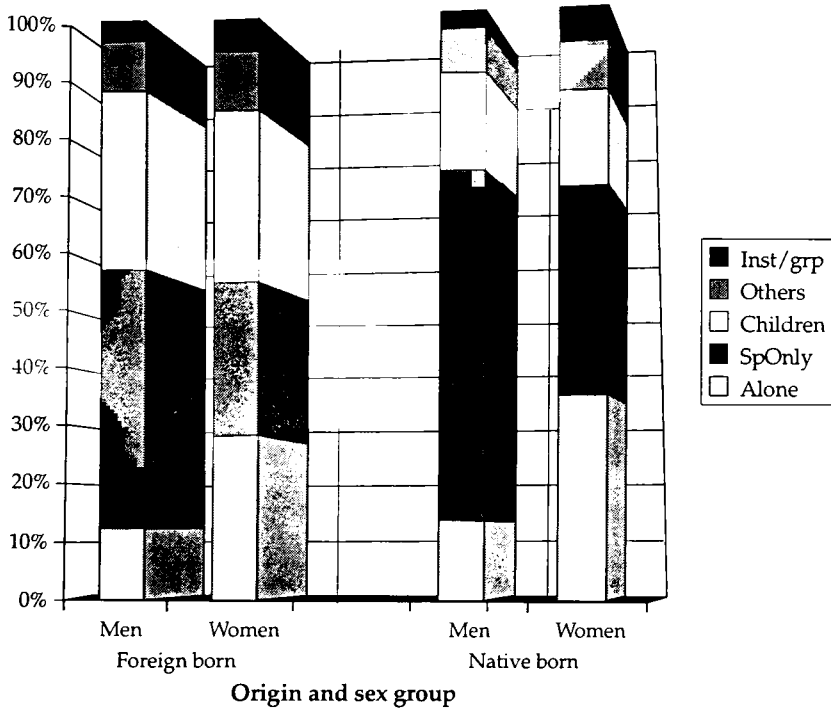
Living arrangements of elderly by origin and age group

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1990 PUMS, combined sample from 5% and PUMS-O 3%).

Note: SpOnly means "living with spouse only;" Inst/Grp means "being institutionalized or living in a group quarter."

women who arrived in the United States before 1950 are as likely to live alone as native-born women at each age level. While the percentages living alone increase for those two groups of women in their 60s and 70s, after age 84, they decline. For immigrant men who came to the USA before 1950 and native men, in contrast, the rates of living alone steadily increase with age, even among men in their 80s. Elderly immigrant men who arrived more recently,

Figure 2

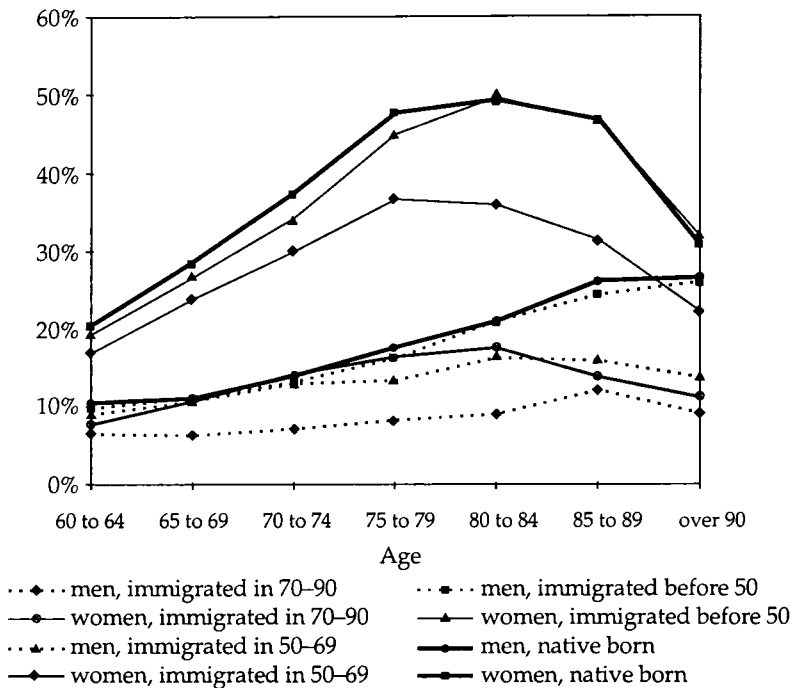
Living arrangements of elderly by origin and sex group

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1990 PUMS, combined sample from 5% and PUMS-O 3%).

Note: SpOnly means "living with spouse only;" Inst/Grp means "being institutionalized or living in a group quarter."

however, tend to be less likely to live alone after age 85. Least likely to live alone are immigrant men who arrived after 1950 and immigrant women who arrived in the 1970–90 period. In general, Figure 3 supports the argument that integration is an important factor influencing living arrangements since it shows that the longer elderly immigrants reside in the United States, the more their living arrangements correspond to those of natives.

Figure 3

Percentage of elderly living alone by age and immigration period

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1990 PUMS, combined sample from 5% and PUMS-O 3%).

SOURCES OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ELDERLY IMMIGRANTS AND NATIVES IN INDEPENDENT LIVING

Thus far our analysis establishes that elderly immigrants from different origins diverge considerably from natives in their demographic and socioeconomic profiles and in their living arrangements. We have also established that differentials between elderly immigrants and natives in living arrangements are closely related to their age, sex, and immigration period. We next address the issue of whether differentials between elderly immigrants and natives in independent living stem mainly from national origins,

differences in individual characteristics (demographic, economic resources, and health status) or the extent of integration into U.S. society. To evaluate the importance of these different dimensions, we use logistic regression since that technique permits us to control for multiple factors. We focus on a single living arrangement—living alone—since elderly in that arrangement are considered to be in a more vulnerable situation than elderly in other arrangements.

Measurement of Covariates and Model Specification

The outcome variable is whether the elderly person aged 60 or over lived alone in 1990. Elderly who are married and have a spouse present or who are living in institutions or group quarters are excluded from the multivariate analysis in order to constrain the sample to elderly who are making choices between living alone versus living with children or others in extended arrangements.⁹ Since previous research indicates that elderly immigrants' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, functional limitations, and degree of integration shape their living arrangements, we control for these factors in our analysis. We measure age as a categorical indicator since Figure 3 shows that it has a non-linear relationship to living arrangements for women; the categories used are ages 60–69=[referent], 70–79="1", and 80 and over="1". We include sex as a dummy variable (1=female; 0=male). A measure of functional limitation was constructed based on responses to two questions: "Because of a health condition that has lasted 6 or more months, does this persons have any difficulty (1) going outside the home alone, for example, to shop or visit a doctor's office or (2) taking care of his or her own personal needs, such as bathing, dressing or getting around inside the home?" If the response was yes to both of these questions, we gave functional limitation a code of "3"; if the response was yes to one question, we gave it a code of "2"; and if the response was no to both questions, we coded it "1." Because mobility limitation and care limitation are highly correlated, it is preferable to combine them into a single measure.

Economic resources are measured by education and income. Education indirectly assesses earning potential and is measured by an ordinal variable specifying different years of completed

schooling. Two income measures are utilized: a dummy variable set equal to "1" if no Social Security income was received in 1989 and respondent's total 1989 income. Since Social Security is a major source of income support for the elderly, we expect elderly who do not receive that type of income to be more dependent on spouses, children, or others and, therefore, less likely to live alone. In contrast, we expect to find increased odds of living alone as personal income increases. We use the square root of personal income to capture negative values and correct for skewness, and divide the resulting measure by ten to reduce scale differences.

Three measures are used to assess elderly immigrant's degree of integration into U.S. society—English language fluency, length of U.S. residence, and citizenship status. Although ideally we would like to have measures of intentions to remain in the United States and other behavioral aspects of integration, these are not available with census data. We expect to find that as elderly immigrants become more integrated, they will be more likely to live alone, i.e. to adopt the independent living arrangements favored by native non-Hispanic whites. To measure English language fluency, we use two dummy variables. The first is set equal to "1" if the respondent speaks only English at home and the second is set equal to "1" if the respondent speaks English well or very well. The second integration measure—length of U.S. residency—is an ordinal measure that ranges from 10 for persons who arrived before 1950 or were born in the USA to "1" for persons who entered in the 1987–90 period. Elderly immigrants who arrived more recently should be more likely than those who arrived years ago to live with relatives or with others, since they will have fewer ties to and knowledge of U.S. society. Finally we use a dummy variable for citizenship status that is coded "1" if the elderly immigrant is a native or naturalized citizen. This measure provides a crude assessment of commitment to the United States and we expect to find that elderly immigrants who are citizens will be more likely to live alone than non-citizens.¹⁰

Relative Importance of National Origin, Characteristics, and Integration for Living Alone

Since our main interest is to assess whether differences in independent living that occur between natives and elderly immigrants from different origins diminish after controlling for differences

across these groups in individual characteristics, we focus upon that relationship in our discussion of findings. To do this, we specify four sets of models in Table 4 that allow us to observe how the odds of living alone change for each national origin group as we control for differentials between natives and immigrants in characteristics and integration. We examine the same eleven national origin groups as we did in Tables 1–3. All foreign-born elderly are classified into one of the eleven groups. The findings are presented as odds ratios or the exponentiated value of the unstandardized regression coefficient ($\text{Exp}[B]$). Values in the ratio that exceed unity express a positive effect of the covariate on the occurrence of the event of living alone, relative to that which occurs for the referent population; a value less than unity expresses a negative likelihood that the outcome event occurs.

Model 1, Table 4, gives the odds that immigrants live alone relative to natives by their national origin status. These ratios were estimated from a model that included only the 11 dummy variables for national origin and thus represent the actual population odds that each origin group lives alone relative to natives. The national origin groups are ranked by the magnitude and direction of their difference with natives in odds of living alone. That model shows that Filipinos are 93 percent less likely than native non-Hispanic whites to live alone and Chinese, Mexicans, Cubans, Other Foreign Born, Italians and Poles are also significantly less likely than natives to live alone. Elderly immigrants from England, Canada, and Germany, on the other hand, are significantly more likely to live alone than natives. Russians are the only group that is not significantly different from natives.

Model 2 allows us to evaluate whether differences between elderly immigrants and natives in socio-demographic characteristics (age and sex) and functional limitation account for the national origin differences observed in Model 1. Our earlier descriptive analysis indicated that there is considerable diversity across the origin groups in these and other individual-level characteristics and, therefore, it is important to determine whether these differences account for origin differences in living arrangements. By comparing change in the unadjusted and adjusted odds ratios (i.e. Models 1 and 2), we can evaluate whether elderly immigrants would be more or less likely than natives to live alone, if they

Table 4

Logistic regression of the odds that the elderly live alone versus with others based on their national origins, socio-demographic characteristics and functional limitations, economic resources, and integration into U.S. society, for elderly who are non-institutionalized and have no spouse present, 1990^a

	Nativity Origin (Model 1)	+ Socio-demographic characteristics & health status (Model 2)	+ Socio-economic resources (Model 3)	+ Integration (Model 4)
Philippines	0.07	0.07	0.12	0.25
China	0.21	0.21	0.36	0.96 ^{ns}
Mexico	0.21	0.22	0.37	0.65
Cuba	0.32	0.32	0.48	1.16
Other foreign born	0.43	0.43	0.55	0.94 ^b
Italy	0.63	0.59	0.66	0.87
USSR	0.99 ^{ns}	.95 ^{ns}	1.01 ^{ns}	1.63
Poland	0.90 ^c	0.89	0.93 ^b	1.33
England	1.11 ^c	1.09 ^b	0.99 ^{ns}	1.33
Canada	1.21	1.14	1.07 ^b	1.33
Germany	1.24	1.25	1.15	1.51
Sex (1=female)		0.96	1.12	1.10
Age 70-79 (=1)		1.60	1.45	1.38
Age 80 or over (=1)		1.68	1.49	1.15
Functional limitation (1-3)		.74	.79	.79

Education (years)	1.04	1.02
No Social Security Income (=1)	.47	.68
Personal Income (sq. root)	1.07	1.05
Speaks only English (=1)		1.54
Speaks English well/very well (=1)		1.40
Length U.S. residency (1-10)		1.19
U. S. citizen (=1)		1.39
Log likelihood (sig=.0000)	-83913.701	-75459.367
-2LL test statistic (sig=.0000)	2330.08	5797.81
	-82847.285	-78358.272
	1215.64	2183.72

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1990 PUMS, combined sample from 5% and PUMS-O 3%).

^a All coefficients are significant at the .001 level unless otherwise noted.

^b Indicates significance at the .05 level.

^c Indicates significance at the .01 level.

had the same characteristics. Model 2 indicates that controlling for differences among elderly immigrants and natives in socio-demographic characteristics and functional limitations has almost no effect on their living arrangements. Only for Italians and Canadians does the odds ratio change somewhat. For instance, the odds that Canadian elderly live alone drop from 21 percent more likely than natives in Model 1 to 14 percent more likely in Model 2. Although socio-demographic characteristics and functional limitation are highly significant for living arrangements, Model 2 indicates that the relationships between those factors and living alone do not vary significantly by origin status. As expected, the odds of living alone increase with age but are less likely to occur among elderly with a functional limitation—the latter are 26 percent less likely to live on their own than elderly with no limitations. Women are slightly less likely to live alone than men, net of other differences.

In Model 3 we control for economic resources, including education and income. A comparison of odds ratios in Models 2 and 3 shows that for all of the groups, a convergence pattern occurs after controlling for differences in economic resources even though large differences persist. For the foreign-born elderly, limited economic resources are a major reason why they are more likely than natives to live alone. The three measures of economic resources have the expected relationships to living alone. Education and personal income significantly increase the odds of living alone and lack of Social Security income significantly decreases it.

In Model 4, we control for elderly immigrants' integration into U.S. society by assessing the importance of their English language ability, length of U.S. residency, and citizenship status for living arrangements. A comparison of Models 3 and 4 shows substantial change for several national origin groups. Indeed, after controlling for integration, in addition to characteristics controlled for in Models 2–3, we find no significant difference between Chinese and natives in independent living and a considerable reduction in the difference with natives for Filipinos and Mexicans. Other foreign born and Italians remain significantly less likely than natives to live alone but the substantive differences are small. For

six other groups (Cubans, Russians, Poles, British, Canadians, and Germans), Model 4 indicates that if these elderly immigrants had the same integration characteristics as other elderly, they would actually be more likely to live alone than natives. This finding is somewhat surprising because it shows a pattern for national origin groups that has not been picked up by research which tends to study minorities as larger aggregates, such as Hispanics or Asians. In other ways the finding is not surprising because research on the elderly indicates that availability of kin is necessary for co-residence with kin to take place (Wolf and Soldo 1988). All else equal, immigrants should have fewer kin available to them than other elderly because the process of migration usually separates migrants from kin.

All of the measures of other elderly characteristics remain highly significant in Model 4, although the magnitude of some of the relationships change from earlier models. For instance, after controlling for integration, Model 4 indicates that elderly aged 80 or over are actually slightly less likely to live alone than those aged 70–79. This finding is consistent with the curvilinear pattern observed in Figure 3 for older women with longer U.S. residence and native-born women. Although the odds ratios for education and personal income appear modest, it should be kept in mind that they are derived from unstandardized coefficients and summarize change per unit. Both measures of economic resources are composed of several units.

In order to gain a better understanding of the nature of the integration effect, we examined the effects of the characteristic and integration covariates for each of the 11 immigrant groups and natives by estimating separate logit models. These models include all covariates in Model 4, Table 4, except the dummy variables for group origin. The results (not shown) reveal a high degree of consistency across origin groups in the impacts of the integration variables on the odds of living alone. All of the estimated integration coefficients are in the same direction as described above for Model 4 or are statistically insignificant. Period of U.S. residence and citizenship status have the most consistent impact: in ten of eleven groups, elderly immigrants are more likely to live on their own if they are a U.S. citizen and if

they have resided in the United States longer. The exceptions (no relationship) occur on the citizenship measure for Chinese and on length of U.S. residency for Canadians. One could speculate that the pattern for Canadians stems from the fact that this group is probably more similar to native-born elderly than immigrants from other origins and thus has limited internal differentiation on the integration measure. English language fluency also has a consistent impact for most origin groups. If elderly immigrants speak only English, they are significantly more likely to live on their own in eight of eleven groups and if they speak English well or very well, they are likely to do so in six of eleven groups. Since England and Canada are two of the origin groups that have no relationship on that measure, this finding suggests that lack of variation within the origin population itself is the principal reason for the lack of a relationship.

DISCUSSION

Our analysis documents that the composition of U.S. elderly immigrants changed dramatically between 1970 and 1990 and will continue to change in the years ahead. In the past two decades, the number of elderly immigrants from Mexico, Philippines, China, Cuba and other developing countries has been growing rapidly and will continue to do so in the years ahead. On the other hand, the number of elderly European immigrants will decline. The shifting composition of elderly immigrants should have implications for living arrangements. Our analysis of the living arrangements of elderly immigrants from the ten largest origin groups shows that two Asian groups (Filipinos and Chinese) and two Latin American groups (Cubans and Mexicans) differ markedly from European elderly in their living arrangements. The Asian and Latin American immigrants are much more likely than European elderly to live in families with children or others and less likely to live independently. Elderly immigrants, however, are a diverse population and our analysis demonstrates the merits of looking at differences for discrete groups. Cubans, while much less likely than European elderly to live alone, are three times more likely than Filipino elderly to do so. Further

analysis of additional origin groups is clearly needed to identify the extent to which other rapidly growing Asian or Latin American groups differ significantly from the groups examined in our analysis.

Although elderly immigrants from European countries and Canada are most similar to natives in their living arrangements, there is some diversity even among that group. Elderly immigrants from Italy and the former USSR, for instance, are less likely than natives (and other European elderly) to be living with spouses, and Italians are more likely, by over 10 percentage points, to be living with children. Despite these differences, the major divide suggested by our analysis is between more recent elderly immigrants from Latin America and Asia and older elderly immigrants from Europe and Canada. These differences will be more marked in the years ahead as the absolute and relative size of the immigrant elderly from Asia, Latin America, and Africa increases in the next millennium.

Our multivariate exploration of the sources of differences in living arrangements between natives and elderly immigrants from 11 origins sheds some light on the nature of these differences. First, the analysis makes it clear that reduced socio-economic resources and lack of integration significantly constrain independent living among elderly immigrants and are important factors contributing to differences with natives. Socio-demographic characteristics and functional limitations, on the other hand, are not a major source of differences between immigrants and natives in living arrangements.

Nonetheless, we observe an interesting pattern, namely that while the study covariates do, with a few exceptions, reduce the differentials between immigrants and natives, the remaining diversity is almost as marked as that which we observe without statistically equalizing these characteristics. This finding again suggests the importance of studying discrete immigrant groups and identifying how they differ from natives in living arrangements and determinants. Our analysis clearly shows that integration is strongly associated with increased odds of living alone. From a statistical standpoint, this means different things for different groups. For most of the European groups, equalization on

integration tends to produce larger differentials with natives than existed prior to the introduction of statistical controls. Being a citizen, speaking only English or speaking English well, and being a longer term resident of the United States are all associated with increased odds of living alone. Since the effect of English is strong, even after controlling for duration of residence and individual characteristics, this suggests that language ability reflects degree of integration and not just shifts in the selectivity of migrants over time. Nevertheless, longitudinal data are needed to examine the issue of selectivity in a more rigorous manner.

From the point of view of social policy these findings provide an ambiguous message. The ambiguity revolves around how one evaluates the status of living alone for the elderly. If it is a positive choice, based on personal preferences and made because of resources, values and abilities, then social policy should encourage it. One way to encourage it for elderly immigrants would be to foster the social integration of the elderly through language programs and efforts that increase English language activities. The latter, however, should be encouraged from a public policy standpoint for a multitude of reasons that have nothing to do with elderly living arrangements. Labor force participation, income generation, and civic participation on the part of immigrants would all be advanced by increased English language fluency. Nonetheless, to the extent that such integration occurs, our analysis suggests that the results will also be correlated with increased odds of independent living among elderly immigrants.

Though elderly living with own children is not the behavioral mode in the United States, our culture positively values familial social support to the elderly. Only time will tell, however, whether the tendency observed in our analysis for elderly immigrants from the Philippines, China, Mexico and other Asian and Latin American countries to be less likely to live on their own and more likely to live with children will be enduring or transient. Certainly, the living arrangements of more recent elderly immigrants are much more likely than those of natives and the immigrant elderly from European origins to involve children. This mode of providing support to the elderly may be more deeply rooted in the cultures of these newer groups than was the case for most European groups. Social policy efforts aimed at supporting the

elderly within the context of households made up of children and other relatives may provide the greatest level of real assistance. Perhaps combining such efforts with others aimed at facilitating integration could simultaneously enhance the overall social welfare of the elderly while opening up choices to them with regard to living arrangements.

NOTES

1. The other races category includes Asian and Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts. Asians are the largest component of that category.
2. From 1970 to 1990 the foreign-born elderly population decreased from 3,863,303 to 3,555,190. However, Pitkin and Simmons (1996) estimate that the foreign-born elderly have increased in the 1990s and will reach 4,300,000 by 2000 and 6,000,000 by 2010.
3. Naturalized citizens may petition for their parents to join them as an immediate relative. Included in the immediate relative category are: spouses of citizens, children under 21 years of age of citizens, parents of citizens 21 years of age or older, and orphans adopted by citizens. Immediate relatives are exempt from numerical limitations imposed on U.S. immigration (U.S. INS 1996, pp. 15–17 and A.3–5).
4. Although we are unaware of any study of elderly immigrants from different national origins, there are some studies of diversity among “younger” immigrants which show that national origin is an important variable that determines how integration proceeds (Gurak and Kritz 1978; Kritz and Nogle 1994; Tienda and Angel 1982; Zsembik 1993).
5. The ICPSR, University of Michigan, created an 8 percent merged sample and we downloaded that file through the Internet and use it in our analysis.
6. The differential sampling fractions for natives and immigrants do not affect our findings because we use the person weights provided by the Census Bureau (pwgt1) to adjust for geographic differences in sampling and other technical factors. For our descriptive analysis, different sampling fractions for groups do not matter because statistics are calculated separately for each population (i.e. native born means on characteristics are calculated for that population only and Mexican means are calculated for that population). In the case of population estimates (e.g. used in Table 1), we adjust for the difference in the sampling fractions of natives and immigrants by multiplying the census weight for natives by the inverse of our sampling fraction (i.e. $133 \times \text{pwgt1}$) in order to inflate the native-born component to an 8% sample.
7. The U.S. Census does not ascertain legal immigration status. It does gather data on country of birth, year of entry to the USA, and citizenship status. Using these measures, it is possible to differentiate persons who are native-born citizens from those who were born abroad and immigrated to this

- country at some point in time. We also assume that the foreign born who are elderly are less likely to be illegal or temporary residents than younger foreign-born persons.
8. This usage conforms with the United Nations classification of countries.
 9. The sample for the multivariate analysis contains 130,093 cases. Alternative model specifications, such as including elderly with spouse present in the sample and using marital status as a covariate, cannot be done because of the fact that no one who has a spouse present can live alone.
 10. Most of the covariates included in our regression analysis are not highly correlated. The highest correlations occur between length of U.S. residence and citizenship status (.61) and length of U.S. residence and receipt of Social Security income (-.52). Nonetheless, all three covariates have the expected relationships to the outcome measure and, therefore, we use all three in our models. No other variables have a higher intercorrelation than 0.37.

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Rethinking the Concept of "Minority": A Task for Social Scientists and Practitioners

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Although sociologists have articulated the components and scope of the "minority" concept, many of the characteristics are no longer germane. Originally those placed in the category were viewed as subordinate and as possessing cultural or physical qualities not approved or preferred by the larger population. There has been no systematic questioning of ingrained seductive words and value-based constructions like "minority". This brief critique offers an evaluation of the "minority" conception that is so pervasive in the social and behavioral sciences, the print and broadcast media, politics, and the entire language system.

INTRODUCTION

In current academic discourse, feminist theory and critiques of post-modern thinking have ushered in reappraisals of conventional language, especially about gender. However, this has not led to objective interpretations of how men and women of non-white racial and ethnic groups translate their experiences. Nor has there been any systematic questioning of ingrained seductive words and value-based constructions like *minority*. In the United states, at least, this latter notion represents a classic example of an ambiguous concept that is accepted as theoretically sound and scientifically measurable in the social sciences and given credibility in matters of policy. As an abstraction most often regarded as virtually synonymous with race, "minority" is actually nonscientific and devoid of conceptual clarity and empirical validity.

American Sociology has played a major role in generating a specialized vocabulary and in giving legitimacy to concepts

like "minority." The field evolved from European philosophical roots as a social science permeated with values. Numerous biased terms and expressions like "invasion" and "visibility" comprised the original sociological frames of reference. The preoccupation in the United States with racial differences institutionalized the minority idea and resulted in the absence of historical explanations of causal social forces (e.g., slavery, discrimination). Consequently, existing sociological concepts and theoretically derived assumptions linked to "minority" are without historical or scientific merit. Actually, they have suppressed realistic and unbiased examinations of racial attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies.

Although sociologists have articulated the components and scope of the "minority" concept, many of the characteristics are no longer germane. Originally those placed in the category were viewed as subordinate and possessing cultural or physical qualities not approved or preferred by the larger population. The assertion was that minorities have a shared sense of group identity. Interestingly, this was overlooked as also being a feature of majority groups. The initial definitions emphasized being self-conscious and viewing themselves as "objects of collective discrimination" (Wirth, 1945: 347). In establishing the boundaries of *the identity of the excluded*, Wirth stated that they possess an inherited status. Without presenting the influences of divergent power relations, he and other sociologists thought of a minority as a group singled out from others for "differential and unequal treatment." This formulation included biology, culture, structural, and perceptual aspects. Several of the traits assigned to "minorities" covered all racial and ethnic groups and economic classes including the "power elite."

Basically, the label "minority" is engulfed in political connotations and refers to behaviors as well as biological traits. As a multidimensional and generic notion, it encompasses behavior but negates ethnicity and cultural distinctiveness. Additionally, this linguistic tool does not denote the vast contrasts that are characteristic of ethnic and racial group life. The variability embodied in ethnic traditions, lifestyles and group modes of affirming collective identity are not reflected in the assorted meanings of "minority" (Aguirre and Messineo, 1997; Snyder, 1990; Wright, 1997).

Moreover, "minority" does not accurately incorporate the histories and biographies of diverse ethnic and racial populations such as American Indian, Mexican American, African American, Puerto Rican, and Asian American (Feagin and Sikes, 1995; Garcia, 1997; Harjo, 1993; Mendoza, 1994; Snipp, 1989; Wilkinson, 1990). That is, the concept appears to have no relevance to ancestral linkages that provide a sense of family and community unity. An underlying thesis of this discussion is that social science interpretations of identities must be group-centered as well as racially specific. Ethnic affiliation and racial attachment, as opposed to externally ascribed "minority" status, are essential parallels with social placement and self-images (Plummer, 1995; Ramsey, 1991).

This brief critique offers an evaluation of the "minority" conception that is so pervasive in the social and behavioral sciences, the print and broadcast media, politics, and the entire language system. Given my long-term interest in the language that frames sociological theory and research, an insightful review of the concept in *Race, Gender & Class* (Nibert, 1996) was well received. While I have a different perspective on alternatives, the author correctly described "minority" as a "sociological euphemism." In the discussion, the evolution of the abstraction is interpreted with respect to the reasons for the sustained reliance on this particular term instead of "oppressed groups." The author states that "the term [constitutes] a social scientific euphemism for the victims of widespread exploitation, injustice and incalculable hardship and suffering . . ." Highlighting trends involving possible substitutions, aspects of the thesis offer a starting point for this discussion (Nibert, 1996: 131).

As this critical analysis will show, unlike other immigrant populations designated as minorities, African Americans have encountered a myriad of barriers since their forced arrival. Throughout the twentieth century, obstacles to upward mobility and equal life chances have confronted them. No other ethnic group in the United States has been enslaved or has faced perpetual racial segregation and discrimination in all institutional domains. Only the American Indian's history approximates this legacy, to some degree. Against this background, the reasons given for continuing the "minority" classification in the 21st century are overshadowed by historical forces. The expression

simply does not enable understanding of the immense cultural and racial heterogeneity that typifies American society.

OBJECTIVES

Contextualized within the culture of the United States, two central questions guide this argument. (1) *What are some major deficiencies associated with the minority concept?* (2) *How can the minority idea be transformed and removed from the social science vocabulary?* Another important question guiding this inquiry is *what are the scientific and policy issues associated with the word minority?* At the outset, the basic principle is reaffirmed that identifying individuals by their race or ethnic background is no less important than recognizing them by their gender or sexuality. All of these indicators provide a sense of the essence of individuality and communal solidarity. Self-knowledge and feelings of personal worth are enhanced through articulating the components of one's identity. Learning is similarly advanced by becoming cognizant of the specific groups comprising the society.

An important related scientific and "sociology of knowledge" issue is why the word "minority" has been retained in the sciences and in the language system itself. While used in other countries where it most often refers to language minorities, in the United States the concept has always been ambiguous and value-laden. Since its origins, the word has been framed in negative imagery. Juxtaposed with problems of definition, typically those so labeled have been depicted as lacking in political and economic power. In addition, they have been considered as occupying the status of the culturally disadvantaged. Each of these descriptors carries a stigma (See: D'Amico, 1997; Goffman, 1963; Riggs, 1997; Snyder, 1990).

POLITICAL LANGUAGE IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Science and the various professions have special modes of constructing and using language. Among the principal requirements in scientific reasoning is that concepts should be reliable, capable of measurement, and empirically verifiable. Correspondingly, clinical fields seek to rely on relatively precise diagnostic tools for behaviors and emotions. In spite of the particular

paradigms in disciplines like sociology, innumerable words are obscure and without a reality basis. "Minority" is one of the key words that is imprecise.

The clarity and logic of concepts is a critical area in the social and behavioral sciences. While "minority" is applied incessantly, the category lacks concrete indicators and its miscellaneous attributes tend to be flawed and conflicting. Thus, given the wide variability among the diverse groups to whom the label refers, problems emerge with its application in social science paradigms. The difficulties disclosed with its usage are multiple. In fact, the contemporary qualities appear to confuse the initial definitions offered by sociologists.

Frequently, "minority" indicates only races (African Americans) or ethnic populations (Hispanics, Asians). At times, it extends to occupationally subordinated groups (e.g., women) and socially isolated populations. Multiracial (biracial persons) and economically depressed persons (unemployed, poor) are subsumed under the minority label. Sexual orientation, physical handicapped status and being white and male or female are similarly classified. It is also applied to processes and changes such as access to college, aging, migrants, opportunities, businesses, rights, issues in mental health, political perspectives *ad infinitum*.

Of special concern in this critical review is the use of the minority concept as representational and as an analytical medium. This interest stems from the interpretations and consequences of the word and its diversified nature as illustrated in the sciences and in the national media. Because "minority" does not meet any of the conventional standards for concept validity, it is an extremely problematic term in sociological inquiry. The numerous referents for the idea are not mutually exclusive. Thus, the array of meanings associated with it produce misleading conclusions. Ultimately, the complications surrounding minority have serious ramifications for social science generalizations as well as clinical practice.

THE MINORITY CHALLENGE

A few selected examples illuminate the contradictions inherent in the use of minority. In an instructive essay by William

Raspberry, a perceptive and influential African American journalist, the mistake is made of using the word "minorities" to denote Blacks only, the group to whom he is referring. The author notes that "Black students at the College of Holy Cross [had] won the right to exclude whites from membership in the school-supported Black Student Union." The theme of the article is "In some instances, separation of the races helps minorities" (Raspberry, 1995: p. A9). However, the essay focuses solely on race.

Similarly, an article appeared in *Black Issues in Higher Education* on the challenges to private scholarships for minorities (Wright, 1997: 14–16). From the title, it was not clear whether the emphasis was on African Americans, sexual orientation, or handicapped status. Actually, the report focused on a student who felt that a community college in Northern Virginia violated the law by preventing Whites from applying for a particular scholarship. A mathematics instructor was quoted as saying that there "appears to be a major hysteria, or fear, of more minority students gaining access to colleges and universities" (Wright, 1997: 16). This comment is obviously not about females and gender issues nor sexual orientation. For, the single "minority" group presented is the African American.

Numerous studies have been designed to examine racial and ethnic bias in a variety of areas from housing and the occupational sphere to advertising. With respect to the latter, a Federal Communications Commission report on this subject appeared in *USA Today* (January 14, 1999). The findings revealed that "advertisers regularly discriminate against minority-owned radio stations and those that have large African American or Hispanic audiences" (Alexander, 1999). Throughout the article, the word *minority* preceded the following: radio stations, listeners, consumers, media, hiring, and magazines. But, as one examines the results from the study by the Civil Rights Forum on Communications Policy, the consumer groups, stations, and audiences discussed are African American and Hispanic. In this context, minority was used as equivalent with race since the focus was on just two racial populations. Questioning such research as well as the presumption that minority is a useful classification provides a foundation for this discussion.

Finally, a *USA Today* report pertained to Denny's becoming one of the first advertisers to launch a campaign about race. The author stated that "with a high number of minority customers, Denny's can't ignore them" (Horovitz, 1999: 1B). Again, the primary "minority" being referred to is the African American. In most of the examples relating to African Americans, "minority" is used as a politically correct term to conceal racial specificity. As a matter of fact, the concept epitomizes one of the notable forms of politically correct language permeating sociology and the broader culture. The choice of this word marks the "sociological imagination" as well as the American national consciousness. Nibert (1996: 133) noted that "sociologists have been reluctant to call 'minority groups' oppressed because such a perspective is outside the range of accepted political discourse." Regardless, the term is not only deceptive in advertising but is inaccurate in the social sciences and inappropriate for policy decisions.

In earlier writings, I have used "minority" as a result of indoctrination in sociological reasoning and forced compliance with editorial stipulations (Wilkinson, 1980a, 1980b, 1987b). However, when I incorporated the term in an examination of psychotherapy, its coverage was clearly restricted.

" . . . white therapists [must] be trained to understand the multicultural history of the society and to cope with racial and ethnic biases and race/sex role stereotypes, since these have an impact on the therapeutic experiences of minority women." (Wilkinson, 1980b: 297).

Selected issues encountered in psychotherapy with women from economically and educationally disadvantaged strata were explored. A significant void was observed in examinations of therapeutic processes and outcomes with "minority women (i.e., American Indian, Black or African American, Mexican American and Puerto Rican)" (Wilkinson, 1980b: 285). I pointed out that "most studies of racial and ethnic minorities had not been sex-specific." Nevertheless, my principal thesis at the time centered on African American women. Dissonance was evident throughout my usage of the term.

Again, in a demographic review of "Ethnicity" in the *Handbook of Marriage and the Family*, my hesitancy in using "minority" was

obvious. In order to minimize misrepresentation, in the introduction I stated that:

"To date, most of the information on minority families had tended to mirror biases intrinsic in the nation's dominant culture. To counteract these biases an attempt has been made to incorporate the . . . conceptual frameworks . . . offered by contemporary minority scholars" (Wilkinson, 1987: 183).

"Minority families" were limited to those delineated by their racial heritage and ethnic lineage.

"Minority families differ from those in the majority population on the basis of race, ancestry, and other characteristics. They are part of a socially, politically, and economically subordinated population. Differential treatment is a significant consequence of minority status. The dominant minority groups (or populations) in the United States are Blacks or Afro-Americans, Chicanos or Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos" (Wilkinson, 1987: 183).

As this discussion demonstrates, the word "minority" has substantial variation and hence translations. This invites illogical reasoning in its numerous applications. Groups so defined have very few shared attributes with respect to race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexuality, and/or culture. In other words, minimal social and behavioral traits are held in common. Most groups detailed as minorities have separate class positions, racial and ethnic origins, family backgrounds, and life styles. Likewise, exposure to the opportunity structure and with oppression vary. Only one population assigned minority status in the Americas has ever been subjected to slavery and centuries of systemic racism (Darity, 1996; Dyson, 1997; Frankberg, 1993; hooks, 1998; Hutchison, 1994; Levy, 1998; Reed, 1992; Wilkinson, 1987).

A MISSING DIMENSION: HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS

Dissecting the minority construction, a lack of understanding or even acceptance of macro-social forces and power differentials is evident with its use. Certainly, the impressionistic notion nullifies the effects of a post-slavery culture and the prevailing

race-based and class hierarchy. Anchored within the matrix of economic inequality, the minority idea does not allow for the residual outcomes from race and class-related disparities. Using it to suggest sex/gender or behavior has an entirely different set of meanings and outcomes than applying the classification to ethnic and racial populations.

In most basic texts on race and ethnic relations, a "minority group" is defined as one that "has restricted power and an inferior status" or is "any group that has less than its proportionate share of wealth, power, and/or social status" (Farley, 1995: 7; Marger, 1991: 44–54). Size is usually not considered as the most important sociological factor. Thus, a minority group is one that

"experiences a pattern of disadvantage or inequality; has a visible identifying trait, and is a self-conscious social unit. Membership is usually determined at birth and group members have a strong tendency to marry within the group" (Healey, 1995: 14).

Introducing the "visible trait or characteristic" that justifies mistreatment by the majority population, the above definition blends with "blaming the victim" assertions. Presumably, the traits may be of a variety of types ranging from cultural to physical or combinations of the two. Depending on the perspective, some groups are called ethnic minorities, while others are referred to as racial minorities. "The visibility factor" confirming membership in a particular racial or ethnic group has been explained as central to the minority thesis (Wirth, 1945). However, more recent interpretations maintain that minorities are determined not merely by race or ethnicity but by "sex, physical disability, lifestyle, or sexual orientation" (Farley, 1995: 7). Despite this, the historical and contemporary relationships between people of African and European descent are completely unlike those of any other groups so categorized.

Concentrating on visibility and embarrassed self-awareness does not permit grasping the pervasiveness of racial animosities and associated forms of prejudicial treatment. These are entirely separate social processes from the discrimination against groups because of their behaviors or physical limitations. Thus,

the perplexing nature of "minority" is revealed in the virtually opposite groups included in its coverage.

In the final analysis, groups presented as minorities have faced vastly dissimilar patterns of acceptance and integration as well as exclusion and residential isolation. Further, intolerance and segregation have always been more injurious and permanent for African Americans than for any other ethnic Americans, regardless of social position or "visible" traits. Therefore, highlighting populations by their actual identities situates them within a narrative frame along with the dilemmas linked to the ethos of equal opportunity. With respect to the limited choices facing women of any ethnic or racial heritage, the minority conception calculatedly omits the intersection of class, gender and race (Wilkinson, 1997).

Probing the content of "minority" permits viewing it as depriving groups of their lived experiences. Its incongruous meanings have been created and reaffirmed by those who have not been among the economically, politically, and/or racially hindered populations. As pointed out earlier, the concept is devoid of historical specificity. Neither the aftereffects of American slavery on self identification nor the influence of the class system on economic status can be explained through its use. No provisions are made for interpreting the circumstances surrounding contemporary inequities that are repeated by other groups also classified as "minorities." Therefore, past and current disparities in opportunities and privileges are discounted through reliance on this impressionistic label. Since it is embedded in the political culture of the United States and hence in the social sciences, questions will be raised when confronting its idiosyncratic and ideological nature. Significant adjustments will be encountered by attempts to replace it since "minority" has been retained through custom and practice. Rationales will proliferate for preserving the concept in spite of the justifiable quest by groups to reclaim and define their own identities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

Researchers, clinicians, and teachers must seek ways to incorporate race and ethnicity in all relevant contexts and omit

entirely the "minority" concept. Since race is such a highly sensitive subject in the United States, a host of avoidance strategies restrict weighing its impact. On one hand, its influence is pervasiveness throughout American society and culture. On the other, the "minority" idea negates this reality. Fields that emphasize research and document identity issues must be among the first to reappraise the diffuse "minority" constellation.

Insisting on race and ethnic precision and race-consciousness is fundamental for addressing in a meaningful way economic and status disparities. The "minority" tag cannot yield solutions to issues bearing on racial injustices in the United States. Policies cannot be based on obscure ideas or presumed neutrality in the identification of groups in need. Specificity is imperative in policy formulation (Allen, Hunt and Gilbert, 1997; Culp, 1994; Reed, 1992; Rhode, 1997; Snyder, 1990; Wilkinson and King, 1987; Wright, 1997). With respect to this, in an examination of the Banneker scholarship program at the University of Maryland, researchers found that race-specificity remains necessary. This recommendation was made because of past, present and cumulative discrimination against African Americans (Allen, Hunt, and Gilbert, 1997). In other words, race-conscious policies in higher education are sound and necessary.

Scholars who explore language have described words as indicators of power and privilege. Ruling classes and majorities engage in identity dialogue that continually estranges existing disenfranchised and disadvantaged populations (Riggs, 1997). Thus, "minority" is substantively Eurocentric and reinforces erroneous racial assumptions. Along with its negative referents, the absence of commonalities among those so classified makes the word political and lacking in theoretical usefulness. Since "minority" is so deeply grounded in the American language system and psyche, as stated earlier, inevitably any change will become an arena of controversy.

Particularizing groups in the United States within the context of their racial and ethnic backgrounds is past due. No systematic evidence exists indicating that in this country, American Indians, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Asian and African Americans prefer assigning themselves a "minority" image or status. Rather, their orientation is toward the distinctiveness of their family

lineage and the racial/ethnic groups to which they belong. In contrast to the vagueness of "minority group" (Nibert, 1996), the self-views of these populations have definitive historical and cultural meaning.

Additionally, the "minority" construction does not lead to any solutions for the numerous social problems correlated with economic levels and racial constraints in the United States. Rational policies cannot be designed using generic categories. Unless words like *subordinated* or *inferiorized* are used, "minority" has no plausible substitutes. Specific group recognition is an imperative in research and in policy formulation. Race and ethnic specificity and race-consciousness are indispensable for addressing problems and major forms of inequality.

Various contemporary perspectives have suggested that traditional modes of thinking have been devoid of the capacity to address the needs and self actualization experiences of diverse populations. This indicates that the different ways that women and men translate their lives is identity related. "Minority" does not convey either personal identity nor historical continuity. In order to accurately incorporate the life stories of women and men of different ethnic backgrounds, interpretations of their uniqueness must be gender-centered as well as racially and ethnically grounded. "Minority" serves as an anachronistic political device that obliterates natural and contingent social distinctions.

The comments presented in this discussion have not been without forethought. Also, they are not presented for continuous argument but rather for self-reflection, learning and understanding. They should prove helpful to those in the social and behavioral sciences and to others who have reinforced illogical constructs. Considering the numerous incongruities in the "minority" concept, scientists and practitioners will have to dissect all applications and cease using it. As noted earlier, while I have regrettably used the word in my early writings, I have sought to discontinue this practice (Wilkinson, 1980a; 1987b; 1980b; 1992).

Currently, the "minority" image is so broad that it includes groups exposed to a whole range of majority beliefs and norms of exclusion. Some of the groups are members of the numerically and politically dominant population. Since science is the study of difference, classifying on the basis of race, ethnicity and economic

class should be normative. Continued attempts to connect, at any level, disabilities, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, economic position and gender under a vague symbol is prejudicial and unreasonable. Describing the experiences of African Americans as characteristic of those encountered by sexual, language or handicapped "minorities" minimizes the far-reaching impact of the country's race ideology.

CONCLUSION

Via the "minority concept, the social sciences are weakened in theoretical logic. For among the predominant problems of the modern era and hence in sociology are those relating to class, race, ethnicity, immigrant status, and gender. While all frame social placement and self-conceptions, race is the most challenging and complex. The "minority" idea reduces the scientific challenges associated with careful and objective study of race and racism (Dyson, 1997; Hochschild, 1996; Levy, 1998).

In addition to hindering understanding of the effects of past and present exclusionary processes on identity, the "minority" classification disregards group attachments and the legitimacy of difference. By maintaining this ideologically encumbered and politically correct word, those who embrace it in their teaching impede the imaginations of others. Ironically, the "minority" concept restricts *and* simultaneously politicizes the "sociological imagination."

The unrelenting incorporation of "minority" in scholarly writings and social science language ushers in the need to include ethnic origins and race in scientific analysis. African Americans should be called by their racial heritage which *they may decide* is "Black", Afro-American, or African American. The purposive act of dismissing identity through the "minority" lens eliminates being informed of the ongoing purposive subordination of particular populations on the basis of their race or ethnic status.

Social and behavioral scientists and social workers are products of cultures and distinct populations. They must be able to deal objectively with race, ethnic group membership and racism. To do so, requires immediate abandonment of the "minority" theme. A rational alternative is needed to eliminate it from the

scientific literature, the print media, and the national conversation. When confirming theoretical principles and attempting to facilitate understanding of group differences, taking into account race and ethnic ancestry is mandatory.

Nearing the end of the twentieth century, it is thus imperative that we begin to alter the language and our mind-sets regarding the manifest and latent implications of the minority misnomer. Perhaps, one way to begin is to delineate possible options. The first involves deleting "minority" from the social and behavioral sciences because of its intrinsic biases, lessening of the significance of racialized economic inequality, and elimination of personal preferences. This step alone could improve the scientific credibility of selected disciplines. Retaining obscure and controversial language at the outset of the present century poses an especially compelling paradox for sociology.

The accent on minority standing overrides the necessity for bringing race and racism into research as well as into clinical therapy and social work practice. Dismissing race, ethnic identity, class status, and even gender through repeated use of the "minority" label reduces the ability to understand the authenticity of the life stories of distinct populations. The narratives of those so named are actually eradicated.

Considering gender, the "visibility" component of "minority" is offensive and unsuitable in the social sciences and in other fields. This feature does not contribute toward explaining outcomes bearing on the lives of women of Spanish, Asian, African and American Indian origin, for example. It is chronically misleading and undermines any appreciation of the personal stories of these racial/ethnic women. Recognizing the special identities that they have is much more principled than analyzing them using nebulous symbolism. The internalization of gender roles and ethnic and racial "being" is a central part of the self-definition process for women (Beale, 1970; Garcia, 1997; Morgan, 1993; St. Jean and Feagin, 1998; Wilkinson, 1995).

To reiterate, examinations of racial obstacles are clouded via the use of the term "minority." The word conceals the realities of particular group circumstances. Comparisons among those so typed erase the differential economic and political inferiorization of one population over another. Given this, the most important

recommendation from this critique is that the concept must be instantly dismantled and constructive possibilities introduced that specify individual and collective identities. Ethnic and racial consciousness is a rational choice.

Overall, racial and ethnic specificity could have several positive outcomes: (1) accepting a population's authentic request to be defined and related to in terms of ancestry or other preferred status qualities, (2) facilitating sensible communication and meaningful interaction between the self and others, (3) providing a sense of in-group solidarity for those now portrayed as minorities, (4) enhancing knowledge of American history and the country's rich cultural diversity. These possibilities reinforce the recommendation that the exclusionary motif embodied in the notion of "minority" must be eradicated from social theory, research, and all policy decisions.

In the United States, race, class and ethnicity have been the principal molders of group interaction, work roles, power, and social hierarchy. Historical forces and change have dramatically shaped family life and occupational outcomes. The "minority" idea does not grasp these realities. Greater explicitness in setting priorities can be forthcoming with the deletion of the concept from the social sciences. Expectedly, any move toward change of this linguistic symbol will be an area of dispute and rationalization for its continuation. This is due to the fact that the word is entrenched in the broader cultural mores. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that the "minority" idea does not reflect America's racial and ethnic mixture.

Ultimately, the minority marker is not pertinent for dissecting the roots of racial inequality in the employment sector nor biases in the workplace. The term does not account for the stratification in employment nor contrasting occupational advantages among persons within the "minority" category some of whom are labeled on the basis of lifestyles. Several groups in the category have greater opportunities for upward mobility than others. That is, for selected populations judged as comparable, systemic differences in chances for success prevail. Thus, intermingling handicapped status, health conditions, and behaviors with race and ethnic heritage is problematic, unwarranted, and unfair to heretofore disenfranchised racial and ethnic populations.

"Pretending that U.S. society . . . has moved beyond racial and gender biases to meritocracy ignores its long and continuing history of bias and inequality" (Rhode, 1997).

As interpreted in this critical assessment, "minority" is not an appropriate formation. Members of particular ethnic populations do not automatically describe themselves using this figure of speech. In contrast, those so defined by the dominant sector seek to have their stories, encounters, and needs included in analyses of their experiences. Their family and ancestral sagas are important to them. Removing "minority" from the lexicon of the social and behavioral sciences means that clarification in establishing hierarchies of need and sound public policy will be forthcoming.

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Who Cares about Racial Inequality?

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The issue of Affirmative Action is discussed, identifying some difficulties with the way that this policy has been pursued in the past: Racial preferences can be a poorly targeted method of closing the gap in social status between Blacks and Whites, and can have negative unintended consequences for incentives and for the reputations of its beneficiaries. Nevertheless, it is argued that some form of affirmative action continues to be needed. The concept of "developmental affirmative action" is introduced. This form of racially targeted policy focuses primarily on the enhancement of competitive skills. In so doing, it avoids many of the aforementioned difficulties.

INTRODUCTION

I have been known over the years as a critic of affirmative action policies. However, in the wake of a successful ballot initiative banning affirmative action in the state of California, I now find it necessary to reiterate the old, and in my view still valid, arguments on behalf of explicit public efforts to reduce racial inequality. In doing so, I want to stress that I am not defending racial quotas, or race-based allocations of public contracts, or racial double standards in the workplace, or huge disparities in the test scores of blacks and whites admitted to elite universities. These practices are deservedly under attack. But, I do defend the U.S. Army's programs to commission more black officers, the public funding of efforts to bring blacks into science and engineering, the attempts by urban law enforcement agencies to recruit black personnel, and the goal of top universities—public and private—to retain some racial diversity in their student bodies. The mere

fact that these efforts take race into account, I will argue here, should not be disqualifying.

My basic position is that the current campaign against “preferences” goes too far by turning what prior to Proposition 209 had been a reform movement to which I was happy to belong into an abolitionist’s crusade that I feel constrained to oppose.¹ True enough, the slogan “mend it, don’t end it” was a cynical device, used by a president heavily dependent on black political support who sought to avoid genuine reform. But, taken seriously, this slogan describes pretty well what our national policy should be.

The most zealous affirmative action abolitionists hold as their fundamental principle that knowing the race of the persons burdened or benefited by a public action can never legitimately influence the desirability of that action. Yet, moral queasiness about the use of race arises for historically specific reasons—namely, slavery and Jim Crow segregation. Those reasons centrally involve the caste-like subordination of blacks, a matter that, in actual historical fact, was not symmetrical as between the races. As such, to take account of race while trying to mitigate the effects of this subordination, thought certainly ill advised or unworkable in specific cases, should not be viewed as morally equivalent to the acts of discrimination that affected the subjugation of blacks in the first place.

It is important to distinguish here between legal and ethical modes of reasoning. Justice Scalia’s famous dictum that “the rule of law requires a law of rules” militates in favor of the simple prohibition of all racial discrimination by public agents. But, the moral case is not so straightforward. I stipulate that an isolated individual’s race, as such, is ethically irrelevant. That is, the weight given to an affected person’s welfare when selecting a course of public action should not depend on race. Nevertheless, there are circumstances where the ability of a public policy to advance the general interest of all persons is enhanced by taking cognizance of the racial identities of particular persons. Under these circumstances, the steadfast refusal to take into account how a policy might impact members of different racial groups, in the name of legal consistency, can turn out to be an act of moral obtuseness.

SOCIAL ETHICS

Of course it is a basic principle of political liberalism—sometimes called the “non-discrimination principle”—that personal characteristics like race, sex, and ethnicity should have no moral relevance.² People are to be valued as individuals, not as the representatives of groups. In the economic theory of social choice, for example, this idea is captured by the concept of “anonymity”: the idea that the legitimacy of any given government benefit depends upon the fact that it is distributed without regard to the identities, as distinct from the conditions, of those who get the benefit and those who do not. This is the ideal.

However, ordinary people are not as fastidious as are social choice theorists. They do care, sometimes passionately, about the social identities of those who are helped or harmed by their government’s policies. As Tip O’Neill once said, all politics is local. This implies that no politics can be truly anonymous. Government must be responsive to a public that is often motivated by group loyalties and antagonisms. At the same time, ideally it should not distribute benefits or burdens to citizens based on traits that are morally irrelevant, such as race.

For multicultural America, this poses a permanent, intractable dilemma. How can we manage it? Some say that all government policies should be “color-blind.” And, given our troubled racial history, the simplicity and clarity of this color-blind formulation can, indeed, seem compelling. But, the problem is more complicated than this “simple” position can accommodate. For, by focusing intensely on how government treats citizens in discrete encounters, advocates of color-blindness give too little weight to the purposes government is trying to achieve when it acts. I maintain that procedural color blindness is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the attainment of substantive racial justice. Public policy can be color-blind yet unfairly contrary to the interests of a racial minority—“benign neglect” being the most obvious example. Conversely, policies that are intended to have wide beneficial impact, regardless of race, may require that cognizance be taken of the reality of racial identity. This occurs, for example, when a president, to enhance the legitimacy of his government among the nation as a whole, tries to

ensure that his top appointments are, to some degree, racially representative.

The distinction between procedural and substantive justice, between means and ends, is of little interest to the color-blind purist, however. In fact, these days you often hear conservatives spuriously likening the defenders of affirmative action to the southern segregationists. For instance, Todd Gaziano wrote in the May-June 1998 issue of *Policy Review*, published by the Heritage Foundation, as follows: "Forty years ago many Americans felt anger and disgust toward segregationists such as Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus who earned their place in history as leaders of the massive resistance to desegregation. Today's massive resistance to racial equality is led by another former governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton." This is irresponsible hyperbole bordering on the absurd.

Is it not obvious that the racial sentiments to which Orval Faubus was responding to were morally illegitimate and undeserving of ratification by government action? And, is it not equally obvious that not all racial sentiments are of this kind?

Thus, we arrive at the fundamental question: *Why should we care about racial inequality per se?* What is wrong with a situation in which blacks are roughly 12 percent of the U.S. population, but some 40 percent of welfare recipients, 50 percent of incarcerated felons, and 3 percent of newly graduating engineers? Why should we care about the racial composition of the police forces in large cities, of Presidential appointees to the federal bench, or of the freshman class at a state university? Why should a large corporation actively seek a qualified black candidate for a position in its upper management? After all, thinking in the abstract, a growing welfare population or an increasing number of incarcerated felons is a problem for society no matter what the color of those citizens. What matters is that we reduce the total numbers, right?

Actually, I will argue that this is not right, or at least not for America, not today. A President who appoints hundreds of local federal judges among whom there are no blacks invites a wholly unnecessary political firestorm. He would rightly find himself in trouble. A corporation that neglects to bring along some blacks into upper management exposes itself needlessly to potential difficulties with its customers or its lower-level employees. A

racially diverse big city fielding a nearly all white police force is asking for big trouble the next time a drunken black motorist has to be forcibly subdued. A freshman class devoid of blacks teaches its students some lessons about our society that are not listed in the course catalog. And to accept with equanimity the blackening of our prisons or welfare rolls is to be indifferent, I suggest, to an important aspect of social justice.

REASONS TO CARE

A. *Racial Identities Matter*

One reason to care about racial inequality is that race forms an important part of the personal identity of many citizens. Ideally, these racial identities should be irrelevant to our dealings with one another. Yet clearly they are not. As a result, all kinds of circumstances, having nothing to do with "racial preferences," require a government to depart from the strictly "color-blind" treatment of its citizens in order to discharge its legitimate function. A front page story in the October 28, 1996 *San Francisco Chronicle* makes the point nicely. Reporting on an FBI investigation into excessive fighting among inmates at the Corcoran California state prison, the story traces the trouble to "an obscure prison edict issued during the 1980s—the integrated yard policy[which] required all prison yards to be integrated by race and gang affiliation." This article quotes a veteran prison guard calling that policy "naïve and stupid[A]nybody that's worked inside a prison would say that." Yet for a prison warden to allocate exercise time among inmates as to minimize racial conflict, he would have to behave in something other than a color-blind manner.

This example is not trivial. In the summer of 1996, the conservative federal judge Richard Posner (in *Wittmer v. Peters*, Nos. 95-3729, 95-4034 (7th Cir. July 2, 1996)) upheld the preferential hiring of a black prison guard in an Illinois boot camp for young offenders. He argued that, with an inmate population that was three-quarters black, and given that "aversive training" methods familiar to marine enlistees were to be employed at the boot camp, the state might have a compelling and thus constitutionally justifiable interest in providing for some racial diversity in the camp's officer corps.

Faced with such examples, supporters of the “color-blind” position invariably reply that race here simply serves as a proxy for some non-racial trait—like the ability to win the trust of black inmates. But this response is insufficient, for the crux of the matter is not the state’s use of race as a proxy for some desirable characteristic in an employee, but rather some citizens’ tendency to view the world through a racially tinted lens. In the boot camp, a young inmate is bullied mercilessly by guards who either have his best interests at heart or do not. When black youths refuse to believe that this bullying is for some useful purpose when none of the guards are black, then the success of the training technique requires racial diversity on the staff. And this is true no matter how sophisticated the prison personnel office may be at discovering, without using race, whether an applicant “truly cares” about his prospective charges.

B. Race Conveys Information

Another reason to care about racial inequality is that race is an important source of information in many situations. Race is an easily observable trait that, as an empirical matter, is correlated with some hard-to-observe traits about which employers, lenders, police officers and others are concerned.³ Direct evidence from employer interviews indicates that both black and white employers are reluctant to hire black, urban young males who exhibit lower-class behavioral styles. Racial identity is also used as information in a variety of ways by police. Some evidence indicates that it shapes their law enforcement decisions. Indeed, the dramatic disparity between the races in the rates of arrest and incarceration for criminal offenses must be taken into account when discussing racial differences in the labor market experiences of males, though the direction of causality is difficult to untangle.

Racial-statistical discrimination can be quite damaging to both the efficiency of market allocations and to equity. This is due to the very real possibility that the empirically valid statistical generalizations lying at the heart of such discrimination can be self-fulfilling prophecies. There is an informational externality present whenever decision takers take actions based on group

inferences. It is not difficult to give straightforward economic accounts of how this process might work in a variety of contexts.

Suppose only a few taxi drivers will pick up young black men after a certain hour. Given that behavior by taxi drivers as a class, it is plausible through a process of adverse selection that the "types" of young black men who will attempt to hail taxis during those hours contain an especially large fraction of potential robbers. This makes it rational to avoid them. But if most drivers willingly picked up young black men, then this behavior might induce a less threatening set of black males to select taxi transportation after dark, confirming the rationality of the drivers' more tolerant behavior.

Or, suppose employers have an a-priori belief that blacks are more likely to be low effort trainees than are whites. Then, they will set a lower threshold for blacks on the number of mistakes needed to trigger dismissal, since they will be quicker to infer that black workers have not tried hard enough to learn the job. But knowing that they are more likely to be fired for making a few mistakes, more black employees may elect not to exert high effort during the training period in the first place, thus confirming the employers' initial beliefs.

Or, if car dealers believe that black buyers have higher reservation prices than whites, then dealers will be tougher when bargaining with blacks than with whites. Given this experience of tough bargaining, a black buyer anticipates less favorable alternative opportunities and higher search costs than a white buyer, and so may rationally agree to a higher price. This behavior confirms the dealers' initial presumption that "color" predicts bargaining power.

Such stories are not difficult to produce, and at least to my ear, they have a certain ring of truth about them. The key to all of these examples is their self-reinforcing nature: they begin with racial beliefs that then bring about their own statistical confirmation. These examples are not unrelated to the historical problems of race, as they have developed in our society. Race is an easily discernable characteristic that has salience in our culture, making it operate powerfully in many venues because it is common knowledge that people are taking it into account.

C. Social Networks

Yet another reason to care about racial inequality is that race influences the social networks that are open to individuals, and these networks in turn have a major effect upon individuals' opportunities.⁴ Here are two observations that illustrate the key to my argument: *First*, all societies exhibit significant *social segmentation*. People make choices about whom to befriend, whom to marry, where to live, to which schools to send their children and so on. Factors like race, ethnicity, social class, and religious affiliation influence these choices of association. *Second*, the processes through which individuals develop their productive capacities are shaped by custom, convention, and social norms, and are not fully responsive to market forces, or reflective of the innate abilities of persons. Networks of social affiliation are not usually the result of calculated economic decisions. They nevertheless help determine how resources important to the development of the productive capacities of human beings are made available to individuals.

One can say that an adult worker with a given degree of personal efficacy has been "produced" from the "inputs" of education, parenting skills, acculturation, nutrition, and socialization to which he was exposed in his formative years. While some of these "inputs" can be bought and sold, some of the most crucial "factors of production" are only available as by-products from activities of social affiliation. Parenting services are not to be had for purchase on the market, but accrue as the consequence of the social relations between the custodial parents and the child. The allocation of parenting services among a prospective generation of adults is thus the indirect consequence of social activities undertaken by members of the preceding generation. An adolescent's peer group is similarly a derivative consequence of processes of social networking.

I concede that this is an artificial way of thinking about human development, but the artifice is quite useful. For it calls attention to the critical role played by social and cultural resources in the production and reproduction of economic inequality. The relevance of such factors, as an empirical matter, is beyond doubt. The importance of networks, contacts, social background, family

connections, and informal associations of all kinds has been amply documented by students of social stratification.

I can put this somewhat less abstractly. There is one view of society in which we are atomistic individuals, all of us pursuing our own paths to the best of our ability, given the opportunities available in the marketplace. Some of us work harder, some are luckier, some are more talented than others, and so the outcomes are not equal. That is one view, but it is a false, or at least an incomplete, view of the way in which our society actually works. For the fact is that each and every one of us is embedded in a complex web of associations, networks, and contacts. We live in families, we belong in communities, and we are members of collectivities of one kind or another. We are influenced by these associations from the very first day that we draw breath. Our development—what and who we are become—is nourished by these associations.

It is a severe disadvantage to be born to parents who are not interested in your development. It is a great impediment for a talented youngster to be embedded in a social network of peers whose values do not affirm the activities the youngster must undertake to develop his talent. Children do not freely choose their peers. To a significant degree they inherit these associations as a consequence of where they live, what their parents believe, what social group they belong to, and so on. In American society, given our history, racial identity is one important component of that complex of social characteristics that define the networks in which we live. Opportunity travels along the synapses of these networks. We learn about what we can do with our talents from the conversation taking place over dinner, from the family friend who says "Why doesn't your kid do this or that?," from the business owner who offers a summer job. These kinds of opportunity-enhancing associations are not just out there in the marketplace to be purchased by the highest bidder. Nor are they allocated randomly so as to create some kind of level playing field.

RACIAL JUSTICE

Now as someone who values liberty it is my view that we cannot and should not seek to equalize for all persons access to

such networks of social affiliation. They are to a large degree the inheritance of history, and we must take them as they come. But we do not have to accept the inegalitarian consequences of these structures without reflection, nor must we impute naturalness or an inevitability to those unequal consequences.

We do not, in other words, have to take one seventeen-year-old who has grown up in a suburban, affluent, two-parent family with wholesome neighbors and peers, attending schools that work, and compare him with another seventeen-year-old who has grown up under less felicitous circumstances, and then stamp on the forehead of the former the big "M" for merit and say of the latter, "He has not earned the right to further develop his talents." When it comes time to allocate state-funded opportunities for the intellectual development of the two youngsters, we need not pretend that the playing field has been level all the time and that, by favoring the first kid, we are merely giving scarce opportunities to the most deserving recipient.

I am arguing that inalienable non-marketed social and cultural resources play a critical role in the production and reproduction of economic inequality. In this context, it is crucial to realize that even the values, attitudes and beliefs held by an individual—of central import for the attainment of success in life—are shaped by the cultural milieu in which that person develops. *Whom* one knows affects *what* one comes to believe, and in that way influences what one can do with one's God-given talents. Do we collectively, as a society, have any responsibility for the debilitating, even pathological cultural milieus that exist in our midst? This is an important component of the racial inequality of our day. Are these subcultures of despair just facts of nature about "those people," toward whom the rest of us have no obligations whatsoever? Or are they products of a history in which we are implicated?

My claim here is that the "social pathology" to be observed in some quarters for our society did not come out of thin air, but to some extent is a consequence of historical practices, including, in the case of blacks, the practice of racial oppression.⁵ Moreover, the ongoing racial segmentation of our society—most clearly visible in the social isolation of today's urban black poor—is an important social inequity that helps to perpetuate the consequences of

our troubled racial history. I believe this analysis has an important ethical implication: *Because the creation of a skilled workforce is a social process, the meritocratic ideal—that in a free society individuals should be allowed to rise to the level of their competence—should be tempered with an understanding that no one travels that road alone.* We should not embrace the notion that individuals have “merit” that must be rewarded without some awareness of the processes by which that merit is produced. These are social processes, with a racial dimension. It should be evident that, notwithstanding the establishment of a legal regime or equal opportunity, historically engendered economic differences between racial groups could well persist into the indefinite future, and not as some have argued, perniciously, because of the genetic inferiority of blacks. Thus, the pronounced racial disparities to be observed in American cities are, at least, in part, the product of an unjust history, propagated across the generations by segmented social structures of our race conscious society. This is what I mean by the problem of racial injustice.

For this reason I would argue that, as a matter of social ethics and social science, there should be collective public effort to mitigate the economic marginality of those who are languishing in the ghettos of America. Prevailing social affiliations, including the extent of racial segregation in our society, influence the development of the intellectual and personal skills of the young. As a result, the patterns of inequality—among individuals and between groups—must embody, to some degree, social and economic disparities that have existed in the past. To the extent that past disparities reflect overt racial exclusion, the propriety of the contemporary order is called into question.

I stress that this is not a reparations argument. I am not saying that some individuals are due something because of what was done to their ancestors. Neither is this a group entitlement argument, in which racial collectivities are seen as having “rights” that take precedence over those of individuals. Indeed, my argument here is entirely consistent with individualism as a core philosophical premise. I am simply acknowledging the additional fact that in society, people are not atoms. They are, rather situated within systems of mutual affiliation. And in our society, these systems are defined, in part, by race.

Taking note of this situatedness and understanding its historical roots leads me to some recognition of race as a legitimate factor in consideration of social justice. When the developmental prospects of individuals depend on the circumstances of those with whom they are socially affiliated, and when social affiliation reflects a tendency toward racial segregation, even a minimal commitment to equality of opportunity for individuals can require, I am arguing, a willingness to take racial identity into account. In our divided society, given our tragic past, this implies that public efforts to counter the effects of historical disadvantage among blacks are not only consistent with, but indeed are required by widely embraced, individualistic, democratic ideals.

COLOR BLIND EXTREMISTS

This argument leads naturally to the question of whether affirmative-action policies are necessary and justified. To emphasize that racial group disparities can be transmitted across generations through subtle and complex social processes is not necessarily to endorse employment or educational preferences based on race. But recognizing the importance of social segmentation does cause one to doubt the ethical viability, and indeed the logical coherence, of "color-blind absolutism"—the notion that the Constitution requires government agents to ignore the racial identity of citizens. Ironically, recent claims by some conservatives⁶ to this effect bear an eerie resemblance, in form and in substance, to the similarly absolute claims of some card-carrying civil libertarians on behalf of a "wall of separation" between church and state.

Consider that, as a practical matter, the government cannot enforce laws against employment discrimination without taking note of a gross demographic imbalance in an employer's work force. Yet, the government's requiring that employment data be reported by race is already a departure from pure color-blind behavior. So too is the practice, nearly universal in the public and private sectors, of targeted outreach efforts designed to increase the representation of blacks in the pool of persons considered for an employment opportunity. Accordingly, the more intellectually consistent of the color-blind absolutists now recommend, as logic

would require, that we repeal the civil-rights laws and abandon even those efforts to achieve racial diversity which do not involve preferential treatment. But is that stance consistent with fairness?

Coming up with cases that challenge the absolutist claim is not difficult. How can a college educator convey to students the lesson that "not all blacks think alike," with too few blacks on campus for this truth to be evident? Can the police consider race when making undercover assignments? Can a black public employee use health insurance benefits to choose a black therapist with whom to discuss race-related anxieties? Can units in a public housing project be let with an eye to sustaining a racially integrated environment? What about a National Science Foundation that encourages gifted blacks to pursue careers in the fields where few now study? Clearly, there is no general rule that can resolve all of these case reasonably.

COSTS OF RACIAL PREFERENCES

I want to be clear. This criticism of color-blind absolutism is not an unqualified defense of the affirmative action status quo. There are many reasons to suspect that in particular contexts the costs of using racial preferences will outweigh the benefits.⁷ One such reason for questioning the wisdom of affirmative action in certain contexts is that the widespread use of preference can logically be expected to erode the perception of black competence. This point is often misunderstood, so it is worth spelling out in some detail. The argument is not a speculation about the feelings of persons who may or may not be the beneficiaries of affirmative action. Rather, it turns on the rational, statistical inferences that neutral observers are entitled to make about the unknown qualifications of persons who may have been preferred, or rejected, in a selection process.

The main insight is not difficult to grasp. Let some employer use a lower threshold of assessed productivity for the hiring of blacks than whites. The preferential hiring policy defines three categories of individuals within each of the two racial groups which I will call "marginals," "successes," and "failures." Marginals are those whose hiring status is altered by the policy—either whites not hired who otherwise would have been, or blacks

hired who otherwise would not have been. Successes are those who would be hired with or without the policy, and failures are those who would be passed over with or without the preferential policy. Let us consider how an outsider who can observe the hiring decision, *but not the employer's productivity assessment*, would estimate the productivity of those subject to this hiring process.

Notice that a lower hiring threshold for blacks causes the outside market to reduce its estimate of the productivity of black successes, since, on average, less is required to achieve that status. In addition, black failures, seen to have been passed over despite a lower hiring threshold, are thereby revealed as especially unproductive. On the other hand, a hiring process favoring blacks must enhance the reputations of white failures, as seen by outsiders, since they may have been artificially held back. And white successes, who are hired despite being disfavored in selection, have thereby been shown to be especially productive.

We have thus reached the result that, among blacks, only marginals gain from the establishment of a preferential hiring program—they do so because the outside observer lumps them together with black successes. They thus gain a job and a better reputation than they objectively deserve. Moreover, among whites, only marginals are harmed by the program, for only they lose the chance of securing a job and only they see their reputations harmed by virtue of being placed in the same category as white failures. In practical terms, since marginals are typically a minority of all workers, the outside reputations of most blacks will be lowered, and that of most whites enhanced, by preferential hiring. The inferential logic that leads to this arresting conclusion is particularly insidious, in that it can serve to legitimate otherwise indefensible negative stereotypes about blacks.

Another reason for being skeptical about the practice of affirmative action is that it can undercut the incentives for blacks to develop their competitive abilities. For instance, preferential treatment can lead to the patronization of black workers and students. By "patronization," I mean the setting of lower standards of expected accomplishment for blacks than for whites because of the belief that blacks are not as capable of meeting a higher, common standard. In the 1993 article "Will Affirmative Action eliminate Negative Stereotypes?"⁸, Stephen Coate and I

show how behavior of this kind can be based on a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, observed performance among blacks may be lower precisely because blacks are being patronized, a policy that is undertaken because of the need for an employer or admissions officer to meet affirmative-action guidelines.

Consider a workplace in which a supervisor operating under some affirmative-action guidelines must recommend subordinate workers for promotion. Suppose further that he is keen to promote blacks where possible, and that he monitors his subordinates' performance and bases his recommendations on these observations. Pressure to promote blacks might lead him to de-emphasize deficiencies in the performance of black subordinates, recommending them for promotion when he would not have done so for whites. But his behavior could undermine the ability of black workers to identify and correct their deficiencies. They are denied honest feedback from their supervisor on their performance and are encouraged to think that one can get ahead without attaining the same degree of proficiency as whites.

Alternatively, consider a population of students applying to professional schools for admissions. The schools, due to affirmative action concerns, are eager to admit a certain percentage of blacks. They believe that to do so they must accept black applicants with test scores and grades below those of some whites whom they reject. If most schools follow this policy, the message sent out to black students is that the level of performance needed to gain admission is lower than that which white students know they must attain. If black and white students are, at least to some extent, responsive to these differing expectations, they might, as a result, achieve grades and test scores reflective of the expectation gap. In this way, the schools' belief that different admissions standards are necessary becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

DEVELOPMENTAL AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The common theme in these two examples is that the desire to see greater black representation is pursued by using different criteria for the promotion or admission of black and white candidates. But the use of different criteria reduces the incentives that blacks have for developing needed skills. This argument does not

presume that blacks are less capable than whites; it is based on the fact that an individual's need to make use of his abilities is undermined when that individual is patronized by the employer or the admissions committee.

This problem could be avoided if, instead of using different criteria of selection, the employers and schools in question sought to meet their desired level of black participation through a concerted effort to enhance performance, while maintaining common standards of evaluation. Call it "developmental," as opposed to "preferential," affirmative action. Such a targeted effort as performance enhancement among black employees or students is definitely not color-blind behavior. It presumes a direct concern about racial inequality and involves allocating benefits on the basis of race. What distinguishes it from preferential hiring or admissions, though, is that it takes seriously the fact of differential performance and seeks to reverse it directly, rather than trying to hide from that fact by setting a different threshold of expectations for the performance of blacks.

For example, given that black students are far scarcer than white and Asian students in the fields of math and science, encouraging their entry into these areas without lowering standards—through summer workshops, support for curriculum development at historically black colleges, or the financing of research assistantships for promising graduate students—would be consistent with my distinction between "preferential" and "developmental" affirmative action. Also consistent would be the provision of management assistance to new black-owned businesses, which would then be expected to bid competitively for government contracts, or the provisional admission of black students to the state university, conditional on their raising their academic scores to competitive levels after a year or two of study at a local community college. The key is that the racially targeted assistance be short-lived and preparatory to the entry of its recipients into an arena of competition where they would be assessed in the same way as everyone else.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I am arguing that if our interest is achieving a just society, then there is nothing in the sorry history of affirmative

action abuses that requires us to tie our hands with a color-blind formalism. Consider the common sense observation that, in this country, an army where blacks are one-third of the enlisted personnel but only three percent of the officer corps is likely to function poorly. The U.S. Army cares about the number of black captains because it needs to sustain effective cooperation among its personnel across racial lines. That the racial identities of captains and corporals sometimes matters to the smooth functioning of a military institution is a deep fact about our society, one that cannot be wished away.⁹ Now, monitoring the number of blacks promoted to the rank of captain, and formulating policies to increase that number, are activities that inherently involve taking account of some individual's race. Yet, depending on how they are undertaken, such activities need not entail the promulgation of racial double standards, nor need they seem to declare, as a matter of official policy, that racial identity is a determinant of an individual's moral worth. As the military sociologist Charles Moskos is fond of pointing out, the Army is the only place in American society where large numbers of whites routinely take orders from blacks. Ironically, the irrelevance of race to a person's moral worth may be more evident to the members of this institution than elsewhere in our society precisely because the government has taken account of race in the conduct of its military personnel policies.

The color-blind principle, while consistent as a self-contained legal rule, is in my opinion neither morally nor politically coherent. It requires that we not care about racial inequality, *per se*, when, as I have argued above, there are many compelling reasons to reject that position. For instance, the color-blind principle would seem to imply that we should discontinue all racial classifications associated with the collection of government statistics. To what proper use could the agencies possibly put the racial information—on crime, housing, employment, welfare receipt, test scores—which they collect? Yet, monitoring the racial dimension of social and economic trends is an obviously vital public function. Why? For one reason, consider that these data are the sole source of our knowledge that discrimination has declined over the years, a key aspect of the case for reforming the practice of affirmative action. Moreover, without these data, the vast over

representation of blacks among imprisoned felons in this country could not be rationalized in such a way as to refute the charge of systematic racism in the administration of criminal justice. These examples illustrate how, despite the moral irrelevance of race at the individual level, there remains an operational need to attend to racial disparity in the conduct of our public affairs.

Moreover, as I have suggested, racially targeted recruitment and racially defined anti-discrimination enforcement mechanisms inevitably entail a form of mild "reverse discrimination," because they guarantee a labor market environment in which the targeted group receives more favorable treatment. Color-blind employment policy, if faithfully and uniformly pursued, must mean the abolition of racial representation as a goal. (See, eg., the recent Silberman decision for DC Circuit in *Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod v. Federal Communications Commission*, No. 97-1116 (D.C. Cir. September 15, 1998), where a federal judge seems prepared to go this far.)

All of this shows the confusion of those color-blind advocates who offer the criminalization of employment discrimination as a quid pro quo for the abolition of affirmative action. Jailing employers for not finding enough black workers would only lead to a dramatic increase in the amount of covert, reverse discrimination against white job-seekers. Indeed, since all anti-discrimination enforcement requires classifying, monitoring, and counting employees by race, the only fully consistent color-blind position is to advocate the repeal of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I respect the intellectual consistency, but doubt the moral probity of those like Richard Epstein of the University of Chicago Law School, who so advocate.

NOTES

1. This point is developed more fully in Loury (March 1998).
2. The discussion in this section draws on Loury (August 1998).
3. For a more complete discussion, see Loury (*Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Spring 1998).
4. These ideas are developed more fully in Loury (1997).
5. For a more complete argument in this vein, see Loury, *Brookings Review*, Spring 1998.
6. For example, *America in Black and White* (1997) by Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom.

7. See Loury (Spring 1997).
8. See Coate and Loury (1993).
9. See *All that We Can Be* (1997), by Charles Moskos and John Sibley Butler, for an informative discussion of affirmative action in the U.S. Army.

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Affirmative Action at the Crossroads: A Social Justice Perspective

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This article reviews the basis for the policy of affirmative action within the context of changing social values. Both the aims and unanticipated consequences of affirmative action are explored, the latter of which have resulted in substantial backlash and the real possibility of policy overturn. Within this context, the position of the social welfare community toward and involvement in affirmative action is traced. An agenda for social work in current and future debates about affirmative action is offered which takes into account the original social problem—discrimination—within redefined societal values and political realities. Alternative remedies to affirmative action, it is argued, can be congruent with the mission and values of the social welfare community in its quest to achieve social justice. Such options include targeting specific professions that interface with the inner city African-American underclass; reframing the purpose of affirmative action from that of correcting injustice for the victims of racial discrimination to social engineering; and targeting specific geographical areas which are characterized by economic deprivation.

INTRODUCTION

The debate about the future of affirmative action occupies center stage on our national agenda. Incremental changes have already been implemented in the direction of diluting the scope and impact of affirmative action and the current socio-political environment suggests continued “chipping away” at the foundation of this public policy. It is essential that the social welfare community be an active participant in the debate about the future of anti-discrimination efforts and that it offer viable alternatives to preserve and extend efforts to fight discrimination in this country.

This article has a three-fold focus. First, the basis for the policy of affirmative action is reviewed within the context of changing social values. Both the aims and unanticipated consequences of affirmative action are explored, the latter of which have resulted in substantial backlash and the real possibility of policy overturn through sustained reductions in the scope of judicial or legislative policy. Second, the position of social work, as the practicing social welfare profession, toward and involvement in affirmative action is traced. Third, an agenda for social work in current and future debates about affirmative action is offered which takes into account the original social problem—discrimination—within redefined societal values and political realities. Alternative remedies to affirmative action, it is argued, can be similarly congruent with the mission and values of the social welfare community in its quest to achieve social justice.

In the past few years, there has been a plethora of books on race and representation, with particular focus on affirmative action. As the debate about the future of affirmative action has gathered momentum, the quantity of books and popular magazine articles has risen exponentially (see for example, Curry, 1996; Post & Rogin, 1998; Skrentny, 1998). In general, this accumulation of literature is descriptive—seeking to explore the debate, detailing why we do or do not need affirmative action—but with few prescriptions for constructive alternatives.

Social work has not been an active contributor to the debate when compared to the disciplines of sociology, political science, and law, and even descriptive information is sparse within the social work literature that would help to clarify this complex issue. A commitment on the part of the social work profession to affirmative action, in principle and in policy, can be assumed from the procedures and practices of social welfare agencies, from the standards of accrediting bodies for social service agencies, from position statements of the National Association of Social Workers, and from the *NASW Code of Ethic* (NASW, 1996a; NASW, 1996b; COA, 1997). However, discussion within the social welfare community has centered largely on support for affirmative action, without full recognition of the breadth and intensity of society's opposition to its continuation. This view is short-sighted.

Affirmative action concerns not only public policy and social justice priorities and commitments, but also the well-being of the clients represented in social work practice. Human service professions have much to contribute to the dialogue about viable alternatives, but must do so within the context of prevailing sociopolitical realities and in concert with other groups which seek to ensure that combating discrimination in any form continues to be a high and demonstrated public priority. The credibility of the profession's contributions to this dialogue must be rooted in a solid knowledge of what affirmative action *is* and why it has come to occupy center stage as detractors seek to dismantle it.

Although affirmative action addresses discrimination against women, the physically disabled, and other designated groups, the focus of this discussion is primarily on racial minorities, particularly African-Americans. This is because much of the current debate centers on racial discrimination and recent Supreme Court decisions (e.g., *Adarand Constructors v. Peña*) focus on establishing tougher standards to justify policies designed to benefit racial minorities (Biskupic, 1995). Similarly, an analysis of the full intricacies and ramifications of affirmative action is beyond the scope of this discussion. Rather, the focus is on viewing affirmative action—past, present, and future directions—from a social justice perspective.

For purposes of this discussion, social justice refers to conditions in which "all members of society have the same basic rights, protections, opportunities, obligations, and social benefits" (Barker, 1995, p. 354). Social injustices, as referenced in the NASW *Code of Ethics*, refer to such conditions as poverty, unemployment, and discrimination (NASW, 1996a, p. 5). Although there are different perspectives on what constitutes social justice and how it can be achieved, Van Soest (1994) found that justifications for an investment in human services and rebuilding the nation's economy were apparent in the diverse views of libertarians, utilitarians, and egalitarians. Based on Rawl's conception of social justice, Figueira-McDonough (1993) argues that equality in the distribution of social goods, such as education and work, is the means to achieve equal opportunity. Equal opportunity, in turn, is the pre-condition for the exercise of freedom.

FROM DISCRIMINATION TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Within the context of changing values, of increased concern about social justice for all, and of grass roots mobilization for change, this nation slowly but steadily over the past 100 years moved toward identifying discrimination as a social problem. The term "social problem" suggests that society has recognized the existence of a social condition which is deemed, by the majority, to be unacceptable in some form or way and which requires the intervention of government, through judicial or legislative remedy, to rectify (DiNitto, 1991; Gilbert, Specht, & Terrell, 1993; Chambers, 1993). The fact of discrimination came to be seen as the problem of discrimination against racial minorities, particularly African-Americans who had been subjected to decades of enslavement.

Affirmative Action Antecedents

Various legislative, judicial, and executive branch efforts were initiated to correct discriminatory practices, the earlier initiatives of which focused on prohibitions against discrimination. The Fifteenth Amendment, which took effect in March, 1870, guaranteed that the right of citizens to vote should not be denied because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude (Pritchett, 1968). Laws which were intended to prevent blacks from exercising their voting rights were declared unconstitutional. The momentum had begun, however slowly. President Truman took steps to desegregate the military in 1946. In *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* (1954), the Supreme Court ruled that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal (Day, 1997).

In 1961, President Kennedy issued Executive Order 10925 which created the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity whose charge it was to recommend "affirmative steps" that executive branch departments and agencies could take to more fully integrate the federal work force. The Order went further in prohibiting federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of race, creed, color, or national origin by federal contractors. In fulfilling their contracts, these contractors were ordered to take affirmative steps to hire African-American and other racial minorities (Wells & Idelson, 1995).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 attempted to ensure that the Constitutional guarantees afforded to all citizens were applied equally. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was created to enforce civil rights (Day, 1997). Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 expanded equal opportunity to cover private employers by making it unlawful to discriminate against potential or actual employees on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, or national origin. The law provides for redress of discriminatory actions: courts have the authority to order employers to take affirmative steps such as reinstating, hiring, or paying retroactive wages to employees (Wells & Idelson, 1995). The provisions of the 1964 Act made all discrimination illegal; this prohibition did not in any way imply that positive or aggressive efforts need be made. And, in fact, they were not.

The slow but steady progress (albeit with some instances of backward movement) in the affirmation of civil rights for African-American and other minorities is consistent with an incremental model of social change, a model embraced by American society and congruent with its conservative leanings (Chambers, 1993). However, even these changes which form the backdrop for affirmative action did not occur without significant resistance. There are members of our society who do not see the unequal division of resources by race as a function of centuries of social policy, but rather as a function of reward for inherent worth or lack of worth, as the case may be (Kraft, 1996).

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AS POLICY

The policy of affirmative action is, in itself, unusually brief and straightforward. In 1965, President Johnson, through Executive Order 11246, expanded President Kennedy's earlier order by requiring contractors to take affirmative steps in all business operations, not just in fulfilling federal contracts (Pecora, 1995). Companies were required to submit the "numerical goals and timetables" used in carrying out their affirmative action plan (Wells & Idelson, 1995). The Order did not require *specific* timetables or "quotas" (numerical imperatives in absolute or proportionate terms), although, in time, individual businesses, bolstered

by the courts, have instituted such. This far-reaching Executive Order and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which preceded it were executed at a time of widespread interest in and support for the civil rights movement. Liberal Democrats controlled the presidency and both branches of Congress, making opposition to affirmative action politically impractical. The backdrop of the growing civil unrest of the 1960s was also a motivating factor for government action (Day, 1997; DiNitto, 1991).

Building on the groundwork laid by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Act was amended in 1991, through Title VI, to prohibit discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives federal government financial assistance (Wells & Idelson, 1995). Included in this category are programs that receive loans, tax breaks, or grants and contracts from the government. Few are exempt. However, the 1991 amendments also inserted language to clarify that employers are not required to meet statistical quotas. In 1992, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act was passed by Congress, which amended Title VII to increase the EEOC's powers to bring civil suits against employers for discriminatory practices. These suits must be brought by the U.S. Justice Department. Heretofore, the EEOC had relied on dialogue and conciliation efforts, with the potential threat of withdrawal of government funds.

Affirmative action rejects the notion that policies are insufficient if they simply do not discriminate against individuals on the basis of gender, race or ethnic background. The word "affirmative" suggests that positive steps must be taken to achieve equality in admissions to institutions of higher education, in hiring and promotion in employment settings, and in other arenas (Kraft, 1995). Inequities must be reduced and eliminated through *active* intervention (DiNitto, 1991; Pecora, 1995).

The broad goal of these policies was to correct the discriminatory practices of the past and to create a balance in the work force and in higher education that was reflective of the balance between the races and genders in American society. Specific objectives were to increase the numbers of under-represented women and minorities in all businesses and programs benefitting from federal support in proportion to their numbers in the general population. Have these goals been achieved? Progress has been made (see, for

example, Burstein, 1994; Taylor, 1995; Wolfe, 1996; AAD Project, 1998). Has discrimination been eliminated? No.

IMPLEMENTING AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Value Issues

There are a number of value conflicts and different assumptions about the nature of people which have affected the successful implementation of affirmative action as a social policy. Although equality is a widely held value, it is a value for some that is based on worth. The assumption that all people are not equally worthy and that there are differences in worth based on racial group identity is one that many Americans hold; such attitudes have been used to justify social, political, and economic discrimination and exploitation for decades. The view that race and class differences are the result of genetic factors and therefore not subject to social intervention received widespread attention with the publication of *The Bell Curve* (Hernstein & Murray, 1994). To the extent that people believe that inequities are a function of inherent worth, then inequality becomes a descriptive reality rather than a social problem (Kraft, 1996).

Even among those who agree that inequality is a function of centuries of social injustice, there are some who believe that once the law made discrimination illegal, it is up to individuals to overcome whatever obstacles confront them in acquiring their fair share of resources or achieving personal aspirations. Adherents of this laissez-faire position would argue that a policy of affirmative action infantilizes the population it seeks to help, thereby exacerbating the consequences of years of discrimination (Kraft, 1996). Even those who agree that inequity is a function of unequal treatment and that affirmative action is part of a useful remedy might still object on the grounds that you can't address one evil (inequality) with another (quotas or preferential treatment). These disparities in viewpoints signify a conflict in values and create serious obstacles to the successful implementation of the policy of affirmative action. It is therefore not surprising that, thirty years after affirmative action was implemented, the policy itself has come to be defined as creating unacceptable conditions for mainstream America.

There were several unique aspects to the development and implementation of affirmative action. Here, the executive, rather than the legislative branch of government set forth the goals, private institutions created methods for implementation, and the administrative departments, with legislative assistance, worked on enforcement. The implementation of affirmative action was left to employing organizations, most of which have developed affirmative action divisions or departments to create and monitor institutional policy. Thus, the policy was implemented in thousands of businesses, agencies, and educational institutions through their own structures and with varying levels of commitment and effectiveness. The government bureaucracy maintains the power to sanction and the wielding of that power has apparently been sufficient to generate significant compliance. The EEOC continues to investigate and adjudicate complaints, often with substantial back log to its heavy load. Most states have passed similar legislation and have created parallel agencies to further ensure that affirmative action is carried out.

Unanticipated Consequences

Executive Order 11246 did not single out specific sub-sections of the population nor were financial resources set aside to implement the order. Instead, it simply authorized the EEOC to use its good offices to monitor and assist institutions in developing methods to achieve the general goal of the policy—to achieve more equitable racial balances. The EEOC and the various state commissions perform more of a judicial than legislative function, monitoring the impact of the policy through the processing of complaints. However, unlike the courts, the decision of one administrative body is not binding on the decisions of other bodies adjudicating similar matters. Therefore, a body of “case law” does not exist and comparable data are not available to contrast the different ways in which the policy has been applied (Kraft, 1995).

As a policy, affirmative action attempts to enforce equal opportunity by monitoring the outcomes of the hiring and promotion processes of businesses. It is the responsibility of businesses to demonstrate that they are in compliance with equal opportunity laws. In general, this internal process includes analyzing employee utilization patterns in regard to women and minorities

and submitting a plan to correct any identified under-utilization (Lundberg, 1994). In implementation, under-utilization has been applied to those situations in which a job category contains fewer women or minorities than might be found based on their presence in the available qualified labor pool. Corrective plans, which "good faith" effort must address, are generally based on numerical goals and schedules.

Thirty-one years after employment discrimination was prohibited under the Civil Rights Act, the definition and manifestations of and remedies for discrimination remain elusive. The nature of our policies and programs to combat discrimination may be as responsible for this continuation as the entrenched attitudes of the American public. Are we clear, as a society, about what constitutes discrimination? And are there always remedies available? What denotes a pool of "qualified" candidates?

Title VII of that Act simply fails to define discrimination. It prohibits some specific practices, such as failing to hire because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, but adds that it is an "unlawful employment practice . . . otherwise to discriminate" (42 U.S.C. 2000e, sec. 702(a)), without providing insight into the meaning of this clause. In 1971, the Supreme Court, in *Griggs v. Duke Power Company*, expanded the definition of discrimination to include not only intentional disparate treatment, but also unintentional practices which have an adverse impact on minorities or women, such as requiring all applicants for particular jobs to meet specified educational credentials (Burstein, 1994). Critics have charged that this revised legal definition creates a situation in which any negative labor market outcome can be interpreted to be the result of discrimination. The result, it is argued, is reverse racism, quotas, and an over concern with group representation rather than individual justice (Burstein, 1994).

The Supreme Court has an inconsistent record in regard to affirmative action although clarification of the policy is frequently sought through this Court. For example, the charge of "reverse discrimination" was clearly enunciated in the decision of *Regents of University of California v. Bakke* (1978). Here, the Court ruled that Alan Bakke was unfairly denied admission to the University of California-Davis Medical School because his qualifications were stronger than many minority candidates admitted to the school

(Day, 1997). Court challenges continue through today, with interpretation subject to the vicissitudes of prevailing socio-political values. In the 1997–98 session of the Supreme Court, the modern-day counterpart of reverse discrimination claims was scheduled to be heard, but an unprecedented out of court settlement caused the case to be withdrawn. This case concerned a white school teacher in Piscataway, New Jersey who was laid off as part of personnel retrenchment in favor of a black teacher with the same qualifications. Civil rights groups had anticipated an adverse ruling by the Supreme Court and court experts believed that the settlement only temporarily forestalled decisions which would set affirmative action back (Holmes, 1997). Although the 1998–99 Supreme Court calendar does not include any major cases involving affirmative action, several cases are now being heard in state courts which raise issues similar to those in the Piscataway case.

To date, the major impediments to the implementation of affirmative action have been sociological, but political barriers are surfacing which affect the ultimate outcome and future direction of the policy, itself. The 1990s have seen a shift of politics to the right. Republicans, who now control both houses of Congress, are calling for an end to affirmative action. The courts, too, are showing a willingness to chip away at the foundations of affirmative action. In *Adarand Constructors v. Peña*, the Supreme Court ruled, in 1995, that federal programs or policies based on race or ethnicity must meet a legal test of "strict scrutiny" (Jaschik, 1995). This decision affects dozens of federal affirmative action programs which have benefitted minority students or faculty members. California's ban on the use of racial and gender preferences in hiring, contracting, and education, went into effect in August, 1997 (Schmidt & Lederman, 1997), despite unsuccessful challenges through the courts (Schmidt, 1997). The impact has already been felt in California. Minority admissions on three campuses of the University of California were reported to have dropped sharply for the freshman class of 1998, the first class to be admitted since the ban on the use of racial preferences took effect (Staff, 1998). In the four states in which affirmative action can no longer be used in higher-education admissions (California, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas) enrollment of members of minority groups has dropped 17 percent (Campbell, 1997).

The rhetoric focuses on instrumental values, e.g., you can't fight discrimination with another form of discrimination. However, the debate fuels old prejudices and stereotypes, with claims that it has stigmatized those whom it seeks to help (Peebles-Wilkins, 1996). The arguments suggest the cyclical nature of societal values and the weight of conservatism now characteristic of our citizens and their elected representatives. The shift in values is evident in the following views:

- Race-conscious policies lead to preferential treatment and unfair advantages for some at the expense of others;
- Justice should entail equal opportunity for individuals, not statistical parity for groups identified by government;
- Affirmative action gives some people in society benefits they have not earned and do not deserve;
- The practice of filling "slots" designated for people of color sets up for failure those hired into these positions;
- Practices that limit or deny opportunities to others lead to heightened racial tensions;
- Minorities who are intended to profit from affirmative action are hurt by the reinforcement of stereotypes; and
- Affirmative action excludes [white] individuals on the basis of race, and hence constitutes reverse discrimination (Gamson & Modigliani, 1994; Kraft, 1996; Peebles-Wilkins, 1996).

Such arguments lead logically to a repudiation of the compensatory features of affirmative action based on the legacy of past discrimination and the goal of redressing resulting inequalities. These views set the framework for the current and future debate on affirmative action. Some want to end equal opportunity programs entirely; others want to bring about change, but disagree about what constitutes equality of opportunity and how it can best be achieved.

Many of these prevailing perceptions about affirmative action can be challenged on the basis of hard data. For example, complaints of "reverse discrimination" by white males represent less than two percent of all complaints made to human rights commissions (Kinsley, 1995). There is no significant evidence to indicate that individuals or groups are suffering as a consequence

of these programs (Merida, 1995) or that economic productivity and efficiency have declined. To the contrary, a study focused the racial make-up of Chicago's largest corporations (including Amoco, Beatrice, MacDonald's, Sears, and Quaker Oats) found, in comparing productivity and efficiency of the participating companies with percentage of minority workers, no significant differences (McMillen, 1995). Unfortunately, "facts" do not necessarily alter perceptions, particularly with an emotional-laden issue. The extent of emotionalism is evident in the pervasive misconceptions about affirmative action—that it is a single policy with one purpose, that it concerns racial issues only, and that preferential treatment of some groups over others is the only (unacceptable) option (Skrenty, 1998).

The weight of public opinion and recent supportive judicial and legislative actions supporting an end to affirmative action as we know it are suggestive of a building momentum for change. The social welfare community needs to acknowledge this political reality, rooted as it is in prevailing values. With recognition that affirmative action has not fully resolved inequities among the races, we need to promote the examination of alternatives within a social justice framework. Anti-discrimination needs to be defined in terms of the larger public good (that which is in the interest of all segments of society), rather than as competition between individual or group interests. The problem needs to be reframed in a way that better addresses the educational, social and economic conditions which continue to challenge the concepts of a society that espouses equality and equity for all.

WHERE DOES THE SOCIAL WELFARE COMMUNITY STAND?

The social welfare community has, not surprisingly, asserted a position in favor of affirmative action, but without noticeable dialogue about the broader mandate for change or possible directions of such change. The *NASW Code of Ethics* (1996a, p. 27) is explicit in regard to a proactive professional position on discrimination: Social workers should promote . . . policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people. But what does this mean? What policies should be promoted? How? By whom?

In August 1996, the NASW Delegate Assembly endorsed a policy statement affirming NASW's support of affirmative action as a tool to prevent and eliminate discrimination. Included among the principles set forth in this statement is that "social workers should join others to denounce attempts to end affirmative action initiatives" (1996b, p. 3). Such principles suggest that social work efforts should be directed to maintaining current policy, surely an unrealistic and perhaps counterproductive professional stance. Simply stated, ongoing verbalizations of our support for affirmative action as currently stipulated in public policy point to a level of political naivete. To assert "keep things as they are" in a socio-political environment in which the reverse (radical change or total demolishing) is being forcefully pursued implies our own brand of inflexibility.

More in line with a proactive position which recognizes the mandate for change are two other principles contained in the NASW statement: "Changes in affirmative action should strengthen practice and policy aimed at ending discrimination and its impact" (1996b, p. 4), and "Social workers should work with others to develop more effective and cogent policies and strategies to guide society and communities to strengthen affirmative action". Even here, such broad mandates lack the level of specificity and direction needed to serve as a guide to professional behavior.

Social workers need to be able to actively apply social planning knowledge and policy development skills to identify new solutions. Further, social work must lend its expertise to the collection and analysis of empirical data on the outcomes of past, present, and future approaches to end discrimination. The credibility of the profession in the affirmative action debate may well depend on being able to document, through our practice, the continued negative impact of discrimination and, conversely, the positive outcomes of anti-discrimination strategies. The profession must also be clear about its potential contributions to an interdisciplinary dialogue.

The failure to identify alternative remedies to combat discrimination is not solely a failure of social work, since politicians as well as concerned disciplines and society in general have similarly come up wanting in terms of viable options. This failure can be

attributed to the fact that alternatives are not only difficult to identify, but are also far more complex than affirmative action in terms of value issues, policy content, and program interventions.

Intra and inter-disciplinary arenas for discussion include: targeting specific professions that interface with the inner city African-American underclass; reframing the purpose of affirmative action from that of correcting injustice for the victims of racial discrimination to social engineering, and targeting specific geographical areas which are characterized by economic deprivation. These arenas do not purport to be solutions, *per se*, but rather broad categories of potential intervention in which specific options may be considered.

THE FUTURE: OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Some possible directions for change that maintain the integrity and intent of the original policy can be gleaned from a sociological perspective. Discrimination goes beyond the decision making of individual employers; it is rooted in institutional racism that has denied minorities not only access to jobs, but to education and training, as well (Burstein, 1994). Although there is a growing African-American middle class and blacks have made educational and economic inroads, there is a growing underclass.

African-Americans are disproportionately under-represented in the labor market at all levels and in higher education. Social workers know this intuitively and anecdotally, since the consequences of under- and unemployed are seen in the lives of the clients we serve. A recent study demonstrated that although blacks are closing the gap in educational disparity vis-a-vis whites, they are losing ground with jobs (Rich, 1995). Data also show that where African-Americans do hold jobs, there is a disparity in pay for the same work between black and white Americans. College educated black men earn, on average, 76 percent of what their white counterparts earn (Walsh, 1995). A study conducted by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management found that African-American federal employees were two and a half times more likely to be fired than white employees, even when variables such as age, education, and years of experience were controlled (Barr, 1995). The highest levels of management remain almost

all white and male (Kilborn, 1995). African-Americans comprise 10 percent of the work force, but only 4 percent of physicians, 3 percent of lawyers and architects, and 2 percent of airline pilots (Cohn & Vobejda, 1993). African-Americans remain largely absent from the most prestigious private sector jobs.

These troubling statistics suggest that the problem is more far-reaching than opportunity disparity. These data negate a compensatory approach to address past discrimination and suggest that a socio-economic model may be more viable. The consequences of large numbers of minorities who are in poverty and who do not contribute to the economy or the culture affect all of us. We all suffer from the drain on our productivity, the reality that many do not share the tax burdens of society, and the manifestations of poverty—including rising crime rates and drug abuse (Kraft, 1996). These consequences of discrimination suggest the enormity of the social justice issues still to be addressed. Dialogue that acknowledges these socio-economic disparities reframe the repertoire of alternative remedies by focusing on assistance to the most victimized, with program eligibility criteria grounded in economic need rather than gender or racial category.

Reframing the Purpose

The current debate about affirmative action revolves around our responsibility to correct the injustices of the past and promote social justice for the future. The left argues that society is to blame for centuries of slavery and generations of discrimination. The right argues that there are no excuses for individuals' failure to take responsibility for their lives and the lives of their families. This focus is counter-productive, as it promotes blame rather than change.

What is undeniable is that a growing black underclass hurts all Americans and any policy that changes this condition will serve all of us. The key to this approach is to generate a respect for different points of view and approaches and a willingness to subject such approaches to empirical testing. If the left wants the right to agree to strategies which emphasize the provision of help and resources, then the left must be willing to attempt programs which are strict and include enforceable sanctions. A potential path for success is to start with an acknowledgment that

there is a serious problem affecting the whole of society, that we do not now know what the solutions are, but that solutions are identifiable if we are willing to explore and experiment (Kraft, 1996). Social work needs to enter this dialogue with coalitions of other professions and politicians. Social engineering to achieve change in norms, mores and social institutions (Barker, 1995) needs to be approached purposefully, with societal manipulation a positive rather than negative goal. Social work has much to contribute in terms of anecdotal successes and a burgeoning empirical research base pertaining to social justice issues. Further, the skills of social workers in mediation and negotiation can assist those whose views are at polar ends to identify and build consensus around areas in which there is agreement.

Targeting Geographical Areas

New social programs aimed at increasing opportunities ought to be piloted in those areas which are creating the highest social cost. These areas tend to be urban, largely minority in composition, with high crime and poverty ratios. The number of arrests, number of people receiving social service benefits, and number of school drop-outs are easy to quantify and serve as benchmarks for assessing the success or failure of programs. The application of appropriate research methods can provide a relatively low-cost indicator of the potential of new programs for success, with equal attention to measuring the outcomes of interventions.

A concurrent strategy in targeted neighborhoods is to actuate the principles of community organizing and change, principles widely heralded within social work yet largely downplayed in an overwhelmingly clinical profession. Empowering communities to create their own affirmative circumstances through self-help networks, community economic development, and the use of political power warrant renewed experimentation, also subject to empirical testing. Such tenets fit with a socio-economic base for the development of new initiatives to achieve equality.

The remaining question is: who is going to accomplish these social experiments? It is becoming increasingly clear that government cannot continue to be relied upon as the source of ideas or the funder of programs. Partnerships between the not-for-profit sector and business have been highly successful in other

ventures, but have not been adequately explored in the area of social engineering. Such partnerships are worthy of pursuit.

Targeting Specific Professions

If one of the major sociological problems inherent in racial issues concerns the motivation of the oppressed and disadvantaged, as some have alleged in the most recent welfare reform debate, certainly their exposure to people who look like them and who occupy the jobs and social positions with which they most frequently interface would have an important impact.

Social work can and should be a model for other professions. The ability of the profession to relate to the communities it serves suggests the imperative of a more diverse human services labor force. The composition of the profession must be brought more in line with the proportion of clients served by social workers who are racial minorities. The current profile of African-Americans in the social work profession (at least in regard to the NASW membership) reflects less than one-half of the 11.8 percent that this group comprises of the U.S. population (Gibelman & Schervish, 1997). These numbers are unacceptable for a profession that would like to see itself in the vanguard of progressive social change. Strategies to recruit ethnic minorities into the profession deserve greater attention and resources. Schools of social work have an essential role to play in recruiting ethnic minorities through outreach and scholarships. This means reaching potential students earlier (perhaps in high school) and more effectively. "Marketing" social work as a career has never been more important. More concentrated efforts to promote diversity within social work will be a signal to others of our commitment in action as well as in words.

Similarly, the teaching profession is crucial in terms of its interface with African-Americans. A large percentage of African-Americans teaching African-Americans would have a significant impact on creating hope and motivation. Other important professional groups to target include police, attorneys, and correctional officers. Targeting efforts ought to go well beyond scholarships and slots, and extend to early identification of potential candidates for these professions and the provision of information

and incentives that would encourage youth at the time they are forming opinions about the course of their future.

The social welfare community needs to increase its expertise in using the media to promote the visibility of these professions and the opportunities they afford for African-Americans. During 1997, an NBC public service announcement series, featuring African-American and other actors of some fame, promoted teaching as a profession. Other professions need this type of visibility and promotion.

Intra-Professional Change

The consequences of discrimination are widely known to the social welfare community. The problems of under and unemployed, of poor education and skill deficits, poverty, substance abuse, inadequate housing, family breakdown, and lives of despair play out in various ways in the presenting problems of the people with whom social workers work. Despite the overwhelming evidence that major stress factors are related to socio-environmental problems, of which discrimination is a notable example, the major emphasis in social work practice continues to be on the nurturing services, such as mental health counseling, that reflect a focus on "fixing the individual" rather than on sustaining services which view problems and interventions as grounded in societal causes and societal solutions. The "person in environment" perspective, which holds claim as the theoretical base of social work practice, falls short in implementation, with the person too often the sole center of attention, while the effects of the environment are ignored. As noted by Greene (1991, p. 9), "the clear integration of a seemingly dual perspective on both the theoretical and action levels sometimes seem to have eluded the profession". Haynes (1998) clarifies that it is not a question of social reform *or* individual treatment; the two foci need not be mutually exclusive and divisive.

Thus, there is a substantial and long-standing discrepancy between the content of policy statements issued by professional associations representing social workers and the actions and interventions of professionals who work with the disenfranchised. This lament is not new and the predominance of a clinical focus within the profession seems to grow continuously stronger

(Gibelman & Schervish, 1997). Specht and Courtney (1994) devoted an entire book to chastising the profession for its abandonment of a systems-change perspective. Haynes and Mickelson (1997) continue to echo the belief that the profession has adopted a "dispassionate, objective, and apolitical stance" (p. xiii). They urge, in a spirit similar to Specht and Courtney, that "advocacy become the central mission of our professional association, a mandated standard for all social work practice, and a daily part of every social worker's experience" (p. xiv).

The obligation of professional associations, schools of social work, and practice agencies to teach, encourage, and allow political practice must go beyond lip service. The predominant interest of social workers in clinical practice, the realities of limited time and funds for advocacy activity, and the pressures upon human service organizations to focus on only reimbursable activities highlight some of the reasons why there is a substantial gap between what the social work professes and what it does. The credibility of the social welfare community to be legitimate players in shaping the anti-discrimination policies and programs of the future depends on the extent to which the dual perspective can be realigned to emphasize both the person and the environment.

CONCLUSION

The examples of possible avenues of intervention discussed above place the social welfare community in a position to contribute, from a social justice perspective, to deliberations about the future course of anti-discrimination efforts. The ongoing dismantling of affirmative action raises fundamental questions about the future of this society. Policy practice, much heralded as an essential component of social work practice, provides the basis for a more active leadership role in the debate. Inherent in such practice is the mandate to inform politicians about the effects of discrimination, as garnered through the day-to-day work of social workers with disenfranchised groups. Collecting and aggregating such data is both realistic and necessary and can provide an important counter-argument to those who urge dismantling of affirmative action without first identifying how its aims can be achieved through other means.

The conditions which led to the need for affirmative action have been unrelenting in their persistence. The situation for many, if not most African-Americans and other minorities has improved only marginally and sometimes not at all (Day, 1997). The opinion of Justice Thurgood Marshall in *Regents of University of California v. Bakke*, 438 U.S. 265 (1978) included this testimonial to the continuous need to pursue a course of equal opportunity, no matter what its form:

"If we are ever to become a fully integrated society, one in which the color of a person's skin will not determine the opportunities available to him or her, we must be willing to take steps to open those doors. (as cited in Ezorsky, 1991, p. 133)"

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Book Reviews

Barry D. Adam, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Andre Krouwel (Eds.), *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics: National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1999. \$59.95 hardcover, \$22.95 papercover.

Adam, Duyvendak, and Krouwel wanted to provide an overview of both existing lesbian and gay social-political movements and to place these movements into an historical context. They acknowledge that little work has been done in this field, and, in an effort to explore the phenomenon of gay and lesbian politics from a worldwide perspective, the editors provided what they call "portraits" of fourteen countries. To ensure a global perspective, countries from each of the five continents are included. The attempt to present a global perspective related to lesbian and gay political and social movements is an ambitious one and the editors have done a laudable job of exploring content that has been largely overlooked by other scholars.

The 318 page, indexed text includes introductory and summary chapters authored by the editors and 12 chapters that include content from the United States, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Britain, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, South Africa, Japan, and Australia. A total of 17 different authors contributed to this effort, and while there is some unevenness in chapter length and scholarship, the book is fascinating if one has an interest in gay and lesbian political, historical, or social movements. There are several recurring themes woven throughout chapters that focus on specific countries. Specifically related to the country being analyzed, themes include: legal issues, an historical overview of the lesbian and gay movements, AIDS and its impact, political realities, and differences between lesbian and gay men's views and approaches.

Most of the authors try and link their essays to existing theoretical or conceptual frameworks thereby demonstrating how lesbian and gay sociopolitical activities fit into existing constructs. And the overarching theme has to be viewed as one of empowerment. Across the globe political activism in gay and lesbian

communities has evolved from small groups meeting in household kitchens to national demonstrations and parades. Once denied legal rights, lesbians and gay men on every continent are demanding personal freedom. Continuing hate crimes, lingering discrimination, and ongoing homophobia shadow these positive outcomes. But the themes of resiliency and determination are clearly evident.

The book has many strengths. Each chapter has been well researched and includes notes and references. It is generally well written and easily read. The reader must be prepared to move through it slowly only because there is a vast amount of content included. The final summative chapter does a fine job of synthesizing, comparing, and contrasting earlier materials which helps the reader integrate content. There are some weaknesses too. There is a tendency for some authors to rely heavily on secondary references when exploring history and some of the chapters were written four years before the book ever reached the press. Therefore, one must trust that the data from the original sources has been accurately portrayed and then correctly interpreted by the current authors (sometimes a quantum leap). Further, one must be aware that some of the materials are dated and perhaps do not reflect current ideology (or even country structure). Some chapters are hard to read simply because of the extensive use of acronyms. For those who are monolingual, when the acronym's letters do not fit the actual title, it may become confusing.

In a world of diversity, this book should find a home first in the libraries of queer scholars and then in the offices of sociologists, political scientists, and historians. Its worldwide perspective should make *The Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics* of interest beyond the United States as its major themes have importance for wherever lesbians and gay men are struggling for legal and human rights, and its historical analysis provides tips for emerging gay and lesbian sociopolitical organizations and movements.

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Roger Goodman, Gordon White and Huck-ju Kwon (Eds.), *The East Asian Welfare Model: Welfare Orientalism and the State*. New York: Routledge, 1998. \$90.00 hardcover, \$29.99 papercover.

This collection of papers examines five Asian countries (namely Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea; China is included as contrast) and attempts to answer the question whether there is an East Asian welfare model. There are two other research questions: First, how does one explain the structure and dynamics of East Asian welfare systems and second, is the East Asian welfare experience worthy of emulation in other countries facing the challenge of welfare reform? In its attempt to answer these questions, the book is divided into three parts: an overview on Welfare Orientalism, a review of East Asian welfare systems, and country case studies.

The book reveals that the East Asian countries constitute a distinct welfare experience with some common elements but they are far from homogeneous. They find that: "with regard to its relevance to Western societies, and Britain in particular, we are comparing chalk and cheese." (p. 20) Cultural explanation for welfare development in terms of Confucianism is dismissed as unhelpful and ideological. Welfare programs are often introduced by those in power with political motives. Welfare spending is considered wasteful by the governments and funded systems are set up to get financial resources for investment in industry and infrastructure.

The relevance of this collection should be placed in the current ideological context. Under the challenge from neo-liberalism, the welfare state in the advanced industrialized countries has been in disarray. This has driven policy-makers and researchers to seek policy alternatives. With very spectacular economic development since 1970's, the East Asian countries have impressed the world. Not surprisingly, their successful welfare system is brought up by the both the Conservative Party and Labour Party in Britain as possible model for emulation.

For a long time, comparative policy analysts who theorize rigorously on the basis of research findings from the advanced western countries have completely neglected East Asian countries, either treating them as developing societies which fall outside

their scope of analysis or contending that these countries will sooner or later be like the industrialized countries in all respects. There is thus a lamentable void in comparative social policy analysis. Seen in this perspective, this book is most timely. As it stands, it is an invitation to the emerging field of social welfare in Asia and a pioneering guide to this relatively unknown terrain.

This book has a number of strengths. The two introductory chapters are particularly interesting. The first by Goodman and White set the stage by thoroughly and perceptively reviewing their idea of Welfare Orientalism. The cultural explanation of welfare development is extensively reviewed. They find that it only imbues certain basic societal features with a sense of timelessness and serves to marginalize other forms of explanations. The importance of the state cannot be overemphasized: "Most notable is the strategic role of states in directing a process of economic development with distributive as well as growth objectives, resulting in a relatively egalitarian pattern of income distribution compared with other industrializing regions such as Latin America." (p. 13) The second chapter by Huck-ju Kwon is a comparative analysis of their welfare development. Rejecting the relevance of public expenditure approach, this paper rightly focuses on the role of the state and the political dynamics of the evolution of the individual welfare systems.

The main criticism of this volume is one that can be directed at many edited books: its struggle to integrate the chapters under a central theme. This is particularly true for the six country case studies. Although Kwon promises that: "The directions in which they are likely to go—and implicitly whether they are likely to go along similar paths—is the subject of the individual country case-studies" (p. 67), most chapters (except Tremewan's and Goodman's chapters) only look at one particular welfare policy. Christopher Tremewan in Chapter 3 gives an analysis of social welfare development in Singapore, emphasizing the manipulation of welfare by an authoritarian regime. Chapter 4, written by Huck-ju Kwon, shows the South Korean pension program as a means of legitimation and the impending financial problems. Yeun-wen Ku examines Taiwan's National Health Insurance in Chapter 5 and attributes its development to democratization, a decline of Kuomintang (the party in power) authority and social

movement. Roger Goodman in Chapter 6 looks at *minseitin* system in Japan which represents a compromise between professional and voluntary institutions. Next, Nelson Chow examines Hong Kong's social security and surmises that a provident fund will be introduced by the new government. Finally, Gordon White looks at China's pension reform and concludes that China seems to converge toward the East Asian welfare system which emphasizes self-sufficiency, personal savings and hard work.

Moreover, while some contributors blend comparative literature with their country studies, other supplies no more than an insider's cursory look at his own social welfare development. Overall, labor welfare, a key element which carries much political connotations in Asia, is not sufficiently explored. Despite these shortcomings, there are two chapters which are thought-provoking. White breaks new ground in his discussion of China's social security reform by linking this issue up with the social development perspective. Tremewan's analysis of Singapore is a fine example of how critical thinking is applied to examine welfare development of an Asian city-state.

Overall, this is an important addition to the field of comparative social policy. It is the best one on East Asia that is available. A theoretical introduction to comparative social policy analysis and discussion of the various models of social welfare would make it more readable. A spate of comparative reports on Asian welfare is on the horizon. The quality of this volume will ensure that it will be an essential reader for many years to come. As the leading text, it will provide insights to researchers who examine the nature and development of East Asian welfare.

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Jonathan Gruber and David A. Wise (Eds.), *Social Security and Retirement Around the World*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1999. \$62.00 hardcover. [June 1, 1999].

The relationship between social security programs and labor participation rates of older persons has been a subject of considerable attention in cross-national research for the past several

decades. The literature has lent credibility to a number of plausible causal relationships between labor force activity and social security benefit provisions. However, none has been conclusive. There continues to be debate and dialogue on exactly how much of a role benefit provisions in social security systems, particularly old-age pensions, play in an individual's decision to stop or reduce their work activity when they become eligible for benefits.

The debate often centers around a number of factors that seem to influence decisions and, consequently, labor force participation rates: the level of the benefit amount; health care coverage; early retirement options based on age or disability; monetary penalties assessed against the pension for continuing work; job satisfaction in the place of employment; health conditions of the individual or family members; working conditions; auxiliary sources of income that enhance the value of a public pension; and a range of quality of life issues (more time with family, care of a family member, hobbies, etc.). Determining which of these factors or mix of multiple factors has the most influence is a daunting task. The challenge is made all the more formidable by the difficulty of developing an analytical framework that does more than merely describe predominant trends and patterns on a case by case basis in selected countries.

There is no general agreement on suitable analytical comparative models that tend to reflect the biases of professional disciplines and government policy analysts with backgrounds in economics, sociology, or public policy. Nevertheless, almost any empirical evidence of how individual decisions are influenced by particular program provisions is welcomed by policy makers who seek to make informed decisions that are likely to impact retirement decisions. Such information is particularly timely in today's political and economic environment given the pressures of government in all industrialized countries to explore measures to reduce expenditures for old-age pension programs (and health benefits) in the face of unfavorable demographic shifts that have been accompanied by early entitlement provisions for benefits.

This text approaches the challenge by relating the documented decline in labor force participation rates to social security provisions in eleven industrial nations. Each country study provides an

overview of historical trends and a description of the institutional aspects of the social security old-age pension. The analytical framework used to provide a comparative context to the study is a detailed examination of the inherent social security program incentives that appear to influence retirement behavior. The analysis for each country is partially based on a simulation model using economic variables to calculate social security wealth in the country. In general, social security wealth is a reference to benefit accrual minus taxes or payroll contributions paid in partial retirement.

The discussion in each chapter provides an abundance of very valuable descriptive and explanatory information in a historical context. Graphs and charts are used to illustrate trends and patterns related to specific public and private program provisions. The data clearly show that options for early retirement and a generous benefit package have influenced choices about working and receiving old-age benefits over the past several decades, contributing to a significant decline in labor force participation rates among older men.

The comparative analysis framework has an economic orientation giving heavy weight to economic determinants in decisions about work and full or partial withdrawal from the labor force. Some consideration is given to the influence of related social and health factors that may impact decisions, but there is sparse attention to a large body of literature that suggests health and quality of life issues have a major impact on retirement decisions. Another limitation in the study to understanding overall retirement trends is that there is insufficient comparative analysis of data on women labor force participation rates and retirement patterns. Most of the cross-country data and analyses are based on the experiences of men due to logistical difficulties in interpretation for similar data on women in the labor force.

Despite these shortcomings, the book is highly recommended for the serious student of retirement age trends and social security old-age pension policies of industrial nations in a cross-national context.

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David Stoesz, Charles Guzzetta and Mark Lusk, *International Development*. Boston, Allyn and Bacon, 1999. \$56.67 hardcover.

The challenge of identifying and implementing development strategies which promote economic progress while successfully addressing problems of mass poverty and social deprivation has spurned a vast literature over the past four decades. Reductionist modernization and Marxist meta-theories with their blueprint solutions have given way to a multi-institutional third way' which combines the attributes of State and civil society as well as a range of international institutions. The present volume represents a useful, if at times frustrating, addition to this debate by searching for elements of what the authors term an integrative model of development', which incorporates broad-based economic and social development goals with environmental sustainability.

The first four chapters provide an overview of the colonial history, post-War development experience and current development tasks facing Asia, Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe. Necessarily concise, they are however extremely useful summaries for non-specialists, although the treatment of Latin America is the thinnest and merits more space. These accounts underline the extent to which rapacious colonial greed on the part of European powers, combined with dictatorship, corruption and genocide (especially in the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, the so-called fourth world') has led to patterns of distorted development whose problems now seem so intractable. In one sense, they belie the claim made in the book's introduction that the authors present a reasoned optimism about the prospect of international development' (p. xi).

However, the prospects for international development appear brighter in the following sections, which consider a number of strategies and case studies showing exactly what can be achieved through creative thought and action. Chapter 5 provides a fascinating account of the work of Catholic and Protestant missionaries in their ambiguous historical roles, colonizing the minds of indigenous peoples while promoting economic development. Some mention is made of their progressive development work since the 1970s but this aspect is greatly underplayed and deserves far more attention from the author in this section, given its

importance in relation to the application of Liberation Theology in Latin America and close associations with the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Chapter 7 contains a wide-ranging treatment of community development in both the North and South but much of it is abstract and there is too little analysis of actual program experiences in the developing world. Although the importance of NGOs in this context is acknowledged there is, surprisingly, little discussion of how traditional, State-directed community development has given way to radical grassroots movements for social and environmental action in defense of people's livelihoods. A link could also have been made here with the subsequent chapter on sustainable development', a process in which community-based movements and NGOs have in many instances become partners and an essential linchpin in the quest for equitable, non-destructive and non-polluting strategies.

Further chapters examine a series of creative attempts to overcome the obstacles to development generated by prejudice, discrimination and bureaucracy. The pioneering work undertaken by Rebecca Adamson with the First Nations Development Institute on behalf of Native Americans and other indigenous groups, described in Chapter 10, should inspire young practitioners and activists everywhere. Likewise, the success of the Grameen Bank micro-credit program in Bangladesh and several other countries, as well as of the Habitat for Humanity low-cost housing scheme, illustrate what can be achieved through sheer perseverance and dogged determination by committed individuals in the face of all the odds. Although not without their critics, of course, these ventures have yielded highly positive economic and social returns for deprived communities, something which many of the multi-million dollar schemes funded by mainstream official development agencies have often failed to achieve.

The volume has some quirks. Sections dealing with development theories and with the measurement of economic and social advancement—or lack of it—(6 and 13 respectively) should have been grouped together. An introductory chapter (rather than just a brief foreword) setting out the central theme and synthesizing the central arguments would have been helpful. Despite the book's valid and well-documented criticisms of Capitalism and Communism, there is no discussion of post-modernism, the

power of agency or stucturation theory. Some coverage of these newer theoretical frameworks would have helped to provide a conceptual basis for analysis of the changing roles of the State, community, the church and NGOs in the development process. The volume refers continually to Malthusian notions of demographic pressure as a source of poverty and environmental degradation. Yet relatively little weight seems to be given to other, arguably more critical factors such as structural obstacles at both domestic and international levels as well as severe policy bias in all economic and social sectors which marginalizes the poor.

The final chapter, entitled 'An Integrative Model of Development', promises much but delivers little. It is something of an anti-climax, since the reader is really not much wiser about what actually constitutes the stated ideal of 'integrative' (or 'integrated') development. Indeed, although meant to underpin the volume, it is defined only in very general terms and is mentioned just briefly in the foreword and merits barely two pages in the final section. 'Integrative' development seems to equate with the UNDP's notion of 'Human Development', which is quoted in support. Yet 'integrative development' remains an elusive concept—fine practice but difficult in theory! It is to be hoped that any subsequent volume from the authors would develop this concept more centrally and comprehensively. However, in spite of the above-mentioned shortcomings, the book contains much valuable material to inform and provoke development policy-makers and practitioners into working for a better world.

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Jane Waldfogel, *The Future of Child Protection*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998. \$39.95 hardcover.

The field of child protective services (CPS), and scholarly examination of it, invokes deep passions and fears, involving as it does the safety of children as well as abiding suspicions of the poor. "Child protection" has come to mean protection of children from their parents, and in practice, CPS interventions have predominantly been directed toward impoverished families.

For many years now, amongst those who have been engaged in CPS and/or study it, there has been widespread agreement and concern that CPS dominates the child welfare system in the United States, and that there is a continuing crisis in that system's abilities (or inabilities) to protect children, and to preserve families or otherwise provide children with permanent living arrangements.

Much has been written about these issues, and individuals and committees have made various recommendations to "reform" the system in order to increase its efficiency and effectiveness. Jane Waldfogel, in writing her book, draws partly on the deliberations of one of these groups, of which she was a member, the so-called Executive Session on CPS at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, funded by the Annie E. Casey and Edna McConnell Clark Foundations. In the process, she exhibits a very competent personal grasp of the recent literature pertaining to many aspects of the crisis, and presents a good summarization of recent facts and controversies, particularly those concerning the "front end" of the system.

Waldfogel gives us a carefully drawn and statistically detailed overview of recent trends in the annual volume of reports of alleged child abuse and neglect received by CPS agencies, the sources of such reports, the demographics of the children involved, and percentages (that constitute a descending order) of reports that are screened in, "substantiated," prompt the opening of cases, and involve child removal. Moreover, while focusing on the United States, she provides a comparative analysis with Canada, Britain, and Australia on all or most of these variables, although noteworthy here is how surprisingly minor are the differences revealed. CPS systems in these countries and ours seem to be far more alike than different.

Waldfogel accurately and fairly analyzes recent and current debates (and their implications) concerning overreporting, underreporting, subsequent underinclusion and overinclusion of families in the system, and the crisis of system overcapacity. She considers "front end" alternatives for change, such as narrowing the gateway to CPS intervention at the point of reporting, screening, and/or investigation, and perhaps coupling this with the building of an alternative service delivery system. Waldfogel opts

for a "differential response" paradigm that she claims would include these elements, in addition to "a community-based system, in which CPS continues to play the lead role"; modifications of the processes through which case-specific assessments and service plans are developed; and a more active role for "informal and natural helpers" in prevention of child maltreatment "in partnership with CPS." She is not unfair in her brief portrayals of recent alternative proposals, and demonstrates considerable awareness of the weaknesses of the proposal that she puts forth here.

However, although Waldfogel is fully aware that operating definitions of abuse and neglect vary greatly even from worker to worker, throughout the book she refers to and compares statistics concerning children who were "abused and neglected," in tacit acceptance of some presumed common meaning. Similarly, credence is given to statistics concerning "substantiated" reports although, in practice, the "substantiation" process is highly variable and arbitrary. There is little discussion here of the process itself or of what "substantiation" means. Likewise, there is little discussion of the foster care system and adoption, of why very sizable proportions of all impoverished children are removed from their homes and placed in foster care, or of the costs involved.

Currently, the CPS system is forced to institute "differential responses," that is, it is obliged to turn away many cases, simply because of the overwhelming volume of reports that it has generated for itself. This in itself is not reform. Moreover, although Waldfogel contends that her paradigm differs sharply from the current CPS approach, it merely extends it. While CPS would keep for its own caseload only "high risk" cases, it would maintain oversight over everything, and families would be "reassessed" on an ongoing basis. "Community partner agencies" and "family and community members" would be enlisted as coercive social control agents for "protective oversight" and "shared responsibility." The CPS gateway to "services" would straddle child welfare even more extensively than it does today, with the possibility of net-widening in terms of the CPS caseload itself. This will appeal to those who believe that if we don't keep a vigilant and menacing eye over the poor, who knows what horrible things they'll do.

Her suggestions for change confuse social work with coercion (which she politely terms "the use of authority"). Waldfogel is

partial to collaborations, collaborative processes, and "partnerships," even with the very families that the system coerces. But to speak of "partnerships" between the coercively powerful CPS and the powerless impoverished families reported to it is to raise further questions of meaning. In addition, there is the problem of the further diffusion of responsibility and diminishment of any agency's accountability that "sharing" CPS responsibility with other agencies entails.

Finally, although many of the examples of collaborative procedures that Waldfogel favorably describes in Britain, New Zealand, and some states have been in place for some time now, we are given only anecdotal evidence of what participants (workers, police, and others) say about their cross-training, team-working, collaborating, and partnering. There is little discussion of actual outcomes in terms of impact on children and families. One starts to wonder if "collaboration" is an end in itself. Nonetheless, there are some suggestions here that any commissioner of child welfare would be wise to take under consideration.

It is time to reexamine the deeper issues that CPS terminology and statistics tend to obscure. The level of explicit discussion must shift to that of underlying values, political philosophy, attitudes toward the poor, the political meaning of "authority," the nature of social justice, and what we mean by social services and social work. If it does not, the future of child protection is dim, indeed. This book does not confront these matters but, if read along with work from other sides of the debate, might help us to see the need to move forward to this level of discussion.

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Book Notes

Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Recasting Egalitarianism: New Rules for Communities, States and Markets*. New York: Verso, 1999. \$13.00 papercover.

The ideal of equality is central to the agenda of those on the left of the political spectrum. Liberals, social democrats and Marxists have all argued that social well-being and human contentment can only be achieved if inequalities in society are significantly reduced. In the past, various policy instruments have been adopted to promote greater equality. Employment generation, job security, wage bargaining, progressive taxation and the provision of publicly funded social services have all helped to reduce disparities in income and wealth. However, in recent times, the quest for greater equality has been stalled by the claim that these and other egalitarian measures stifle economic growth. Their arguments have been persuasive. Today, political leaders and electorates believe that the need for economic development is greater than the drive for equality. As a result of changes to the tax system, the weakening of labor unions and retrenchments in the social services, the degree of inequality in American society has increased substantially during the last two decades.

In this important book, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis propose a new strategy for promoting equality. This strategy is based on the recognition that income redistribution policies are unlikely to secure political support. Instead, they argue that a strategy based on asset redistribution has a good chance of success. Four components of an asset redistribution strategy are outlined. They include the creation of worker-owned firms, the promotion of home ownership, the provision of educational vouchers and the adoption of policies that give children access to parental property.

In addition to outlining their proposals, Bowles and Gintis invited 16 social scientists and philosophers to comment on their ideas. Unfortunately for egalitarians, these commentaries suggest that however ingenious Bowles and Gintis's proposals may be, they suffer from numerous difficulties and are unlikely to result

in a significant reversal in current thinking about economic development and equality. Nevertheless, Bowles and Gintis may have initiated a debate that could have far reaching repercussions. Their clear explication of how a grossly unequal society harms the well-being of ordinary people may be persuasive in fostering an egalitarian agenda that is electorally palatable.

Myra Marx Ferree, Judith Lorber and Beth B. Hess (Eds.), *Revisioning Gender*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999. \$72.00 hardcover, \$34.95 papercover.

Feminist scholarship in sociology has expanded rapidly over the last twenty or so years. This expansion has moved steadily along a trajectory of shifting gender analysis from the margins of sociological interest to its very center. Today feminist scholars insist that gender be viewed as a central element in all sociological research. Since gender is a central element of social life, the gender lens must be applied to all sociological questions.

As the editors of this book point out, sociology has not yet reached the stage where gender is central to its concerns. While gender inquiry is today given much more prominence than before, it is still viewed as a specialized field within the discipline. To attain centrality, they urge feminists scholars to continue to stress the importance of gender in all sociological and indeed, social science research. Irrespective of whether social science investigation is concerned with issues closely associated with gender, such as the family or employment, or with less obviously relevant issues such as economic development, social policy or law, gender must be fully integrated into the research agenda.

To promote this goal, this book offers a broad overview of the current state of feminist scholarship. Based on a summer conference funded by the American Sociological Association, it provides an commendably comprehensive account of the field. Its sixteen chapters cover a wide range of topics. These are grouped into five major categories dealing with the conceptualization of gender; gender and social policy; science and gender; gender and sexuality; bodies, gender and sport; gender and culture and so on. The list is impressive.

Equally impressive is the way most of the authors summarize their topics in a readable and engaging way, and successfully

avoid obfuscating the narrative with jargon. For this reason, the book should appeal not only to academics but to all those who are interested in contemporary social questions. For example, the chapters on gender and globalization, and gender and the welfare state do not focus exclusively on the gender dimension, but succeed in summarizing the field in its entirety, successfully demonstrating that gender issues cannot be relegated to the margins of social policy discourse. The authors also show that their subject is exceedingly complex and that it contains few simple and universally agreed upon generalizations. Their ability to combine sophistication of presentation with a readable and easily understood exposition of the field is impressive.

This book will be an essential resource for students, faculty and researchers in the social sciences. As suggested earlier, it should also appeal to those with a wider interest in contemporary social issues. It deserves to be the standard resource book on the subject.

Christine Cousins, *Society, Work and Welfare in Europe*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. \$55.00 hardcover.

It is only in relatively recent times that social policy scholars have again focused on the role of employment in the promotion of social welfare. Although full employment was a fundamental component of both the New Deal and Beveridge proposals, mainstream social policy paid little attention to labor market issues and focused instead on the social services, and on issues of social service delivery. Today, employment is once again an important element in social policy. The requirement that needy people be required to work is central to so-called welfare reform in the United States and Britain. In Europe, where unemployment rates are comparatively high, labor market flexibility is a perennial theme in social policy discourse.

In this interesting and ambitious book, Christine Cousins examines diverse aspects of employment policy in Europe and its relationship with social policy. The book traces developments in four European nations—Britain, Germany, Spain and Sweden—and examines the way changing employment patterns over the last fifty years have affected social policy thinking. The four countries chosen offer examples of both policy divergence and

convergence. All four have been described as 'welfare states' and all four have adopted policies that link employment to social welfare. On the other hand, there are significant differences in the way these policies operate and the way they address fundamental social needs.

The book covers an enormous field and at times, appears to lack coherence. However, this is largely due to its ambitious sweep over a wide range of topics. These include discussions of Fordism and flexible specialization in industrial production, the growth of 'non-standard' employment, the increasing role and significance of women in the labor market, regional differences in labor markets and industrial production, gender inequality and discrimination in employment, and the merits of social exclusion as an alternative concept to that of poverty. The book also provides an excellent summary of employment trends in the four European nations since the Second World War.

Although Cousin's does not attempt to compare European trends with those in the United States, her book contains much information that will be of interest to American readers. The problem of persistently high unemployment; the idea of social exclusion as a uniquely European approach to conceptualizing social welfare; and the idea that active labor market policies are a major responsibility of government deserves the attention of readers in the United States and indeed, other countries as well. This book should be widely read. Hopefully, it will encourage social policy scholars to pay more attention to issues of employment and social policy.

Stephen P. Wernet, *Managed Care in Human Services*, Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books, 1999. \$32.95 papercover.

The term 'managed care' is widely used today but there is still much confusion about its meaning and implications. In the popular media, it is used primarily to criticize HMOs for failing to provide adequate medical services to people with serious health conditions. In psychotherapy, it gloomily foretells the imminent end of private practice. In the social services it is more broadly used to refer to the contracting out of services to non-governmental organizations. Frequently, it connotes the involvement of for-profit groups in the provision of these services.

As these examples show, there is a need to clarify these different meanings and to provide a comprehensive account of developments in the field. This helpful book, edited by Stephen Wernet goes a long way towards meeting this goal. It contains a number of interesting contributions on different aspects of managed care. Wernet's opening chapter sets out to describe managed care and to define the complex jargon which is used by those working in managed care programs. Several chapters discuss managed care in the context of child welfare, mental health and children's behavioral health. One chapter deals with the way managed care is impacting psychotherapeutic practice and the book concludes with a brief assessment of some of the issues and debates surrounding the topic.

While the book makes a useful contribution to the literature, it does not fully meet the need for a comprehensive account of managed care. The role of managed care in corrections is only mentioned fleetingly, and the implications of managed care for mainstream medical social work are not discussed. Some of the chapters tend to repeat material presented by other contributors. These deficiencies stem largely from the fact that the book is an edited collection and not a systematic, single authored explication of the subject. Nevertheless, it contains much useful information and should be widely consulted by social workers and human services personnel.

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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 Robert Leighninger, School of Social Work, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803. 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.

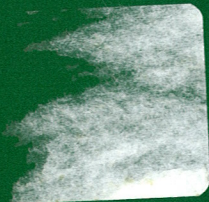
BOOK REVIEWS

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