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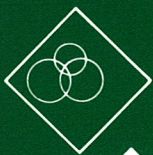
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# Second-Generation Parenthood: A Panel Study of Grandmother and Grandchild Coresidency Among Low-Income Families, 1967–1992

RICHARD K. CAPUTO, PH.D.

Yeshiva University  
Wurzweiler School of Social Work

*This paper reports findings of a national study of low-income coresident grandmothers and grandchildren between 1967 and 1992. A small increasing minority of women was found to reside with their grandchildren in low-income families over the study period, although the proportion of those who did declined as they reached retirement age. More than half of ever coresident low-income grandmothers (N = 776) were second-generation parents for three or more years. The majority (64 percent) was Black.*

*Among ever coresident low-income grandmothers in 1992 (N = 521), being Black and being single increased the likelihood of being a second-generation parent. Previous low-income coresidency also predicted low-income coresidency in 1992. Further, older low-income second-generation parents were more likely to reside in skipped vs. three-generation families, as were those outside the South. The author argues that low-income coresident grandmothers may be adversely affected by time limits associated with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Act of 1996. Changes to the PRA and the Earned Income Tax Credit are discussed.*

This paper reports findings about coresident grandmothers and their grandchildren among low-income families. In general, the family form of second-generation parents, that is, caregiving grandparents and their grandchildren, has become more common among elderly households over the past several decades (Kornhaber, 1996). In 1970, over 2.2 million or about 3.3 percent of children under the age of 18 lived in grandparent-headed households; by 1993, nearly 3.4 million or about 5 percent of children under the age of 18 did (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994). By 1997,

according to reports of a U.S Census Bureau study, 3.9 million or about 5.5 percent of all children lived with their grandmothers (Nasser, 1999). In 1993, approximately 12 percent of African-American children lived in the home of a grandparent, compared to 6 percent of Hispanic children and 4 percent of white children (Mullen, 1995). Meredith and Roe (1993) estimated that between 30 and 70 percent of children lived with grandparents in some cities with large low-income African-American populations. And in a study of elementary school enrollment records, Burton (1992) found that grandparents were raising sixty percent of African-American students under the age of 12.

The increase of second-generation parenthood reflects in part longer and more active spans of older persons. In addition, contemporary trends in marriage and childbearing, economic disparities and disruptions, and public health problems contribute to the trend (Dressel, 1996; Jendrick, 1994b; Johnson, 1985; Pearson, Hunter, Cook, Ialongo, & Kellam, 1997; Pruchno & Johnson, 1996). Common reasons for grandparents to be raising their grandchildren include the widespread use of drugs and alcohol, HIV infected children, parental neglect, abuse and/or abandonment, divorce, death of a parent by illness, suicide or accident, and parental mental or physical illness or incarceration (*Hearing*, 1992). On the whole, grandchildren present second-generation parents and support systems with a formidable array of health and social problems. These problems are particularly acute for low-income grandparent caregivers about whom more needs to be known.

The study reported here focuses on grandmothers because their present and projected survival rates far exceed those of grandfathers with children aged 20 or greater, while modestly exceeding those with children aged 19 or less (Uhlenberg, 1998). In addition, when both grandparents are alive grandmothers are more likely than grandfathers to be parenting their grandchildren (Chalfie, 1994). Further, about three-fourths of grandparent caregivers are between the ages of 45–64, a time when mothers again may have to make decisions balancing work and family that most working men are less likely to face (Spain & Bianchi, 1996).

The study focuses on low-income families because many such grandparent caregivers encounter problems obtaining public



assistance, qualifying for foster care payments, and making ends meet. Furthermore, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRA) makes federal aid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), available only if poor teen parents and their children reside with the teen's custodial parent or other responsible relative (CQ 1996 *Almanac*, 1997). For lack of alternatives, in many instances the responsible person will be a grandmother and a small but nonetheless significant percentage of them will reside in low-income families.

Results of the study are meant to suggest program and policy responses to meet the socioeconomic needs of this at-risk group of grandmothers. For example, time limits for cash assistance, Medicaid, and Food Stamps imposed by PRA may need to be reassessed in light of length of time the grandmothers are found to coreside with their grandchildren (Flint & Perez-Porter, 1997). Also, to the extent coresident grandmothers are found to be unmarried or in their pre-retirement years, the availability, scope, and adequacy of the Earned Income Tax Credit may also need to be reassessed (Mullen, 1995).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The 1990s witnessed increasing scholarship and research in the area of grandparent caregiving in general (Burnette, 1997; Burton, 1992; Dowdell, 1995; Dressel & Barnhill, 1994; Jendrick, 1994a; Joslin & Brouard, 1995; Minkler & Roe, 1993; Shore & Hayslip, 1994). Despite this research, relatively little is known about what characterizes second-generation parenthood or coresident grandparent households, particularly in regard to low-income families (Kelley, 1997). Much of the related research relied on small nonrandom samples in particular geographic areas (Thompson, Minkler, & Driver, 1997), while an earlier national study of grandparents (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1992 [1986]) used a representative sample of children aged seven to eleven in 1976. Three recent national studies in particular have a direct bearing on the research reported here.

In the first study bearing on the present research, Chalfie (1994) used data from the March 1992 Current Population Survey (CPS) and examined skipped-generation households, that

is, those comprising grandparents and their grandchildren with neither of the child's parents present. She found that more than three-fourths (77 percent) of the caregivers were between the ages of 45 and 65 and that while three-fourths were married, only 63 percent of the grandmother caregivers were married. In addition, the majority of grandparent caregivers (68 percent) were White, while 29 percent were Black. Proportionately, however, midlife Blacks were nearly twice as likely as Whites the same age to be grandparent caregivers: 9 percent of Blacks vs. 5 percent of Whites. Finally, Chalfie found that 41 percent of grandparent caregivers were poor or near-poor (100–149 percent of poverty), but provided no information about income by race, marital status, or sex.

Fuller-Thompson, et al. (1997) is the second study having a direct bearing on the present research. Using the second wave of data from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), Fuller-Thompson, et al. found that 10.9 percent of grandparents had reported raising a grandchild for at least 6 months. Many of these grandparents further reported far longer-term commitments, nearly one-fifth (19.8 percent) for ten or more years. Second-generation parenthood cut across gender, class, and ethnic lines. Nonetheless, single women, Black, and low-income persons were disproportionately represented. Women and Blacks had approximately twice the odds of becoming caregiving grandparents. Fuller-Thompson, et al.'s study was limited in that data were gathered within a relatively short time span, namely 1992–1994. Hence, like Chalfie's (1994) cross-sectional study, Fuller-Thompson, et al. provide no information about how characteristics of grandparent caregivers vary over time.

Caputo (1999) is the third study having a direct bearing on the present research. Using data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Market Experience (NLS), Mature Women's Cohort, Caputo reported that 21.6 percent of the sample had grandchildren living in their households for at least one year between 1967 and 1992 and the majority of these were Black (56.2 percent). In addition, 51 percent reported that grandchildren had lived with them for one or two years, while nearly 31 percent reported that grandchildren had lived with them for five years or longer. Caputo also reported that in 1992, when about a fifth of

the study sample was 65 years of age or older, number of children excluding grandchildren, race (being Black), and number of years of previous second-generation grandparenthood were positively related to the likelihood of becoming a coresident grandparent. In addition, in 1992 younger women and those residing in more affluent families were more likely to be coresident grandparents. Among coresident grandparents in 1992, younger women, those in more affluent families, and single women were more likely to be living in three-generation rather than skipped-generation households. By using income status as an independent variable, Caputo did not profile low-income second-generation parents, nor did he identify predictors of grandmother and grandchild coresidency among low-income families as he did for families in general.

The present study also uses the NLS, Mature Women's Cohort, that is, aged thirty to forty-four in 1967, to fill some of the gaps in previous research. Specifically, it addresses the following questions of this cohort of women between 1967 and 1992:

1. What were the defining characteristics of low-income coresident grandmothers and their grandchildren?
2. What was the trend in the proportion of respondents who were coresident grandmothers or second-generation parents?
3. What sociodemographic factors affected the likelihood of coresidency among low-income families?
4. Among low-income second-generation parents, what sociodemographic factors affected the likelihood of residing within three-generation vs. skipped-generation households?

Answers to these questions can be used to guide policies and programs thought to increase the likelihood that low-income coresident grandmothers successfully negotiate a second generation of parenthood.

## DATA AND METHODS

Study data came from the National Longitudinal Survey of Labor Market Experience (NLS), Mature Women's Cohort, a nationally representative sample of 5083 women who were ages 30 to 44 in 1967 when they were first interviewed. Respondents were



interviewed on a continuing basis between 1967 and 1995, and they were asked a range of questions regarding labor market experiences, human capital and other demographic characteristics about themselves and their family circumstances. The most recent data available for the study reflected circumstances of respondents through 1992, a total of fifteen survey years. Documentation about the sample was found in the *NLS Handbook 1995* (Center for Human Resource Research, 1995).

### *Measures*

Respondents who reported a grandchild when asked about their relationship to each of the other household members at the time of the survey were classified as second-generation parents or coresident grandmothers. Low-income respondents were those with family incomes less than one-half the median family income based on the population sample in the survey year.

Duration of coresidency was determined by the number of years in which respondents reported that at least one of their grandchildren lived in the household at the time of the survey. A respondent's age in 1992 was determined as her age at the time of the first interview in 1967 plus twenty-five. Education reflects the highest grade she completed through 1989, the last year this data was reported. Marital status was coded 1 = single (including separated, widowed, and divorced women), 0 = married, with spouse present. Previous research indicated that coresidency was more likely among single grandmothers. Race was coded 1 = Black, 0 = Other. Previous research indicated that Black women were disproportionately caregiving or coresident grandmothers than those of another race. Region was coded 1 = South, 0 = Other, to maintain consistency with previous research. Work effort comprised the number of weeks worked (in units of 10) between survey years.

Since the NLS defined household members in relation to respondents, data was not available to determine if a respondent's child who resided in the household was also the coresident grandchild's parent. For purposes of household type, three-generation households (coded as 1) were nonetheless construed as those in which the grandmother resided with her own children and with her grandchildren. Skipped-generation households (coded

as 0) comprised those in which the grandmother resided with her grandchildren, but without any of her own children. A related household measure comprised the number of coresident grandchildren, that is, those grandchildren who resided in the grandmother's household at the time of survey.

### *Procedures*

Only those respondents for whom all relevant information was available were included in the two eligible study samples used in the multivariate analyses. The first study sample comprised ever coresident or second-generation low-income grandmothers ( $n = 521$ ) between 1967 and 1992. Logistic regression analysis was used to compare odds ratios of eight correlates on coresident vs. non-coresident low-income grandmothers in 1992. Correlates or predictors, delineated above, were selected for inclusion in the regression model on the basis of theoretical significance and empirical findings of previous research. These were age of respondent, marital status, race, education level, region of the country, number of children excluding grandchildren in the household, weeks worked between 1992 and the prior survey year 1989, and years of low-income grandparenthood through survey year 1989. The second eligible study sample comprised only low-income coresident grandmothers in 1992 ( $n = 85$ ). Logistic regression analysis was used to compare odds ratios of the same set of correlates on three-generation vs. skipped-generation households, with one exception. Number of grandchildren was used instead of number of children in the household.

### LIMITATIONS

Use of the NLS, Mature Women's Cohort, limited this study to a nationally representative sample of American women between the ages of 30 and 44 in 1967. Since the cohort was not representative of all adult women, generalizability about low-income grandmothers (and by extension low-income grandparents) was compromised. In addition, since the NLS data files contained no information about respondents' grandchildren living outside the household, the study sample is not representative of all low-income grandmothers of comparable ages. Despite these limitations, study findings provide a basis of comparison with previous

research and thereby add to the growing body of knowledge about coresident grandparents and second-generation parenthood. Results are nonetheless presented and implications for policy discussed with these limitations in mind.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows defining characteristics of low-income grandmothers and grandchildren. As Table 1 indicates, 15.3 percent of the population sample ( $n = 776$ ) resided with at least one grandchild in a low-income family between 1967 and 1992. Nearly two-fifths (38.1 percent) of ever coresident low-income grandmothers reported that their grandchildren lived with them in one or two of the fifteen survey years, while 11.1 percent reported likewise in ten or more survey years. More than half (64 percent) of ever coresident low-income grandmothers were Black.

In 1992 more than half (59.3 percent) the coresident low-income grandmothers lived with one grandchild, while 35.2 percent lived with two or three grandchildren. Of reported grandchildren in 1992 ( $n = 150$ ), over one-third (33.7 percent) were between the ages of five and twelve, while nearly another third (32 percent) were between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. In addition, a sizable majority of coresident low-income grandmothers (81.3 percent) were between the ages of fifty-five and sixty-five, while nearly one-fifth were over sixty-five years old.

In 1967, a sizable majority of coresident low-income grandmothers (93.1 percent) were between the ages of thirty-six and forty-five, while the remainder was relatively young, between the ages of thirty and thirty-five. Of coresident grandchildren ( $n = 86$ ), the majority (77 percent) were under the age of five, while the remainder were of grammar school age.

Between 1967 and 1992, the proportion of respondents who reported that their grandchildren resided in their households gradually increased, but fluctuated within a narrow range, under 5 percent, for both low-income and above-low-income families. At no time did coresident grandparents constitute more than 10 percent of the population sample. Figure 1 shows the proportion of low-income respondents who reported that they resided with their grandchildren by year.



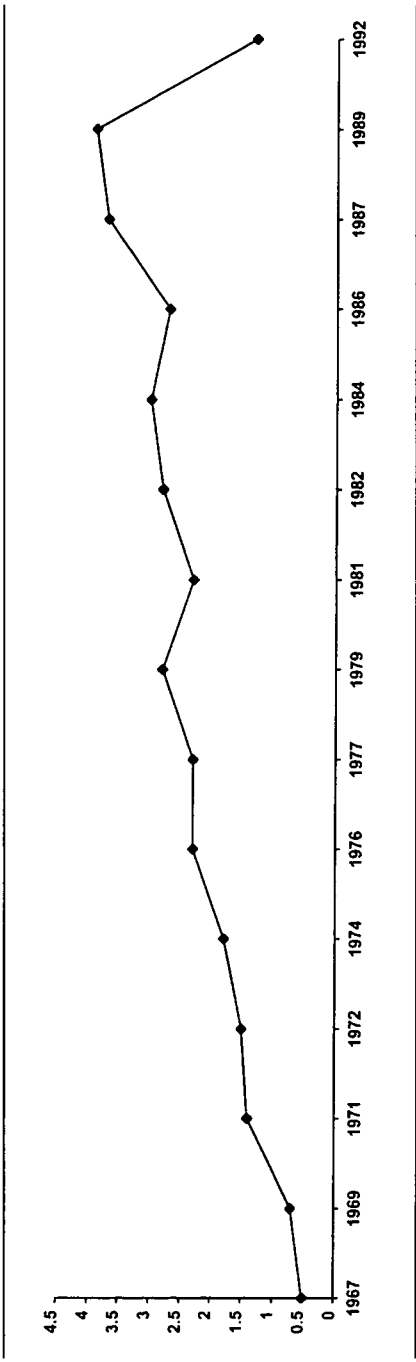
Table 1

*Defining Characteristics of Low-Income Coresident Grandmothers and Grandchildren*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Percentage</i> <sup>1</sup>
Lifetime Incidence (n = 776)	
Percentage of population sample ever coresided with a grandchild in a low-income family	15.3%
Race	
Black	64.0
Other	36.0
Number of Survey Years of Coresident Grandparenthood	
One-two	38.1
Three-four	20.3
Five-nine	30.5
Ten-fifteen	11.1
Number of Grandchildren Among Coresident Grandmothers in 1967 (n = 86)	
One	69.0
Two-three	27.5
Four	03.4
Number of Grandchildren Among Coresident Grandmothers in 1992 (n = 152)	
One	59.3
Two-three	35.2
Four -six	05.5
Age of Coresident Grandmothers in 1967 (n = 58)	
30-35	06.9
36-40	46.5
41-44	46.6
Age of Coresident Grandchildren in 1967 (n = 86)	
1 year old or less	47.1
2-4	29.9
5-12	23.0
Age of Coresident Grandmothers in 1992 (n = 91)	
55-60	48.4
61-65	32.9
66-69	18.7
Age of Coresident Grandchildren in 1992 (n = 150) <sup>2</sup>	
1 year old or less	04.7
2-4	11.3
5-12	33.7
13-18	32.0
19-21	10.6
22-41	06.0

<sup>1</sup> Percents may not add to 100 due to rounding errors.<sup>2</sup> Two cases had missing values on age of the grandchild.

Figure 1  
*Low-Income Grandparents As Weighted Percent of Population Samples By Year.*



As can be seen in Figure 1, the percentage of low-income respondents living with grandchildren ranged from a low of 0.5 in 1967 ( $n = 58$ ) to a high of 3.9 in 1989 ( $n = 193$ ). There was an upward trend through the 1970s when respondents were in their late thirties and early forties. The trend flattened somewhat in the early to mid-1980s, but rose more sharply in 1987 ( $n = 196$ ) and peaked in 1989 ( $n = 193$ ) when respondents were in their fifties and early sixties. Only in 1992, when nearly one-fifth (18.7 percent) of the ever coresident grandmothers were over the age of sixty-five, did the trend decline to levels of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Based on the study sample of ever coresident low-income grandmothers ( $n = 521$ ) Table 2 shows the logistic regression results of coresident vs. non-coresident grandmothers in 1992. Age was inversely correlated with the likelihood of low-income coresidency, while marital status, race, region and number of years of previous coresidency were positively related to it.

Each additional year of age decreased the likelihood of low-income coresidency by 8 percent. Single ever coresident low-income grandmothers were nearly two and one-half times (Odds ratio = 2.47) more likely than their married counterparts to reside in low-income coresident families in 1992, while Black ever coresident low-income grandmothers were slightly more likely to do so (Odds ratio = 2.54) than their racial counterparts. Ever coresident low-income grandmothers living in the South were more than one and one-half times as likely (Odds ratio = 1.85) as those who lived elsewhere to reside in low-income coresident families in 1992. Finally, each additional year of low-income coresidency increased the likelihood of being a low-income coresident grandmother in 1992 by 17 percent.

Based on the sample of coresident low-income grandmothers in 1992 ( $n = 85$ ), Table 3 shows the logistic regression results of three- vs. skipped-generation families. Age was inversely correlated with the likelihood of living in low-income three-generation families, while living in the South increased the likelihood of living in three-generation families.

Each additional year of age decreased the likelihood of living in a low-income three-generation family by 14 percent. Coresident low-income grandmothers living in the South in 1992 were more



Table 2

*Odds Ratios of Low-Income Coresident Grandmothers (n = 85) vs. Non-coresident Grandmothers (n = 436) in 1992, Among Ever Coresident Grandmothers*<sup>1</sup>

<i>Correlates</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>
Age	0.92**
Children (#, excluding grandchildren)	0.92
Education	1.08
Marital Status (1 = single)	2.47**
Race (1 = Black)	2.54*
Region (1 = South)	1.85*
Weeks Worked (10 <sup>-1</sup> )	0.97
Years Coresident Grandparenthood	1.17***
Max-rescaled R <sup>2</sup>	0.19
Hosmer and Lemeshow Goodness-of-Fit Statistic	4.98
	df = 8
	p = .76

<sup>1</sup> The combined n of 521 does not equal the lifetime incidence n of 776 in Table 1 due to deletion of cases with missing values on variables included in the regression model. Also due to missing values, the n of 85 does not equal the coresident grandmother n of 91 reported in Table 1.

\*\*\* p < .001, \*\* p < .01, \* p < .05

than three and one-half times as likely (Odds ratio = 3.75) to live in three-generation families than those who lived elsewhere.

## DISCUSSION

On the whole, findings reveal that during midlife, a small increasing minority of women was likely to reside with their grandchildren in low-income families, although as expected the proportion of those who did so declined as they reached retirement age (Chalfie, 1994; Fuller-Thompson et al., 1997). More than half of these low-income grandmothers assumed the responsibility of second-generation parenthood for three or more years, while previous low-income coresidency was a good predictor of current low-income coresidency. Further, in a given year, Black women with histories of second-generation parenthood

Table 3

*Odds Ratios of Three-Generation (n = 44) vs.  
Skipped-Generation (n = 41) Low-Income Households in 1992*

<i>Correlates</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>
Age	0.86*
Coresident grandchildren #	1.37
Education	1.05
Marital Status (1 = single)	2.09
Race (1 = Black)	0.71
Region (1 = South)	3.74*
Weeks Worked (10 <sup>-1</sup> )	0.95
Years Coresident Grandparenthood	0.91
Max-rescaled R <sup>2</sup>	0.19
Hosmer and Lemeshow Goodness-of-Fit Statistic	10.16
	df = 8
	p = .18

\*\* p < .01, \* p < .05

were more likely to be coresident grandmothers in low-income families than were those with histories of coresidency in general likely to be coresident grandmothers (Caputo, 1999). Finally, older low-income second-generation parents were more likely to reside in skipped-generation families outside the South and without benefit of income and other assistance from the child's parent.

Efforts will need to be made to increase the capacity of second-generation low-income parents to obtain greater resources. Flint and Perez-Porter (1997) and Mullen (1996 & 1995) suggest several guidelines to assist advocates in their efforts to alter existing policies and programs now that states have primary responsibility for indigent families. First, it is less costly to provide small cash grants and Medicaid benefits to grandchildren in their grandparents' care than it is to provide foster care. Although the foster care payment rates are higher than public assistance benefit levels, legal custody of the child remains with the official charged with the protection of children. Hence, despite the financial attractiveness of kinship foster care, low-income coresident grandmothers who have such a responsibility do not have the authority to consent to

medical treatment or make other decisions a guardian or custodian is empowered to make. Kinship foster care may be viable alternative for those who anticipate a short-term relationship, but less desirable for those who anticipate a longer duration of coresidency.

A second way advocates can shape legislation is to encourage states to exempt readily low-income coresident grandparents from imposed welfare-related time limits. The PRA currently provides that TANF funds cannot be used to provide assistance to a family that includes an adult who has received such assistance 60 months. Unless exemptions are granted or the PRA 60-month time limit lengthened, low-income second-generation parents will need to weigh the benefits of receiving TANF assistance for themselves for a maximum of five years against the prospective need for long-term support for their grandchildren. Any previous use as first-generation parents will count against second-generation parents by further restricting the duration of their eligibility for public assistance. For younger second-generation parents, such an exemption is most imperative, given that the majority of them are likely to coreside with their grandchildren for three or more years and a sizable minority are likely to do so for five or more years.

Child-only grants may also help to offset some of the adverse consequences associated with the 60-month provision targeting adults. There is some evidence that children who receive aid when their parents do not constitute a growing share of the total welfare caseload in the country, more than doubling from 10 percent in the late 1980s, and that grandchildren living with grandparents are a significant portion them (Vobejda & Haveman, 1999). Whether child-only grants empower second-generation parents to make work- and family-related decisions in the best interests of the child or create a substratum of persistent poverty the PRA was meant to preclude is a subject for future research.

A third way advocates can shape related legislation is to insist that elderly and ill grandparents should automatically be exempt from welfare-related work requirements. The PRA provides states with flexibility in deciding good-cause exemptions from requirements that all adult TANF recipients must engage

in work or job training no later than 24 months, or to engage in community service after two months, of receiving assistance. Advocates can also ensure that states use their flexibility to assure appropriate exemptions from such requirements. Younger second-generation parents may need to work and might benefit from flexible job training and community service, assuming similar day care provisions are provided them as the PRA provides parents. Older second-generation parents, however, may be less suitable for training and/or work requirements due to health or related reasons and they and their grandchildren would benefit from exemptions.

Fourth, advocates and service providers should ensure that the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) remains a viable option for able-bodied working low-income coresident grandmothers and that these grandmothers know about and use it. The EITC is a refundable tax credit to working individuals with at least one "qualifying child," which includes grandchildren. A grandchild must be under age 19 at the end of the calendar year, a full-time student under age 24 at the end of the calendar year, or permanently and totally disabled at any time during the year regardless of age. Filing an income tax, however, is the only way to obtain the EITC. Many low-income families, such as some of those found in this study, might not be otherwise legally required to file returns. For example, married grandparents both under 65 and raising two grandchildren were not required to file a tax return for 1995 if their income fell below \$16,550. With this amount of earned income, these grandparents would have been entitled to a refundable credit of about \$2,000, but they would have had to file a tax return to receive it.

Created as part of the Tax Reduction Act of 1975, the EITC has enjoyed bipartisan support. Since the Republican take over of Congress in 1994, however, EITC has been continually targeted for reduction in scope and adequacy, if not elimination (Piven, 1998). Hence, advocates need to find support for continuation of EITC. Service providers and others with direct access to able-bodied low income second-generation parents can maximize the take-up rate of the program by ensuring such grandmothers know of the existence of EITC and what needs to get done to use it.

Fifth and finally for purposes of this paper, states should develop child-only Food Stamp grants. Under current law, grandparents and grandchildren are considered one household for Food Stamp purposes. This means that the income and resources of both the grandparents and the grandchildren determine the amount of Food Stamps, if any, the household receives. As a result, otherwise eligible second-generation parents receive little or no Food Stamps. Child-only Food Stamps would eliminate this bias against second-generation parents.

In conclusion, this study sought to contribute to the growing literature on second-generation parents, that is grandparent caregivers. In light of study findings, guidelines and recommendations to ensure greater economic security for low-income second-generation parents were presented. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996 and the Earned Income Tax Credit were discussed.

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# Making a Difference: Human Service Interest Group Influence on Social Welfare Program Regulations

RICHARD HOEFER, PH.D.

University of Texas at Arlington  
School of Social Welfare

*Social workers increasingly understand the importance of political action to affect legislative policy-making. This paper sheds light onto the unexplored subject of interest group influence on the executive branch, specifically on the writing of program regulations for social welfare programs. It describes groups active in the process and what they do in their quest for influence. It also presents a preliminary model of interest group influence on regulation writing. Results show that having greater access, articulating a liberal policy position, choosing a "better" strategy and devoting more resources to influence efforts are all significant predictors of a group's influence level during the Clinton Administration.*

## INTRODUCTION

Political advocacy and social work are inseparable. The National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics makes this clear (National Association of Social Workers, 1996). A considerable body of literature exists regarding the importance of advocacy and the need for social workers to engage in the political process (for a few recent examples, see Domanski, 1998; Haynes and Mickelson, 1997; Hoefer, in press; Jansson, 1999; Richan, 1996). Most literature for social workers focuses on influencing law-making.

While considerable work on group influence has been conducted with regard to legislatures, much less work is available concerning group influence on the executive branch, especially



in the rulemaking process. This omission is curious because the importance of understanding how regulations are created is well-known. As Harris and Milkis state: "Regulatory politics—the struggle for control over the administrative levers of power and policy shaped within government agencies—is central to government activity in the United States" (Harris and Milkis, 1989: viii).

A few authors have focused specifically on the need to monitor and advocate program regulations (Albert, 1983; Bell and Bell, 1982; Haynes and Mickelson, 1997; Jansson, 1999). These authors point out the importance of executive branch decision-making but do not present empirical research concerning how it is similar to and different from legislative lobbying.

Although non-legislative policy-making is a very important aspect of group influence over policy, it is still a neglected area of research, especially in social welfare where changes in program rules can have dramatic impacts on individual recipients of aid and services (Berry, 1984; Brodtkin, 1986; Lipsky, 1984; West, 1985). As noted by Ripley and Franklin (1987) and Kerwin (1994), changing social welfare regulations without going through the legislative process first became an important way to alter policy during President Reagan's terms of office. Such efforts continue today at the federal level and exist at the state level, too.

Ultimately, a better understanding of the correlates of influence may help social workers perform their executive branch advocacy efforts more effectively, resulting in better programs for clients. The objectives of this research are thus to describe how human services interest groups try to influence social welfare policy regulations and to test a model of self-reported interest group effectiveness in influencing the content of social welfare regulations. We first describe the regulation-writing process, then review the literature on interest group effectiveness in influencing policy. The methods used in this study are next specified. After a discussion of the research results, implications for social work advocates are presented.

## WHAT IS THE REGULATION WRITING PROCESS?

Regulations (also known as rules) are written as described in the Administrative Procedures Act of 1946. Kerwin (1994) has

described the process as consisting of eleven steps. For this paper, we condense these steps into three stages (see Figure 1). The first, “pre-publication”, stage sets the process in motion and ends with publication of the draft rule in the *Federal Register*. Decisions are made regarding the legislative authority for the rule, ideas are discussed for what might be in the rule and authorization is granted to proceed. Staff are assigned and the goal of the regulation is established. The draft rule is developed and is reviewed by both internal and external actors. While much of this stage is seemingly invisible, as with any project, the quality of the preparation has a strong impact on the quality of the results.

The second, “post-publication”, stage consists of public participation and taking action on the draft rule. At this stage, the agency decides how to manage public input such as choosing between requesting written comments and holding public hearings. After information is received, it must be read, analyzed and folded into the proposed rule, or refuted. There are many alternative courses of action, ranging from preparing the final rule with no changes from the draft rule, making minor or major

Figure 1  
*Steps and Stages of the Regulation-Writing Process*

<i>Kerwin's Steps</i>	<i>Hoefer's Stages</i>
1. Origin of rulemaking activity	1. Pre-publication
2. Origin of individual rulemaking	
3. Authorization to proceed with rulemaking	
4. Planning the rulemaking	
5. Developing the draft rule	
6. Internal review of the draft rule	
7. External review of the draft rule	
8. Revision and publication of a draft rule	
9. Public participation	2. Post-publication
10. Action on the draft rule	
11. Post-rulemaking activities	3. Post-adoption

Source: Adapted from Cornelius M. Kerwin (1994), *Rulemaking: How Government Agencies Write Law and Make Policy*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, pp. 76–77.

changes, abandoning the rulemaking effort and beginning over, to the most extreme case, deciding that no rulemaking will take place at all (Kerwin, 1994).

The final, post-adoption, stage takes place after the adoption of the final rule. Actions that take place here include interpretations by staff of vague or unclear portions of the rule, corrections, responding to petitions for reconsideration of the rule and preparing for litigation.

This research examines the whole range of interest group activities that try to influence the regulation writing process, at whatever stage they occur.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Because of cutbacks in government funding for human services, many nonprofit service providers and advocacy groups experienced difficulty in surviving the 1980s and 1990s. Some studies noted that changes in program regulations were one approach used to effect change. Expansive rules were rescinded or ignored. New rules were made to reduce government's responsibility and to reduce expenditures (Brodkin, 1990; Lipsky, 1984). These changes were accomplished by:

... strengthening the authority of the OMB to screen regulations promulgated by the regular bureaucracy, carefully selecting personnel who would support the administration's program to staff agency and department positions, (and) devolving regulatory authority to the states" (Harris and Milkis, 1989:99).

#### What Makes a Group Influential?

Much has been written in the political science literature on the determinants of interest group influence at the national level, primarily on Congress. This research is, however, divided in its conclusions. Several authors contend that interest groups have little effect (Bauer, Pool and Dexter, 1967; Meier and Lohuizen, 1978; Milbrath, 1963; Wilson, 1973). Others believe that, under some conditions, interest groups are likely to be effective (Austen-Smith and Wright, 1994; Greenwald, 1977; Herring, 1929; Knocke and Wood, 1981; Whiteley and Winyard 1983; Ziegler, 1964).

Research that *has* found that interest groups can make a difference have identified a number of factors internal and external

to the organization that are associated with success. Variables internal to groups are the:

1. degree of access to decision-makers (Greenwald, 1977; Culhane and Hacker, 1988),
2. organization's policy positions (Greenwald, 1977; Ziegler, 1964),
3. type of strategy used by the group (Gais and Walker, 1991).
4. amount of other organizational resources (especially funding) (Bauer, Pool and Dexter, 1967; Greenwald, 1977; Herring, 1929; Knocke and Wood, 1981),
5. amount of information a group can offer decision-makers (Austen-Smith and Wright, 1994; Meier and Lohuizen, 1978; Milbrath, 1963; Whiteley and Winyard, 1983),
6. type of group members (Greenwald, 1977; Walker, 1983; Ziegler, 1964), and
7. size and dispersal of the membership (Greenwald, 1977; Herring, 1929; Milbrath, 1963),

Variables external to the group which are associated with success are the

8. type of issue (Greenwald, 1977),
9. the predispositions of the decision-makers (Bauer, Pool and Dexter, 1964; Culhane and Hacker, 1988; Herring, 1929; Whiteley and Winyard, 1983) and
10. the place of the group in the interorganizational system (Greenwald, 1977; Knocke and Wood, 1981; Ziegler, 1964).

All of these writings focus on the legislative branch. As noted before, little research has been conducted on interest group effectiveness in impacting the executive branch. One excellent exception is Berry (1984). In looking at the Food Stamp program, Berry indicates that one group, the Food Research and Action Council (FRAC), was successful in affecting policy within the executive branch because of its "exceptional understanding of how the program worked" (Berry, 1984: 93). FRAC also turned to court decisions at a time when "public opinion and media coverage became less favorable" (Berry, 1984: 90). Furlong (1992) tested many of the variables associated in the literature with successful

legislative lobbying to determine their relevance to rulemaking. They were either not significant or not consistently significant across the several ways he used to measure influence. His study, however, has several methodological problems, including a very low response rate (8%).

## METHODOLOGY

The information reported in this paper comes from a mailed survey of Washington-based interest groups active in social welfare policy, broadly defined. These groups were identified through the *Washington Information Directory* (Congressional Quarterly, 1993) as being interested in issues related to social welfare. In order to be included in the survey population, a group needed to be listed in the *Directory* as being active in monitoring and trying to affect the content of regulations promulgated by the executive branch as well as trying to affect legislation. A phone contact was made to determine if the *Directory* information was correct and to ask for the name of the person most connected with influencing the executive branch.

The survey was pre-tested on a small group of organizations and personal interviews were conducted with ten organizations' executive directors or lobbyists before finalizing the instrument.

A typical mail survey process was used: an initial mailing to all groups, a postcard "Thank you" /reminder ten days later, and a second full mailing to all non-respondents two weeks later. Because of the importance of each group's response, we also sent a "third and final" mailing to non-respondents six weeks later. Of the 295 groups initially sent surveys, usable responses were received from 127, for a response rate of 43%.

## RESULTS

The first part of this section looks at the data gathered on the variables noted in the literature review as being important correlates of interest group success, focusing on variables internal to the groups. The instrument used did not measure variables external to the group. We then test a model of human service interest group influence on regulation-writing using this information.

*Degree of Access*

Two questions were asked regarding the degree of access a group has with relevant executive branch agencies. The first question asked if government agencies consulted with the group for its policy positions. Nearly three-fourths (72%) of the 126 responding groups said yes. These groups can be considered privileged in that their access is high and is initiated by the government agency.

A less dichotomous way of looking at access was achieved by asking respondents to rank the importance to their group of learning about upcoming changes in regulations from agency personnel. The more important this approach is, the better access the group has. Three-fifths of groups (60%) feel this is a very important or most important way they have to gain information. One-fifth (21%) believe it is unimportant or not very important. and 4% do not receive information in this way. The remaining 15% view it as somewhat important.

*Policy Positions*

The groups in this data set generally desire more federal government services in the areas of health, housing, human services and civil rights (see Table 1, Part A). There is less desire for additional federal regulation in these areas, although between about one-half and two-thirds of the groups believe that more or much more regulation would be good (see Table 1, Part B). These results in the areas of health, housing, human services and civil rights contrast dramatically with organizations' views on defense policy, where there is a strong desire for fewer defense services and regulations. In aggregate, then, these groups could be labeled as "liberal" although there are a few groups espousing more conservative positions.

An additional way to look at a group's policy position vis-à-vis the bureaucracy is to determine if the government agency with which the group most often interacts is "in accord with" the group's position. Group leaders were asked to respond to a statement that "Agency officials oppose our policy position." One-fourth (26%) stated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Nearly half (47%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with

Table 1

*Policy Positions of Groups*Part A: Regarding Federal *Services*

(percent stating agreement with policy option)

	Health (n = 85)	Housing (n = 82)	Human Services (n = 92)	Civil Rights (n = 84)	Defense (n = 62)
Desire More or Many More Federal Services	93%	85%	84%	73%	2%
Desire Somewhat Less or Much Less Federal Services	2%	5%	8%	4%	89%

Part B: Regarding Federal *Regulation*

(percent stating agreement with policy option)

	Health (n = 71)	Housing (n = 65)	Human Services (n = 69)	Civil Rights (n = 68)	Defense (n = 38)
Desire More or Much More Federal Regulation	62%	45%	49%	55%	24%
Desire Somewhat Less or Much Less Federal Regulation	21%	34%	22%	19%	47%

Note: The scale for this question had the following options: Much More, Somewhat More, Present Level, Somewhat Less, Much Less. Respondents could also indicate that their group had no position on the issue. Only groups with a position on the issue are included in the percentages.

the statement. The remaining groups were neutral. In general then, most groups find that "their" government agency does not reject their views, although a significant minority must seemingly work to overcome some or considerable skepticism regarding their ideas.

*Strategy*

There are many tactics that interest groups can choose to influence regulation writing. Table 2 lists thirteen specific tactics, the percent of groups that indicate that each tactic was an "important" or "one of the most important" tactics used to achieve influence, and the percent of groups that never use the tactic.

Table 2

*Efforts Made to Influence the Executive Branch's Regulations about Human Services Programs, (n = 127) (Strategy in parentheses)*

<i>Tactic</i>	<i>Important or most important</i>	<i>Do not use</i>
Build coalition with other groups (Coalition-building)	65%	11%
Bring current regulations to attention of Congress (Pre-publication)	60	8
Bring current regulations to attention of executive branch (Pre-publication)	57	9
Provide information to other groups about the regulation (Coalition-building)	55	9
Take desired changes in proposed regulations to Congress (Post-publication)	52	11
Take desired changes in proposed regulations to agency personnel (Post-publication)	52	11
Participate in public hearings about proposed regulations (Post-publication)	45	11
Offer drafts of desired regulations prior to publication of draft regulations in the Federal Register (Pre-publication)	30	28
Take desired changes in proposed regulations to the White House (Post-publication)	26	17
Use press to affect <i>elite opinion</i> about regulations (Press)	25	26
Use press to affect <i>public opinion</i> about regulations (Press)	24	25
Take desired changes in proposed regulations to OMB (Post-publication)	17	30
Take adopted regulations to court (Post-adoption)	6	63

Note: The scale for this question had the following options: Most Important, Important, Somewhat Important, Slightly Important, Unimportant, and Not Used.



These tactics have also been classified according to when they are usually used in the regulation-writing process. This leads to identifying three intervention strategies: before the publication of the proposed rule in the *Federal Register* (pre-publication), after publication but before adoption (post-publication); and after adoption (post-adoption). Some tactics cannot be categorized in this way, as they can be used at any time in the process. Two different groups of tactics appear, the "coalition-building" and the "press influence" approaches. The strategy each tactic is associated with is also indicated in Table 2.

The data indicate that the "coalition-building" strategy is considered the most effective way to influence regulation writing. On a scale from 1 to 6, with a higher number indicating more importance is attached to the strategy, the mean score is 4.5. The second most effective strategy is pre-publication, with a mean of 4.3. This indicates that being proactive by bringing current regulations to the attention of both Congress and the bureaucracy to encourage action to change them (elements of a pre-publication strategy) are also seen as being among the most effective ways to be influential. The post-publication strategy, with a mean of 3.7, is in the middle ranks of effectiveness. The second strategy that could take place at any time is press influence. It is in the lower-middle ranks of effectiveness, with a mean of 3.1. Taking regulations to court (the only tactic in the post-adoption strategy) is seen as an effective tactic by very few groups (mean is 1.81).

#### *Resources and Information to Provide to Decision-makers*

According to popular perception and newspaper accounts, interest groups with vast amounts of cash buy the votes of members of Congress. While the academic literature often finds that this is not true, it is reasonable that some level of resources is very important to groups. Money and staff are necessary to achieve an organization's purposes. The survey asked each group to provide its budget, but the non-response rate is so high on this question that there is no sense in citing these data. Instead, we turn to the use of staff size as a proxy variable for level of resources. Staff, of course, cost money, and staff are used to gather and disseminate information, so it is defensible to relate staff size with organizational resources.

The vast majority (97%) of the 124 responding groups have staff. The median number of Staff FTEs is 11, with a range between 0 and 2000. Over half (59%) of the groups reported increasing their staff size compared to five years previous to the survey.

Because the level of staff effort in affecting policy may be an important element in how successful a group is, we asked respondents to estimate how much staff time was used to influence the executive branch. The median group reported that 20% of staff time is spent on such activity, although there was a range from 1% to 100%. The best measure of group resources devoted to advocacy is hypothesized to be a combination of the number of organization staff and the amount of time they spend in influence efforts. Thus, a new variable, staff advocacy effort, was computed by multiplying the number of staff by the percent of time spent on policy-work. Using this measure allows us to compare organizational efforts better across groups. This variable ranges from 0 to 173.25 staff FTEs allocated to policy work by responding groups. The median value is 2.8 FTEs.

#### *Type of Group Members and Size and Dispersal of Membership*

Previous research noted that the type of member a group has and the number and dispersal of the group's membership could be important in determining how influential a group is. Our research indicates that not all "groups" have members. Among our respondents, only 74% were membership organizations. For the membership organizations, there are three different patterns of membership. Organizations have members who are organizations or their representatives (37%), individuals (27%), or a mix of organizations and individuals (36%). The median number of organizational members is 4,500; the median number of individual members is 4,000.

#### *The Dependent Variable: Interest Group Effectiveness*

Before explicating the model to be tested, it is important to discuss the dependent variable, self-reported interest group effectiveness. There are a number of problems with using any self-reported measure, but there are reasons to accept such a measure as well. First, there is little reason to suspect that respondents would knowingly bias their answers to an academic survey; thus,

they are used as expert witnesses as to their group's success rate. Second, at least one study has shown that self-reported effectiveness was highly correlated with an objective measure of effectiveness (Hoefer, 1994). Finally, as no well-established measure of the concept exists, it is acceptable to work with a measure that has face validity in a research project that is primarily exploratory in nature.

Groups feel successful in half of their efforts, on average, when trying to affect regulations. The median is 50% success, with a range from 0% to 100%. The standard deviation is 23.9.

#### *Developing and Testing a Model of Interest Group Effectiveness*

Because the literature on the determinants of affecting the executive branch is relatively sparse, the model tested here is also fairly basic and related to the variables considered important in influencing Congress. It should thus be understood as a first step in gaining a better understanding of the influence process operating in the executive branch.

We use one variable to represent each of the factors found in the literature review and discussed above, with two exceptions. Because of the large number of non-membership organizations in the sample, we excluded all information on membership size and dispersal. In addition, staff advocacy effort is being used a proxy variable for both level of organizational resources and amount of information a group can provide to decision-makers.

When an option was present to choose between different variables representing the same concept, each variable was tried in the model. The final choice was made by selecting the variable that most increased the model's fit. The final model hypothesizes that a greater level of self-reported effectiveness is due to greater access (measured by receiving information from agencies regarding changes in regulations), policy positions not opposed by the agencies (measured by the extent of opposition by the agency), a strategy emphasizing early intervention, and higher levels of staff time devoted to advocacy efforts.

The results of testing this model using Ordinary Least Squares regression are shown in Table 3. Although there were a total of 124 respondents, only 70 groups completed all the questions used to measure the variables used in the equation. This attrition is unavoidable, but does reduce the representativeness of the results.

Table 3

*Results of OLS Regression on Model of Interest Group Influence on Social Welfare Regulations (standard error in parentheses) (n = 70)*

<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>		<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	<i>t-score</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Keep abreast of changes through agency personnel (ACCESS)	3.87	(1.79)	.22	2.17	.03
Group policy position not opposed by agency (POLICY POSITION)	3.95	(1.73)	.22	2.29	.03
Use of pre-publication strategy (STRATEGY)	5.35	(2.02)	.27	2.64	.01
Staff advocacy effort (RESOURCES)	.19	(.09)	.20	2.15	.04
Constant	14.08	(11.53)		2.22	.23
R-Square	.27				
F Score	8.32				.00

All four variables are significant in the expected direction in explaining the dependent variable. Effective groups use a “pre-publication” strategy for influencing the content of regulations, keep up with regulatory changes via agency personnel, generally have policy positions not opposed by the agency and spend more time trying to influence the executive branch.

Because the equation’s  $r^2$  is only .27, a considerable portion of the variance in the dependent variable is unexplained. These results do, however, indicate that we have taken a few steps on the correct path in understanding what separates groups that are effective in influencing federal regulations from those that are not.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

This research sheds light onto the unexplored subject of interest group influence on the executive branch, specifically on the writing of program regulations for social welfare programs.

It presents a model of interest group influence on regulation writing. Results show that having greater access, having the "correct" views, choosing a "better" strategy and devoting more resources to influence efforts are all significant predictors of a group's influence level during the Clinton Administration. That a measure of each of the literature-derived variables of access, strategy, policy and resources is significantly related to higher group effectiveness is instructive. These findings indicate that there is considerable hope for persons wishing to affect federal social programs' regulations if they understand the pathways and barriers to effective action.

One of the most interesting findings is that using a pre-publication strategy is very important in being effective. Because of the strength of the group leaders' responses to coalition-building tactics, we expected that building linkages with other groups and sharing information between groups would have been significantly correlated with effective action. However, when that variable was used in the equation, the results were non-significant. We believe the reason for this is that groups build coalitions and share information throughout the process. Many groups "jump on the bandwagon" in later stages of the process, once the rules are essentially completed. We would expect, though we did not test this hypothesis yet, that groups that build a coalition and share information before publication of a rule will be the most effective.

Additionally, the data indicate that being in contact with an agency is not enough, even if its staff ask for a group's input. This request may come too late in the process to be influential in shaping the terms of the debate. It is when agency personnel keep a group abreast of issues that this contact is helpful.

These results have important implications for social work advocacy practice. The use of pre-publication tactics is shown to increase the likelihood of success. This makes sense because many of the crucial decisions concerning scope and content of regulations are made during the writing stage (Kerwin, 1994). After considerable effort is expended in preparing the draft rule it is difficult to alter its course greatly. Thus, to influence the process most efficaciously, social workers should develop ongoing relationships with agency personnel that lead to exchanges of

information, rather than waiting to make contact after publication in the *Federal Register*.

Another implication for social workers is to be prepared with ideas about how to change current or proposed regulations. Being proactive is seen as an element leading to success. This requires developing networks within the executive branch and reaching out to the persons writing the regulations to discover the issues that they see as likely to be controversial or problematic.

In the American system, there are multiple pathways in policy-making, and, in some cases, different agencies within the Federal bureaucracy may be assigned the job of writing the regulations that govern the implementation of a law. The implication of knowing that human service interest groups have more success with "friendly" agencies and personnel is to try to have the regulation-writing task assigned to an agency and person with which one has a good relationship.

We must also understand the connection between what makes an agency "friendly" and social work lobbying groups' policy positions. The reason that a liberal policy position may be helpful in being effective in influencing the executive branch is due to the policy positions of the President in office. The opposite was true during the more conservative administrations of Presidents Reagan and Bush. One interest group representative for gay, lesbian and transgendered individuals indicated that his group had had no access to the regulation-writing civil servants during the Bush years in the White House. Social workers should therefore increasingly realize the importance of national electoral politics on what sometimes is seen as an obscure and unimportant element of the policy process, the writing of regulations.

A final implication is that success in influencing social program regulations requires resources, and the more the better. Money is translated into staff and other key resources for making a difference. Social workers, if they are to create a more effective voice for themselves and their clients, must thus be willing to devote their funds to supporting the organizations that represent them in the halls of power.

This current study leads to interesting and useful conclusions. Yet more work remains to be done in this area that is of great importance to the study of social welfare policy. Two

areas of improvement are most important. First, a more objective definition of interest group influence should be used. One such approach is to compare proposed and final regulations with interest group comments to see which groups' positions are more often adopted (Furlong 1992; Hoefer, 1991). The second area of improvement needed is to examine in more depth how best to influence regulation-writers during the pre-publication stage. This would include understanding the ways that other executive branch agencies and personnel intervene in the rule-making process. These are important actors whose impact has not been well studied. Given the increasing importance of interest groups at the state level (Hoefer, in press), it would also be useful to study the impact of human services interest groups at the state level.

### CONCLUSION

Because of the importance of using rule-making authority to impact human services programs, it is as vital to study how influence is gained in the regulation-writing phase of a program as it is in the legislative phase. While there are a few authors who have discussed the importance of the topic, little empirical research has been reported in social work literature. Building on the beginning steps studied here will increase the ability of social workers to protect and improve the lives of the least well-off in our country.

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# The Discourse of Denigration and the Creation of "Other"

JOSHUA MILLER, PH.D., AND  
GERALD SCHAMESS, M.S.W.

Smith College School for Social Work

*This paper attempts to reduce the distance between intellectual frameworks that inform different fields of social work practice by exploring the relationships between intrapsychic mechanisms, family dynamics, small group processes and such society wide phenomena as public denigration, scapegoating, and the systematic oppression of politically targeted population subgroups. Clinical theories are used to explore disturbing social trends such as the redistribution of wealth while cutting services to the needy, the growth of prisons and disproportionate numbers of incarcerated people of color, societal retreat from social obligation and commitment and divisive political rhetoric. Suggestions are made about how clinical social workers can actively engage in forceful social activism.*

"We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men [sic] are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness (Declaration of Independence).

"The basis of democratic development is therefore the demand for equality, the demand that the system of power be erected upon the similarities and not the differences between men [sic]" (Laski, 1965:10).

## INTRODUCTION

For the past generation, social workers and other human service professionals have witnessed the impoverishment, marginalization, denigration and scapegoating of their clients. In this process, regressive legislation and divisive rhetoric have marched

hand in hand. Recent examples include the so-called "Welfare Reform Act," "The Defense of Marriage Act," and legislation stripping legal as well as illegal immigrants of their civil rights. Prison populations have soared, with alarming numbers of African-Americans behind bars. At the same time, the distribution of wealth in the country has shifted dramatically in favor of the wealthy. Are these trends related?

A strong commitment to social justice has been described as the central "organizing value of social work" (Swenson, 1998, p. 527). Currently, eighty five percent of professional social workers are employed in clinical settings where they provide treatment and case management services to a wide range of clients (Ginsberg, 1995). Since frequently, clinical practice is not functionally linked to social justice initiatives, practitioners face a serious dilemma: How can we integrate the theories and techniques that shape clinical practice with the overarching goal of promoting social justice? Is it possible to utilize clinical knowledge in assessing and interpreting the massive social injustices our clients experience? Can practice theories originally developed to explain intrapsychic processes, group dynamics, and family systems help practitioners understand socially sanctioned attempts to repress, marginalize and denigrate clients? Might clinical concepts such as denial, splitting, scapegoating and triangulation offer useful insights into how professional social workers can respond to problematic social trends that undermine client welfare?

The ideas in this paper are derived from long standing efforts to address these and similar questions within the profession of social work. Central to our analysis are concepts of self and "other" as they appear in the group dynamic, family systems and psychodynamic literatures. In advancing this analysis, we are aware of the problems inherent in trying to use explanatory paradigms developed to analyze dynamic functioning in individuals, families and small groups in explaining large-scale social phenomena. Nonetheless, we are impressed by the degree to which a number of paradigms formulated to explain micro and mezzo level phenomena concur in asserting that acts of violence and exploitation against targeted populations are typically rationalized and justified by defining the victim(s) as "other:" i.e. different from and inferior to dominant individuals or groups;

not fully human. Based on that observation, we will present some psychological paradigms that explore the dynamic of scapegoating in individuals and small groups. Our premise is that similar processes are influential in shaping and justifying large group behaviors; particularly inter-group conflict, public policy decisions and public discourse. In presenting this analysis, our intent is to expand the range of paradigms available to policy analysts and clinical social workers. The analysis is meant to augment rather than replace or minimize the usefulness of paradigms derived from structural, economic, or political theories. We will particularly utilize concepts from psychodynamic and cognitive psychology, family systems theory, and social psychology (particularly intergroup conflict theory). Not all of these constructs have been empirically tested, nor do they represent the myriad of theoretical models used by clinical social workers. We have chosen them for two reasons: 1) They frequently shape clinical social workers practice with individuals, families and groups, and 2) they are helpful in elucidating large-scale societal and political processes.

The paper begins with a summary discussion of disturbing social trends. We will then consider the social psychology of group conflict, the function of selected defense mechanisms, the family systems concept of triangulation, and the role of leadership in fostering hatred. The closing section discusses how these formulations might inform a proactive social work response to the collective psychology of negation and denigration that permeates contemporary American society.

### DISTURBING SOCIAL TRENDS

Although the three trends summarized below are well known to most social workers, particularly readers of this journal, we briefly review them here because of our concern about their potentially numbing effect as they become entrenched social and political realities.

#### *Redistribution of Wealth and Cutting Services to the Needy*

Changes in the federal tax code in the 1980's generated an inexorable redistribution of wealth with the wealthiest sector of our population benefiting the most. Income inequality is now what it

was in the late 1920's, prior to the introduction of the progressive income tax (Thurow, 1995). The wealthiest 1% of the population receives approximately as much income after taxes as the poorest 40%. As a result, the most affluent 2.5 million Americans have as much income as the poorest 100 million (Shapiro, 1995).

What is most striking is the gap between poor and wealthy citizens. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development states that, in the 1980s, the income gap between rich and poor in the United States was significantly greater than in any other industrialized country (Bradsher, 1995). There are even greater chasms between the wealthy and the poor when race is added to the equation. Whether using statistics on wealth or income, African-Americans consistently compare less favorably, even when taking into account such factors as education or place of residence (Oliver & Shapiro, 1995). Between 1970 and 1990, the ratio of black to white income fell from .60 to less than .56 (Goldsmith & Blakely, 1992).

### *The growth of prisons*

The burgeoning inequality of wealth has been accompanied by an unprecedented rise in the prison population, the highest proportion of imprisoned people in the history of this country ("More Inmates," 1994). With nearly 2 million people in jails and prisons, America now has the highest incarceration rate in the industrialized world (Holman, 1999). High as these figures are, they exclude over 2.5 million people on parole and 475,000 on probation (Rothman, 1994). Although the crime rate has remained steady or dropped since the 1980's, the number of people incarcerated rose by 250% (Holman, 1999). In addition to locking more people up, many states are moving to deny prisoners educational services, one of the few pathways that prepare them for life outside of prison. Many people who previously had received services—the poor, homeless, mentally ill, alcoholics, drug users, and people with character disorders—are now incarcerated (Schlosser, 1998). Over half of the incarcerated population are people of color, with a high proportion of African Americans (Hacker, 1995; Schlosser, 1998).

In California, five African American men are in prison for every man in a state college or university (Taqi-Eddin, Macallair

& Schiraldi, 1998). Poor neighborhoods in large inner-cities contribute disproportionately to the prison population; e.g. in urban areas African Americans are 7 to 10 times more likely to be incarcerated than whites (Sabol & Lynch, 1997). While only 2% of white adults are under correctional supervision, 10% of blacks are (Council of Economic Advisors [CEA], 1998). African Americans are not only arrested at much higher rates than whites, but after arrest are convicted and admitted to prison at higher rates (CEA). These legal outcomes effectively abrogate the life prospects of the incarcerated person, weaken families, and fray the fabric of community life (CEA; Miller, 1997).

### *The Retreat from Social Obligation and Commitment*

As social workers are well aware, income entitlements for poor people have been drastically reduced. This has been accompanied by a decrease in counseling and other social services due to managed care restrictions. The political discourse ceaselessly reiterates the mantra of no new taxes. There is much talk about the freedom to become wealthy while the concept of societal obligation has almost disappeared from public dialogue. As tax revisions have made the rich wealthier and as more people are imprisoned, cuts in human services have further impoverished the poor. The most dramatic example of this trend was the abolition of the federal government's responsibility (the AFDC program) for providing assistance to the nation's poorest citizens; the great majority of whom are children.

In addition to trends of rising inequality and incarceration, the middle and upper classes have been withdrawing from public institutions (Reich, 1991). Public schools, parks, and other community facilities such as libraries and beaches, have receded as places where people from different backgrounds mingle and share common experiences. Rising numbers of middle class people are moving to suburbs and in some instances, to "gated communities" where elaborate security systems "protect" residents by restricting access (Egan, 1995). Some gated communities have their own school systems and police forces. Residential racial segregation, particularly of poor African Americans, has become institutionalized (Massey & Denton, 1993). Living in segregated, fenced off communities the privileged are not only protected

from seeing social disparities, but are implicitly encouraged to turn a blind eye to the suffering of others. An irony of the move to private, controlled communities is that residents are highly taxed in the form of member and user fees. Acceptance of such fees challenges the widely held belief that the middle and upper classes are unwilling to increase its tax burden to pay for services. It seems more accurate to hypothesize that the public aversion to paying taxes in support of social and educational services is linked to stereotypes about dangerous and irresponsible "others;" a concept we will discuss later.

### ENDURING MYTHS OF FAIRNESS AND EQUITY

Before beginning our clinical analysis of these trends, we will compare them with some powerful myths that inform American belief systems. As the introductory quotations remind us, one myth is that the U.S. is a democratic society in which people are treated equally and the legal system functions to insure fair play for all. Another, is that America is a meritocracy in which opportunities for social advancement are equally available to everyone. These myths support the assumption that hard work, moral behavior, and proper values coupled with ability, will inevitably lead to success (Figueira-McDonough, 1995). The premise is that in a pluralistic society, individuals are free and unencumbered in making rational choices about their welfare and ultimate best interests (Skerry, 1998). A third myth is that Americans are a compassionate people who will help needy people, particularly if they subscribe to the work ethic (Ellwood, 1988). This value reached its apogee in the 1930's during the New Deal, and was reaffirmed during the Great Society's "war on poverty" in the 1960s.

As we argued in the preceding section, economic fairness and equal opportunity do not actually exist in America today; neither is there equitable treatment under the law. Moreover, recent legislation undermines the contention that the United States is compassionate towards those in need or is welcoming to immigrants. Race, citizenship status and economic resources dramatically influence how different groups of people experience American democracy and opportunity.

We do not know if the majority of white, middle and upper class Americans are consciously aware of their privilege, or of

the disparities between themselves and other groups of citizens. There is reason to think that affluent people are relatively sheltered from such realities. Many only encounter harsh poverty in newspaper and television stories that depict the homeless, children who are not medically insured, and fires that devastate neglected, overcrowded tenements. Privileged and affluent citizens, who have some intellectual knowledge about economic and social disparities, are likely to lack any emotionally meaningful awareness about poverty and racism. To the degree it exists, emotional awareness is kept in the realm of unconscious thought through a collective process of denial, socially reinforced by intentional segregation of economically stressed and racially different neighborhoods.

#### THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF GROUP CONFLICT AND THE NEED FOR AN "OTHER"

One way to conceptualize what is happening in American society today is to view it as an arena dominated by inter-group conflict which is largely unacknowledged at the level of public/political dialogue. Thus, there are: 1) a small number of affluent people, lots of poor people, and a range of economic sub-groups in between; 2) racial dichotomies conceptualized in terms of white people and people of color; 3) discourses that divide "law abiding citizens" from "criminals," and; 4) people able to earn their income and those who, for a variety of reasons, require income assistance. From a social science perspective, of course, social-structural factors, such as competition for limited resources shape interactions between people from different groups. Fisher (1990) discusses the contribution such factors make to "realistic" group conflicts.

Nonetheless, "unrealistic" prejudice and fear between groups also plays a significant role in group conflict. We observe, for example, anti-Semitism in groups which have little or no contact with Jews; conflict which cannot be explained by reference to "realistic" group conflict theory (Bayor, 1988). Similarly, Fisher (1990) describes the "diabolical enemy image" and the "moral self-image", in which a group or nation's collective, positive sense of self is strengthened by viewing members of one's "in-group" as superior to members of other "out-groups."



Phenomena such as these suggest that structural inequalities do not account for all prejudice and hatred. Bigotry and intolerance are also generated when out-groups are socially constructed as threatening. In response to perceived threats, societies frequently promote unity and national pride by defining as "other," people who are different and /or who challenge prevailing myths. At such times a coherent sense of national identity is preserved by demonizing a consensually agreed upon enemy. Pinderhughes coined the term "common renounced targets" to describe this phenomena, while Volkan described it similarly, using the phrase "suitable targets for externalization" (Group for Advancement of Psychiatry, 1987:42). People defined as "other," whatever the particular context, become suitable targets for rage and acts of aggression. They are held responsible for whatever internal tensions and external threats beset particular societies. As the process unfolds, target populations are socially constructed as not fully human; unworthy, inferior, morally deviant and dangerous. In consequence, the governing in-group feels justified in "protecting" itself by using state power against subgroups it defines as different or "other."

It is important to note that "others" cannot exist in isolation. The process of socially constructing people as "other" is only functional when cast in a relational context; i.e. contrasting people who are "good" with those who are "bad," people who are "hard-working" with those who are "lazy," people who are "powerful" with those who are "weak" (Lopez, 1994). This way of dividing the world suggests that members of groups in power can only feel good about themselves when members of other groups are conceived of as "less than." Freud (cited in Fisher, 1990) believed that one manifestation of this phenomena, ethnocentrism, reflects a type of group narcissism in which high self esteem and love of self within a group are maintained by directing intragroup tension and aggression away toward other groups that can be stigmatized and possibly, attacked.

The concept of the "other" has important implications. People are less willing to care for those they construct as other, particularly if the perceived differences are related to values and ethics. For example, in their study of working class white families, Sennett and Cobb (1974) found that respondents were less willing

to support welfare policies if they believed benefits were going to people of color who, in their view, had less of a work ethic. Such judgements are often rooted in a form of "moral surveillance" based on assumptions and second hand information, thereby reinforcing the belief that people are poor because they are morally deficient.

Ironically, the intensity of intergroup resentment may increase when there are only minor differences between the contending groups; i.e. when the "other" is nearly but not quite the same as the "self" (Berman, 1994). Despite repeated attempts to portray poor Americans as different (part of an "underclass", or participants in a "culture of poverty") what remains for most people is our essential commonality; our sameness as we struggle to survive economically and socially. Popular media conceptions to the contrary, there is a great deal of research which indicates that poor and affluent people in the U.S. share the same values (Gans, 1995; Wilson, 1996). The essential sameness in values between poor and middle class Americans is distorted by differences in economic circumstances, and by the fact that poor people have far less privacy than wealthier people and thus, are subjected to much greater public scrutiny (Gans).

While scapegoating and creating a denigrated "other" are frequently unconscious processes in individuals and small groups, our analysis suggests that scapegoating has become a fundamental component of public policy in the United States today. It has become a useful and perhaps necessary tactic that allows the wealthiest one percent of the population to focus public debate on the "other;" the *unworthy* poor (e.g. poor women and their children receiving public assistance), *criminals* who *terrorize* communities, or immigrants who *threaten* our borders. This strategy may partially explain how it has been possible to redistribute such large amounts of wealth to an affluent few without serious protest from the vast majority of people who not only have not benefited, but who have actually lost ground. Scapegoating, which relies on the ability to dehumanize and demonize relatively powerless populations defined as "other," has effectively served to distract most citizens from recognizing the economic and social inequities that have increasingly permeated American society over the past thirty years.

## APPLICATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY THEORY

In the following section we will consider the role defense mechanisms and cognitive dissonance play in defining the "other." We will also discuss triangulation, a family systems concept advanced by Murray Bowen.

*Denial, Splitting and Projection*

In psychoanalytic terminology, denial is defined as a defense mechanism " . . . by which an individual unconsciously repudiates some or all of the meanings of an event . . . (in order to erase) the disagreeable and unwelcome facts of the situation (Moore & Fine, 1990:50)." In individuals, denial is typically supported by two other defense mechanisms, splitting and projection. Splitting is an unconscious process in which individuals unconsciously maintain *separate* internal representations of entirely good and entirely bad care-givers because they find it profoundly threatening to recognize that the caregiver who is emotionally gratifying and the one who frustrates them are one and the same person. Projection is "a mental process whereby a personally unacceptable impulse or idea is attributed to the external world, (with the result that) one's own interests and desires are perceived as if they belong to others" (Moore and Fine, p. 149).

Taken in concert, these concepts describe the intrapsychic processes involved in 1) refusing to recognize external dangers and frightening self representations, 2) identifying an "other" person or group as a "bad" object who deserves to be attacked and possibly destroyed, and 3) justifying one's own aggression as self-defense against attack from an external enemy. At an intrapsychic level these defense mechanisms act together to create scapegoats who "deserve" to be denigrated and attacked because they represent everything the individual most hates and fears in him/herself. Although these intrapsychic mechanisms are observable in people with severe emotional disturbances, they also seem applicable to the social phenomena we described earlier. Moreover, they bear an uncanny resemblance to explanations of inter-group conflict proposed by social psychologists. This suggests that theorists analyzing micro and mezzo levels of interpersonal conflict largely concur in their explanations of how individuals and "in-group" members maintain self-esteem

and justify oppressive behavior toward denigrated "others," even when they approach the issue from quite different theoretical perspectives.

### *Cognitive Dissonance*

The concept of cognitive dissonance explains that individuals or groups experience tension (dissonance) when there are inconsistencies between the environment they perceive, their behavior, and their internalized view of themselves (Kimble & Garnezy, 1963). The theory goes on to state that dissonance can only be resolved : 1) by modifying internalized values and self images to conform to social/environmental reality, or 2) by redefining social/environmental reality to conform to internalized belief systems. The first resolution involves reconciling internal cognitive process with consensually validated "reality." The second resolution involves revising descriptions of social reality and modifying previously accepted views of historical events to make them more compatible with preexisting values and self images; a process which requires extensive use of both denial and projection.

For example, most affluent Americans prefer to believe that prosperity is the fruit of hard labor, rather than privilege or luck. Among other factors, this view reflects internalization of the myths described earlier. One way in which white, middle and upper class citizens can "resolve" dissonance between societal myths of equal opportunity and the systematic pattern of inequality that exists in American society, is to target an oppressed subgroup and blame it for the adversity it suffers as a result of discrimination, prejudice and/or inequality. This formulation allows the privileged subgroup to maintain its own values and self image, without acknowledging complicity in oppressing the scapegoated subgroup. Dissonant thoughts are thus "resolved" through a process involving denial (prejudice, discrimination and social inequality don't exist in America and accordingly, I'm not bad), splitting (I'm good , its those "others" who are bad), and projection (I'm justified in injuring those "others" because they want to destroy my values and way of life).

In discussing dissonance between internalized values/self concepts and external reality, it is also useful to consider the concept of a coherent and integrated, positive sense of self as

described by G.S. Klein, H. Kohut and others (Eagle, 1984). In looking for areas of congruence between individual and large group behavior we note that it is difficult both for individuals and groups to maintain a coherent, positive sense of self in the face of inconsistencies between internalized self representations and consensual reality. For example, individuals whose self concept rests on the belief that they have earned an esteemed and secure place in society by having the right values, making sacrifices and working hard, find it difficult to maintain their beliefs when confronted with evidence of others who work hard and fail, or whose location in the social structure deprives them of the opportunity to work at all. When acceptance of social reality actively challenges personal self-worth, one way of resolving the resulting intolerable dissonance is by denying reality, splitting off aggressive and self-hating aspects of the self, and projecting them onto the "other;" i.e. individuals or groups socially constructed as morally deficient and/or dangerous. Once this construction solidifies, individuals or groups categorized as "other" are no longer considered fully "human" and thus, are unworthy of equitable or humane treatment from those in positions of power.

### *Triangulation*

Bowen's theory of family dynamics describes "triangulation" as a process in which two or more people reduce the anxiety or tension in their relationship by joining together against a third person who stabilizes the system by becoming "the problem" (Bowen, 1976). Conceptually, the concept is closely related to scapegoating. Triangulation is a useful tool for understanding political initiatives designed to unite subgroups with common class interests against other, less powerful groups; e.g. campaigns emphasizing the "decline" of family values, the dangers of immigration, etc. Perhaps the most striking of these initiatives was the electoral strategy that President Nixon and his aides (Kevin Phillips in particular) consciously designed to unify Republicans, white northern Democrats and white conservative southern Democrats in a political coalition. The strategy was intended to amplify public fears that a liberal government in Washington would offer preferential treatment to African-Americans (Edsall & Edsall, 1992). Consequently, the Republican Party was able to

unite a number of disparate groups to create an electoral majority composed of affluent Republicans, "Reagan democrats," and the white "religious right." In conjunction with a severe economic downturn during the last years of Jimmy Carter's presidency (Edsall & Edsall), this coalition contributed markedly to Reagan's first election and ensured his second. The strategy's success is not surprising, since groups are more likely to make social distinctions based on categories of "us" versus "them" at times of social and economic upheaval (Sennett, 1970).

Triangulation and scapegoating only work when there is collective denial of reality. At an individual level, denial is triggered by threats to the self perceived as so threatening they cannot be consciously acknowledged (Goldstein, 1984). Implicit in denial is the need to "cut-off" emotions that are too painful or anxiety provoking to experience on an ongoing basis (Bowen, 1976). At a collective level denial involves the repudiation of aspects of social reality that, if acknowledged, would threaten the social fabric. For individuals, denial promotes a false narrative about self. For societies, it promotes a discourse of hatred, fear, and distortion.

### LEADERSHIP AND FOSTERING HATRED

Public leaders exert enormous influence regardless of whether the public idealizes or vilifies them. Access to the public through the media, as well as the actual power leaders exercise, make them highly visible both as authority figures and experts. Leadership that stresses similarities between people can heal splits between groups. Leadership that stresses differences in values and lifestyles, and exploits the socially constructed sense of "other" for political advantage can exacerbate social schisms (Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, 1987)). A number of public statements by candidates for the presidency have both emphasized differences and purposefully denigrated subgroups defined as "other." These include Ronald Reagan's characterization of "welfare queens," George Bush's use of the Willy Horton issue, Patrick Buchanan's anti-gay diatribes in 1992 and 1996, and President Clinton's attack on Sister Souljah during the 1992 campaign. Recent attempts to "reform" welfare have been legitimized not only by the President, but also by the Speaker of the House,

Majority Leader of the Senate, and countless other elected state and national officials. In contemporary political rhetoric, drastic reductions in eligibility and benefits are presented as "reforms" even though they treat welfare recipients as if they belong to a different biological species. As political leaders advocate for and justify "reforms" of this kind, public opinion is shaped by leadership that scapegoats, divides, and reinforces an invidious sense of difference at enormous cost to those categorized as "other."

Political leadership of this kind involves scapegoating and denigrating subgroups to achieve political advantage. Scapegoating employed systematically has four major consequences: 1. Angry, disenfranchised, working and middle class people are given human targets to vent their frustrations against. 2. The target groups are dehumanized and denigrated. 3. The political opposition is associated with the denigrated group(s) and thus discredited. 4. Leaders employing this strategy attain and solidify their power (Whillock, 1995). Extreme examples of such leadership have had disastrous consequences in Europe during the 1930's and 1940's, and more recently in Yugoslavia, East Timor and Rwanda. As we witness the increasing economic inequalities in American society, the rampant use of imprisonment as a mechanism of social control, and the widening divisions scapegoating promotes at a national level, we begin to recognize the budding, terrible consequences that divisive leadership inflicts on all of us.

### HOW TO RESPOND

We have tried to identify and understand a combination of societal trends- increased inequality, rising rates of incarceration, decreased services for the needy and a public discourse that denigrates and scapegoats poor people, people of color, and immigrants- by employing selected psychodynamic, cognitive, group and family systems concepts. We have argued that mechanisms of denial, splitting, projection, scapegoating, triangulation, and divisive leadership contribute to a collective psychology of denigration and dismissal. This, in turn, supports a social process of negation and rejection that alienates and harms significant numbers of Americans.

What can be done when psychological mechanisms of this kind are purposefully manipulated to support a national discourse of denigration? There are no ready answers or easy solutions, but we will offer some suggestions. They are directed mainly to clinical social workers because so many master's level social workers practice in clinically oriented settings. Since we believe that the processes described above are, for the most part, unconscious and irrational, the strategies we propose are designed to address unconsciously motivated attitudes and behaviors as well as intentional exploitation.

### *Making Overt What Is Covert*

A fundamental method used to ameliorate the effects of irrational internal processes in individuals involves the simple act of talking. Social workers believe that directed conversation results in greater rational insight. When people understand their irrational wishes, fears, and conflicts, they can change how they understand themselves as well as how they behave.

Directed conversation can be facilitated with families and groups. Bargal and Bar (1994) found that ethnic groups (e.g. Arabs and Jews) in conflict with one another respond positively to small group encounters that promote greater understanding of the historical and social forces which fuel the conflict. Accordingly, our first recommendation is that social workers engage in structured public discussions about privilege and oppression in the context of America's history and its current social structure. Social workers can foster such dialogues or can work with existing organizations that organize such conversations (Examples of such organizations are listed in *The President's Initiative on Race*, 1999).

A number of models of public dialogue provide guidelines for addressing difficult and contentious issues. For example:

1. Large group discussions about controversial, emotionally charged topics that divide Catholics and Protestants have been initiated by social workers in Northern Ireland (Templegrove Action Limited, 1996). These discussions began with formal presentations and proceeded to small group discussions.
2. The Public Conversations Project of Cambridge, Massachusetts (Becker, Chasin, Chasin, Herzig & Roth, 1995; Chasin,



Herzig, Roth, Chasin, Becker & Stains, 1996) has conducted small group dialogues, facilitated by family therapists about controversial issues such as abortion. Clear ground rules make it possible to foster respectful inquiry and avoid clichéd conversations.

3. A foundation-supported effort, Study Circles, provides technical assistance to communities with the goal of fostering on-going discussion groups about race and racism (Study Circles Resource Center, 1997).
4. Schools of social work have sponsored public conversations about racism that feature facilitated discussions in which the leaders model constructive self reflection, and participants engage in small group "fishbowl" conversations (Donner & Miller, 1999).
5. In recent years, President Clinton has sponsored a national conversation about race, thereby using his leadership position to foster a respectful, historically grounded public dialogue that is sensitive to social context (CEA, 1998). Although we do not suggest that conversation alone will suffice (we believe strongly that the social conditions described earlier must also change), we subscribe to the view that changes in consciousness are often necessary preconditions for social action directed toward changing policy. The projects outlined above suggest that public conversations about power, privilege and oppression are an effective means towards initiating shifts in collective consciousness.

### *Deconstructing Coded Scapegoating*

Making overt the covert in clinical work also involves decoding symbolic meanings in discussion. Recent advances in narrative and discourse analysis have assisted this effort (Chambon, 1994; White & Epston, 1990). Words and metaphors are important. They not only shape and frame discussions but open or limit what people can think about, and what actions they are willing to consider. Words and metaphors can be utilized to humanize or dehumanize both object and subject.

Many clinical social workers are already aware that clients' private troubles encode societal discourses that reflect unequal

social structures. This perspective encourages clinicians to actively identify how internalized societal oppression contributes to the development of symptomatic behavior (White & Epston, 1990), thereby allowing them to deconstruct and reconstruct public discourses that oppress and marginalize clients. Practitioners can indirectly help their clients by vigilantly and regularly monitoring and challenging the terms and metaphors used by politicians and the media to mis-describe clients. Such language can be deconstructed and exposed as it is articulated in public discourse, much as destructive and negative metaphors are elucidated in therapy. New metaphors that encourage integration (rather than splitting) and healing should be offered to replace those that divide and denigrate.

In the process of developing new metaphors, agencies, professional organizations and individual practitioners can initiate "media watches" which provide weekly briefings about how clients are misrepresented in public forums. Social workers can offer audio essays to public radio stations and organize clients to write their own narratives for agency newsletters. Both in agency practice and in MSW and BSW programs, social workers practitioners and educators can regularly contribute to publications that appeal to general audiences. Although it is important for educators to engage in research and to publish scholarly articles in refereed journals, schools of social work can also give faculty members credit for scholarship and community service on the basis of articles written for popular consumption that are published in the mass media.

We are well aware of the time limitations and constraints social work clinicians face in the era of managed care (Schamess & Lightburn, 1998), and we do not mean to minimize the pressures practitioners currently labor under. Ultimately, however, we have to ask whether by colluding with managed care models that only compensate social workers for "billable hours" spent in face to face contact with clients who have medically diagnosable conditions, we are contributing to the solution or to the problem? We know it is difficult to find time to engage in publicly uncovering coded metaphors that foster client scapegoating, but our future as a profession depends on finding creative ways of creatively engaging in this process. As a case in point, in 1998, the

Federation of Clinical Social Workers proposed union affiliation for regional chapters whose members approve the plan. Where adopted, this initiative will enlist union representatives in negotiating service conditions and reimbursement schedules with managed care companies and other funding agencies. The plan is designed to reduce the power disparity that has, up to now, characterized negotiations between social workers and institutional funders, with the goal of giving social work practitioners more bargaining power both to advocate for client needs, and to protect themselves from exploitation. While still too new to evaluate, the initiative indicates that social work professional organizations are developing innovative advocacy options both for practitioners and clients

### *Humanizing Everyone*

The intrapsychic and group processes we have described work to dehumanize people. As clinical social workers participate in public discourse and dialogue, it is essential to reemphasize the profession's code of ethics; particularly the fundamental value which asserts that every human being deserves to be treated with compassion and respect. Clinical social workers can actively strive to modify public perceptions both by describing clients empathetically in public forums, and by facilitating direct client access to the media. Such initiatives amplify clients' voices in much needed ways, and make it more difficult to scapegoat clients in public political discourse. As practitioners, we are aware of the distortions promulgated by people who are either unaware of the heroic efforts clients employ in dealing with tremendous adversity, or who purposefully scapegoat particular subgroups for political gain. We need to challenge denigrating myths and stereotypes by presenting narratives that both affirm the universality of the human condition and describe clients in all their complexity. Initiatives of this kind would challenge what Allport (1948) called "tabloid thinking."

### *Taking Responsibility*

In our work and in our lives, we cannot challenge scapegoating and oppression and retain our authenticity without acknowledging that social workers too benefit from a privileged

position in society. If rising inequality and scapegoating threatens everyone's sense of integrity, then we, in our paid professional roles, often become unwilling participants in repressing others. As helpers, we too experience cognitive dissonance when we think about the goals and standards of our profession and then pause to reflect on what we are, or are not doing in our work with clients. It is a dilemma all of us must grapple with. We emphasize it here because we believe that if unconscious mechanisms of denial, splitting and projection contribute to negative social trends, social workers can work toward social change by first recognizing and challenging these mechanisms in ourselves. By looking soberly at the history of privilege inherent in our professional status, and by considering what we can do personally, professionally, and collectively, we can take a first step toward challenging the current discourse of denigration. Although social work is far from the most affluent, powerful, or influential professional subgroup, we can nonetheless play a significant role in initiating meaningful social change by examining the functions and roles we play within agency structures in the context of how society at large currently perceives and deals with subordinated client subgroups.

As we know from our clinical work, however, psychological difficulties are not always amenable to rational discourse and self-reflection. The historian, Howard Zinn (1994, p.239), argues that "our traditional much praised democratic institutions—representative government, voting and constitutional law—have never proved adequate for solving critical problems of human rights." We agree with this conclusion and believe that conditions for our clients are currently so desperate that more confrontational strategies such as demonstrations, and in selected instances, non-violent civil disobedience will both be necessary. As in other periods of socially sanctioned scapegoating, it is essential for social workers to bear witness and to challenge the legitimacy of hegemonic discourse.

Such actions by individuals, must of course be by personal choice. Collectively, however, as explicated in the NASW Code of Ethics, clinical social workers have an obligation to promote social justice for clients as well as to enhance their individual well being. Strategies that the profession has used in the past include

sit-ins, demonstrations and teach-ins. Collective, professional, civil disobedience can also imply refusal to cooperate with policies that overtly harm or denigrate our clients. For example, many clinicians currently engage in a covert form of civil disobedience through the practice of code switching; i.e. providing funding organizations with medical diagnoses that ensure needed services for clients, but that neither reflect the actual focus of therapy or the clinician's "actual" assessment of the client's mental status. While typically intended to protect or promote client welfare, such behavior basically involves "playing the game;" i.e. accommodating to the system rather than overtly challenging it. If the profession can unite to take stronger public positions, agency coalitions, professional organizations, consortia of schools of social work, and unions could collaborate in confronting the seemingly inexorable trend toward providing fewer and less adequate services for client populations that have been increasingly defined as unworthy and undeserving of care. The essential decency of much of the American public suggests that effectively presented, widely disseminated information about how inadequate services affect vulnerable client populations is likely to evoke a positive public response.

It is important to recognize a confrontational strategy involves sizeable professional risks. In the short term it could have serious negative consequences including the loss of agency contracts, significant reductions in agency income, agency closures and the elimination of jobs. Nonetheless, as a profession, we must ask ourselves to what extent we will cooperate and even in some instances collude with policies that offer modest work security while ignoring client needs. It is a complicated dilemma that does not lend itself to a quick or easy solution. At this point in time, we can only articulate the issues and encourage serious ongoing discussion throughout the profession, but especially among clinical social workers, who because they constitute the majority of currently practicing MSWs, have in many ways, been most affected by current policies.

### CONCLUSION

This paper reflects a preliminary attempt to explore the relationship between intrapsychic mechanisms, family dynamics,

small group processes and such society wide phenomena as public denigration, scapegoating, and the systematic oppression of politically targeted population subgroups. It also recommends a number of "remedies" we think could positively influence the problematic social trends outlined above. In essence, we are urging clinicians to combine therapy with policy practice. While treatment is clearly beneficial to large numbers of individuals, families and groups, clinicians also need to advocate collectively for and with clients. The current scale of social victimization and oppression is so immense, and the present political climate is so focused on scapegoating poor people, people of color and people in other politically targeted disadvantaged subgroups, that frightening consequences seem inevitable unless the processes can be reversed.

In Essence, we are Urging clinicians to combine therapy with policy practice much in the tradition first articulated by Bertha Reynolds (1964).

At present, the critical gap between clinical and policy practice is reinforced by the educational structures of most schools of social work as well as by the work requirements of agency practice as currently defined. The profession should thoughtfully and thoroughly re-examine those structures.

We believe it is critical for clinicians to actively and forcefully enter the public discourse (locally, nationally, individually and collectively) that denigrates oppressed and disadvantaged people. Hate speech is a monolithic narrative which suppresses, oppresses and dehumanizes its targets. In contrast, planfully devised public dialogue can create a discourse of compassion and understanding (Whillock, 1995) in which even participants with passionately opposing views can gradually discover each other's common humanity

As professionals (and citizens) we live at a time when we cannot be complacent. There is too much at stake for our clients and for ourselves. Historically, social work's use of clinical theory has too often been associated with professional withdrawal from public life and social action (Specht & Courtney, 1994). We suggest here that applying clinical theory to social phenomena can contribute to a different outcome by reducing the distance between the intellectual frameworks which inform different fields

of practice. Our analysis suggests that forceful activism by clinical social workers would meaningfully challenge the public discourse of denigration, and contribute to forging a national dialogue of compassion.

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# Pathways to Prison: Life Histories of Former Clients of the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems

STEPHEN A. KAPP

University of Kansas  
School of Social Welfare

*This study examines the relationship between child maltreatment and future offending from the viewpoint of former clients. Imprisoned adults describe their experiences in child welfare and juvenile justice system services. Specifically, those placed out of the home originally into the child welfare system have a different perspective on their path to prison than those placed into the juvenile justice system as delinquents. The study contributes to the literature by examining the relationship between the services children receive in the child welfare system as well as the juvenile justice system and their imprisonment as adults from a former service recipient's point of view.*

One of the primary goals of the child welfare system is to provide a safe alternative for abused and neglected children to grow and develop. Unfortunately, the children placed in that system often end up as recipients of juvenile justice services for committing illegal acts later in their youth. In some cases, these individuals continue to offend and are eventually imprisoned as adults. This paper describes a research project designed to explore the relationship between child welfare and juvenile justice services and eventual adult imprisonment. Unlike much of the previous research assessing the link between maltreatment and illegal behavior, as both a juvenile and an adult, this project is based on the impressions of former clients of these service systems. In the context of life history interviews, former service recipients, currently incarcerated as adults, provide alternative explanations for their imprisonment based on whether their legal and service

histories began as maltreated or delinquent children. A brief review of the relevant literature relating to child maltreatment and offending behavior will precede the discussion of the study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Although the research linking child maltreatment and offending behavior is often flawed (Widon, 1989), there is some credible evidence connecting these two sets of circumstances (Widon, 1989). However, it is critical to also recognize that many abused or neglected children do not go on to commit illegal acts (Widon, 1991). Other research has found that a more consist link occurs between abuse and status offenses (Zingraff, Leiter, Myers, & Johnson, 1993). In addition to identifying these connections, these researchers agree that it is difficult to fully understand the relationship between maltreatment and offending without knowing more about the impact of services children receive as a result of their maltreatment on eventual illegal offenses (Widon, 1991; Zingraff, Leiter, Myers, & Johnson, 1993).

A similar discussion takes place when this discussion shifts to the impact of juvenile delinquency on adult offending. Although youth involved in delinquent acts are more likely to commit illegal behavior as adults (Wolfgang, Thornberry, & Figlio, 1987; Sampson & Laub, 1993), there is still a significant group of juvenile delinquents that cease their illegal behavior as adults (McCord, 1979; and Wolfgang, Thornberry, & Figlio, 1987). In both cases, the incidence of maltreatment or offending as a child does not necessarily lead to illegal behavior. This leaves a critical question: what is significant about those children that do eventually offend that is different from the considerable number that do not?

Some light can be shed on this issue by examining the relationship between delinquency services and adult offenses. While meta-analyses has provided evidence that those in treatment are less likely to offend (Whitehead & Lab, 1989; Palmer, 1991; Lipsey, 1992), others have argued that treatment programs do not address core factors that lead to offending behavior (Jenson & Howard, 1998). Although the effects of juvenile services on adult offending remain unclear, there are two related studies that stimulated the research project that is the focus of this paper.

When youth were followed from a specific juvenile residential treatment facility to prison, a high-risk profile was identified. African American youth with two or more felony adjudications at intake to the residential juvenile program placed in an out-of-home settings at discharge were more likely to be imprisoned in adulthood. Another critical finding was that children placed in the residential setting as child welfare cases, not adjudicated of any illegal behavior, were as likely to go to prison as adults as the delinquent children (Kapp, Schwartz, & Epstein, 1993; Schwartz, Kapp, & Overstreet, 1994; and Collins, Schwartz, & Epstein, in press). These studies and the aforementioned literature highlight some critical questions that drove the design of this study. Why are children placed in a residential facility as child welfare clients as likely to eventually go to prison as delinquent youth from the same facility? and What are the unmet cultural, systemic, and service needs of the high risk youth that often end up in prison as adults? Building on the previous efforts, this research explores the relationship between the delivery of services for maltreated and delinquent children and subsequent illegal behavior as a youth and an adult.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach relying on life history interviews with former clients of the child welfare and juvenile systems about their experiences with services. The interview was conducted jointly with the participants by asking them to reconstruct their own personal history within the child welfare and juvenile justice system. Specific questions were used to identify the exact placements and their timing, but few other structured questions were asked beyond what the young man thought of each facility. This allowed the individual to identify and expound on issues as he felt necessary. The researcher listened for ideas relating their evaluations of various services, along with ideas they may have for future program innovation. A very similar organization was utilized in Clifford Shaw's classic work—*The Jack-roller*. In that instance, he created the sequence of placements for the juvenile in his study and then asked the youth to write an autobiographical account of his experience within that structure (Shaw, 1930).

The data from the interviews were documented by the interviewer's handwritten notes.

### *The Sample*

This study employed a convenience sample. Initially, these individuals were identified from a group of individuals formerly placed at a specific juvenile facility and currently imprisoned (Kapp, Schwartz, & Epstein, 1993). It is worthwhile to note that this study has focused only on imprisoned young men. The pragmatics of locating participants compelled us to focus on these individuals. Although pursuing those living in the community would be an excellent companion approach, resource limitations did not permit it.

Individual prisons were targeted based on two criteria: a significant number of participants from the previous study and an administration that would be likely to cooperate with the study procedures. Potential participants were sent a letter inviting them to participate and describing the informed consent procedures. Those that responded favorably were interviewed. In-depth interviews were conducted with eight individuals for two to three hours apiece. Seven of the eight interviewees were African American.

After a set of preliminary analyses was conducted, the interviewer conducted additional individual interviews with some of the participants and solicited their feedback on the tentative conclusions. The initial findings were presented to them and their reactions were solicited. Their impressions were very helpful in minimizing the biases in the research method, clarifying concepts, and reinforcing the initial findings.

### *Data Analysis*

The analysis strategy for this project attempted to fully exploit both the breadth and depth offered by these data. Initially, efforts focused on gaining a full appreciation of the participants' description of their experiences. Next, common themes and responses were organized and reviewed using a content analysis software package (Researchware, 1993). To examine some differences in the ways incipient criminality is perceived by these young men the analysis focused on the structure of the narratives used by

these individuals to tell their stories. Pertti Alasuutari (1995) has suggested comparing life stories at a more abstract level. Each story plot has a structure that should be recognized. He proposed breaking down components of the story according to the relevance to the plot. Emphasis is then placed on making plot summaries for comparing and contrasting the text. Identified story types can then be tied to each plot. These plots were examined for their linkage to a type of world view. This data analysis technique was very useful in trying to understand the notion of responsibility and its role as it relates to future involvement with the criminal justice system.

## FINDINGS

The descriptions of the respective paths to prisons differed by the legal reason for the original out of home placement: child maltreatment (child welfare youth) or illegal behavior (delinquent youth). Child welfare youth were placed in the system after being abused or neglected by a care giver. After multiple placements as younger children, these individuals eventually found themselves in residential treatment and institutional facilities as adolescents. These facilities were populated predominantly by youth with histories of delinquent behavior (Kapp, Schwartz, Epstein, 1993).

### *Child Welfare Youth*

As expected, the child welfare youth were placed out of home earlier in life (between the ages of 7–9 versus early to mid-teens for delinquent youth) because they had been abused or neglected by their caretakers in one way or another. Consequently, they lived in more out-of-home placements for a longer period of time. In addition to the length of their experience, another major difference is the way the young men seem to hold the system responsible for their circumstances.

For each of these young men, a major life event in the child welfare system functions as a turning point, after which they seemed to have given up hope. The critical events are key points where the ultimate goal of living with a family or living on their own was thwarted. Additionally they held the system accountable for their loss of hope. This progression is clarified by examining some of the events. In two of the cases, the young man was

removed from a foster home that was intended to be an adoptive home. "You know what caused me to be alleviated from there, check this out man. It was Christmas. They parents came, they look at you with an evil eye. Knew something was wrong but not told directly. After the celebration, the female started packing my stuff. Let me know that I was leaving. My caseworker picked me up on Monday or Tuesday. I didn't find out until after I left, the caseworker divulged, "Those white people's parents told them if they did not get rid of this Nigger, they were going to divorce you from the family".

The second youth described the intended adoptive home as a positive place. "Felt good about myself, and I liked it at that time of my life." But he could not stay there, "Illegal for me to be living there until papers were signed." During the interim, an alternative placement was chosen in a different city where a critical event occurred, "One day, I was talking to another girl whose brother was at [a different facility] with me. My girlfriend got jealous, she hit me in the mouth with the door and I went off on her. On February 15th, 1985, my adoptive mother left me a note and \$10 wishing me a good life. After that I did not care." This person definitely saw the dismissal by his potential adoptive mother as a turning point in his life. Although one could argue that his behavior may have influenced the outcome of this event, he ascribed the failure of his adoptive home to being in an unnecessary placement.

The third example is related to placement in a facility geared to providing independent living opportunities. After numerous placements from a very young age, this young man was placed in this facility with high hopes of being able to eventually live on his own. Unfortunately, the program was a disappointment, "It was a new town and I didn't know anybody. It was my first taste of freedom. They were trying to teach me to be independent in a town where I did not know anybody, I had never been anywhere but [hometown]. It didn't work. It was a hit [setup] from the beginning. I never understood why they put me there to begin with. I ended up running back home. Went back home and ran the streets." This individual tied the disappointment from failing in a heralded independent living program to his longer term inability to make a life for himself in the community.

In each of these cases, which represent all of the child welfare cases in the sample, the individual described a traumatic event as the centerpiece of his experience in the system. The event was portrayed as something over which the person had no control. After these events, these individuals gave up their hopes for making it on their own in a community setting.

These three individuals, originally placed out of the home as child welfare cases, seem to agree that they have been made victims of the system. However, there are differing sentiments about these services contributing to their eventual imprisonment. The individual previously describing the lack of independent living skill development, holds himself responsible for his imprisonment. "In prison because of bad decision-making. I wasn't going to let my brother get hurt, and a fight went too far. He was mad and I was mad, and he ended up freezin' to death. I would probably do it all over again."

The other individuals have a different view on the placement of responsibility for their time in prison. "\_\_\_\_\_ [a specific facility] made me very angry. It had the greatest impact on me coming to prison.". "Being in juvenile facilities is very much related to me being in prison. This is why I speak of slavery today for a system which I am temporarily part of. Slavery as a juvenile, slavery as a resident of this prison."

When I shared the preliminary findings with one of these individuals in the process of the follow-up interviews, he supported the notion of the programs contributing to his imprisonment. "Especially what you go through. All this and it's not like it is supposed to be. It is like I went through all of this for nothin'. It makes you want to rebel."

### *Delinquent Youth*

The individuals placed out of their home for involvement in illegal behavior view the impact of juvenile services on their imprisonment very differently. They do not hold the system responsible for their circumstances, as a child or an adult. Their sense of having a personal choice in the matter is very strong. Although they often question the judgement behind their decisions, they accept personal responsibility for committing an illegal act. On occasion, some discredit the idea of blaming other things or



people for their personal situation. They are very willing to admit a preference for the allure of the street with little regard for the consequences of their behavior. "I did that on my own. I did it for the rush and the money." or "If I didn't get caught, I would get geeked up (high) and do it again."

These youth were very willing to point to the attraction of street life, as discussed earlier, as being very enticing to them. Unlike the child welfare individuals, they refused to identify the services and programs as leading to their involvement in the adult criminal justice system. One unique description portrays the issue as a matter of letting time pass. "I just recently figured out what I wanted to do. That be the problem with these cats, keepin' them out of trouble while they figure out what they want to do."

Others more directly credit the program and services they received while highlighting their personal responsibility for their situations. "Got the right thing, I just choose to do something else. 'Cause I remember everything I did in each program, but once you get out it comes down to that final test-are you gonna hang out with the same crowd or are you gonna get new friends and do the right thing!" "Had a lot to offer a person, if they took the time to understand. That there still leaves the ultimate decision, it still lies on them. If a person has in his mind that he gonna be a criminal, you ain't gonna do nothing about it." The delinquent youth admitted the attraction of the street life, chose not to blame the programs for their behavior, and highlighted the significance of personal responsibility.

This attitude about responsibility and decision-making was confirmed in a follow-up interview with a young man placed in the juvenile system as a delinquent. "Everybody knows the difference between right and wrong. To kill, rape, steal is wrong. If you place that problem with someone else, that is wrong. You know that is wrong. It is an excuse that allows you to act that way. Something in the past doesn't affect me. It doesn't make no sense [blaming someone/something else for your situation]."

Additionally, he supported the importance of surviving on the street as one of the crucial factors leading to additional trouble. "People don't know when to quit. Majority of people searching for things to get high off of, or a better life financially, not emotionally. Those things there, cause them to end up here. I knew it was

wrong to sell drugs, kill people. My thought process, this shit got to be done. Got to kill. This me or them." The impressions about the respective pathways from child welfare and juvenile justice systems to adult prison appear to be different for the child welfare youth and the delinquent youth.

## DISCUSSION

Child welfare cases were committed to the juvenile system because they were in need of care and protection. The individuals placed as child welfare cases in this study appear to be holding the system responsible for its dismal performance. In some cases, they attributed their imprisonment to poor treatment, and a violation of a commitment made by the system to care for them when they were young children.

On the other hand, the individuals placed in the system for their delinquent behavior are more likely to assume personal responsibility for their imprisonment. They appear to have accepted the placement in this system as some sort of retribution for their illegal behavior and this is linked to their decision to commit that behavior. Upon discharge from these programs, they continue to hold themselves responsible for these acts which they tend to attribute more to an inability to avoid the trappings of returning to street behavior rather than a result of the service programs within this system. It is interesting to note that the different views presented by these two groups are not apparent when they are critiquing the services in the juvenile justice system. They generally agree on a consistently critical point of view (Kapp, 1997).

This method of research seems to hold some promise for expanding the knowledge base about the impact of services on recipients. Some interesting notions about the progression to prison are forwarded by former clients of these systems. This method is useful for giving clients a voice in the evaluation of services. Additionally, some critical issues are presented within a context which is likely to be transferable to others settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Obviously, the findings need to be verified in additional and larger samples. Specifically by expanding the sample to include those that experienced services as a juvenile but did

not proceed to adult imprisonment. In any case, researchers, administrators, policy and direct service practitioners interested in the effect of these service systems are encouraged to support and conduct more studies that focus on the input of service recipients.

This study also highlighted some critical practice considerations. Practitioners in both the child welfare and juvenile justice system are aware of the need to provide and manage stable, safe placements for children which will hopefully lead them out of these systems and away from the constant developmental disruptions associated with moving from placement to placement. This study not only confirms those needs but provides a glimpse at some of the specific psycho social impacts associated with "growing up" in these settings. Some of the study participants propose that the instability in their lives as child had serious implications for their lives as an adult.

For the practitioners dealing with delinquent youth the findings may be not startling. These youth hold themselves accountable for their inability to resist the temptations presented by a street lifestyle and are accepting of the consequences. There is a clear notion of personal responsibility for the illegal behavior and eventual imprisonment. The practice challenge is to find ways to frame, present, and develop more attractive, positive alternatives. Given the inherently complex social and economic factors associated with diminishing the allure of the street and/or proposing acceptable alternatives such interventions should address the individual, family, and community levels of these client systems. A final consideration is the distinctively different points of view held by the formerly delinquent versus formerly child welfare youth. These differences may warrant separate treatment programs or at least programs capable of addressing these alternative views.

## CONCLUSION

Previous research raised questions about the special cultural, systemic, and service needs presented by high risk youth which may contribute to their eventual imprisonment as adults. Some insights provided by former recipients of the juvenile justice and child welfare system identified some potential factors. The life

history interviews provided valuable insights into these questions and should be considered by researchers interested in studying maltreatment, juvenile offending, and imprisonment. There seems to be different impressions of the pathway from the juvenile system to the adult system depending on the original reason for entering—child maltreatment versus illegal behavior. The differing methods of entry appear to have implications for the role of personal responsibility in the transition from the juvenile system to the adult system. Practitioners, researchers, and policy makers need to consider offending, and imprisonment. There seems to be different impressions of the pathway from the juvenile system to the adult system depending on the original reason for entry—child maltreatment versus illegal behavior. The differing methods of entry appear to have implications for the role of personal responsibility in this transition. Practitioners, researchers, and policy makers need to consider these differences and their ramifications as they deliver, study and advocate for the types of services provided to children in these two systems.

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# Race, Class, and Support for Egalitarian Statism Among the African American Middle Class

GEORGE WILSON

University of Miami  
Department of Sociology

*This study uses data from the 1990 and 1987 years of the General Social Survey to assess the effects of minority status and position in the class structure in explaining middle class African Americans' support for opportunity-enhancing and outcome-based egalitarian statist policies. Findings do not provide confirmation for prior research that has found that racial effects are predominant, but has considered a more narrow range of policies and not assessed interaction effects. First, neither additive nor interactive effects of race and social class explain support for government policies that are premised on providing people with skills to compete in the labor market. Second, interaction effects are salient for government policies that are intended to guarantee socioeconomic outcomes. Specifically, the joint effects of race and social class explain levels of support that are intermediate between the relatively pro-interventionist views of working class racial peers and the more anti-statist stance of white middle class counterparts. The race/class dynamics are interpreted as a product of the extent to which the two policy types conform to the dominant principles of American stratification ideology. In addition, implications of the findings for understanding the kinds of policies likely to be enacted and racial inequality in the policy implementation process are discussed. Finally, suggestions for future research that shed additional light on the race/class basis of opinions about egalitarian statism are offered.*

As the African American population has become increasingly heterogeneous and differentiated sociologists—in the last decade or so—have begun to examine how minority status and privileged position in the American class structure account for attitudes about socioeconomic inequality in America (for a review see Hochschild 1995). In this regard, one developing line of

studies has assessed the relative effects of race and social class in explaining the commitment of relatively privileged African Americans to "egalitarian statism" (Kluegel and Majetu 1995), namely, preferences that the government play a role in redistributing economic resources to regulate socioeconomic inequality. Significantly, this line of research assesses the operation of two factors which have been demonstrated to affect orientations toward policies to alleviate socioeconomic inequality in diametrically opposed ways. In particular, incumbency in the middle class is associated with fiscally conservative views (Kluegel and Smith 1986, 1981), while the harsh legacy of discrimination in the U.S. associated with minority group status is conducive to maintaining race-based, activist sentiments about the role of government in regulating economic inequality (Sigelman and Welsh 1991; Jaynes and Williams 1989).

To date, studies of the race and class bases of support for egalitarian statism among the "new black middle class" (Landry 1987) have focused most heavily on policies that have become value-laden in recent political discourse such as race-based preferences and quotas in hiring associated with "affirmative action" (Welsh and Foster 1987; Welsh and Combs 1985), and spending on "welfare" (Jackman 1994; Gilliam and Whitby 1989; Parent and Stekler 1985; Seltzer and Smith 1985), as well as more general questions concerning the adequacy of present spending levels to assist African Americans and the poor (Tuch et. al 1997; Allen et al. 1989). Typically, these studies have proceeded by assessing the additive effects of race and social class in explaining levels of support for anti-poverty policies relative to the African American working and white middle classes. Overall, they have reached consistent results: the effects of race are paramount at upper-levels of the African American class structure. In particular, across gender and age categories and in all regions of the United States minority status best explains levels of support for state spending to reduce inequality that are closer to the relatively pro-interventionist views of working class racial peers than the more anti-statist stance of white middle class counterparts.

However, several shortcomings in existing studies have limited our understanding of the race and class underpinnings of support for egalitarian statism among relatively, privileged

African Americans. In particular, studies have focused almost exclusively on "outcome-based" policies, those such as affirmative action and welfare that are premised on assuring socioeconomic outcomes. Conspicuously absent in existing research have been analyses of commitment to "opportunity-enhancing" policies, a second type that is based on providing opportunities to be economically self-sufficient.<sup>1</sup> Significantly, the two policy types represent alternative strategies regarding the appropriate role of the government in eradicating economic inequality. In this regard, whether anti-poverty policy should be premised on promoting economic opportunities or ensuring economic statuses has been the source of heated debates among policy experts, legislators, and social scientists for several decades (Wilson 1996, 1987; Mead 1986; Murray 1984). Further, the almost exclusive reliance on a "main effects" (Gilliam and Whitby 1989) approach in existing studies has precluded identifying the influence of race/class interactions. In fact, the prevalence of joint race/class effects are reasonably inferred from several studies in which levels of support for egalitarian statist policies among relatively privileged African Americans are intermediate between those of similarly situated whites and working class African Americans (Tuch et al. 1997; Welsh and Foster 1987; Seltzer and Smith 1985).<sup>2</sup>

This study addresses these shortcoming in prior research. In particular, it uses nationally representative data to assess the additive and interactive effects of minority status and position in the class structure in explaining the commitment of middle class African Americans to both opportunity-enhancing and outcome-based egalitarian statist policies.

#### RACE AND SOCIAL CLASS: ADDITIVE AND INTERACTION EFFECTS

The predominance of class effects in explaining commitment to egalitarian statism is premised on the notion that in the post-1965 civil rights era African Americans has begun to undergo the same successful patterns of structural incorporation into the middle class experienced by other racial and ethnic groups in American history (Sowell 1980; Evans 1992; Davis and Watson 1982). In particular, new patterns of structural incorporation in



recent decades which are a product of factors ranging from the dismantling of segregation across major institutional spheres in American society (Jaynes and Williams 1989) and increasingly liberal white racial attitudes (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985) has led to a decline in the significance of race in determining the "life chance" opportunities of African Americans (Wilson 1996, 1987, 1978) and heightened investment in politically conservative, class-based ideology. Accordingly, the predominance of social class should signal that relatively privileged African Americans are ideologically aligned with similarly situated whites: class effects should structure levels of support for egalitarian statism which are below those of the working class. Overall, evidence of the unprecedented stability and continuity of middle class status among African Americans has increased the stake in the economic status quo is found on several fronts. For example, in recent decades patterns of intergenerational occupational mobility among African Americans have come to closely resemble those of whites: they are increasingly able to transmit their status onto their children (Hout 1984; Featherman and Hauser 1978). Further, patterns of occupational attainment among the African American middle class have forged ideological alliances across racial lines. Specifically, the growing representation of the African American middle class in "primary" sector firms has made their employment relatively stable, remunerative, and has indoctrinated them into an occupational culture that puts a premium on conservative values related to "corporate conformity" (Evans 1992; Davis and Watson 1982).

A second explanation—race—is rooted in the notion of the uniqueness of the "black experience" that continues to mark African Americans as an "unmeltable" (Novak 1975) group. Significantly, dynamics surrounding racial discrimination account for the primacy of race effects that structure uniform and relatively high levels of support for egalitarian statism at all levels of the African American class structure. In particular, this perspective emphasizes that African Americans—irrespective of class status—are engaged in competitive processes with whites: they become sensitized to issues of rampant and unaddressed racial and socioeconomic inequality as they encounter discrimination in vying for valued resources such as jobs and access to desirable

residential neighborhoods (Hwang, Fitzpatrick, and Helms 1998; Waldinger 1996). In fact, evidence of discrimination suffered by African Americans at all class levels in recent years constitutes "textbook" structural conditions for the development of race-specific patterns of support for egalitarian statism. For example, studies have found that African Americans have been continually restricted to an inferior range of neighborhoods (Massey and Denton 1993, 1987), are marginalized in segregated, "race-conscious" jobs slots in both the public and private sectors that are removed from mainstream intra firm career-ladders (Collins 1997, 1993; Moore 1981), and are confronted with unequal treatment in a range of public accommodations including restaurants, stores, and hotels (Feagin 1991).

In addition, race-based sentiments toward egalitarian statism among privileged African Americans may be fueled by the effects of self-interest. For example, predispositions toward maintaining liberal attitudes toward government regulation of inequality may result from its historic role in assisting African Americans overcome discrimination in the labor market (Butler 1991; Collins 1993). In fact, a personal benefit among relatively privileged African Americans has derived from government efforts to address racial inequality: the growth of the black middle class in the civil rights era has been traced directly to the expansion of the public sector (Landry 1987; Collins 1997, 1983). Further, among the African American middle class a more indirect but salient form of self-interest may derive from government efforts to ameliorate inequality—members of one's family or friends may benefit.

Finally, the ethclass formulation offers a rationale for maintaining that joint race/class effects should account for levels of support for egalitarian statism among the African American middle class that are intermediate between the pro-interventionist stance of lower class racial peers and the anti-statist posture of white middle class counterparts. The ethclass formulation was most systematically enunciated by Gordon (1964), and asserts that among minority middle classes race and position in the class structure not only have independent effects on ideological orientations but that they also have a shared effect.<sup>3</sup> In particular, the ethclass theory incorporates the countervailing influences of

both economic advantage associated with incumbency in a privileged class position and continuing discrimination that are the bases of respectively, the class and race explanations. Accordingly, minority middle classes experience a "dual consciousness": while influenced by the structural imperatives associated with their position in the class structure, experiences with racial discrimination cause them to perceive their fates as linked to those of their lower class racial peers.

## DATA AND METHODS

Data from the 1990 and 1987 years of the General Social Survey (GSS) are utilized to assess the additive and interactive effects of race and social class in accounting for commitment of the African American middle class toward opportunity-enhancing and outcome-based policies. Significantly, an adequate assessment requires that analyses compare privileged African Americans with working class African Americans as well as working and middle class whites. The GSS is a full probability sample of English speaking adults (over age 17) living in households in the United States (for a description of the GSS sample design see Davis and Smith 1996). Overall, analyses included 131 African Americans and 775 whites from 1990 and 153 African Americans and 872 whites from 1987. The model used in this study is operationalized as follows:

### *Dependent Variables: Egalitarian Statism*

Two policy items that form the opportunity-enhancement index were taken from the 1990 GSS and they are consistent with the notion that the government's appropriate role is to help the relatively disadvantaged become self-reliant; they assess support for government to create economic opportunities for the poor through the creation of enterprise zones and the awarding of college scholarships. The following two items form the index: "There are several things that the government in Washington might do to deal with the problems of poverty and unemployment. I would like you to tell me if you favor or oppose them."

- (a) *Enterprise Zones*: Giving business and industry special tax breaks for locating in poor and high unemployment areas.

- (b) *College Scholarships*: Providing special college scholarships for children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who maintain good grades.

The opportunity-enhancing index is additive and consists of a four-point scale: responses to each of the three items were coded as: (0) strongly oppose or oppose, (1) neither favor nor oppose, (2) favor or strongly favor.

Each of the three policy items that comprise the outcome-based index were taken from the 1987 GSS and they are in accord with the notion that government's role in regulating inequality extends to providing socioeconomic outcomes for the disenfranchised. In particular, the three items guarantee jobs, standards of living, and housing for the impoverished. These items are worded as follows: "On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the government's responsibility to:"

*Jobs*: Provide a job for everyone who wants one.

*Standard of Living*: Provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed.

*Housing*: Provide decent housing for those who can't afford it.

The outcome-based index is additive and consists of a nine point scale, summing up the responses for each item which were coded as (0) definitely should not be, (1) probably should not be, (2) probably should be, (3) definitely should be.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Independent Variables: Race and Social Class*

Race is coded as 1 = African American and 0 = white. Social class is a categorical variable (1 = middle, 0 = working) and is based on occupational criteria. Accordingly, the sample is restricted to individuals who were employed at the time of the interview: the current occupation of sample members is coded into one of six 1990 census-based occupational categories. Those whose occupation is in one of three categories—Managerial and Professional, Technical-Sales and Administrative Support, and Service constitute the middle class. Sample members whose current occupation falls in other categories constitute the working class. Utilizing an occupationally-based measure of social class is appropriate in this study: stratification research in the area

of work and personality (Kohn and Schooler 1983; Kohn 1969) has demonstrated a causal link between class-based occupational experiences and the formation of values such as tolerance, trust, and intellectual flexibility that, in turn, are suspected as impacting of a range of ideological orientations including attitudes toward the permissible role of the welfare state in regulating economic and social arrangements in American society.

*Additional Independent Variables:*

Several other variables are examined as determinants of middle class African Americans' levels of support for opportunity-enhancing and outcome-based policies. In particular, assessed are the effects of two status variables—earnings (individual earnings in 1990) and education (years)—that are routinely used to measure position in the stratification system but are modestly correlated with occupationally-based conceptions of social class (Wright 1985; Kohn and Schooler 1983; Kalleberg and Griffin 1980). Also examined are how commitment toward egalitarianism varies by sociodemographic characteristics including gender (dummy variable for female with male as reference), age (years), and region of residence (dummy variables for North, South, West, and Midwest as reference).

## RESULTS

Several procedures are undertaken to compare the commitment of the African American middle class toward opportunity-enhancing and outcome-based policies with the African American working class and white middle and working classes. The first consists of assessing bivariate relationships between position in the class structure and attitudes toward egalitarianism for all race/class groups (descriptive statistics for all variables in the analyses are in Appendix A).

Table 1 reports the results from the bivariate regressions across both types of egalitarianist policies. The results suggest that among the African American middle class support for opportunity-enhancing and outcome-based policies are a product of different race/class dynamics. In fact, findings concerning opportunity-enhancing policies do not provide support for any

Table 1

*Bivariate Relationships Between Race and Social Class On Support for Egalitarian Statism*

	<i>African Americans</i>	<i>Whites</i>
<i>Middle Class</i>		
Opportunity-Enhancement	3.1 (1.0)	3.0 (.80)
Outcome-Based	2.1 (.79)	1.7 (.68)
<i>Working Class</i>		
Opportunity-Enhancement	3.1 (1.1)	3.1 (.93)
Outcome-Based	2.5 (1.1)	2.2 (1.0)

*Notes:* Standard Deviations are in parentheses.

of the three explanations offered. Specifically, relatively privileged African Americans have mean values (3.1) for opportunity-enhancing policies that are nearly identical to those of both their white class counterparts (3.0) and working class racial peers (3.1). In addition, findings concerning more intrusive outcome-based policy provides support for the ethclass formulation. In particular, levels of support among middle class African Americans (5.7) are intermediate between the higher levels of their working class racial peers (6.6) and the lower values of their white middle class counterparts (4.7).

The bivariate results are suggestive and make necessary additional analysis to reach more definitive conclusions about the effects of race and social class in accounting for middle class African Americans' commitment to the opportunity-enhancing and outcome-based policies. In this regard, Table 2 presents results from multivariate analyses that assess the additive effects of all variables in the model as well as the interaction terms between race and all variables in the model. The results provide confirmation for the interpretation reached from the bivariate regressions.

Table 2

*OLS Regressions on Support For Egalitarian Statism\**

	<i>Opportunity-Enhancing</i>		<i>Outcome-Based</i>	
	(b)	(beta)	(b)	(beta)
<i>Additive Terms</i>				
<i>Race and Class</i>				
Race	.06	.05	.37	.33***
Class	-.08	-.07	-.32	-.29***
<i>Status</i>				
Income	-.07	-.05	-.09	-.07
Education	.13	.12	.04	.04
Female	.22	.17*	.15	.13
<i>Sociodemographic</i>				
Age	.06	.05	.08	.07
North	.10	.08	.05	.04
South	-.07	-.06	-.15	-.14*
West	.03	.02	.05	.03
<i>Interaction Terms</i>				
RaceClass	.08	.07	.35	.32***
RaceIncome	.07	.06	-.14	-.13*
RaceEducation	.15	.13	.06	.05
R <sup>2</sup>	.21		.25	

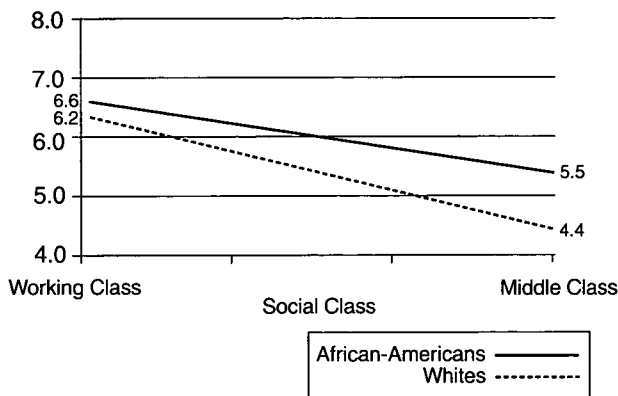
Notes: \*P < .05 \*\*P < .01 \*\*\*P < .001. Only those interaction terms that are significant for at least one of the two types of egalitarian statist policies are reported.

First, none of the three explanations—race, class or ethclass—explain findings reached for policies whose purpose is to facilitate opportunities to compete effectively in the labor market. Specifically, neither race, nor social class have significant independent effects and the interaction term for race and class is not significant. Second, the ethclass formulation constitutes the most appropriate lens through which to interpret African Americans' support

for programs that are closer to guaranteeing socioeconomic outcomes. In this regard, two findings are noteworthy: race and class have measurable independent effects on levels of support for government intervention. Further, the race/class interaction term is highly significant. Accordingly, the multivariate analyses provide further confirmation that with respect to attitudes toward opportunity-enhancing policies an African American subculture exists among the middle class that is distinct from their working class race peers and white middle class counterparts.

Finally, to shed additional light on the magnitude and direction of the interaction effects among the African American middle class in structuring support for outcome-based policies it is necessary to solve the regression equations for both African Americans and whites. Results of this procedure are plotted in Figure 1. The findings are straightforward and provide support for the ethclass interpretation. Specifically, the African American middle class has mean values that are intermediate between the higher levels of support of working class racial peers and the lower values of white middle class counterparts. In addition, one other finding bears mentioning: for outcome-based policies racial differences are trivial among the working class and relatively

Figure 1  
*Joint Effects of Race and Social Class on Support for Outcome-Based Policies*





large among the middle class. In this regard, there is nearly three times as large a racial gap in support among the middle than the working class.

## CONCLUSION

Analyzing a broader range of policies than has been previously considered and assessing interaction effects alters our understanding of the race/class bases of support for egalitarian statism among the African American middle class. First, findings indicate that race/class determinants of support for egalitarian statism are not monolithic. In fact, they vary across well-recognized types of anti-poverty policies—namely, those that are opportunity-enhancing and outcome-based. In particular, neither race nor social class account for high levels of support for opportunity-enhancing policies that are shared by African Americans and whites at all class levels. Further, race and class exert a joint effect on levels of support for outcome-based policies that are intermediate between the relatively pro-interventionist stance of the African American working class and the more anti-statist posture of the white middle class. Second, assessing interaction effects are indispensable for arriving at a more nuanced understanding of race/class dynamics. Indeed, the finding that race and social class jointly influence support for outcome-based strategies suggests that interpretations of research findings in prior studies concerning the predominance of racial effects are in need of reassessment.

Overall, it is plausible to conclude that the race/class dynamics among the middle class are a product of the extent to which the two policy types conform to the dominant principles of American stratification ideology. First, it appears the premise underlying opportunity-enhancing policies—economic self-reliance—is a deeply-engrained tenet of the “dominant ideology” (Huber and Form 1973) that minimizes minority status and class position as factors in accounting for policy support. It is striking that similar to a range of ideological tenets which are in line with the “dominant ideology” (Huber and Form 1973), such as individualistic causal beliefs about poverty (Kluegel and Smith 1986) and

beliefs about an open opportunity structure (Hochschild 1995), opportunity-enhancing policies are supported by both African Americans and whites at all class levels. Second, it seems reasonable that race and social class are more important determinants for outcome-based policies because of their foundation—guaranteed socioeconomic outcomes—which is a precept that violates normative stratification ideology (Bobo and Kluegel 1993). Significantly, similar to tenets at odds with normative stratification principles, such as structural causal beliefs about poverty (Kluegel and Smith 1986) and beliefs in a closed opportunity structure (Sigelman and Welsh 1991), levels of support for outcome-based policies vary across class categories and racial group affiliation. In the case of the African American middle class, it appears that modest levels of support are produced by sentiments about the deep-rooted nature of inequality associated with minority status that serve to counteract the conservatizing influence of occupying a privileged class position.

In addition, not to be overlooked are how the findings further our understanding of crucial issues surrounding the implementation of egalitarian statist policies. First, they help to identify the kinds of anti-poverty initiatives likely to be enacted. Significantly, recent sociological research on the sociohistoric roots of civil rights legislation in the post-1965 period has found that interracial group coalitions among the middle class are indispensable for providing adequate funding to interest and lobby groups who directly influence the outcome of the legislative process (Quadagno 1994; McAdam 1981). Accordingly, it appears that government policy will revolve around the premise of providing incentives for the poor to become self-reliant: opportunity-enhancing initiatives receive broad support among both the white and African American middle class, while relatively favorable levels of support for outcome-based measures are restricted to privileged African Americans. Second, findings indicate that among the middle class the policy preferences of whites are more likely to be implemented than those of African Americans. In particular, enacted policy—which is based on principles of enhancing economic opportunity—reflect whites' views of the government's ultimate role in regulating inequality, while the sentiments of

African Americans, which extend to policy premised on guaranteeing socioeconomic outcomes, will likely go unheeded in the legislative process.

Finally, it is important to underscore that the findings from this study provide directions for research that would further enhance our understanding of the race/class determinants of privileged African Americans' commitment to egalitarian statism. In particular, they justify advocating that a wider range of opportunity-enhancing and outcome-based policies be examined with an approach that incorporates interaction effects. In this regard, it is especially crucial to examine the effects of minority status and class positions across both income and race targeted policies. A recognized limitation of this study is the failure to examine policies that are explicitly race-targeted which may invoke a different range of dynamics than the policies targeted to the general poor which have been examined in this study (Tuch et al. 1997; Bobo and Kluegel 1993). This research is much anticipated: it will assess race/class dynamics at a time when they are becoming increasingly important because of the rapidly changing racial composition of the middle class.

## NOTES

1. The one study that examines public commitment to opportunity-enhancing and outcome-based policies—that by Bobo and Kluegel (1993) focuses almost exclusively on whites and assesses the impact of racial attitudes, forms of self-interest, and causal attributions about poverty on levels of support.
2. One study, that by Gilliam and Whitby (1989) assesses the joint effects of race and social class on support for egalitarian statism among the African American middle class. However, support for “welfare” is one item in a five item additive index composed otherwise of questions about social problems including crime, drug abuse, aid to cities, and health care.
3. In Gordon's original elaboration of the ethclass formulation he states that the joint effects of race and social class result in differing ethclasses. However, the majority of illustrations used to demonstrate its utility involved the “minority middle class.”
4. Analyses that utilize polychoric correlations support constructing the indices used in the regression analyses. First, the two opportunity-enhancing items are highly intercorrelated (.53), as are the three outcome-based items (range from .34 to .52).

## Appendix A

## Characteristics of GSS Sample

	African Americans		Whites	
	X	SD	X	SD
<i>Policy Types</i>				
Opportunity-Enhancing	3.1	.80	3.1	.83
Outcome-Based	2.3	.90	2.0	.88
<i>Independent Variables</i>				
Earnings	\$22,234	\$5,569	\$26,747	\$6,101
Education	12.0	3.9	12.3	4.2
Female	51.7		53.8	
Age	35.0	5.2	37.2	5.5
North	N = 89		N = 491	
South	N = 74		N = 351	
West	N = 65		N = 374	
Midwest	N = 56		N = 431	

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# Urban Violence among African American Males: Integrating Family, Neighborhood, and Peer Perspectives

M. DANIEL BENNETT, JR.  
AND MARK W. FRASER

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
School of Social Work  
Jordan Institute for Families

*Even though rates have declined in recent years, violence is a serious problem in many American cities. This paper reviews recent perspectives on violence among young, urban African American males. Special attention is afforded the "father absent" hypothesis, the effect of poverty, the character of neighborhoods, the roots of self-efficacy, and peer influence, particularly the influence of street codes. The latter are argued both to regulate some situational behavior and to promote the use of violence in disputes over social status, drugs, and money. The authors discuss implications for policy and community development.*

High rates of urban violence have made identifying factors contributing to both victimization and participation in violent acts a matter of great public concern (Reiss & Roth, 1993). African American young adults—particularly males—are over-represented both as victims and as perpetrators of violent crime (Fingerhut & Kleinman, 1990; Fingerhut, Ingram, Feldman 1992; Paschall, Ennett, & Flewelling, 1996; Snyder, Sickmund, & Poe-Yamagata, 1996). A growing body of research suggests that the roots of violence may be embedded, at least in part, in the structural disadvantages that many youths and young adults—particularly African American youths and young adults—experience in their neighborhoods and that influence the character of family life and the nature of peer relationships (see Sampson, 1987; Shihadeh & Steffensmeir, 1994; Cao, Adams, & Jensen, 1997). It is



important to note that the causes violence do not originate at the neighborhood level. The effects of racism, residential segregation, and poverty are important considerations. However a thorough examination of these factors is beyond the scope of this paper. Further, the violence described and discussed here differs from school violence (e.g. Columbine High School shooting) as well as domestic or family violence in that it typically takes place in an urban context and—we will argue—is related to social and economic conditions that influence social dynamics.

The purpose of this paper is to review recent perspectives on the nature of violence among African American male adolescents and young adults. Specifically, we will discuss findings from studies of family, neighborhood, and peer or street behavior. If solutions are to be found for high rates of violence, they likely reside in social policies that alter the chain of risk factors affecting young men in high-risk neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup>

### *Extent of the Problem*

Though it has declined somewhat in recent years, the rate of homicide among males ages 15–24 in the United States is approximately 10 times higher than in Canada, 15 times higher than in Australia, and 28 times higher than in France or Germany (World Health Organization, 1995). The arrest rate for homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault continues to be considerably higher for persons 15–24 years of age than for all other age groups (Uniform Crime Reports, 1997). Approximately 20% of all violent crime arrests involve an individual under 18 years of age (Snyder et al., 1996). Homicide is the second leading cause of death among persons 15–24 years of age and is the leading cause of death for African American and Hispanic youths in this age group (Fingerhut & Kleinman, 1990; DuRant, Cadenhead, Pendergrast, Slavens, & Linder, 1994; Van Soest & Bryant, 1995; Centers for Disease Control, 1996; Singh, Kochanek, & McDorman, 1996; Snyder et al., 1996).

African American males face a disproportionate lifetime risk of death by homicide. According to the Centers for Disease Control (1990), the risk of homicide among African American men is 1 in 27, as compared to 1 in 117 for African American females, 1 in 205 for white males, and 1 in 496 for white females. African American males are victims of homicide at an annual rate of 56.3 per

100,000 with the greatest incidence of homicide occurring among African American males ages 15–24. Within that age group, the rate of homicide is 132 per 100,000 (Anderson, Kochanek, & Murphy, 1997). Importantly, homicide rates reflect only the actual number of deaths and do not include violence that does not end in death but may result in serious or permanent injury (Fingerhut & Kleinman, 1990). It is estimated that for every violent death, there are at least 100 nonfatal injuries caused by violence (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1990). Hence, the impact of violence on African American men is large, extending well beyond the actual number of homicides.

The black market availability and sheer lethality of firearms is a major contributor to high rates of homicide (Snyder et al., 1996). In a study of juvenile victims and offenders, Snyder et al. (1996) concluded that the increase in juvenile homicide from the mid-1980s through 1994 was completely firearm-related and that African Americans were more likely than whites to be victims of firearms-related homicide. In the first half of the 1980s, firearms were involved in 46% of African American juvenile homicides versus 39% of white juvenile homicides (Snyder et al., 1996). However, between 1990 and 1994 firearms were involved in 71% of African American juvenile homicides compared to 54% of white juvenile homicides. While these figures demonstrate the magnitude of the problem of youth violence among African American youths, they do not illuminate the structural forces that are thought to be linked to the availability of guns and the growth in violence (Seidman & Rappaport, 1986). DuRant et al. (1994) argue that the disproportion of violence by race is almost entirely accounted for by social factors associated with poverty and unemployment (see also Deater-Deckard et al., 1998; Van Soest & Bryant, 1995). In the next sections, we explore this argument first from a family perspective and then from a neighborhood perspective.

#### *Family Disruption and Family Support: The "Father Absence" Hypothesis*

Poverty, unemployment, and other indicators of social disadvantage exert both direct and indirect effects on children, youths, and young adults (Patterson, Forgatch, Yoerger, & Stoolmiller, 1998). Physical illnesses, family stress, inadequate social support,

and chaotic home environments are manifestations of the lack of resources typically associated with poverty (Kirby & Fraser, 1997). Persons affected by poverty may judge their financial positions as insecure and their futures as uncertain. Hence, they may be unwilling or unable to take on the financial responsibilities of marriage and family. Many scholars now think that the economic marginality of many African American males has had a disruptive impact on family stability, contributing to out of wedlock births and the growth of single parent households (Sampson, 1987; Wilson, 1984).

Single parents who are poor often have less contact with neighbors and are less likely to monitor the activities and associations of their children (Bloom, 1966; Sampson, 1986; McLanahan & Booth, 1989; Sampson, 1997; Hawkins, 1999). Because single parents bear the dual burden of employment and child care, they have less time to develop social ties that might reduce the family burden (Shihadeh & Steffensmeir, 1994; Strand, 1995). Thus, the combination of single-parenthood and poverty reduces the resources available to children and holds the potential to disrupt effective parenting.

Some scholars believe that single-parenthood is a major contributor to the high incidence of violent behavior among African American youths and young adults (Paschall et al., 1996). Parallel trends of increasing rates of single parenthood and violent behavior by African American youths seem to support this assumption. The percentage of African American youths under the age of 18 who lived only with their mothers increased from 44% in 1980 to 54% in 1992, an aggregate increase of 23% (Paschall et al., 1996). During the same time period, the arrest rate for aggravated assault and murder among African American youths ages 10–17 increased by 89% and 145% respectively (Paschall et al., 1996).

Although the increases in aggravated assault and murder are unlikely to be due to any single factor, burgeoning rates of single parenthood and “father absence” are oft heard as explanations for interpersonal violence among young African Americans. In a study of 171 U.S. cities, Sampson (1987) found that rates of offending by African American juveniles were strongly influenced by variations in family structure. The disruption of African American families was found to have the largest effect on robbery

and homicide. High rates of joblessness among African American adult males seemed to be directly related to the prevalence of families headed by African American females. Sampson (1987) also found that household structure was highly correlated with the rates of violence among African American youths. These effects were independent of income, region, density, city size, and welfare benefits. Moreover, they were similar in pattern to the effects of family disruption on violence among white children (Sampson, 1987; see also Hawkins, Laub, & Lauritsen, 1998). Such findings seem to suggest that father absence is related causally to violent behavior among youths, particularly African American youths. In light of this "absent father" hypothesis, many violence prevention programs have incorporated mentoring by African American adult males as a means to offset the effects of father absence (see, e.g., Wilson-Brewer & Jacklin, 1990; Harvey & Rauch, 1997).

Recent research, however, suggests that "family disruption" may be inadequately conceptualized when merely described as the absence of a father or single parenthood. Father absence can be offset by the presence of other male family members and friends (e.g., uncles, grandfathers, and neighbors). In a study of 254 urban African American male adolescents across five family constellations (single mother, stepparent, biological parents, mother with extended family, and extended family only), Zimmerman, Salem, and Maton (1995) concluded that father absence was not a significant predictor of delinquent behavior. In fact, youths living in single parent families reported *more* parental support than did youths in the remaining four family constellations. Zimmerman et al. (1995) observed that the single parents (mothers) appeared to compensate for father absence by cultivating auxiliary parental support. In addition, they observed that many African American youths actually continued to receive support from their fathers, even though their fathers were outside the home (see also Jackson, 1999).

Other research also seems to support the view that the strength of family and non-kin relationships may counter-balance family structure for some African American youths. In a six-year longitudinal study of 132 families, Klein, Forehand, Armistead, and Long (1997) found that compared to family structure, poor

maternal communication and problem solving skills were more predictive of antisocial behavior and arrest-convictions in late adolescence and early adulthood. Similarly, Jarrett (1995) in a review of qualitative literature on the social mobility of low-income African American youths found that "supportive adult network structure, restricted family and community relations (i.e. parental review of social activities), stringent parental monitoring, strategic alliances with mobility enhancing institutions and organizations, and adult sponsored development" were salient factors in buffering adolescents from the risks associated with growing up in poverty. Thus, as suggested by Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1986), kin *plus* non-kin support may be a better predictor of adolescent behavior than family structure per se (see also Zimmerman et al., 1995; Werner & Smith, 1982; Rhodes & Jason, 1990). The research suggests that parent-child communication, consistent discipline, and supervision are more highly correlated with behavioral outcomes. While father absence and poverty may affect childrearing practices, research suggests that some single parents manage ( despite unfavorable odds ( to develop adequate alternative means to support and monitor children. It is the quality of this support and supervision that buffers many poor children from risk.

*Social Disorganization:*

*The Collective Efficacy of Families and Neighborhoods*

The effectiveness of families in raising children is directly related to the effectiveness of neighborhoods in supporting families (Small & Supple, 1998). Neighborhoods provide settings that differentially promote critical developmental processes, which, in turn, shape a child's sense of wellbeing and self efficacy. Social developmental processes that occur through involvement with parents, teachers, and peers are contextually dependent. That is, they are based on webs of strong and weak social ties that provide role models and rewards for prosocial behavior (Fraser, 1996). These processes are disrupted when fear of victimization, anger, and pessimism break down social cohesion.

From this perspective, the character of the social environment—particularly the neighborhood—affects family functioning. Moreover, it helps to explain collective destructive acts that

occur in riots, gang confrontations, and other seemingly spontaneous violent events. In declining neighborhoods, residents become reluctant to monitor the behavior of others who they do not know. By default, a wider range of oppositional and destructive behavior—such as harassment of shopkeepers and intimidation of passersby—is tolerated. This exacerbates fear and withdrawal, and as isolation grows, it further breaks down cohesion. Drug addiction, drug trafficking, exploitive and hostile relationships with women, confrontational relationships with law enforcement and other authorities, and other types of antisocial behaviors are collectively symptomatic of growing social disorganization. In socially disorganized communities, residents often view the larger society as uncaring, intolerant, and hostile (Allen-Meares & Burman, 1995). In the course of just a few years, the consequences of social disorganization can be distrust, alienation, hopelessness, and anger.

*Social disorganization theory.* At the neighborhood level, violence can be conceptualized as the result of structural disadvantages that collectively deny African Americans in general—and African American males in particular—access to economic opportunities and social mobility (Taylor-Gibbs, 1988). Structural disadvantage contributes to the social and psychological conditions, which impede family functioning and increase the likelihood that violence will occur. Implied above, this view is often referred to as social disorganization theory (Sampson et al., 1997).

In contrast to social disorganization, social organization refers to the extent to which residents of a neighborhood are able to achieve and maintain effective social control and realize common goals (Wilson, 1996). In recent research, three dimensions of social organization are often identified: (1) the strength or density of social networks, (2) collective supervision and personal responsibility in addressing neighborhood problems, and (3) resident participation in formal and informal organizations (Skogan, 1992). High social organization depends on high social cohesion, resident participation in social networks, and the strength and stability of those networks (Liska, 1992). In contrast, social disorganization is the absence of these factors.

Socially disorganized neighborhoods can be characterized by disrupted and dysfunctional households; ethnic, racial, and class

segregation; hostility and predatory behavior; and the development of crime tolerating norms (DeFronzo, 1996). Social disorganization is thought to most likely emerge in neighborhoods with high rates of joblessness, poverty and residential mobility (Sampson et al., 1997). Whether cause or effect, these factors exacerbate other neighborhood problems that contribute to low social cohesion and weak, poorly formed networks, which undermine social organization.

*Social control and social disorganization.* Recent studies have attempted to examine the relationship between social disorganization and the effectiveness of formal social controls, such as law enforcement efforts to break up gangs and "weed" communities of serious offenders. Rose and Clear (1998) argue that high rates of incarceration in low-income urban neighborhoods may actually contribute to social disorganization by creating a heavy reliance on law enforcement. The expansion of reliance on formal control is thought to inhibit the development and maintenance of informal controls, principally the willingness of residents to intervene on behalf of other residents and to correct the behavior of youths who may be engaged in potentially harmful behaviors. From this perspective, high levels of incarceration undermine informal social, political, and economic controls that may already be weakened by poverty, joblessness, and crime. Ironically, then the result of reinforced law enforcement can be reduced social cohesion and self-regulation (Rose & Clear, 1998; see also Miller, 1996). This applies only to law enforcement strategies that focus on widespread arrest and incarceration. Although more research is needed, peacekeeping law enforcement such as community policing does not appear to reduce informal social control. On balance, this seems to suggest that promoting social cohesion and informal social control through the development and maintenance of strong bonds of attachment among community residents may be a critical strategy in reducing violence.

From a neighborhood perspective, high levels of youth crime and violence are thought to signal a decline in the ability of parents, neighborhood elders, and others to channel younger community members into conventional lines of action. This "neighborhood perspective" builds on the idea that communities

are complex systems of formal and informal networks rooted in family life, school activities, work commitments, and on-going socialization processes (Shihadeh & Steffensmeir, 1994). Formal networks typically consist of ties among groups, schools, faith based organizations, sports and youth agencies. Informal networks consist of kinship, peer, and other associational ties that may grow out of but are not necessarily maintained through the formal networks. Early community workers like Jane Addams and Edith Abbott knew that the social organization of a neighborhood is dependent on the maintenance of both formal and informal networks (see, e.g., Abbott, 1936). Recent research supports this view. Williams, Stiffman, and O'Neal (1998), for example, conducted a study of 684 African American youths ages 14 to 17. They found that exposure to neighborhood violence, deteriorated schools, negative peer environments, traumatic neighborhood and family experiences, as well as alcohol and substance use were significant predictors of violence. When the web of resources in a community becomes weakened, neighborhoods appear to lose efficacy, fear of victimization rises, and residents lose confidence in social institutions (i.e., schools, religious leaders, and law enforcement).

Data suggest that these factors conspire to create conditions in which violence occurs. Skogan (1992) conducted a study of social disorder and neighborhood decline across forty neighborhoods in six U.S. cities. Social disorder was measured by the degree to which community residents felt that loitering, drug traffic, vandalism, gangs, public drinking, and street harassment were problems in their communities. Findings from this study revealed a substantial negative correlation ( $-.59$ ) between social disorder and neighborhood solidarity (Skogan, 1992). Thus, as neighborhood solidarity decreased, social disorder increased. This study further found that poverty, instability, and the racial composition of neighborhoods were strongly linked to area crime, but that this linkage was mediated through social disorder (Skogan, 1992). Similarly, in a study of 8,782 residents across 343 Chicago neighborhoods, Sampson (1997) found that the collective efficacy of neighborhoods—defined as social cohesion and informal social control among residents—was negatively related to rates of



violence. These data strongly suggest that the collective capacity of neighborhoods to control behavior and support families is a key determinant of crime.

*Resilience: Self-Efficacy and Peer Relationships*

Thus far we have focused on the interrelatedness of family and neighborhood conditions as risk factors in the growth of violence in African American as well as other communities; but how is it that factors such as low neighborhood social control translate into oppositional and violent behaviors? As we have suggested, not every child from a disrupted family or socially disorganized neighborhood engages in violence or exhibits antisocial behavior. The concept of resilience provides a basis for understanding this phenomenon.

Resilience is defined as high functioning in face of great risk or adversity (Rutter, in press). Although the research on resilience is nascent at best (for a review, see Fraser, Richman, & Galinsky, 1999), individual and environmental factors are thought to protect children from risk and promote positive developmental outcomes. In the absence of environmental protective factors such as a supportive family or a cohesive neighborhood, personal attributes such as self efficacy, a cultural identity, and social competence (skill in solving social problems and relating to people) are conceptualized as "buffering" individuals from risk (Fraser, Randolph, & Bennett, in press; see also Miller, in press; Schiele, 1998). In a sense, resilience is the product of a counterpoint balancing of risk and protective factors. Violence and other negative outcomes emerge when accumulated risk significantly outweighs protection (see, e.g., Hill, Howell, Hawkins, & Battin-Pearson, 1999).

Across many potential protective factors, self-efficacy, cultural identity, and—more broadly—social competence loom large in influence. Individual attributes are rooted in the ways youths and young adults form meaning from social information in their environments. Influences such as prior experiences, personal goals, and feelings affect the interpretation of information in the environment and form the basis for social interaction, including family, school, and peer relationships (Nurius & Berlin, 1995). The meanings given to events and even social conditions are

dependent on the linguistic categories, rules, values, and goals of the cultures and groups in which children are embedded. These meanings are further impacted by virtue of the fact that we live in a society where the accumulation of material wealth is often held as a measure of importance and self worth. Hence, broad societal influences also help to shape meaning. From this perspective, the families and communities in which we are born and in which we grow up provide a reservoir of memories that are used to interpret on-going flows of experience (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Nurius & Berlin, 1995). They are the resources a youth uses to assign meaning to life. They are the basis for hope, for aspirations, and for expectations.

This provides an important context for understanding the way individual behavior and developmental outcomes unfold in and are related to the environment. Self-efficacy, for example, refers to beliefs in one's ability to achieve goals associated with a given situation. These beliefs affect the level of challenge over which a child feels competent, the amount of effort expended in a given venture, and the degree of perseverance that is applied when encountering difficulties (Bandura, 1982; Wilson, 1996). In this regard, two special problems potentially affect many African American children in some economically distressed urban neighborhoods. First, because of prior disadvantage, victimization, and failure, these youths may doubt their ability to accomplish what is expected. Derived in part from negative life experiences and dangerous neighborhoods, many may be skeptical of new opportunities. They may inaccurately interpret the intentions of others as negative, too often attributing hostility to those whose intent may be positive (Courtney & Cohen, 1996). This is called "hostile attribution bias" and it is correlated with aggressive behavior in children (for reviews, see Crick & Dodge, 1994; Fraser, Nash, Galinsky, & Darwin, *in press*). Second, they may feel confident of their abilities but give up trying, because they believe that their efforts will ultimately be futile—that is, they expect the environment to be unresponsive, discriminatory, or punitive. For some children, attributions are shaped by hostile, dangerous neighborhoods. Though these attributions may be functional in the context of the street, they interfere with important social developmental processes in school and other settings (Courtney & Cohen, 1996).

This "social cognitive" perspective helps to explain differential violence by linking family and neighborhood conditions to the way children process social information (Fraser, 1996). The ways children give meaning to events, the ways they interpret the actions of others, and the skills that they bring to bear in solving social problems may be conceptualized as learned through interaction with other people, whose own behaviors are—influenced by joblessness, neighborhood violence, and other indicators of social disorganization—contextually dependent (DuRant et al., 1994). Social cognitive theory begins to provide an explanation for how street violence, poverty, drug abuse, and drug traffic impact beliefs and behavior. Neighborhood conditions affect children's relationships with their parents and their relationships with others. They deeply affect children's opinions about themselves, their interpretations of the intent of others, and their ability to sustain efforts to prevail over adversity. While some resilient children beat the odds, many do not (Fraser, 1997; Pollard, Hawkins, & Arthur, 1991).

*Race and Continuities in Violence:  
The Effect of Neighborhood Joblessness*

Recent data provide further information on the interconnections among individual, family, and neighborhood risk factors associated with urban violence among African American youths and young adults. During late adolescence and young adulthood, a rarely discussed but key trend emerges. The vast majority of violent youths stop their violent activities. For African American youths, however, twice as many young adults persist in violent offending (Elliot, 1994). *The one significant exception to this pattern occurs among those African American males who become employed.* Within this group, there are no discernible differences in rates of violence by race (Elliot, 1994). Studies by Anderson (1990) and Padilla (1992) suggest that adolescents without legitimate opportunities in local labor markets are easily drawn into illegal enterprise (see also Blumstein, Cohen & Farrington, 1988; Taylor-Gibbs, 1988; Sullivan, 1989). Involvement in illicit activities including drug and handgun sales is too often seen as a viable alternative to continued schooling and prospective employment in the legal labor market. In this context, it is not past experience with

unemployment that initiates criminality. Rather, it is that conventional employment holds increasingly marginal potential for youths in neighborhoods where there is high joblessness—a sense of despair and alienation—and where few adults are committed to conventional lines of action. Thus for many youths in high-risk neighborhoods, criminal behavior becomes an attractive alternative to limited opportunities for legitimate employment.

*The Code of the Street: An Oppositional Culture?*

In some communities, this despair spawns what some scholars have called an “*oppositional culture*,” where street norms and values conflict with those of mainstream society and provide situational inducements for violence (see Anderson, 1990; 1994). The concept of oppositional culture should not be confused with the concept of subculture. Historically, a subculture or more specifically a “subculture of violence” was thought to emerge from wide-spread reaction formation, a psychological defense wherein youths were believed to embrace certain values in reaction to barriers to legitimate opportunities (see Cohen, 1955; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Phillips, 1997). Subculture theory argued that localized oppositional norms permeate, define, and guide interactions in entire neighborhoods (see Wolfgang & Ferracutti, 1967). Oppositional culture or behavior, on the other hand, can be thought of as a combination of attitudes, values, and behaviors that inform *situational* public behavior for some, but not all, youths and young adults of a given neighborhood. Further, these attitudes, values, and behaviors are “normative” for only a small street-wise segment of a given community (Anderson, 1997; 1999). While there is a vast amount of research on the etiology of violence, much of it fails to examine the various social dynamics that contribute to oppositional behavior and the ways oppositional behaviors and attitudes affect the social identities of community members, especially young urban African American males (Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998; Miller, in press).

In many socially disorganized communities, alienation and hopelessness contribute to a climate where oppositional behavior receives tacit support. To be sure, the support is situationally dependent and does not regulate all social exchange. That is, even in high-risk neighborhoods, most residents subscribe to legal,

conventional norms and values (Wilson, 1996). However, fearing violence and lacking widespread community (including police) support, residents may acquiesce to gangs, drug dealers, and thugs. This gives rise to a "street code" that embraces the concrete utility of violent and aggressive behavior. This code of the street is defined by a set of informal rules governing interpersonal public behavior. For (too) many urban youths, street codes promote the use violence as a building block of social status (Massey, 1995).

Respect is an integral part of street codes and is often subject to strict social regulation (Anderson, 1994). Simply maintaining eye contact with an individual for "too long" may be viewed as lack of respect, an affront that can escalate into a confrontation. In a similar vein, a snide remark that might otherwise be viewed as trivial may lead to an "honor" contest where no party backs down until someone is injured (Anderson, 1990; Markowitz & Felson, 1998; Polk, 1999). To be sure, honor contests are not unique to African American youths or urban youths and young adults. They do, however, seem to be predominantly a male phenomenon, and they are reported to occur across many different cultures and countries (for more information, see Polk, 1999).

In the absence of mainstream goals and means for achievement, a fragile sense of personal capital, respect, and honor become the medium for social exchange. Resorting to violence at the first sign of conflict, portrayal of oneself as fearless and dangerous, the reputation for numerous sexual encounters with members of the opposite sex, and the display of material wealth through illegal/illicit activity produce social capital, respect, and status (see Taylor-Gibbs, 1988; Fagan & Wilkinson, 1998).

In some socially disorganized neighborhoods, the existence of street codes is socially, politically, and economically reinforced. Street codes are socially reinforced by the fear-induced tolerance of violence by community members (Taylor-Gibbs, 1988). As suggested earlier, social disorganization breaks down informal social control and social cohesion, making it difficult for residents to support conventional values and beliefs without fear of victimization. In many urban areas, parents who are committed to conventional lines of action are reported to limit their focus of concern to include only their own homes and children (Skogan, 1992). From a political perspective, street codes may even be

reinforced when federal, state, and local governments develop comprehensive formal control strategies without concomitantly developing other programs that strengthen informal social controls (Taylor-Gibbs, 1988; Majors & Mancini-Billson, 1992).

Based on fear and violence, street codes are economically reinforced by educational and business institutions that do not or cannot provide adequate job training or employment opportunities. Thus, the transition from school to work is attenuated. Recent so-called "get tough" educational policies may exacerbate the problem by making the transition from school to adult roles more difficult. Across the country, these policies appear related to a rise in dropout rates and a decrease in college enrollments of African American youths, particularly African American males (Johnson, 1998). Further, job programs intended to address the problem too often have negative outcomes. A case in point, the Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) was found to be of limited effectiveness for those who need it most. White males were more likely to be channeled into "on the job" training programs, which provide the highest likelihood of re-employment. On the other hand, women, minorities, the long-term unemployed, and public assistance recipients were more likely to be channeled into classroom training or simply receive placement assistance (Fitzgerald & McGregor, 1993; see also Johnson et al, 1998). Making the transition to adult roles still more difficult, many African American males who complete job training programs find that there is no local labor market demand for their newly acquired skills (Kirschenman & Neckerman, 1991; Fitzgerald & McGregor, 1993). The disjuncture between public concern about violence and systematic actions to address the roots of violence contributes significantly to the proliferation of violent, oppositional attitudes and behaviors (Rose & McLain, 1998). This creates a brutal reality. Some neighborhoods are simply tough and dangerous places to live. Thus, a certain familiarity with and adherence to street codes is a necessary survival mechanism (Anderson, 1990; Massey, 1995).

#### *Policy Implications: Extending Recent Successes*

Violence among young urban African American males arises from social conditions that disrupt effective parenting, reduce the effectiveness of neighborhoods, deprive communities of jobs,

and encode ( for some youths ( hostility and coercion as a means of social interaction and dispute resolution. We do not mean to imply that the social conditions giving rise to and characterizing violence among African American males are unique to African Americans. They may similarly affect Asian American, Latino, Native American, and other youths. Further attention—both in terms of historical forces and social conditions that affect behavior—must be given to these and other groups who have been subject to discrimination. The proliferation of guns, the abuse of psychoactive substances, and membership in gangs often exacerbate these conditions (Hill et al., 1999; Howell, 1998). At this intersection of the effects of racism, poverty, and violence, African American youth in some neighborhoods have become deeply alienated and have adopted—in varying degrees—a set of oppositional attitudes and behaviors (Anderson, 1994; Rose & McClain, 1990).

*Community policing and neighborhood mobilization.* In spite of the depth and seeming intractability of the problems giving rise to violence, recent innovations in community practice have caused some scholars to suggest that not all the root causes of antisocial aggressive behavior have to be addressed in order to make communities safer (Kelling, 1997). Community based efforts in several major U.S. cities have improved public safety by developing and implementing intervention strategies that acknowledge multiple determinants of violence among young urban principally African American males.

The city of Boston recently implemented a multi-faceted prevention/intervention effort that targets neighborhoods with high rates of crime and violence. It is comprised of four components: the Youth Violence Strike Force, Operation Nightlife, Operation Cease-Fire, and the Boston Gun Project. These four components represent collaborative efforts between local and state law enforcement entities, the Massachusetts Department of Probation, gang mediation specialists, and members of the local faith community. Law enforcement officials use various criminal statutes and civil forfeiture laws as a means to remove violent offenders from the streets. Probation officers make nightly visits to the homes of youths, who are under court supervision in an effort to ensure compliance with the terms of probation, reduce truancy,

increase academic performance, increase parental involvement and improve communication with schools. Mediation specialists also known as “street-workers” are sent to “hot spots” in an effort to resolve conflict and link youths with community services (Howell & Hawkins, 1998). Finally, the *Boston Gun Project* seeks reduce gun violence by coerced use-reduction strategies, including limiting access to firearms (Kennedy, Piehl, & Braga, 1996). The *Boston Gun Project* is a public policy initiative that relies heavily on federal firearm laws to make the illicit gun market much less viable and to remove the most violent gang and drug offenders from the streets (Howell & Hawkins, 1998). Overall, Boston’s community prevention intervention is believed to be a significant contributor to the near 80% reduction in juvenile homicide from 1990 to 1995 (U.S. Department of Justice, 1996). The reported successes of this community policing program and a similar one in Chicago strongly suggest that public policies promoting partnerships with social service agencies, the faith community, and law enforcement organizations can alter some of the neighborhood conditions that have made murder the leading cause of death among young African American men (Kennedy, Piehl, & Braga, 1996; Loeber et al., 1998; Rose & Clear, 1998).

While not as comprehensive as the Boston initiative, midnight basketball leagues have also been described as a viable intervention strategy in the effort to reduce the levels of crime and violence among urban African American males. The first league was founded in 1986 in Glenarden, Maryland. It was designed to keep “high risk” youth, principally unemployed high school dropouts off the streets (Farrell et al., 1996). The games were scheduled between the hours of 12 a.m. and 3 a.m.; peak hours for gang and drug related offenses. This league and subsequent ones are reported to provide more than just late night recreation. Many midnight basketball leagues provide opportunities for participants to obtain high school diplomas, learn family development skills, and secure employment. Hence, this intervention focuses on the transition from school to work and responsible adult roles. Since 1986, midnight basketball leagues have been established in hundreds of cities across the country and it has been oft reported—without rigorous evaluation—that crime and



violence have decreased as a result of such leagues (see Farrell et al., 1996).

*Informal social control and social cohesion.* In the context of these successes, innovative programs and while we await evaluations describing their apparent success, it is not too early to develop public policies that further strengthen the efficacy of communities. If changes emerging from innovative community policing and neighborhood mobilization programs are to be sustained and extended, our review suggests that increases in informal social control and social cohesion must emerge from the efforts of law enforcement, social services, public health, faith, and other community organizations. In the context of improved public safety, improved collective efficacy will require capitalizing on the strengths of community members, while addressing risk factors that corrupt neighborhood socialization processes.

*Strong ties and weak ties.* From a neighborhood perspective, it is not sufficient to suppress crime and reduce fear of victimization. These are critical beginnings. However, to build informal social control and social cohesion, one must create greater interconnect-edness among neighborhood residents and, in so doing, generate a sense of attachment, involvement, and commitment to collective enterprise. This involves strengthening both strong and weak ties in the social networks of residents. Strong ties consist of family and friends with whom one feels close. Weak ties consist of more distal colleagues and acquaintances who can be called upon to solve problems (Macy, 1991). Weak ties often serve as bridging mechanisms between different neighborhood groups. In that sense, they promote social cohesion by linking residents who might not routinely have contact. The social fabric of effective neighborhoods is made up of both kinds of ties.

From a neighborhood perspective, social cohesion and informal social control are founded on the strong and weak ties among neighborhood residents (Macy & Skvoretz, 1998). To use the concept of "ties" to address differential rates of success in the transition from adolescence to conventional adult roles (and, concomitantly, in racial disparities in rates of de-escalation from illegal behavior), one would strengthen the relationship between school involvement and labor market participation. Partnerships between schools and businesses might be (and, in some commu-

nities, are being) constructed both for making public education more relevant and for insuring that success in school leads to economic opportunity in legitimate labor markets. Mechanisms such as this must be found to strengthen the ties across the home, school, and work settings where young adults develop skills, attitudes, and beliefs. This is a tall order that exceeds the individual mandates of community policing, public housing, social service, and other organizations.

A multi-component approach that affects the risk factors which disrupt effective parenting, alienate children from school, reduce opportunities in legitimate marketplaces, and promote oppositional codes is most likely—in our view—to fortify gains now emerging through community policing, public housing, and neighborhood initiatives in Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and other cities. The sense of promise that is beginning to spread through communities in some areas of the United States can be fulfilled only if we become successful in building connections between people and in eroding the hopelessness that energizes violence at the street level. This will require viewing violence not only as a neighborhood problem with public safety, family, education, and local labor market dimensions, but also as a problem related to the social and economic vitality of America's urban areas. Herein lies both hope and challenge in extending recent successes in crime prevention.

## NOTE

1. The terms neighborhood and community are used interchangeably. They refer to a physical space characterized by boundaries in which people share norms, values, goals, and feelings of belonging and trust. Although "community" is sometimes used to describe social relationships that transcend physical boundaries (as in a church community), we will use both terms to connote a bounded space wherein people share by consensus a bond of attachment.

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# Factors Encouraging the Growth of Sustainable Communities: A Jamaican Case Study

ELEANOR WINT

University of Natal  
Centre for Adult and Community Education

*The concept of sustainable communities assumes a process of social and/or economic development that has as a high priority, the needs of the future generation. However, models of social and economic development employed in developing countries, must rely heavily on political, social and psychological empowerment techniques being employed at the community level, in order to warrant any type of sustainability becoming apparent. A case study taken from Kingston, Jamaica recounts and examines the experience of a Social Work Unit/private company in partnership, becoming involved in a low-income community's drive for sustainable development. The paper will reflect on the intervention, the analysis of which suggests inclusion and acceptance of a 'third party' support mechanism by the community and the presence of visible political and economic support from the government as the two factors which impact directly on creation of sustainable development initiatives in communities such as this.*

## EMPOWERMENT WITHIN GARRISON COMMUNITIES

As other authors have pointed out, real empowerment of the community tends to lead to confrontation with the state and its machinery (Delgado, 1997; Kolawole, 1982; Shragge, 1997). Handing over authority to local bodies, the forming of partnerships between state and community economic ventures, the creation of new civil structures with their own autonomous and independent decision making machinery, are all changes which lead not only to en-culturation and re-vitalisation of dying communities, but are also changes which have the potential to lead to confrontational politics from all the stake-holders. In fact, often one finds that

in the low-income community, there is a peculiar tension which exists in its relationship with the government. Although striving to create some sort of community integrity with civil structures which are run and managed by the local residents, there is still the hesitance to become too independent and confrontational and therefore lose the patronage derived from partisan support. For these people, confrontation with party representatives is therefore rarely more than easy rhetoric, as they remain unsure of the faithfulness of any new source/offers of assistance. The most successful types of alliances therefore tend to be those which bring clearly defined rewards, rewards which should be visible in material terms and should be accessible to the majority of the residents.

Wealth and status have become synonymous with visible party membership and position. In examining this Jamaican case study Stone's concept of the 'garrison community' helps us to understand the extreme dependence ('clientelism') which develops between the ghetto resident and the political party in power. In exploring this clientelism, Stone (1986) coined the concept of garrison communities, where the guarding of the 'garrison', the urban ghetto community, became uppermost in the life of the residents. Stone sees this dependence leading to a partisan practice of "preponderant support" (Stone, 1986:63) where in the community, the need for, and access to, scarce resources, oftentimes leads to extreme measures being taken to ensure community coherence and safety, albeit all in the name of partisan fidelity. As has been seen in the past, garrison communities with their typical die-hard political-party allegiance, constantly turn to and rely on the political party to furnish socio-economic needs. This type of faithfulness has also tended to re-direct confrontational politics inward as a consequence of the local competition engendered. This in turn leaves little space for forging of alliances and collaborative activities with outside non-party groups which have been historically hesitant to identify with the area for fear of reprisals, personal or political.

In developing countries, community usually refers to a particular locality engaged in communal activity. As Ife (1996) points out, geographical rather than interest-based definitions allow development practitioners more freedom to understand principles

of equity and justice as communal attempts at CED implementation are better monitored within boundaries. Thus development in this context reflects not simply social and economic growth as reflected in socio-economic indicators, but rather a community-defined process of improved social networks and access to resources which will enhance personal, economic and communal quality of life over an extended period of time. As Munslow expresses it, reflecting on the South African experience, sustainable development is being "concerned with improving the overall quality of life as well as satisfying human needs (Munslow et al. 1997:4)". This type of development therefore is long-term, multifaceted and concerned not only with immediate economic return, but also concerns itself with setting structures in place which will ensure (as much as is possible in these temperamental Third World economic) a life-style which is internationally comparable and environmentally supportive.

In analysing the strategy employed in the case study, the writer was guided by a particular model which Nozick (1993) presents. She offers five principles which provide a framework for building a sustainable community. Summarily these are:

1. Community commitment to maintaining the natural balance between humanity and nature.
2. A collective unity of purpose. Thus for the community, the 'power within' (the individual) and the 'power-with-others' (the community) should emerge rather than being ascribed due to partisan fidelity and adherence to fixed national agendas.
3. Placing the onus of development on the community and the individual within that community, pointing out that material and non-material needs will only be satisfied when human indicators of development are foremost. As she puts it, "people matter most-not things, not money", (1993:38).

These three principles lend support to use of the locality-based definition of community where systematic emphasis of the human resource element bridges the divide between rich and poor. Empowerment of the individual brings together resources and potential. Although undereducated and inexperienced, poor residents need not be underachievers. Access to innovative resources,

coupled with a wish to achieve can bring untold of success. This is one of the premises on which the empowerment principle rests as the individual attempts to integrate political, emotional and economic empowerment. (Abbott, 1995; Freire, 1972; Friedman, 1992; Jones, 1992; Mendell & Evoy, 1993).

### THE JONES TOWN EXPERIENCE

In 1992, the government of Jamaica began the process of developing a strategy for re-vitalisation, deemed the 'only way forward' for urban low-income communities 'blighted' by continuous outbreaks of gun warfare, extreme poverty and a piteous lack of infrastructure. A specially selected Committee was constituted under the Office of the Prime Minister. It brought together a range of community-based organisations, representatives of the church, representatives of the political parties, The Kingston Restoration Company (KRC, a private urban re-development company), the Government of Jamaica and the Social Work Unit, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus. After a series of meetings, a sub-committee was given the charge to scientifically select an area with which to begin the process of designing and implementing a strategy for re-vitalisation. The area, Jones Town, was selected and accepted by the Committee after a process of rating based on proximity to the designated KRC re-development area, evidence of a high level of political 'warfare', socio-economic characteristics, and potential for development. KRC and the Social Work Unit were then named as joint implementers (with the backing of the government of Jamaica) of this process towards re-vitalisation.

Having selected Jones Town, the Committee was faced with the problem of clarifying geographical boundaries that were acceptable to all the stakeholders. The problem was eventually resolved by using a geographical area delineated as such by the Electoral Enumeration office and ratified by the historico-geographic recollections of the residents. As the area has remained a party stronghold, local political interpretations of 'tribal' boundaries, (a term used to reflect political party allegiances) was also employed.

#### *Description of Jones Town*

Jones Town evolves from what was called Jones Pen, then a post-emancipation residential area. It housed primarily up-and-

coming professionals who were working in Kingston and proud of their newly evolving status. Houses were well built of block and steel and had spacious bed-rooms, kitchens and bathrooms all under one roof with well-kept surroundings. During the nineteen fifties, the area was serviced with buses, electricity, and an efficient water and sanitation system. This pace of development, however, failed to keep abreast with the remainder of Kingston, due to the area becoming stigmatised as a political party stronghold, and suffering frequent attacks by the opposing faction. As the years passed into the sixties, these large houses became tenement yards, housing a number of families in one building or one yard. During the seventies and eighties, this political stigmatisation resulted in a restriction in movement for the residents, with a consequent dislocation of earning opportunities. Consequently towards the end of the period, many of the community activists who had been working towards lessening the dependency on political allegiance, left the area to find work and to live elsewhere in Kingston. For those left, the problem of political violence together with the oppressive reality of extreme poverty over the years, created a tightly knit, closed community ravaged by frequent outbreaks of gun warfare and attendant emergency curfews.

Today internally, Jones Town is well serviced with churches (of all denominations) bars, small shops and groceries, basic schools, a post office, a primary school and a police station. Within close proximity, Jones Town has potentially easy access to a range of health facilities, schools, cemeteries, public transportation, limited telephone facilities and fire stations. Economic opportunities are however limited as the stigmatisation of the residents and the area by the larger community still exists.

Jones Town is a community of history, a community of memory, of residence, of partisan politics and as such, a community that needs to be seen in both a physical and spiritual sense. It is an inner-city neighbourhood which has been ravaged from within, by the devastating impact of poverty, hopelessness, alienation, and from without, having endured severe political polarisation and consequent stigmatisation by the larger society. It is an example of an ideal-type garrison community, having been used as a 'war-zone' between opposing 'tribalists' and one that has seen its share of savage, personal domestic disputes. In 1986, explaining the garrison concept of such communities, including Jones Town,

Stone spoke of "machine guns controlling clearly defined political boundaries", with a consequent "political protection insulating the residents from the reach of the security forces" (1986:57).

The young (51% under 20 years of age) socially depressed community of approximately 8000 residents, has over the last 30 years experienced a continued deterioration in the level of community services available internally. For them, inclusion in a strategy for re-vitalisation was seen as a possible way of lessening the effects of this deterioration and continued dependence on party representatives, as the continued high level of social unrest and violence has undermined any local attempts at change.

### *The Strategy*

The first step in the re-vitalisation strategy was a process of gaining community acceptance through introduction of the team and building knowledge of the community and its dynamics. In initiating the process, the faculty representative of the Social Work Unit and the team leader from the KRC spent some three months in the area being formally introduced and becoming familiar faces to political and social activists. During the seventies and the eighties (a period of severe stigmatisation by the larger society due to the high level of gun warfare), the residents of Jones Town had made systematic attempts to structure community organisations which were tasked with designing a representative body which would serve to bring together all the sections of the community. It was important, therefore, for the team to re-assure community residents that this was not just another political manoeuvre designed from outside simply for political gain, but rather a move which reflected a real interest on behalf of the larger society to build on work already started and which hopefully would lead to a renewal of the area. During that time also, political representatives and residents were aware from discussions and the public media that the select Committee had been chosen and the implementers were to be expected in the area.

When it was decided that both community leaders and the community itself accepted the presence of the team and were willing to begin participation in the process of re-vitalisation, students of the Social Work Unit were formally and informally introduced to the community together with their faculty Super-

visor. The use of students from the Social Work Unit brought home to the community of Jones Town, the seriousness of the project. Suddenly to them, it appeared that perhaps someone was really interested in helping them in their almost forgotten dream of rehabilitation. To the residents of Jones Town, the constant threat of gun violence had now become a way of life which it was clear had driven away any sort of systematic interest in the area. To see young, female University students standing on the corner late in the evening talking about community dreams and desires seemed almost unreal. Soon however it became obvious that team was indeed intent on pursuing a process which must begin with a high level of community involvement.

The first community meetings were held at the two Church Halls in separate sections of the community. They were able to present the intent of the particular process to the residents, as well as to identify the kinds of concerns that were most frequently articulated. They also served to identify to the researchers, possible community resource persons who might be willing to identify with the project. Maintaining this contact, however, was not as simple as it might seem as it meant that those persons would have to be seen as assisting with a project which at first blush appeared to have strong political support from the party in power.

The process began with employment of the Social Compass technique (Connor, 1969), as a participatory method of identifying community strengths, weaknesses, and resources. After motivation by the churches and social activists of the community, members of the community volunteered to be trained by the Unit to assist with the exercise. As students were also to be gathering data along with the community residents, careful attention was paid to the issues of acceptance, credibility, and safety as part of the process of gaining entry to and acceptance by the community. There were ground rules agreed on by the community representatives and the students, such as how late one could stay in the community at night, students should always be accompanied by the chosen community representative, and if fighting broke out in the community, students should be quickly escorted out.

Then followed an intense three months of data generation. Participatory analysis of the data led to the implementers becoming very active, discussing the findings from the study with the



different sections of the community, with the special Committee and with the Prime Minister's office.

The process of gaining acceptance by the community was premised on the principles of partnership and the necessary fusion of researcher and researched. In this manner, unexamined assumptions of leadership, expertise, and authority, often held by the outsider, were open to confrontation and scrutinisation by the community experts. This methodology has been acknowledged as a way of sharing the responsibility for collective decisions made (Bawden, 1989; Finn, 1994; Freire, 1972;) while re-enforcing community self-confidence and endurance.

In 1993, the working group entered a second phase where the task was now one of representation and advocacy. The team had no other agenda than to call for help on behalf of the community within the areas that were identified during the participatory data gathering. It therefore initiated consultation between the community, private investment companies and government representatives to attempt clarification and support for possible implementation of goals which could be derived as a result of the process. The community at this phase was represented by mass meetings, area political representatives, informal community leaders and church representatives while the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister provided an external source of assistance.

Although a potentially rewarding time, it was also a very challenging period as it saw leadership roles becoming clarified as part of the process. The team leader, for example, soon realised that Jones Town could become a very taxing responsibility and from time to time began to be involved in other less demanding activities. Students became immersed in other degree requirements and the faculty representative realised that developmental growth of a community calls for a great deal of personal and communal empowerment, a process which is time consuming and requiring repetitive re-enforcement. For Jones Town, it was a period of continuous dialogue and negotiation, forcing opposing groups within the community to re-identity themselves as joint members in the process. All levels of leadership were engaged. Despite setbacks, the determination of the Select Committee to see the process through and 'to keep the people to their word', active continuation of the process was ensured. In this manner, residents

were therefore assisted with negotiating how 'tribal' warfare was to be handled and were also encouraged to initiate the inclusion of new expertise.

By 1996, we saw the evolution of a Jones Town Re-development Committee (JTRDC), which called for a formal alliance between Jones Town community representatives and the Committee. At this point, new partners were drawn into the process viz. the CAST/IPED team. This was a team of consultants and students from the Physical Infrastructure Class of the University of Technology, Jamaica. It brought into the process 'new blood', some of whom were former residents/leaders of Jones Town who were now living outside of the area but had retained links with remaining family and the community at large. The JTRDC as its' first task designed and assisted with the implementation of a number of community activities which included the Best Block Competition, the provision of rewards for Labour Day activities, general cleaning of communal and open areas, summer vacation programmes for some 100 youngsters, a Basic Schools upgrading programme, and a cultural Ghetto-music Splash. These activities served to bear out the truth of the position, that in Jones Town, there is indeed a community and activities organised through the representational bodies are viable and well supported. Activities served also to bring to the fore the wide range of skills and leadership abilities which abound in the area. Planning and mobilisation for the activities also served not simply to critique and balance proposals being made by various representatives within the JTRDC, but also created a sense of camaraderie and entrepreneurship amongst leaders at all levels.

It is clear however, that community mobilisation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for development to be sustained. The process in Jones Town has therefore attempted to include the political process and the constituent political representatives, without including the actual Members of Parliament themselves. It forced the political directorate to examine the accustomed preferential treatment within the community boundaries and the divisionary nature of such activity. Meetings which were held both inside the community and outside in highly public forums attempted to be truly participatory with a democratic organisational culture which emphasised the use

of non-hierarchical organisational strategies. This participatory developmental model employed was therefore able to encourage and stimulate the resurgence of a well-defined representative body within the community in which residents felt empowered enough to identify themselves as change agents. Consequently, local residents were motivated to "make things happen" and we witnessed a subtle transfer of power with the government's agreement (after more than four years of asking) to open the east-west corridor which had been closed due to political warfare, ministerial backing for huge inputs of international financial aid, structuring of a Revolving Loan strategy which should be funded by existing national sources, and visible evidence of state intention to back private sector financial and resource support for basic schools, parenting and teen projects, and economic ventures in the area.

The Social Work Unit is no longer in Jones Town. It is not needed. Looking back at 1998, it would appear that the community is now fully mobilised towards social, psychological, and economic empowerment (Report 1998), having moved through the stages of participation in consciousness-raising and critical analysis of historical political alliances, learning how to exert control through developing competence and technical ability, and re-establishing a positive self esteem (Ninacs, 1997). If we look at the areas of success, the need for security, clean neighborhood and improved access to the outside world, ranked high on the list. During the process it became clear that it was important to the community that those persons who wished to be identified as part of the process should be clearly identified and publicly praised. For them community approval was now more influential than wealth or status conferred from outside. The community is well on its way to prioritisation of its needs and the possible sources for assistance, having finalised arrangements with government-linked international aid agencies for establishment of income generating projects located inside Jones Town. It has also called for a redefinition of autonomy and decision-making power as it strives to entertain possible alliances. This is what re-vitalisation really means. A new power from within which is defined in cognitive, economic and social terms. Economically, the historical reliance on the local representatives of the state and/or party continue to

give way to self-help and innovative use of the credit institutions that now exist specifically for a clientele such as this.

### TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

A key premise underlying the use of a participatory developmental model was the acceptance by all the stakeholders that the strategy employed would build on empowerment of the local leadership. It was an assumption which derived from an academic and experiential understanding of poverty and its alleviation and an understanding of what its role is in the process of sustainable development and anti-poverty programming. In Jones Town, poverty alleviation was interpreted as improved housing conditions and removal of certain stigmas associated with location, thus allowing for easier access to the outside community. As the majority of residents were self-employed, ease of access and proximity to the market place was critical. Economic empowerment then became both determinant and corollary as acceptance of their legitimate struggle for autonomy should lead to improved financial inflows into the community and improved economic strength. Simultaneously, as residents realised the possibility of their savings going towards the erection and renovation of their own dwelling units, the incentive for earning a steady income should improve proportionally. Empowerment also spoke to increased use of community decision-making and acceptance of it by the politician.

In addressing poverty, social processes go hand in hand with new economic initiatives as economic independence brings with it new roles, responsibilities and personal relationships.<sup>1</sup> In Jones Town, the services of community-based agencies in the development of skills and starting up of small businesses remained high on the agenda as residents identified the need for improved incomes. As Ninacs' SWOT analysis of the Bois-France mouvement communautaire in Quebec (1993:154), lead him to conclude, any economic activity within the community will become sustainable chiefly because of the solidarity and recognition of the broader socio-political framework which exists. Here, the external agents found it expedient to 'market' the community to the private interests and internally, to ensure that programs aimed at restoring self

esteem and weakened family relationships become high priority. The community was quick to realise that sustainable poverty alleviation speaks about creative and democratic alliance building between public and private sector agencies as well as within already existing agencies, as development of the community grows.

The intervention approach used in this case assumed that people preoccupied with daily questions of safety and political violence are hard pressed to dream of a long life or a fruitful future. These residents of inner-city low-income neighbourhoods see political stability and the freedom to encourage economic investment at the local level as a desirable goal. For them, sustainable development and empowerment means having the capacity to negotiate alliances with both government and private sector from a position strengthened by representation and participation as they strive to live that 'better' life. Institutionalised acceptance of communities' attempts at capacity building and self-actualisation is therefore called for. In a society where economic power continues to be highly concentrated within a small minority of rich and privileged families, who along with foreign capital dominate the economy, communities are now demanding an integrated approach to development which builds on tradition and history but confronts a sense of marginality and powerlessness by improving the conditions of life and livelihood nationally.

As Barr (1995) points out, in the process of sustainable development there is a need to form mutually empowering alliances, as confrontation with the state/government is not the only route. In fact, it is now recognised that capacity building or asset building i.e. the developing of community skills and resources cannot be achieved relying totally on internal capabilities. In discussing the complexities of empowerment, Barr makes the point that often the State while attempting to hand over the reigns of local government and other such structures of local empowerment, finds its efforts misunderstood. "There are sometimes contradictions, therefore, between the apparent desire to empower but an actual unwillingness to recognise and "own" the logical consequences in terms of power redistribution and dis-empowerment. Professionals and politicians need honestly to appraise their attitudes and consider whether in their strategies for empowerment they only accede to notions of partnership because this approach secures

their own power" (1995:128). What is interesting to note, is that as the Jones Town residents began to realise their own ability to negotiate for project funding on their own behalf, new demands were being made of politicians to go beyond the traditional clientelism and give integrated social development an opportunity to take root.

## CONCLUSION

Analysis of this case study has demonstrated that there are certain lessons to be learnt:

- a. Jones Town as a ghetto garrison community still shows the capacity to move to a democratic cross-sectional developmental representation despite the history of dependency and guardianship. This representation has the potential to harnesses the community strengths by giving status to committed community involvement.
- b. As organisational strength grows with the confidence gained from accomplishments, it must be borne in mind that the pace of sustainable development in such low-income ghetto settlements cannot move more rapidly than the community's ability to interpret and challenge political control. This is substantially bolstered by achieving a position of organisational and cognitive strength.
- c. The involvement of the community may be sporadic or temperamental. It is hardly well sustained without considerable support. As they consciously strive to remove the shackles of clientelism, the use of a process of participatory learning action at the hub of the intervention will lead to the community embracing new opportunities for re-visioning and structuring of initiatives for social and economic development. Retention of an unattached external body that sees its role as facilitator and enabler, would serve to under-gird the process of learning and commitment as the community strives to bring together internal and external resources to tackle stigmatisation, alienation and poverty. This body, however, needs to ensure that it is non-partisan, reputable and willing to understand the process of representation and advocacy while having the competencies for action development.

## NOTE

1. See Mendell and Evoy (1993) for discussion on the tensions inherent in community economic development

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# The Potential Impact of Gender Role Socialization on Welfare Policy Formation

MAGALENE HARRIS TAYLOR

University of Arkansas  
Department of Sociology

*This paper addresses a five year welfare reform pilot project conducted at the state level. The outcome of research findings for this project indicate that factors other than the obvious are barriers to women choosing work over welfare. Gender role socialization may play an active and very significant role in this process. The reality of which may inhibit welfare reform efforts at the state and national levels.*

## INTRODUCTION

As future generations reflect on the 90's decade, it is likely that one of its labels will be the decade of welfare reform. During the 1990's, numerous states waged reform measures to reduce the welfare rolls. Presently, and likely the most enduring, is the federal effort to diminish the welfare rolls. Actually, efforts to reform the welfare system began in the 1980s. Under the Reagan administration, state initiatives were encouraged to reduce the welfare rolls and several states initiated projects to do so (Greenberg and Wiseman, 1992).

These state efforts to reduce the welfare rolls for the most part did not reach their intended goals. As a result, the concerns over welfare reform continued and became a central political issue during the campaign for the U.S. presidency in 1992. After the presidential election welfare reform remained high on the national political agenda and in August 1996, President Bill Clinton signed into law new national welfare reform legislation.

This new law, P.L. 104-193, was a Federal block grant program and replaced the existing Aid to Families with Dependent

Children (AFDC) program with the new Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program (CRS, October 7, 1998). This new TANF legislation has dramatically altered welfare as it ended the historical entitlement based approach for cash aid to eligible families that had been the foundation of AFDC. Consequently, numerous states have adopted a range of welfare reform programs with tougher sanctions designed to move recipients from welfare to work. (CRS, August 20, 1998). This Federal legislation to end welfare as we presently know it was deemed necessary, in some views, since past state efforts to reform welfare were not successful.

### THE FAILURE OF STATE GENERATED WELFARE REFORM EFFORTS

Along with numerous other states, the state of Washington in 1987, initiated a five year welfare reform effort. A primary goal of this effort was elimination of able-bodied recipients from the welfare rolls. This effort, referred to formally as the Family Independence Program (FIP), continued through 1992. Specifically, state policy makers designed the program to reduce the welfare rolls by meeting the expected work-related needs of recipients. Those needs included health care and child care benefits, educational training and the replacement of food stamps with cash. In spite of these very bold efforts to encourage movement off the welfare rolls, the program failed to meet expected goals (Taylor, 1996). In the final evaluation of the program, FIP recipients did not fare any more successfully than Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients in the job market (Taylor, 1996). In fact, the job attainment success of FIP recipients was considerably less than their counterparts in the AFDC program during the five year period (Taylor, 1996).

This author's experience working on the research project that monitored FIP, over a five year period resulted in the identification of two important factors that contributed to the effort's failure to reach its goals. First, it appears that gender roles played a significant part in individual perceptions regarding work and welfare. This especially appears to be the case in the choices made by women with children on the welfare rolls. Secondly, it appears that program designs such as those underlying FIP are dictated to

the poor, and therefore do not adequately incorporate the insights, perceptions, and needs of program recipients. This lack of participant involvement in program design results in the exclusion of vital information necessary to insure program success.

This article focuses on the first issue, though the second issue must be kept in mind in exploring the first. It is suggested here that if participants had been more directly involved in program design, the relevance of gender roles could have been recognized and more adequately addressed in the design.

## WASHINGTON STATE'S WELFARE REFORM EFFORT

### *Program Design*

The Family Independence Program was a welfare reform effort that took place in the state of Washington between 1987 and 1992. FIP was a five year program created by the Washington State Legislature as an alternative to the AFDC program, to the Washington Employment Opportunity Program (WEOP), and to the State's Work Incentive (WIN) program. The goal of FIP was "to increase the economic self-sufficiency of welfare families and decrease the number of children growing up in poverty" (The Urban Institute, 1994).

The provision of monetary benefits, training and educational opportunities for future employment, transitional child care, transportation benefits and health care benefits for recipients and their children were services intended to serve as incentives for people getting off welfare. In providing these incentives, it was expected that FIP participants would increase their job skills and face fewer barriers to employment, compared to AFDC recipients who were not provided these incentives and supports. It was posited that with these incentives and supports, FIP recipients would move more rapidly from welfare, unlike traditional AFDC recipients, to self-sustaining employment.

The long standing AFDC program and FIP, the welfare reform effort, held important similarities, but they differed in three major respects. First, AFDC participants received food stamp coupons; FIP participants were instead provided the cash equivalent of their food stamp allotments. Second, the level of financial assistance for child care provided to FIP participants was much higher

than that provided AFDC participants. Third, unlike AFDC recipients, FIP recipients who participated in approved training and educational programs or who worked part or full-time received cash bonus incentives. In contrast, under AFDC policy guidelines, certain recipient households that qualified were mandatorily assigned to job search, education, and training programs. Those AFDC recipients failing to participate in these mandatory activities risked sanctions, although sanctions were infrequently enforced in Washington (Greenberg, 1993).

The overall goal of FIP, as reflected in policies, was to approach welfare and work from a more flexible position. In devising the FIP program, sponsors intended for the program to offer special tools that would assist welfare recipients in making, program designers presumed, a smooth transition from welfare into the work force. These special tools would remove the major barriers or constraints for recipients that had prevented them from moving into the workforce previously. For example, anticipated expenses for childcare were absorbed by a transitional child care allowance, a wide variety of employment and training activities with an emphasis on education were available to recipients and medical benefits were replaced by transitional Medicaid for those employed recipients who succeeded in moving through a probationary period without medical coverage.

### THE FAMILY INCOME STUDY

The Family Income Study (FIS), conducted by the Washington State University Social and Economic Sciences Research Center, was a five year longitudinal research effort that collected a variety of data on the Family Independence Program. Data collection began in 1988 and continued through 1992.

The FIS questionnaire used for data collection solicited information from respondents in a number of areas. Data were collected about labor market behavior, public assistance and family history, household composition, educational experiences, assets and income, housing, health status, child care, children's school and social activities, and food expenses. In addition, information on psycho-social characteristics of respondents including measures of respondent self esteem, sense of personal control, depression, and dimensions of social support was collected. The

questionnaire was administered to over 2100 households on public assistance in the first year. In addition, data were collected from respondents through both personal interviews and by telephone contact over the five year period of the project.

### *Subjects*

The study population, for the most part, resided in Western Washington and lived in metropolitan areas. The great majority were white. The respondents averaged 30 years of age. About three-fourths of the assistance population had one or two children, with one the more common number. In 62% of the households only one adult was present (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 1990).

The state of Washington's assistance population differs demographically from the national assistance population in several respects—ethnicity is the most obvious difference. The national assistance population is predominantly African American or Hispanic; some 40 percent are black, another 20 percent are Hispanic, Asian, or Native American, and the remaining 40 percent are white. For Washington, only 6 percent of the assistance population is black, 18 percent is Hispanic, Asian or Native American, and 76 percent is white (Washington State Institute for Public Policy 1990:2).

One of the more robust demographic characteristics of the population concerns the educational level of the assistance population in Washington state. The Washington state public assistance recipients' educational attainment was, in general, exceptionally low. Forty-one percent did not have a high school diploma and another 17 percent of recipients later secured a GED. Only 9 percent reported completion of education or training beyond high school, including vocational training, community college or beyond (Washington State Institute for Public Policy 1990:2).

The educational level of this group was compared to the educational profile for the non-poor. The great majority of these women classified as the non-poor live in Western Washington, in the metropolitan areas. Among the non-poor, only 14 percent had not completed high school and another 7 percent were GED recipients. Twenty-two percent, just over a fifth, have an associate degree, a four year degree or more, and another 4 percent have

completed a training program (Washington State Institute for Public Policy 1989:5).

Another significant characteristic was work history. Many among the assistance population worked or had recently worked. During the first reference year in the study, the period between mid-1987 and mid-1988, 41 percent worked. Those who worked averaged just over 31 hours per week.

Work led to two major benefits for the assistance population. First, in families where the mother worked, income levels were 20 percent higher than incomes of families with non-working mothers. Second, in Washington, work explained more of the exits from assistance than are explained from studies of the national assistance population. For respondents who left assistance during the reference year, more than half attributed their exit to getting a job, increasing their work hours, higher pay or related reasons.

#### FIP POLICIES AS CONTRASTED WITH AFDC

Although the services and benefits provided participants in AFDC and FIP have important similarities, they differed in three major respects. First, AFDC participants received food stamp coupons; while FIP participants were provided the cash equivalent of their food stamp allotments. Second, the level of financial child care assistance provided FIP participants was much higher than that provided AFDC participants. Third, unlike AFDC recipients, FIP recipients who participated in approved training and educational programs or who worked part or full-time received cash bonuses. These bonuses were calculated as a percentage of a benchmark standard, which was computed as the AFDC cash payment standard plus 80 percent of the food stamp Thrifty Food Plan. Under AFDC, in contrast, certain recipient households were mandatorily assigned to job search, education, and training programs. Those failing to participate risked sanctions, although sanctions were infrequently enforced in Washington State (Greenberg, 1993).

Thus, the overall goal of FIP, as reflected in its policies, was to approach welfare and work from a more flexible position. In devising the FIP program, sponsors intended that the program provide a tool that would assist welfare recipients in making a smooth transition from welfare into the work force. In doing so,

barriers or constraints that recipients might face were anticipated in the conceptualization of the program. For example, anticipated expenses for childcare were absorbed by a transitional child care allowance, a wide variety of employment and training activities with an emphasis on education were available to recipients and medical benefits that might not start up until after six months of employment were replaced by transitional medicaid.

### *Analysis Sample*

This author's study utilized a subsample of the FIS public assistance sample and limited inquiry to white females who were not in the labor force at year one of the study, but were participants in the AFDC program. Because these respondents were AFDC recipients who were not working at year one of the study, they were good candidates for the FIP program, if they chose to participate. On the other hand, they were appropriate control group subjects if they chose not to participate in the FIP program. The total number of such recipients at year one for this study was 702. Eight of those cases were assigned a missing code and classified as missing by Year 5. Therefore, 694 cases were used in the final analysis. The mean age of the respondents in the sample at year one was 30.54 years of age. Educational levels were low, with an average of 11.3 years at year one and 11.97 percent at year 5 for all respondents. Approximately forty-one percent were divorced or widowed, while 29 percent had never married at Year 1.

In year 5 of the study, those who were married increased from 16 percent to 22 percent and those persons divorced or widowed dropped by 10 percent (31%). Those respondents who were in the never married category dropped from 29 to 16 percent during the five year period. The average number of children per respondent at year 1 was 2.21, and 2.45 at Year 5 (Lidman and Weeks, 1990: 2-3).

## FINDINGS

### *FIP*

Overall, FIP did not achieve intended results. By the end of the five year period, FIP recipients were no more successful than AFDC recipients in job attainment.



*Analysis of Findings: Author's Subsample*

The findings of the author's subsample indicated a more successful transition by AFDC participants from welfare to work than FIP participants during the five year study period.

Based on the results of discriminant analysis and a cross-tabulation of AFDC and FIP participant data at Year 5, 417 out of the 702 respondents in this subsample ended up in the working category. *Working category* refers to those individuals employed, either part-time or full-time, anytime during year 5. Of the 417 respondents classified as working, approximately, 211 persons were working and receiving some form of welfare as well. A cross-tabulation of welfare recipients data at Year 5 indicated 84 respondents were receiving FIP (six of these respondents were also receiving AFDC) and working and 127 respondents were receiving AFDC only and working. After five years, at least 59% of the 702 respondents in this subsample were working at the time of the Year 5 interview. But, the number of persons who moved from AFDC to work compared with those who moved from FIP to work during the five year period was significantly greater.

Other findings in the author's study indicate that FIP program respondents were concerned with some of the same issues FIP program sponsors assumed they would be, but the decision to work or remain on welfare also included hidden or underlying dimensions of what were thought by policy designers to be common barriers to a successful move from welfare to work. For those mothers not in the work force by year 5, these underlying dimensions may have been mechanisms that forced recipients to weigh their personal benefits of moving from welfare to work against the personal costs of doing so.

The greatest concerns for these respondents included financial and material support, children and their school activities, wages, and social supports. It appears, that even though financial, material, and emotional support may have been present in these respondents' relationships, other factors such as decent wages and involvement with children's school activities may have been unresolved barriers to lasting employment. Even though respondents receiving FIP were provided an opportunity to attend school or training during the five year period, the mean educational level for this group only slightly increased from

11.33 years to 11.97 years. This fact would have some bearing on the continued low wage opportunities for those recipients choosing work.

Although schooling and training seemed likely avenues for recipients, the time spent away from family while pursuing education or training may have been considered a greater short term cost for recipients than a long term benefit, as fewer FIP participants than AFDC participants chose to enter the work force.

The personal conflicts faced by mothers with school aged children involved in extracurricular activities such as band or sports, may have had greater consequences than policy makers anticipated. The competing demands of schooling (or training or work) for themselves compared to time spent with their children may be significant unmeasured factors in decision-making by mothers. Even though social, emotional and financial supports may be adequate in these situations, unmeasured costs to recipients such as these may determine final choices. For example, a mother may not be willing to sacrifice time and attention away from her school age children to engage in schooling or training for herself, especially if those children are active in school activities. Difficulties balancing the physical and emotional costs involved with schooling or training for the FIP recipients, compared to the well-being of mother and children, may be even greater if it is a single parent household which does not involve frequent contact with extended family.

Although these possibilities may help suggest possible explanations regarding the employment choices of welfare recipients, other questions remain unanswered. For example, what is the reasoning underlying these choices? What forces encourage women to make choices to remain detached from the workforce when opportunity to make a transition into the workforce with several amenities is presented? One possible explanation may be found in the social structure rather than in the individual psyche.

#### TOWARD A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION: GENDER ROLE SOCIALIZATION

In recent years women scholars, such as Chodorow (1978), Gilligan (1982), Miller (1986), Jordan et al. (1991), and Miller and Stiver (1997), have presented alternative approaches to explaining

Table 1

*Dependent Variable Outcomes*

<i>Actual Groups</i>	<i>RESPONDENTS WORKING</i>		
	<i>AFDC</i>	<i>FIP</i>	<i>AFDC + FIP</i>
Welfare and Work	127	84	211
Work/No Welfare	206	0	206
Total working	333	84	417

Table 2

*Dependent Variable Outcomes*

<i>RESPONDENTS NOT WORKING</i>	
No Welfare/ No Work	49
FIP Only/No Work	84
AFDC and FIP	8
AFDC Only	144

individual socialization. Their work has focused on understanding more fully the development and identity formation of women in the socialization process than that provided by traditional male-based models of individual human behavior and development.

Gilligan's work highlights two important characteristics in the socialization process, paradigmatic and structural. Her work revealed the experiences of women do not fit existing models of human development. Instead of pointing to this disparity as a problem in women's development, Gilligan suggests these limitations may be a representation of the conceptualization of the human condition, "an omission of certain truths about life" (Gilligan 1982:2). Gilligan elaborates on this point, by emphasizing the impact of structural elements in individual development. She suggests the existing differences between males and females develop within a "social context where factors of social status and power combine with reproductive biology to shape the

experience of males and females and the relations between the sexes" (Gilligan 1982:2). Gilligan's efforts resulted in her discovery of a "different voice" characterized by gender not by theme. This theme unfolded as she studied the development of moral decision making among women. The voice, Gilligan asserts, is not necessarily exclusively male or female but reflects two different modes of thought. One mode focuses on individualization and rights, the other on connectedness and responsibility. In other words, one mode reflects the dimension of separateness and impersonality consistent with traditional paradigm thinking. The other mode reflects the dimension of interrelatedness and the value of personal experiences and relationships characteristic of alternative paradigm thinking (Schrivver, 1998). Although these themes are not necessarily tied to gender, according to Gilligan, they do seem to reflect the different developmental experiences of males and females. Similarly, the work of Miller (1976), reinforces this theme. Miller suggests that "women's sense of self becomes very much organized around being able to make and then maintain affiliation and relationships" (1976:83).

Chodorow's work (1978) also addresses identity formation in women. Her work explores and accounts for the differences in personality development in males and females. Chodorow asserts that women, universally, are largely responsible for early child care. This early social environmental difference results in basic differences in personality development of girls and boys. Chodorow's explanation is that personality formation is almost entirely set by three years of age, and that for both girls and boys the caretaker during the first three years is almost universally female.

This early environment results in female identity formation taking place in a context of ongoing relationships, since "mothers tend to experience their daughters as more like and continuous with, themselves." Girls in turn see themselves as more "like their mother, thus fusing the experience of attachment with the process of identity formation." This early environment also results in boys being experienced by their mother as male opposite. Boys "in defining themselves as masculine separate their mothers from themselves." By doing this, relatedness, connectedness, and empathy is less central in their early identity formation and definition

of self. Individuation and separation is instead more central in males' identity formation (1978:pp. 150, 166–167).

According to Chodorow "girls emerge from this period, the first three years, with a basis for 'empathy' built into their primary definition of self in a way that boys do not." At the end of this early developmental process, "girls come to experience themselves as less differentiated than boys, as more continuous with and related to the external object-world, and as differently oriented to their inner object-world as well" (p.167).

Chodorow posits that these different early experiences have significant consequences for the developmental experiences of both males and females throughout their lives. Attachment continues to be more important for female identity formation and separation and individuation remains more important for the development of masculinity in boys. Male identity tends to be threatened by intimacy, female identity, by separation. Males tend to have difficulty with relationships while females tend to have problems with individuation (in Gilligan 1982:8–9).

#### TOWARD RETHINKING WELFARE REFORM—SUGGESTED POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

In considering the alternative ways in which women and men are socialized to think about themselves and their connection to others and their environment, a new perspective needs to be included to expand our understanding of women, work, and welfare. If we consider the work of these theorists, the choices made by welfare mothers to delay entering the workforce at critical points in their parenting years may be more fully explained.

Gilligan and Chodorow offer new perspectives on the dimensions of identity formation that may very well significantly influence women's decision making about education, training and work.

Gilligan finds a "different voice" for women, one that focuses on connectedness and responsibility which celebrates interrelatedness and values personal experiences and relationships. Chodorow emphasizes the impact of maternal socialization. Her work also addresses the relatedness and connectedness that appears to be a strong dimension of gender socialization in women.

These processes ultimately become important elements in identity formation.

These alternative perspectives on identity formation suggest the need to focus on the social structure and the processes by which females are socialized to think about personal or familial relationships, especially maternal relationships. If socialization does serve as an important underlying predictor of gender role behavior, then the choices made by the welfare mothers in this study may be more fully explained. Their decisions to forego opportunities for education, training and work in order that their social and nurturing responsibilities for maintaining close relationships with their children could be fulfilled, may not be nearly as confounding as it seems when viewed only through the lenses of traditional developmental and socialization theories. These newer perspectives shed needed light on the structural socialization of women and the superficial manner in which this issue has been addressed in policy making and program design historically. As in the case with many welfare reform efforts, Washington state policy makers presumed that employment would or should be the ultimate goal for the FIP program participants. As a result, the most apparent barriers to job attainment such as lack of education and training/work were addressed. It is also quite possible that FIP participants may have initially viewed lack of education and training as the only barriers to their entering the world of work. However, when confronted with the reality of choosing education, training, and, ultimately, work over parenting responsibilities, the findings of this study suggest that mothers may have seen the welfare and general well-being of their children, as reflected in the time and attention available to their children when their children needed them as their primary responsibility. Conversely, these mothers chose to deny themselves the long term benefits of schooling, training and job-generated income in order to meet their responsibilities to their children.

This data does not address the reasoning, nor factors that impacted the different outcomes for AFDC compared to FIP recipients. Given that AFDC recipients were given less options to pursue work compared with a greater number of options offered to FIP recipients, it can be assumed, FIP recipients had more options to exercise personal judgment regarding themselves and their

families. Because of lingering questions such as this, the use of existing alternative theories to help explain the confounding lack of success of FIP and other welfare reform efforts, welfare research needs and deserves much more attention by policy makers, policy analysts, and researchers.

### POLICY IMPLICATIONS/SUGGESTED OUTCOMES

The ultimate goal of welfare reform has been uniform in thought. Able-bodied individuals are encouraged and expected to become active in the workforce. The intent is that movement into the workforce would not be sporadic, but long term. The assurance that any previous model will insure this type success has been fleeting. We are intrigued when part of the model is effective, but when welfare reform does not address the entire issue, the end result does not generate the expected outcome.

I propose a model in which recipients have a voice regarding their present and future needs. Certainly, these needs may vary depending on the individual, but allowing the recipients a voice will open communication regarding the life course placement of the recipients themselves and their families (Clausen, 1986).

Keeping the life course development of the family in mind, I propose a plan that acknowledges the various life-cycles of the family. The family progresses through various stages of development, such as, early marriage, young children, pre-teen, adolescents and so on (Bengston and Allen 1993; Demo and Allen, 1996). Given these various changes in family development, parents may be more flexible in assuming challenging work or training roles at some points in the family life course than at others. A welfare reform plan that reflects the life course of the family will give consideration to gender role socialization for women, especially so for women who are very traditional in their views regarding the role of mothers. Avoiding the likelihood of forcing women to make a choice between work and family may prove more realistic and feasible, given past failures of welfare reform.

Another focus of this plan would be to address the psychological wellbeing of the client. Given that welfare is a program that inherently embodies a stigma that may be passed on to clients, it would be unrealistic to assume that individuals are unaffected by

its use. Long-term use may generate feelings of low self-esteem, or feelings of inadequacy in clients, of which they may not be aware. Providing psychological services or support groups for clients would be one means to addressing this issue.

Integrating Life-Course theory into welfare reform policy allows policy makers to look beyond the individual and address a comprehensive picture of the individual, family and environment. Policy should be in sync with the life-course development of the family, as the individual develops within the family, so does the social, psychological and environmental dimensions of the family.

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# Grandma's Babies: The Problem of Welfare Eligibility for Children Raised by Relatives

REBECCA L. HEGAR,  
AND MARIA SCANNAPIECO

University of Texas at Arlington  
School of Social Work

*This article provides a brief history of children raised by relatives and examines the welfare eligibility of these families, emphasizing changes under the Personal Responsibility & Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (PR&WOA). The revolution in public welfare places many care-giving relatives at financial risk. Depending on their states' plans for implementing the PR&WOA, children and their relative caregivers may lose state support. The article presents the social welfare policy responses of a number of states to the problems of kinship care-giving, formal kinship foster care, the PR&WOA, and other social welfare provisions. Unintended consequences of welfare reform are highlighted.*

Both legislative and public debate on the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (PR&WOA, P.L. 104-193) failed to consider that about 10% of children who received AFDC did so in the homes of care-giving relatives. Most of these family arrangements fall outside of the formal child welfare system, which also places children with their relatives. Formal kinship foster care has grown dramatically in only a few years, and it now accounts for half of foster care placements made in some states and many urban areas (Children's Research Institute, 1996).

This article explores the relationships among informal kinship care giving, formal kinship foster care, and U.S. social welfare policy, particularly the PR&WOA of 1996. Prior to the PR&WOA, care-giving relatives were able to receive "child-only" AFDC grants for children who had been eligible in their parents' homes.

In other cases, care-giving relatives who met eligibility requirements were included along with the children on an AFDC grant and Medicaid. The revolution in public welfare, including work requirements and lifetime eligibility limits for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and separation of Medicaid from TANF, places many care-giving relatives at financial risk. Depending on their states' plans for implementing the PR&WOA, relatives who are unlikely work force participants may lose state support for kinship care-giving.

The relationship between welfare reform and kinship care-giving is complicated further by the range of approaches used by states to provide formal foster care placement in the homes of relatives. In some states and localities, kinship foster homes are reimbursed at the same rate as traditional foster homes, while other states have allowed children in state custody to be placed in the homes of relatives who received AFDC "child only" grants. Some states pay relatives a rate intermediate between welfare and foster care, and some relatives receive no state aid while caring for children in state custody. The range of payment models already in use is becoming more complex as states respond to the PR&WOA and grapple with the eligibility of kinship caregivers under TANF.

This article provides a brief history of children raised by relatives, details the extent of this family form in the United States, and outlines their welfare eligibility and changes under the PR&WOA of 1996. It also presents the social welfare policy responses of several states to the problems of kinship care-giving, formal kinship foster care, the PR&WOA, and other social welfare provisions. Unintended consequences of welfare reform are highlighted.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT SURROUNDING CHILDREN RAISED BY RELATIVES<sup>1</sup>

Children reared by grandparents and other close relatives form part of a cultural practice with roots in antiquity and branches extending world wide. Several regions are noted for the widespread practice of relatives fostering children, or kinship care. For example, it is a traditional family form throughout Oceania, including many countries of the Pacific rim and islands.

Luomala reports that in traditional Hawaiian culture "the grandparents' claim to grandchildren took precedence over that of the natural parents, who had to get their consent to keep a child to rear for themselves. The firstborn, if a boy, customarily went to the paternal grandparents; a girl went to the maternal grandparents" (1987, p. 16–17).

West Africa is another center of fostering within kinship networks, and the motivations for it are complex and diverse. Children may be sent to live with relatives for purposes of weaning, care when a family dissolves, instruction in a trade, attendance at school, or helping in the home of the caregiver (Castle, 1996). Castle notes that "in West Africa, fostering is rooted in kinship structures and affiliations and unlike its 'Western' connotations, the term is not necessarily perceived to be associated with families that are in some way disjointed or dysfunctional" (1996, p. 193). Bledsoe and colleagues come to similar conclusions: "One of the most striking features of rural West African families is that costs of raising children are rarely borne exclusively by biological parents; rather, they are shared by many people through the extended family and other social networks. This includes cost sharing within households as well as fostering out children to other households . . ." (1988, p. 627).

Within the European and Anglo/American traditions, relatives have tended to have a socially mandated role in child rearing when parents were absent or incapable. The Elizabethan Poor Law of 1603 made grandparents responsible for dependent grandchildren, and this English mandate was applied in the American colonies (Trattner, 1994). In modern times, the trend has been to limit financial responsibility to parents, and in some cases stepparents. However, a California law that required grandparents and adult siblings to reimburse the state for welfare costs was repealed only in 1971 (Mnookin & Weisberg, 1988), and the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 1984 established conditions under which a grandparent's income had to be considered when determining a child's eligibility for assistance (Mnookin & Weisberg, 1988).

For generations, many American children have also lived with relatives. Although it is normative within all ethnic groups for relatives to rear children who are orphaned or whose parents are unavailable to them, kinship care giving takes on special

significance within some ethnic and racial communities. For example, African-American children, who were excluded first by slavery and later by segregation from most early child caring institutions, have been especially likely to live with relatives. Throughout the twentieth century, family and community self-help, sometimes centered on the church, has provided for dependent African American children (Billingsley, 1992; Gray & Nybell, 1990; Scannapieco & Jackson, 1996). Stack (1998), who has researched extended kinship among African-Americans for more than twenty-five years, documents that work patterns over several decades, such as adult migration to the north to find factory jobs, resulted in children being left in the care of southern relatives during parts or most of some years. Some authors observe that helping patterns seen in African American families may echo earlier African traditions that were not successfully obliterated by slavery and the American experience (Martin & Martin, 1985; Yusane, 1990).

Following a pattern unique in U.S. history, many Native American children were placed in institutions, rather than being left to the care of family, kinship network, and ethnic community. This pattern of placement outside the culture became one impetus behind passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, the first U.S. policy document to state an explicit preference for kinship placement (Matheson, 1996). Despite a history of Native American children being intentionally removed from their kinship circles, kinship has continued to be a central aspect of Native culture (Shomaker, 1989).

For a variety of social and economic reasons, which are discussed in the following section, the phenomenon of children living with relatives other than parents is growing. The emergence of what might be called a grandparent's rights movement has been fueled by two social trends: situations where grandparents assume care of children when neither parent is able to provide a home for them, and marriages that end in divorce, potentially limiting contact between children and relatives of the noncustodial parent. The national phenomenon of grandparents raising grandchildren has reached the popular press and the self-help book market (Creighton, 1991; DeToledo, 1995; Takas, 1995), as well as being a focus for professional intervention and academic

study (Burton, 1992; Chalfie, 1994; Jones & Kennedy, 1996; Minkler & Roe, 1993; Mullen 1996b) and for policy and legal advocacy (Czapanskiy, 1994; Hanson & Opsahl, 1996; Waysdorf, 1994). The needs of children being raised by grandparents and other relatives continue to challenge the public and child welfare systems to find appropriate responses.

### SCOPE AND GROWTH OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH RELATIVES

According to available estimates, between 2.3 million and 4.3 million children in the United States live without their parents in the homes of relatives (Everett, 1995; Furukawa, 1991; National Commission of Family Foster Care, 1991, Saluter, 1996). Almost one and a half million live with grandparents alone (Saluter, 1996). This growing cultural phenomenon is not evenly distributed across racial and ethnic groups. African-American children make up forty-four percent of those living with grandparents without a parent in the home (Furukawa, 1991; Saluter, 1996). That pattern is about six times more common for African-American children, and one and a half times more frequent for Hispanic children, than it is for white, non-Hispanic children (Furukawa, 1991; see also Burnette, 1999). U.S. Census data may also under count children living with relatives and others. For example, one study reports that the proportion of African American children in "informal adoptions" has increased in recent years, from 13.3% living with extended family members in 1970 to 16.5% in 1989 (cited in Billingsley, 1992, p. 30).

However, kinship care giving is a cultural phenomenon not limited to families of color. Of the approximately three million American children reported by the U.S. Census reports as living with neither parent in 1995, more than half were white (Saluter, 1996). Evidence of the pervasiveness of kinship care-giving is found in the attention of the popular media (e.g. Creighton, 1991), in the number of available self-help books for those raising grandchildren and other juvenile relatives (e.g. Chalfie, 1994; DeToledo, 1995; Takas, 1995), and in the existence of support groups for kinship caregivers in many U.S. cities. Certain areas also have developed specialized social service programs, such as Kids 'n'



Kin (1996) in Philadelphia. Although informal kinship care is not limited to families in poverty, many of the children in the care of relatives received Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) because they were eligible in the homes of their biological families. As noted above, 10% of the 7.7 million children on the AFDC rolls were living without their parents in the homes of relatives (National Commission of Family Foster Care, 1991).

Explanations for the numbers of U.S. children being reared by relatives are varied. Earlier in the century, reasons were more likely to include parental death, the untenable life of single parents before day care centers or AFDC, and the material advantages some relatives might offer children. However, there are other explanations for the recent gradual rise in the proportion of all American children living in homes without their parents, from less than 2% in 1960 and 1970, to 2.2% in 1980 and 1988 (Saluter, 1989), to 3.3% in 1991 (Furukawa, 1991) and 4.3% in 1995 (3.9% if identified foster children are excluded) (Saluter, 1996). One factor is that some urban areas have lost part of a generation in the young child-bearing years to crack cocaine and other drugs, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and crime and prison (Burton, 1992; Lee, 1994; Waysdorf, 1994). In the language of the streets, the parents are "on the street," and more stable grandparents and other older relatives have stepped into the parental void. Additional causal factors may include economic realities that make it difficult for young parents to succeed without help from older relatives in the form of money, housing, or relief from parenting responsibilities.

#### PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO CHILDREN IN THE CARE OF RELATIVES: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The federal Aid to Dependent Children program enacted in 1935 was preceded by various state aid programs for widowed mothers. Missouri and Illinois had established the earliest of them in 1911, and by 1935 only two states lacked such programs. Many states also expanded coverage to unmarried mothers and raised benefit levels to approach adequate support for the family (Trattner, 1994, p. 226). However, neither mothers' pensions nor the original AFDC program made provision for children living without their parents in the care of relatives (or, for that matter,

with single or widowed fathers). In 1965 when the Medicaid program was established and linked with AFDC eligibility, the value of a child-only grant paid to a relative caregiver increased substantially, and by the 1990s, 10 percent of AFDC grants went to relatives on behalf of eligible children. To be eligible, children had to be under age 18, living in the home of a relative within the first degree of kinship (grandparents, aunts and uncles, siblings), and deprived of parental support, with income and assets not exceeding standards for AFDC eligibility. Transfer of custody was not required.

Other public aid programs have been responsive in different degrees to adults raising the children of close relatives. In 1977 a U.S. Supreme Court Decision established a grandmother's right to live in public housing with her grandchildren (*Moore v. City of East Cleveland*), but the Court left unresolved whether such a family has the same Constitutional protections as a parent/child family (Baker, 1987). Some other aid programs, notably food stamps, have been more consistently available to children living in the homes of relatives with low incomes because eligibility is based on household size and income. Failure to meet income tests can deprive children in the care of relatives of participation in Headstart, WIC, and other programs, unless the children were certified for AFDC (Mullen, 1996).

#### PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO CHILDREN IN THE CARE OF RELATIVES: THE PR&WOA

The Public Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (PR&WOA) brought fundamental change to the policy, in place since for most of the century, that children deprived of the support of an employed parent or parents deserve public support. By replacing AFDC with block grants to fund Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), with its work requirements and lifetime eligibility limits, the United States has taken two steps that impact children raised by relatives. First, eligibility for assistance under AFDC was defined by federal statute (though determined locally); under TANF, each state sets eligibility for its programs. Second, assuming that states continue child-only assistance to dependent children living with relatives, not only benefit levels

but exceptions and the application of new family caps are the responsibility of each state jurisdiction.

TANF requires that states submit a plan to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) that outlines how the state will provide cash aid to families with children and provide parents with job preparation, work, and support services. These plans, based on federal guidelines, are divided into five key policy areas: requiring work; making work pay; limiting time on assistance; encouraging personal responsibility, and other key provisions. States have the flexibility to set a benefit rate and to determine what categories of families are eligible. Relatives caring for kin may fall into two broad categories that are discussed further below: relatives who receive child-only grants, and those who receive aid for both children and themselves.

*Relatives receiving welfare assistance for children only.* With few exceptions, relatives receiving child-only grants are exempt both from work requirements and time limits on benefits (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1998). The child is receiving the benefit, not the relative, so there are no restrictions put on the relative. Additionally, when the child reaches adulthood, the time he or she received benefits as a child does not count towards the work or time requirements imposed on the adult recipient.

As adults leave the welfare roles under TANF, child-only cases have come to account for a larger proportion of total grants. Nationally, they have more than doubled, from about 10% of grants to more than 20%. In six states (Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota), child-only grants now comprise 40% to 50% of the welfare roles (Vobejda & Havemann, 1999). Although not all of the 1.8 million child-only cases represent relatives caring for juvenile kin, the largest group is made up of kinship caregivers (Vobejda & Havemann, 1999). In the other cases, parents may be ineligible because of their immigration status or failure to meet other conditions of TANF.

A later section of this article discusses how specific states are using their new latitude to set policy for child-only cases. Although some are responding generously, others seem to be taking a more antagonistic view toward a segment of this group that has been referred to as "country club grandmothers" (Vobejda & Havemann, 1999). This pejorative is based on a stereotype

of these relatives as middle and upper income individuals who collect child-only payments for their relatives' children because the children's parents were AFDC-eligible.

*Relatives receiving welfare aid and assistance for children.* Unlike those who receive child-only grants, relative caregivers who themselves receive TANF are not automatically exempt from work and time limit requirements. Each state is able to exempt 20% of its caseload from the time requirements. Most have chosen not to exempt any family from the personal responsibility aspects of TANF (school attendance, immunizations, and check-ups). States tend to grant exemptions based on one or more of the following criteria: Age of parent or caregiver; mental or physical disability of parent or caregiver; care of a disabled dependent; victim of domestic violence; employment seeker, or high local unemployment rates.

Exemption from work requirements is most often based on the age of the child and/or the caregiver (parent or relative). The TANF provision allows states to exempt from work requirements and the JOBS program parents with children up to 1 year of age (6 years of age if child care is not guaranteed). Table 1 shows which states grant work exemptions based on the age of the child.

Caregivers who are not working after two months on assistance are required to participate in community service (hours optional by state). Most states (30) exempt caregivers if the child is less than one year of age. States vary in their approach to exemptions related to the age of the caregiver, which are not reported uniformly to the federal government. Examples drawn from several states illustrate the range of policies. Texas caregivers are exempt if the child is 4 or younger and or if the caregiver is 60 years of age or older. New York caregivers are exempt if the child is one year of age and or if the caregiver is 60 years old or older. South Carolina single-parent caregivers are exempt if the child is less than one year old, or less than 6 if day care is unavailable. Minnesota two-parent families must work immediately; single parent families are exempt if the child is one year of age or younger and or if the caregiver is 60 years old or older. Washington single parents were exempt until June 1999 if the child was one year or younger; then the age of exemption changed to three months (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1998).

Table 1

<i>Age of Youngest Child Exemption From Work Requirement</i>	<i>States</i>
Over 1 Year:	Texas, Virginia, Vermont, New Hampshire, Alabama
Up to 1 Year of Age:	Washington, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, So. Carolina, Minnesota, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maine, DC, Delaware, Alaska
6 months or younger:	Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, Florida, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Wisconsin, Indiana, Maryland
County Option:	California, Colorado, No. Carolina
No Automatic Exemptions:	Montana, Utah, Iowa, Michigan

Table adapted from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (1999). Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program: Second Report to Congress.

TANF stipulates that states can not use Federal funds for any part of a grant to provide assistance to a family that includes an adult who has received assistance for 60 months, whether they were consecutive or not. All state plans have implemented this policy, and some have taken the option to set lower time limits. Table 2 shows time limits by state. It is apparent that the PR&WOA and state responses to it have resulted in highly inconsistent policy responses to the problem of welfare-eligible children living in the homes of care-giving relatives.

#### STATE WELFARE POLICIES AFFECTING CHILDREN WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

The devolution of U.S. public welfare into more than fifty state, district and territorial programs was an intent of the PR&WOA. Decentralization, state control, and the proliferation of different approaches to eligibility, work requirements, and time limits are planful, not unintended, consequences of this particular

Table 2

<i>Time Limit</i>	<i>State</i>
60 months	Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Dist. Of Col., Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming
Intermittent, e.g., 24 out of 60 months; lifetime of 60 months	Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia
Less than 60 months lifetime	Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Ohio, Utah
24 out of 60 months; lifetime of 60 for adults only	Arizona, Indiana
For adult applicants: 18 months but can be extended to (1) 24 months based on local economic conditions or if extension will lead to employment or (2) 60 months if no job available and adult participates in community service (2) For adult recipients: 24 months but can be extended to 60 months if no job available and adult participates in community service (3) Safety-net program for children beyond adult time limit	California
No limit if family has earned income and work 20 hours per week (2) 24 months for families with no child under age 13 and has no earnings (3) 60 months for all other families	Illinois
24 out of 60 months; no lifetime limit	Massachusetts
Will use state funds after 60 months	Michigan, Rhode Island
12, 24, and 36 months lifetime for adults only, time period depends on employability of head of household	Texas

Table adapted from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (1999). Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program: Second Report to Congress.

experiment with welfare reform. However, the public and Congressional debate that preceded passage of the PR&WOA rarely acknowledged that a proportion of AFDC grants went to children in the care of relatives of retirement age. Another proportion benefited children placed with younger, working relatives who need Medicaid benefits to take in children who may be ineligible for coverage under the relatives' own health insurance. Further, some of these relatives are giving care to foster children at the request of child welfare agencies.

States provide a range of financial support to children in state custody and placed with their relatives. Following the U.S. Supreme Court Decision *Miller v. Youkim* (1979), states must make federal foster care monies available to relatives who meet foster care licensing standards and who accept placement of eligible children in state custody. However, states are free to deny the foster care board rate when federal monies are not involved. Historically, federal funds have covered children who were eligible for AFDC while in their own homes. Despite the availability of federal foster care monies for relative placements, many states have licensed and paid few relatives as foster parents. However, other states have placed large numbers of foster children with relatives who receive the foster care board rate, and a few states have worked out intermediate rates of payments to relatives (Children's Research Institute of California, 1996). In most states, many relatives historically have cared for children in state custody with assistance from child-only AFDC grants or without state financial help. These mixed systems for reimbursing relatives are a prominent feature of the current child welfare system (Children's Research Institute of California, 1996; Scannapieco & Hegar, 1995).

The changes embodied in the PR&WOA of 1996 affect relative caregivers both within and outside the child welfare system. Those whose support derives from federal foster care funds (Title IV-E) are least likely to be affected in the short term. Also, those receiving child-only grants under TANF are exempted by federal law from work requirements and lifetime limits, though states are not required to offer child-only grants at all, and they may cap payments to families (AARP Grandparent Information Center, 1997). At greatest financial risk are care-giving relatives who are

themselves on a TANF grant, receiving a cash benefit and usually Medicaid. The policies of several states are reviewed in this section, and the policy implications of such diverse approaches to welfare eligibility are discussed in the final section of the article.

Maryland has created a special category of "caretaker relatives" who provide care to an eligible child or children, but who have no TANF-eligible children of their own. These care-giving relatives can be included in the grant which Maryland has elected to pay out of state funds, making the caregivers not subject to work the requirements and time limits required when federal monies are used. In addition, child-only TANF grants are available when no adult is on the grant, for example when the adult is not eligible due to income or when the adult is on a separate TANF grant (to which work requirements and lifetime limits would apply). These child-only cases in Maryland have grown to 26% of the TANF caseload, up from 10% to 15% of AFDC grants a few years ago (Born, 1999; Vobejda & Havemann, 1999). Maryland's willingness to use state funds and lack of any benefit ceiling protect many care-giving relatives from loss of benefits. However, a key group remains at risk: TANF-eligible caregivers who take in relatives' children must still meet federal work and lifetime limit requirements with respect to their own grants. Either returning to work or losing benefits may make continuing to care for a relative's child impossible. These realities may influence both families and agencies to place children primarily with older relatives who have other means of personal support (Social Security, pensions, SSI) or no other children in the home.

Like Maryland, Wisconsin and Florida have created new categories of assistance for families that care for related children (Vobejda & Havemann, 1999). In doing so, they have reduced substantially their official welfare roles, while alleviating problems for relative caregivers. The willingness to use state funds to support care-giving relatives who are not eligible for TANF is a constructive response that could be copied by other states.

Idaho has chosen to apply a family cap to care-giving relatives receiving child-only TANF grants. While the federal exemptions from work requirements and lifetime limits apply, Idaho will pay a set child-only grant, currently \$256/month, regardless of the number of children covered by the grant. Designed to penalize



families who have additional children while on welfare, family caps have other, probably unintended, consequences when applied to relative caregivers. Like most states, Idaho relies on welfare monies to support many kinship foster care placements. Welfare reform has created a disincentive for families to accept placement of more than one child (since the benefit is capped), though most foster children are part of sibling groups that ideally should be placed together. Both families and agencies may be influenced to separate brothers and sisters in order to spread the financial burden and access maximum state aid.

California has preserved child-only grants under TANF and applies no ceiling to the grant, which, as elsewhere, can be received either by parents not on the grant or by care-giving relatives. The proportion of child-only grants has grown rapidly over several years, due in part to a large number of cases where the parents' immigration status makes them ineligible for their own TANF grants. They may be able to receive child-only grants for offspring who are citizens because of their birth in the United States. Child-only grants are expected to grow dramatically because California's CalWORKS legislation allows families to keep a child-only grant after parental eligibility for TANF has expired due to time limits (Berrick, 1999; Vobejda & Havemann, 1999). Eligibility for child-only grants upon expiration of adults' TANF eligibility is a helpful policy that may be widely emulated.

In North Carolina, policy makers have expressed concern that parents who have exhausted their own eligibility for TANF will leave children with relatives who can receive child-only grants (Vobejda & Havemann, 1999). There the state goal is to remove adults from the welfare roles first, but emphasis is also being placed on closing child-only cases. Counties in North Carolina are able to provide job training, counseling or other services to grandparents and other relative caregivers to help them become self-sufficient (Vobejda & Havemann, 1999). Although the goal of removing care-giving relatives from TANF may be unrealistic and may affect kinship caregiving negatively, the idea of providing services to relatives raising children is a sound one.

This survey of representative state provisions concerning TANF eligibility for care-giving relatives has identified several helpful approaches. States are free to exempt 20% of their TANF

caseloads from work requirements, and this provision can be used to assist relative caregivers. Most states have chosen to use age of the parent or caregiver as one basis for exemption. Jurisdictions that fund grants to relative caregivers with state funds have protected many such families from loss of benefits. However, this approach will probably not be adopted by states historically unwilling to fund public welfare. It also is helpful that some states allow families to retain child-only grants when adult eligibility expires and that others provide social services along with financial assistance. Finally, states can make maximum use of federal foster care funds by licensing as foster parents eligible relatives willing to care for children in state custody.

#### DISCUSSION: DEVOLUTION OF WELFARE AND VARIATIONS IN SOCIAL POLICY

As already noted, the decentralization of decision making about welfare policy and encouragement of state innovation were *intended* consequences of welfare devolution under the PR&WOA. However, the variety of state responses to that legislation has created a patchwork quilt of welfare rules and benefits. This uneven social policy has consequences of its own that require examination.

In the past, unequal benefits between states have sometimes motivated mobile families and individuals to seek out high-benefit states, particularly during periods of regionalized economic crisis. Historically, states responded with residency requirements for welfare eligibility, most of which were eventually eliminated for federally funded programs. However, the PR&WOA allowed states to return to the concept of residency by permitting them to impose on new residents *home state* rules for up to twelve months. These could have involved temporarily limiting welfare eligibility to that available in the applicant's home state. Fortunately, California's use of a home state rule under the PR&WOA was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in its 1999 session as violating the constitutional right to travel (*Saenz v. Roe*, 1999; Asseo, 1999). Home state rules might have affected children and their relative caregivers when either moved between states. Any penalty for changing state residence to live

with family would contradict other U.S. social policy, for example the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, which requires child welfare programs to facilitate interstate placements involving kinship homes.

Another policy problem arises out of the history of linking AFDC eligibility with access to a range of other services. Headstart, the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program, school breakfast and lunch programs, and Medicaid conveyed automatic eligibility on children receiving AFDC (Mullen, 1996a). The absence of an AFDC program operating under federal guidelines will complicate the process of applying for these programs and may add to the problem of geographic inequality. A further wrinkle involves children in state custody. Since 1962, federal dollars have paid the foster care costs of AFDC-eligible children, while others have been supported with state and county funds. The replacement of AFDC with TANF leaves no clear basis for eligibility for federal foster care monies. At present, the Department of Health and Human Services has directed states to base that decision on the child's actual or hypothetical eligibility for AFDC in 1996 before the PR&WOA took effect (Woodard, 1999). Obviously, this hypothetical standard will require revision as time passes and actual 1996 eligibility rolls become less useful.

Another consequence of the decentralization of policy making under the PR&WOA is that advocacy groups for children, relative caregivers, and others now have both a harder time influencing policies and a more difficult task in informing their constituencies of welfare benefits and rights. Diverse groups such as the Children's Defense Fund, Child Welfare League of America, the Association of Retired Persons (which together form a coalition called Generations United), as well as the National Foster Parent Association all take a role in advocacy for dependent children and their relative caregivers. It is obvious from publications of these groups that it is now extremely difficult for them to publicize welfare changes and advocate for their constituencies (e.g. AARP Grandparent Information Center, 1997; Crumbley & Little, 1997; Takas, 1995). Isolation from effective advocacy is likely to leave kinship care providers even more vulnerable to misperceptions that, as a county-club set among welfare recipients (Vobejda & Havemann, 1999), they and the children in their care are the new unworthy poor.

## NOTE

1. This section is adapted from Hegar, R. (1999), The cultural roots of kinship care. In R. Hegar and M. Scannapieco (eds), *Kinship foster care: Policy, practice, and research*, pp. 17–27. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

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## Book Reviews

James Midgley, Martin B. Tracy and Michelle Livermore (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Policy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999. \$85.00 hardcover.

Although social policy is no longer the stepchild of social work curriculum, it nevertheless fails to command as much attention or interest of social workers as, for example, subjects dealing with direct practice or clinical treatment. That's a pity since all social work practice, direct or indirect, takes place within the framework of extant social policies—a point that would not be lost on those who read this excellent text for graduate and undergraduate students in social work and other cognate disciplines and professions.

Organized in five sections, its 33 chapters cover a wide territory. The six chapters in the first section discuss such topics as the definition of social policy, an overview of American social policy, economic dimensions of social policy, policy analysis, policy practice, and the impact of social policy. Section two contains five chapters that trace the history of American social policy beginning from Colonial times to the post-Reagan era. The largest section, consisting of twelve chapters, is devoted to social policy and the social services. Here one finds discussion of such bread and butter topics for social workers as child and family welfare services, income maintenance, social security, the correctional system, housing policy, policies for people with disabilities, employment policy, education and social welfare policy, urban development policy, and social policies dealing with the elderly, health care, and mental health. So extensive is this section that the book might even appropriately be titled *Handbook of Social Policy and Social Services*.

The eight chapters on the institutional approach to social policy, conservative approaches to social policy, critical social policy, welfare pluralism and social policy, feminist approaches to social policy, the social development perspective in social policy, race, politics and social policy, and social policy and physical environment are organized under the rubric of the political economy of



social policy in section four. The final section has two chapters—one on international aspects of social policy and the other offering conjectures about the future of social policy.

The book is written primarily for a U.S. audience. Despite occasional references to social policies and services in other countries, the focus of the book is exclusively on social policy in this country. Students and instructors would find this a helpful introduction to the major social policies and social services in the United States. It is unrealistic to expect an introductory textbook to have the depth or the detail required for more advanced study. Readers especially interested in such areas as the role of social movements, faith-based organizations, single issue pressure groups, and lobbyists in the process of policy formulation will want to read specialized books. Similarly, while allusions to such topics as the role of judiciary in policy development, the values and ideologies undergirding different social policies, the manifest versus the latent functions of social policy, and the unintended consequences of social policy are made in the various chapters, readers expecting fuller treatments will need to turn to advanced texts.

Will the non-poor continue to be the principal beneficiaries of policies ostensibly enacted to help support the poor? What will be the impact of the revolution in information technology on social services? Will social policy in the United States, dominated by income support and social service approaches, incorporate a social development perspective? Will the welfare state—arguably the most notable social and political invention of the twentieth century—expand, shrink or evolve in a different direction? Questions such as these are stimulated by a careful reading of this extremely useful and welcome handbook, noteworthy both for its comprehensiveness and for the clarity of exposition by most of the contributors, all of whom are well-known experts in their respective fields.

The final chapter by the editors offers a number of cautious and plausible speculations about the future of social policy in the United States. On present indication, it does look likely that U.S. policies will continue to be shaped incrementally; that they will not always be mutually compatible; that they would be fragmented and pluralistic; that they would be created within

the dominant framework of a market economy and that, alas, the huge economic disparities, further sharpened during the current economic boom, will not be attenuated anytime soon.

Shanti K. Khinduka

Washington University in St. Louis

Cynthia Duncan, *World's Apart: Why Poverty Persists in Rural America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999. \$27.50 hardcover.

Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, current national policy requires states to provide benefits to adult participants only when they actively seek employment, become employed, or participate in employment training activities. Welfare reform, embedded in the theory of labor-force attachment, will fail in areas of the country where jobs are scarce and a few politically powerful individuals control opportunity. Discrimination, whether overt or latent, provides a significant barrier to self-sufficiency, undermining the efforts of participants to end their dependency on welfare.

*World's Apart* takes the reader deep into the heart of rural poverty. Three geographical areas are examined—areas that have depressed labor markets and where opportunity is in short supply. In the first two areas, Blackwell—a community in the Appalachian Mountains, and Dahlia—a community in the Mississippi Delta—inequality and lack of opportunity are functions of overt discrimination. Here, discrimination coupled with a depressed labor market serve as structural barriers for which the welfare participant has no recourse. No amount of legislated work requirements can mitigate the conditions that prevent the participant from achieving self-sufficiency.

Blackwell's poverty population consists of primarily low-skilled whites, while Dahlia's poor are primarily black. Despite the difference in ethnicity, both impoverished populations experience very similar inequality and oppression. Opportunity is dished out as a reward or withheld as a punishment by the controlling elite. These oligarchies have a long history as part and parcel of the social, economic, and even spiritual fabric of the community.

In contrast to the discriminatory practices of Blackwell and Dahlia, Grey Mountain—a rural community in New England—has embraced its poverty population, developing opportunity and fostering equality for its poorest members. By comparing and contrasting the three rural communities, Cynthia Duncan is able to provide examples of the crippling effects of discrimination on a community. In Blackwell and Dahlia, corrupt politics, fueled by the power-elite, leave the community incapable of development and growth, thereby feeding a viscous cycle of unemployment and welfare dependency. In contrast, Grey Mountain is experiencing growth, development, and stability due to its efforts to assist all its impoverished citizens, regardless of ethnicity or community status.

Duncan explores the three communities using qualitative methods that include examination of social history, economic analysis, observation within the community, and in-depth interviews. The author quantitatively examines ten decades of Census Bureau data in order to demonstrate the perpetuation of poverty in rural communities. By using this mixed methodological approach, Duncan successfully opens up the rural community to the outside world, allowing the reader to understand the nature of power relationships and their impact on the powerless individual, as well as the community.

As any good social scientist will, Duncan translates statistics and observations through the use of the research subject's voice. By providing analysis in juxtaposition to personal interviews, the author brings cold and distant data to life in a way that brings the reader into the stories of lives lived in rural poverty. This is a powerful technique that is difficult to accomplish. Duncan demonstrates that she has mastered the craft of telling the tale while reporting the research. It is also evident in her writing that she is passionate about her role as a researcher and author of poverty studies.

*World's Apart* is a well-written book that should be included in any college course on poverty and inequality in modern America. It serves as a reminder that despite the efforts and desires of the architects of welfare reform, poverty persists and will continue to persist where opportunity is lacking and discrimination is flourishing. The book also demonstrates the practical application

of social development theory, which calls for the integration of economic and social investments as strategies in combating poverty. Community organizers, policy makers, and political leaders, whether they are from rural or urban communities, would do well to read this book.

Perhaps the only drawback to Duncan's work is that, while it was written in an era of welfare reform and retrenchments in social services, the author does not acknowledge the impact of the new legislation on the population under study. To some extent, welfare reform, with its mandates for employment-related activities, will mitigate the lack of access to opportunity. How much it is able to do so is not clear, and some would argue that the legislation will further entrench discriminatory practices in communities such as Blackwell and Dahlia. Whatever the case may be, the author needs to visit the subject and identify the impact of welfare reform. This would only strengthen an already strong presentation on rural poverty in America.

William Rainford

University of California, Berkeley

Frank F. Furstenberg Jr., Thomas D. Cook, Jacquelynne Eccles, Glen H. Elder Jr. and Arnold Sameroff. *Managing to Make It: Urban Families and Adolescent Success*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999. \$32.50 hardcover.

While there have been many studies on parenting and the well-being of children, too few of them have focused explicitly on the link between family and community that may play a central role in the transition to adulthood. This book, by sociologist Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr. and an interdisciplinary team of colleagues, is about parenting strategies that are tied to successful early adolescent development within the context of disadvantaged communities.

*Managing to Make It* builds on the theoretical traditions of Weber and Dahrendorf who conceptualized ways in which structural opportunities and limitations, or life chances, are internalized and thereby shape future possibilities. The authors note the importance of interdisciplinary scholarship including the work of Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn, Coleman, Jencks and

Mayer, South and Crowder, and Wilson in laying a foundation for this study. Though important research on adolescent success by economists Green and White is omitted, the attempt to break down disciplinary boundaries is one strength of this book. Other strengths of the book include its balanced attention to individual and structural factors associated with adolescent success and its especially thorough review of the social capital literature.

In this seven year study, Furstenberg and his colleagues used various methodologies including ethnographic research in five Philadelphia neighborhoods, a survey of 486 parents and young adolescents from 65 census tracts in low-income sections of the city, and in-depth follow-up interviews with 35 of the survey participants. The researchers offer a balanced discussion of the quality of the data, and provide helpful methodological appendices. They are careful not to overstate their findings given the use of telephone surveys, operationalization of neighborhoods as census tracts, and exclusion of the wealthiest and poorest sections of Philadelphia. Furstenberg and his colleagues detail these potential limitations, and then go on to note that their sample is representative of households with listed numbers living in broad areas of the inner city. The authors make effective use of their qualitative material to illustrate quantitative findings.

The central premise of the book is that parents provide a key connection between the larger community and adolescent well-being. Further, the role of parents in managing risks and opportunities outside the home may be particularly important for adolescents who live in disadvantaged communities. Furstenberg and his colleagues explore ways in which parents develop opportunities for adolescents; supervise relationships between adolescents, peers, and authority figures; and monitor interactions between adolescents and institutions including schools, churches, social service agencies, and corporate employers in the larger community.

The researchers find compelling evidence that managing risks and opportunities for adolescents is a parenting role of central importance. They also find that the majority of parents in their study are functioning relatively well in this role, despite the fact that almost half of them are living in or near poverty. They note, however, that success in early adolescence depends on effective

parenting in combination with social opportunity as evidenced by good schools, good social services, and good employment settings in the larger community. Within the urban context, parents who are warm and caring, effective disciplinarians, able to give adolescents increasing amounts of autonomy as they grow, skilled at locating opportunities for their children in the larger community, and capable of advocating for them in various settings outside of the home improve their children's chances of success in early adolescence. The researchers also find that this kind of parenting is just as common in single-parent as in two-parent families. Further, parents who live in poor neighborhoods are just as likely to effectively manage risks and opportunities for their adolescents as parents living in neighborhoods with more resources.

In fact, one of the most important contributions of this book is its challenge to our assumptions about the strength of neighborhood effects on adolescent outcomes. Furstenberg and his colleagues explore several factors that are widely thought to be central to the successful transition to adulthood and found more variance within neighborhoods than between neighborhoods. On this key point, they write "We found virtually no neighborhood-level differences in academic competence, acting out, parents' assessments of their children's adjustment, or the children's self-assessment of their mental health. The single exception to this pattern was involvement in prosocial activities, which was moderately associated with neighborhood quality and level of advantage" (p.219). The authors note that similar findings are emerging from other current studies, and suggest that we may be overestimating neighborhood effects on early adolescent outcomes. They are careful to note that the strength of neighborhood effects on later adolescence needs further research.

This book is well-written and, with the exception of some table headings, generally well-edited. Furstenberg and his colleagues have done an expert job reporting their findings about the central role of parenting in early adolescent success without letting readers forget the larger context of the challenges parents face in an age of dwindling public resources for child and family welfare. The book is the first in a series sponsored by the MacArthur Foundation on the development of adolescents living

in high-risk environments. If this first offering is any indication, the series will make an important contribution to the literature on successful youth development in urban areas. *Managing to Make It* will be particularly useful to those teaching courses on child welfare, urban studies, social and economic development, and social welfare policy.

Deborah Page-Adams  
University of Kansas

Kevin Bales, *Disposable people: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999. \$24.95 hardcover.

The central argument of Kevin Bales' *Disposable People* is that slavery—understood as the total control of one person by another for purposes of economic exploitation—has not disappeared globally since the abolition of the slave trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the contrary, in some places such as Mauritania old forms of slavery have persisted and adapted while in places such as Thailand, it has increased with economic growth. Bales provides five instances of contemporary slavery—Thailand, Mauritania, Brazil, Pakistan and India. Each country study includes personal histories, a description of the political, legal and economic context and reference to both the local and global forces at work, including efforts to end slavery. In each case he seeks to understand slavery culturally and contextually, without forgiving it.

While the subject matter of the book is grim and disturbing, its message is hopeful and Bales has a clear vision of what should be done. The hope stems from the author's own sense of moral outrage as well as from the people in the national and local level monitoring, campaigning and relief organisations with whom he worked. Sometimes as research subjects and sometimes as research collaborators, they contributed generously to making the study possible, as Bales is quick to acknowledge. Along with international organisations opposing slavery, he calls them the 'new abolitionists' and trusts that his research will help provide legitimacy and publicity for their cause.

However, hope does not spring from the lives described by Bales. Relating the story of Siri, a child prostitute enslaved in a

Thai brothel, he talks of how he 'looked into the flat deadness of her eyes, listened to the hopelessness in her voice, and saw the destruction of her personality and her will to escape'. Bales sensitively addresses the physical and psychological traumas of his research subjects, recognising how violence, vulnerability and despair can wear down collective resistance, the individual spirit and personal self-esteem. However, no matter how his evidence and invective leads us to despise the slaveholders, brothel keepers and child kidnappers, in the end he does not let his readers off the hook. On the contrary, he shows how slavery in the new global economy binds our lives together and for people in industrialised countries how they are implicated in this social horror as consumers and investors.

In his personal narrative style as well as his determination to let people's lived experience of slavery tell its own story, Bales' work has that same 'angry young man' quality as the work of Jeremy Seabrook. As such it is important and valued polemic but it is also weightier and has more in common with academic texts such as Hugh Tinker's seminal historical work *A New System of Slavery* on Indian indentured labour, than with those writing in the *New Internationalist* tradition. Bales' work is firmly grounded theoretically, being rooted in a solid understanding of globalisation debates, which in turn allows Bales to draw robust and consistent policy conclusions. In this respect, *Disposable People* has something in common with Nigel Harris's book on international labour migration, *The New Untouchables*, although the framework and conclusions differ. Put another way, that the book is intensely readable and that it has an unequivocal political agenda does not in any way detract from its intellectual rigour.

Bales sees the causes of new slavery as the population explosion that has flooded the world's labour markets; economic globalisation and modernisation of agriculture that has led to landlessness and dispossession; and the resulting 'chaos of greed, violence and corruption'. All these reinforce poverty and vulnerability, which in turn are the life-blood of new slavery. The economic returns from new slavery are much greater than old slavery and the risks are fewer. While just as controlling of people's lives and choices, new slavery is short-termist, characterised by job insecurity and 'just-in-time' production strategies. The emphasis



is no longer on slave-ownership for life but slave-holding for as long as a slave is useful—hence the title, *Disposable People*.

The most poorly developed part of Bales thesis can be found in the contradictions in his argument on modernisation. This he says is a good thing because it can lead to employment and education, which provide an escape from slavery. However, he also argues for example, that modernisation can destroy the traditional rules and bonds that might have protected potential slaves. Despite the contesting intellectual paradigms echoed here, Kevin Bales' book is an important contribution overall and will act as a compelling catalyst for further research into new slavery globally. Moreover, for those concerned with social development, it stands as an important reminder of how global social policy solutions have to be found at the international as well as national and local levels. Moreover, these in turn cannot be divorced from the workings of the global economy and the human rights agenda. In terms of the latter, Bales leaves us in no doubt that in terms of slavery, cultural relativism cannot be tolerated and only a universalist perspective will do.

Jo Beall

London School of Economics

Kimberly A. Maynard, *Healing Communities in Conflict: International Assistance in Complex Emergencies*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. \$27.50 hardcover.

During the eight years since the end of the Cold War, the world has witnessed horrific levels of violence played out in internal conflicts within states. International relief efforts have attempted to rebuild communities and alleviate the tremendous hardship of affected populations with mixed results. Social workers have not played a prominent role in international assistance, and as such, within the profession, the discourse on armed conflict is often limited to the psychosocial impact of trauma on war-affected refugee populations resettled in northern countries. This book places the focus directly on conflict-ravaged communities and the responsibility of those who intercede to incorporate a systems approach in collaborative efforts to promote recovery and a sustainable peace.

In this book, Kimberly Maynard notes the intense personal animosity and intergroup hostility underlying contemporary warfare, suggesting that this violence might best be conceptualized as *identity conflict*. This intimate warfare results in a soaring percentage of civilian casualties and is fueled by the ready availability of arms from the Cold War stockpile as well as by an abundance of newly manufactured weapons. Basic means of survival are targeted in such conflicts, as is the very framework of community cohesion and cooperation, resulting in societal implosion leading to complex emergencies. International intercession is based on outdated patterns of warfare, which do not involve such pervasive societal interaction.

This book is divided into two parts. The first establishes the context for Maynard's thesis that the nature of contemporary conflict requires new approaches to humanitarian intercession. The second part offers a conceptual and practical framework for international assistance and community rehabilitation. The five chapters comprising the first section of the book include a discussion of the tools and premises of international humanitarian assistance, and an overview of how identity conflicts evolve into complex emergencies. Of particular interest to the social work profession is Maynard's discussion of the ramifications of such emergencies for all sectors of the society: political, economic and food security, health, vulnerable populations, psychosocial distress, human rights, and environmental devastation. One of the severe and lasting consequences of such emergencies is forced migration: movements of large numbers of uprooted people fleeing ethnic cleansing, human rights violations, persecution, forced relocation, and other threats to security. This sets the stage for a comprehensive discussion of the process of repatriation, the decision-making process and the often thorny reintegration issues that may accompany the return—for both the returnees and the community. The final chapter in Part 1 focuses on communities ravaged by identity conflict, a perspective that has not been widely explored. This particularly intimate form of warfare destroys community life, creating great challenges for reconstruction and reintegration under conditions of distrust and ongoing security threats, competing claims of ownership of resources, and the shredding of intergroup reliance.

In the three chapters that comprise Part 2, Maynard examines multidimensional approaches to rebuilding community cohesion and healing. The author presents specific strategies and programmatic approaches which, she contends, must be adopted by international agencies in complex emergencies. Programs must fit the context, be sustainable locally, and operate with a long-term view of managing conflict and rebuilding civil society, a requisite for sustaining peaceful relations. The final chapter advocates for a systems perspective in international development assistance, covering an expanded time frame from the prevention of conflict to long-term development. This will require substantial modification in the operating procedures, mandates, coordination and time frames currently used in international assistance. Maynard challenges the international community to take up this vision, and to create innovative new parameters for intercession in complex emergencies.

Drawing from a wide range of disciplines, the author provides a timely and constructive critique of international assistance and its role in complex emergencies in this admirably integrative work. As a practitioner, researcher, and consultant with extensive experience in disaster management and international aid, Maynard incorporates into her presentation firsthand knowledge of the complex emergencies generated by these identity conflicts, in places such as Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Caucasus, Tajikistan, and Kosovo. It is this experience "on the ground" that gives the book particular authority.

Fascinating issues touched on by the author suggest to this reader key areas for further analysis. One is the question of sovereignty, and the respective degrees of autonomy expected and required by the local authorities as well as by the international aid agencies. Development aid often comes with conditions attached, related to the nature of the market system and "democratization" as defined by northern countries. War-torn states such as Eritrea have asserted their sovereign right to set policy and development directions on their own terms, to the point of asking the international non-governmental organizations to leave the country. Lessons learned by the international community in this setting could be put to good use in relation to Maynard's proposals for new approaches to aid.

A second point that deserves further attention relates to the underlying conditions and inputs that fuel armed conflict and complex emergencies. To what extent are international aid agencies exponents of these same conditions? This is a complex question beyond the scope of this book. However, the question of how legitimacy is conferred on the activities of the international donors, by whom, in whose interests, and to what ends bears examining in any discussion of outside intervention. Third, while identity conflict is a useful organizing concept that can be applied in many contexts, it would be useful to explore conditions such as environmental scarcity that might foster such conflicts.

*Healing Communities in Conflict: International Assistance in Complex Emergencies* is a singular contribution to the ongoing debate about international aid. It is well organized and well referenced. This book will be of particular interest to scholars, graduate students, and practitioners, and deserves a place in every library of international social work and social welfare.

Nancy Farwell

University of Washington

Leroy Pelton, *Doing Justice*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999. \$21.95 paperback.

Almost all topics in social welfare contain references to some form of justice, and they take the form of:

- In a just society such and such should be done . . .
- This form of redistribution should take place, so that past injustices can be corrected.
- Such and such behavior is deviant behavior, and justice requires that it be dealt with in such and such manner . . .

The term justice is used as a slogan to support or oppose social policy. It is important that this slogan is deconstructed, or at the least put in perspective. The term stands for too many templates of state behavior. Leroy Pelton's work, *Doing Justice* makes an important contribution toward such deconstruction. He has argued that "[I]t is time to recognize and respect group diversity and experiences as a pervasive fact of life, but as a poor and unjust basis for the formation of public policy" (p. 218). Put

in a different manner: membership in any group should not be a reason for the state to reward or punish a person. Pelton's own words suggest that A[g]roup preference policies violate the first principle of a just society" (p. 16). Seen from this perspective, what has become known as affirmative action is a violation of norms of justice. Attributes or behaviors of individuals, however pathetic or commendable, should be seen as property of individuals, and not as property of groups. Any public policy to reward or punish such property of individuals as generalizable to groups is unjust. Pelton goes on to elaborate: the only just principle for a state to engage in is *non-discrimination [italics ours]*. The principle of non-discrimination rules out preferring or excluding any group, whether constructed by race, ethnicity, or other criteria. Such non-discrimination policy should be applied to the state's policies in welfare programs, in social service programs, in community regulation, in administering the criminal justice systems and in managing conditions of peace or war.

To put Pelton's work in a context of history of social thought, one needs to recall that the word "liberal" has two very different meanings. The first meaning applies to an American context, where "liberal" means a belief system that is for state spending in programs that supposedly benefit disadvantaged groups. The second meaning applies to an English context, where "liberal" means a belief system which is for safeguarding individual liberty which can be compromised either due to state policy (thus the state endangering individual liberty) or due to other forms of group behavior (thus other groups endangering individual liberty). The two meanings of the term liberty are somewhat opposed to each other. That is, when the state engages in "liberal" action of the first kind, it may be in violation of "liberal" orientation of the second kind.

This is a very serious work. It probably would have been an even better work if it explored into the various forms of justice. Elsewhere, I have suggested that (see Chatterjee, 1999, pp. 66–71) as the basic technological slope of a society begins to generate more and more surplus, the state's justice functions also keep increasing, and include *protective justice, correctional justice, distributive justice, restorative justice, and representational justice*. The most primitive function of the modern state is protection (from

internal and external predators). With affluence and prosperity, protection from poverty, from ignorance and from disease become additional functions of the state. These additional protective functions overlap with justice functions, because the state creates *group constructs* (like children, aged, handicapped, disabled of several kinds, etc) with which it tries to protect certain vulnerable populations.

When protective justice functions of the modern state are threatened, it must resort to its correctional justice functions. Or, it may resort to its distributive justice or restorative justice functions. Here again, the state must create group constructs to carry on these three functions.

Then comes the problem with representative justice. On one hand, the state is beholden to powerful groups because its very political composition is influenced by the behavior of these groups. On the other hand, it must struggle to protect the relatively powerless groups which are often without representation. A modern state needs to see that groups without serious representation in the legislative arena are not totally rendered into political powerlessness or groups without much economic success are not left without legal defense when facing the correctional justice system.

The concept of equality overlaps with the concept of protection, and justice. Thus we are faced with equal protection, and equality in various forms of justice. Equality of opportunity becomes another extension of the protective functions of the state. Must equality of opportunity be a prelude to equality of outcome? If yes, then individuals disadvantaged in the opportunity ladder somehow must be carried over to the successful outcome arena. If no, then disadvantaged individuals are only given an opportunity to fail, and it is not worthwhile to have such a policy.

How would Pelton feel about groups (yes, groups) who are at a disadvantage due to the sheer accident of birth? In a civil society, where one is born should be of no consequence, or should it be?

A debate which took place in the U.S. during the 1970's (and really was a reincarnation of earlier debates in Europe) are of some importance here. Rawls (1971) thought that the only way for the state to reduce inequality was for the state to engage in some form of distributive justice. Nozick (1974) argued that as long as

property is acquired in a lawful way, the state cannot take it away for the purposes of redistribution. Inherent in this debate was a conflict faced by most modern states: how to manage the pull for redistribution which should result in equality with the pull for non-intervention or total non-discrimination which should result in liberty? Every modern state is required to manage these two opposing pulls. On one hand, those who are successful in the marketplace are for liberty, so they can enjoy their success. On the other hand, those who are not successful in the marketplace want equality, so that they can have second or third chances to enter the game. For the state to balance the act, group constructs are one way to reduce to pull from the libertarians, and total no-discrimination is another way to reduce the pull from the egalitarians.

Pelton does an excellent job in making a case for the libertarians, and it is important to read his book to learn the arguments for this case. However, developing public policy for the modern state is a balancing act, and Pelton's book educates us about only one side of such an act.

Pranab Chatterjee  
Case Western Reserve University

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## Book Notes

Robert B. Hill, *The Strengths of African American Families: 25 Years Later*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999. \$49.00 hardcover, \$19.50 papercover.

Twenty five years ago, Robert Hill published a short volume contesting the popular belief that African Americans were challenged by a host of social pathologies as revealed in high rates of poverty, welfare dependency, crime, teen pregnancy and single parenthood. Although it was true that the rates of these pathologies were higher among African Americans than the white population, Hill pointed out that the vast majority of African Americans were not living in poverty; nor were they on welfare or in jail or living as unmarried, single parents. In fact, the vast majority lived normal lives and went about their business much as their white counterparts did. However, the media consistently presented the view of African Americans as poor, deviant and immoral. This reinforced racist attitudes and the equally reprehensible liberal tendency to patronize African Americans by insisting that they needed charity and other forms of 'help'. Worse, the institutionalization of the social pathology view obscured the real strengths of the African American community. By emphasizing these strengths, Hill presented a very different image of African Americans as family centered, religious, hard working and community oriented.

Although Hill's contribution was not properly recognized in either media or academic circles, it is today more widely accepted that the social pathology perspective has presented a biased and racist view of the African American community. With the wider acceptance of a strengths perspective in social work and social policy, more emphasis is now being placed on people's capacities rather than deficits. While many will continue to dismiss Hill's contributions, his argument is a powerful one which has important implications for social work and social policy.

Hill's book shows how a proper understanding of the strengths of the African American community can inform policy makers. He does not challenge the fact that there are many



problems to be resolved but he contends that they can best be addressed by harnessing strengths rather than assuming that African Americans should be treated as passive recipients of services. For example, the plethora of local community development projects operated by African Americans shows how solutions based on a strengths perspective can address the community's pressing needs. Many other examples are given. This slim but important book contains important lessons and should be widely read.

Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999. \$21.95 papercover.

Social scientists have produced elaborate theories to explain social change. These theories often focus on wider, interpersonal social and economic forces emanating from the social fabric of society. While these forces play a critical role, the role of individual human effort is frequently overlooked or downplayed. This is unfortunate for, ultimately, social change depends on human action, and the struggles of those who seek to modify existing social arrangements.

Many academic analyses of the resurgence of feminism in the last thirty or so years have been published and they have shown that complex social and economic factors have contributed to what many feminist writers call the 'second wave' of the women's movement. Unlike the first wave, which was primarily focused on political rights, the second wave has been characterized by a more wide ranging attempt to address reproductive rights, promote economic equality and address the issue of poverty and deprivation among women.

In this engaging book, Flora Davis explicitly states her intention to avoid theoretical and academic speculation and to focus instead on the women who struggled and campaigned for enhanced rights. Davis offers a very readable and illuminating narrative showing how ordinary people confronted with injustice sought to right wrongs and change the prevailing culture which relegated women to subordinate roles in many sphere of social and economic life. They may not have changed the world but, to a significant extent, they succeeded in overturning deeply entrenched practices and beliefs.

The book offers personalized accounts of a variety of campaigns fought by women on several fronts. It begins with the airline stewardesses who successfully challenged the practice of retiring older women and those who married. Succeeding chapters range over the founding of NOW, the battle over the ERA, the rights of women in academic institutions, the enhanced representation of women in politics, abortion and lesbian rights and many other issues. Davis also emphasizes the fact that the struggle is not over. Indeed, the campaign for enhanced equality and rights has been vigorously opposed by those who believe that women should fulfill traditional maternal and housekeeping roles.

This is a wonderfully accessible and enjoyable book which should be read by all who are interested in the way personal struggles can create wider social movements that address social ills. Rich in detail and narrative, it will inspire and energize all of those who believe that it is possible to bring about meaningful social change.

Martha Shirk, Neil G. Bennett and J. Lawrence Aber, *Lives on the Line: American Families and the Struggle to Make Ends Meet*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999. \$24.00 hardcover.

Readers may respond with little enthusiasm to the publication of yet another book on the subject of poverty in America. Poverty has become a major topic subject of scholarly research and numerous statistical analysis, policy analyses and ethnographic studies of poverty have appeared in recent years. While some may argue that little more needs to be said on the subject, the problem of poverty remains critical, limiting the life chances and aspirations of millions of people. The need for policy relevant research that may eventually result in effective action is an urgent one.

In this highly readable book, Shirk, Bennett and Aber examine different aspects of poverty. Shirk uses her journalistic skills to provide descriptive personal profiles of ten American families living in poverty. The ten families are drawn from different parts of the United States and include people of very different backgrounds and circumstances. Both urban and rural families are included. The profiles are reminiscent of Oscar Lewis's ethnographies and provide a particularly realistic account of that it is like to live in conditions of deprivation and adverse opportunity. Linking the profiles to statistical data about poverty, Bennett

draws on his professional skills as a demographer to show how the subjective experience of poverty translates into national data of disturbing dimensions. Aber, in turn, links the ethnographic and statistical data to an interpretation of the causes of poverty and offers policy proposals for its amelioration.

The book stresses the fact that poverty in America thrives in a context of affluence. In many nations, poverty is directly associated with a lack of economic development. In the United States, on the other hand, its causes lie in a multiplicity of factors that operate at both the individual and societal level. The book suggests that low educational attainment, young parenthood and a lack of adequately remunerated jobs are of primary importance. The fact that these causal factors have not been addressed is, they argue, nothing short of a national disgrace. The United States is notorious for having the highest rate of child poverty in the Western, industrial world.

The authors have not only produced a readable and insightful account of what it is like to be poor in America, but effectively combine statistical findings and policy recommendations to offer a comprehensive view of the problem. The book will be of particular value to undergraduate students who will find that the linking of narrative, statistical data and policy analysis offers meaningful insights into poverty in America today.

Maurice Mullard and Paul Spicker, *Social Policy in a Changing Society*. New York: Routledge, 1999. \$80.00 hardcover, \$24.88 papercover.

The study of social policy has historically been a descriptive exercise dominated by descriptive accounts of historical events, legislative provisions and administrative practices. The lack of theoretical sophistication in the field has long been noted by commentators in other disciplines who have effectively used theory to frame their own analyses of social policy issues. Over the years, social policy writers within social work and social administration have responded to these criticisms and today, theoretical insights are much more widely used.

This book shows how effectively theory can be used in a textbook to inform social work and social administration students of the assumptions that pervade the policy making and

implementation process. Consisting of 15 chapters, it is extremely wide ranging and informative. It also shows how exciting the subject can be when properly linked to theoretical discourse. A very attractive feature of the book is the way it draws on theory from various fields, including political science, economics and sociology. Several chapters deal with the most important ideological perspectives in social policy covering conservatism, social democracy, liberal individualism and Marxism. Other chapters discuss Keynesianism, global economy theory, communitarianism and postmodernism. Another strength of the book is the way the authors link theory to the practical problems which have long been the purview of social policy analysis. Issues such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, social justice and even public expenditure are linked to wider theoretical debates.

Although the book is written for British students, it will also be useful for students in other countries. It can be effectively used as a supplemental text for students in the United States who are not adequately exposed to theoretical issues and who will benefit from its wider perspective. The book has many strengths and will appeal to students. It should be widely prescribed.



## CORRESPONDING AUTHORS

Richard K. Caputo, Ph.D.  
Professor of Social Policy and Research  
Wurzweiler School of Social Work  
Yeshiva University  
Belfer Hall  
2495 Amsterdam Ave.  
New York, NY 10033-3299  
email: caputo@ymail.yu.edu

Richard Hoefer, Ph.D.  
School of Social Welfare  
P.O. Box 19129  
University of Texas at Arlington  
Arlington, TX 76019

Joshua Miller, Ph.D.  
Smith College School for Social Work  
Lilly Hall  
Northampton, MA 01063  
email: Jlmiller@sophia.smith.edu

Stephen A. Kapp  
Assistant Professor  
School of Social Welfare  
University of Kansas  
105 Twente Hall  
Lawrence, KS 66045-2510

George Wilson  
Department of Sociology  
Ferre Building  
Coral Gables, Florida 33124  
email: Gwilson@umiami.ir.miami.edu

Rebecca L. Hegar, PhD  
Maria Scannapieco, PhD  
School of Social Work  
University of Texas at Arlington  
Box 19129  
Arlington, TX 70119

M. Daniel Bennett, Jr.  
Mark W. Fraser  
Jordan Institute for Families  
School of Social Work  
University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill  
301 Pittsboro St., CB#3550  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3550  
email: ROVNQUE@aol.com  
mfraser@email.unc.edu

Eleanor Wint, Ph.D.  
Programme Co-ordinator ETD  
Community Development  
Education  
University of Natal  
Private Bag x10  
Dalbridge 4014  
Republic of South Africa  
email: mataylor@comp.uark.edu

Magalene Harris Taylor  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Sociology  
211 Old Main  
University of Arkansas  
Fayetteville, AR 72701  
email: mataylor@comp.uark.edu

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 Managing Editor  
 Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare  
 School of Social Work  
 1201 Oliver Street  
 Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5034 USA  
 TEL (616) 387-3205  
 FAX (616) 387-3217





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#### *Founding Editors*

Norman Goroff and Ralph Segalman

Western Michigan University  
JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE  
School of Social Work  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

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