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DISTRIBUTION OF THE FEDERAL TAX BURDEN, SHARE OF AFTER-TAX INCOME, AND AFTER-TAX INCOME BY PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATION AND HOUSEHOLD TYPE, 1981–2000

RICHARD K. CAPUTO, PH.D.

Findings of this study show that the lowest- and middle-income households overall and those with children had lower total effective Federal tax rates during the Clinton administration than during the Reagan and G.H. Bush administrations. Concomitantly, the top one percent and highest income quintile households overall, those with children, and those headed by an elderly person age 65 or older without children had higher total effective Federal tax rates during the Clinton administration. Nearly every category of household type and income level measured in this study had more after-Federal-tax income during the Clinton administration than either the Reagan or G.H. Bush administrations. The study also found that the shares of after-Federal-tax income were equitable across the three presidential administrations for the lowest-income quintile households with children, while the share of after-Federal-tax income for middle-income quintile households with children actually declined during the Clinton administration. The study concludes by noting that where it counts most for individuals and families, namely in the amount of after-tax money available to households, there were no differences by presidential administration during the post-Reagan era among low-income households and where differences were found for middle-income households, they were opposite what more liberal or less centrist-left Democrats would have hoped for.

Key Words: *After-tax income, Federal tax burden, tax policies of Reagan, G.H. Bush, and Clinton administrations*

This paper examined the distribution of the total effective tax rates, the share of after-tax income, and the amount of after-tax income among the bottom, middle, and highest household income quintiles, as well as the top one percent, by presidential administration between 1981 and 2000. It followed an earlier paper (Caputo, 2004) that examined a variety of socioeconomic indicators for productivity, corporate profits, and poverty by presidential administration in the latter part of the twentieth century. The former study indicated that the "great divide" thesis regarding the U.S. economy before and after the Reagan administration depended on which measure of the economy was the focus of attention. In addition, on some measures where before and after differences were detected, the nature of those differences was paradoxical, suggesting that Democratic presidential administrations catered to constituencies thought to be more aligned with Republican administrations. Corporate profits as a share of national income, for example, were highest in Democratic rather than Republican administrations and despite the increased income inequality found for the post-Reagan years, individual and family poverty rates remained relatively constant after edging upward from the 1970s but still below 1960s highs. Further, findings of that study provided some evidence corroborating neoclassic economic theory in regard to incentives and productivity and they presented a challenge to activists who equate poverty as a natural or an inevitable byproduct of the more market-driven fiscal and monetary policies of the 1980s and 1990s.

The purpose of the present study was to determine the extent that those bearing the brunt of the Federal tax burden throughout the economic booms of the mid-to-late 1980s and 1990s differed by presidential administration and household type. At the time of this study, tax-related data comparable to that used here were not available for either the 1961–1979 or post-2000 periods. Did the distribution of the Federal tax burdens among household income groups during the Reagan administration differ from that of the G.H. Bush administration or was it similar? Did the distribution of the Federal tax burdens during the Clinton administration shift from those of either the Reagan or G.H. Bush administration, or from both of them? To what extent did different lower income household types, for example those with children and

those headed by seniors, contribute disproportionately more or less shares of the Federal tax burden and after-tax income than comparably structured upper income households under the Reagan, G.H. Bush, or Clinton administrations?

The Reagan and Clinton administrations presided over substantive changes in tax policy. The Economic Recovery Act of 1981 reduced the top marginal income tax rate from 70 percent to 50 percent in 1982, also effectively reducing the top rate paid on capital gains from 28 percent to 20 percent, and cut rates for lower income individuals between 1982 and 1984. The Reagan administration, however, followed the 1981 tax cuts with two tax increases. The Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act in 1982 targeted corporations and it buttressed the Social Security Trust Funds through the payroll tax, the latter of which disproportionately affected lower income earners because of its regressive nature vis-à-vis the income tax (Hulten & O'Neill, 1982; Krugman, 2004; Steuerle, 1992). The Tax Reform Act of 1986 further reduced marginal rates, this time in stages over 1987 and 1988. The top marginal rate was reduced from 50 percent to 28 percent, while the corporate rate was reduced from 50 percent to 35 percent. The G.H. Bush administration in 1990 and the Clinton administration in 1993 both increased taxes in an effort to reduce Federal budget deficits (Joint Economic Committee, 1995). In 1990, Congress increased the top marginal tax rate to 31 percent. The 1993 tax increase was the more progressive of the two, again targeting more affluent taxpayers, raising the marginal tax rate for high income payers to 38.6 percent, and reversing the 3.86 percent decline of Federal income taxes of the top 10 percent of income earners during the G.H. Bush administration (Hartman, 2002; U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2003). During the second Clinton administration, however, half the tax cuts provided by the 1997 Tax Act went to the best-off 5 percent of taxpayers, while taxpayers in the lowest 40 percent of the income scale got nothing (Center for Tax Justice, 1997).

The current G.W. Bush administration has cut tax rates that favor upper income groups more so than lower and middle income groups and it has consistently pursued a tax-cut or tax-relief agenda since assuming office in 2001 (Citizens for Tax Justice, 2004, 2001). In setting out his administration's tax relief agenda,

G.W. Bush noted that Federal income from tax revenue rose throughout the 1990s to its highest peacetime level, topping 20 percent of GDP (Bush, nd). Who bore the brunt of Federal taxes during that period and how did that distribution differ from that of the 1980s? Answers to these questions and those above provide a context within which to judge the distributional merits of G.W. Bush's tax relief proposals that he wants to see made permanent rather than expire in 2011 as authorized by Congress (Bush, 2002). Although much of the rhetoric about tax cuts suggests a positive relationship between tax reduction and economic growth, that is, the more taxes are reduced, especially for more affluent individuals and corporations since they are likely to increase investment expenditures, the greater the economy will expand, this relationship is not addressed in the paper. It is better addressed elsewhere, as are the effects of the tax cuts on the Federal deficit. Suffice it to say here that despite theoretical assertions to the contrary, there is little empirical support linking the level of taxation with either the level or the rate of growth of economic output (Myles, 2000), while the evidence linking tax policies to Federal deficits is more firmly established and widely acknowledged (Rivlin, 1989; Shapiro & Friedman, 2004). Having said that, however, as Myles suggests, the structure of taxation does effect economic growth by providing incentives for investment in human capital, and as Kamin and Shipiro (2004) show, tax cuts that get more money into the hands of lower- and middle-income households also contribute to economic growth by increasing consumer demand since these income groups are more likely than more affluent groups to spend the money quickly. Whether policies enhancing investment are more or less effective than those increasing consumption is a long-standing issue among economists that goes beyond the scope of this study to address (See Galbraith, 1987; Hunt, 2002; Keynes, 1936; Pierson, 1944;).

The distribution of tax burdens which is the focus of this study raises issues of fairness, particularly when the distribution of Federal tax burdens appears to favor higher income earners at the expense of lower income taxpayers. To the extent such burdens also fall disproportionately on low-income households with children and on those headed by seniors, the issue of fairness assumes even greater importance. Low-income children and seniors constitute

vulnerable populations. To the extent they have disproportionately shared the Federal tax burden throughout the 1980s and 1990s corrective measures are warranted. In addition, to the extent middle-income households have experienced reduced shares of income vis-à-vis that of upper-income households, democracy in the U.S may be threatened. This is so in light of Barro (1999) whose study of over 100 countries from 1960 to 1995 showed that democracy rises with the middle-class share of income.

Methods

Data

This study relied on CBO data that incorporated a comprehensive array of household income, as noted below, including capital gains, which Census data exclude (Congressional Budget Office, 2003). The CBO report contained related annual income information for all households, for households with children (that is, with at least one member under the age of 18), and for elderly childless households (that is, headed by a person 65 years of age or older with no member under the age of 18) by household income categories. The household income categories used in the analyses for this paper included the bottom, middle, and highest quintiles, as well as the top one percent.

Measures

Effective tax rates are calculated by dividing taxes by comprehensive household income. A household consists of people who shared a housing unit, regardless of their relationship. Households with children have at least one member under age 18. Elderly childless households are those headed by a person age 65 or older with no member under age 18.

Comprehensive household income comprises pretax cash income plus income from other sources. Pretax cash income is the sum of wages, salaries, self-employment income, rents, taxable and nontaxable interest, dividends, realized capital gains, cash transfer payments, and retirement benefits plus taxes paid by businesses (corporate income taxes; the employer's share of Social Security, Medicare, and federal unemployment insurance payroll taxes); and employees' contributions to 401(k) retirement

plans. Other sources of income include all in-kind benefits (Medicare, Medicaid, employer-paid health insurance premiums, food stamps, school lunches and breakfasts, housing assistance, and energy assistance).

Income categories are rankings of all people by their comprehensive household income adjusted for household size—that is, divided by the square root of the household's size. Quintiles, or fifths, comprise equal numbers of people. Shares of after-tax income are self-explanatory. After-tax income is adjusted to 2000\$.

Procedures

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine differences in total effective tax rates, share of after-tax income, and amount of after-tax income by presidential term (Reagan, G.H. Bush, and Clinton) for each household income category. When statistically significant differences were found overall on a measure, post hoc analyses were done to determine statistically significant differences between specific pairs of presidential terms. The Scheffe post hoc procedure was used when Levine's test of the null hypothesis for homogeneity of variance was accepted and the Games-Howell procedure was used when Levine's test of the null hypothesis for homogeneity of variance was rejected.

Results

As can be seen in Table 1, total effective tax rates among the highest quintile and top one percent income households were significantly higher during the Clinton administration vis-à-vis those of the Reagan and G.H. Bush administrations regardless of household type (that is, all households, those with children, or elderly childless). For these two income categories, no differences were found between the Reagan and G.H. Bush administrations. The total effective tax rates were significantly lower during the Clinton administration than either the Reagan or G.H. Bush administrations, which were similar, for all middle income households and for middle income households with children. The total effective tax rates were significantly lower during the Clinton administration than either the Reagan or G.H. Bush administrations, which were similar, for the lowest income quintile of all

Table 1
ANOVA Results—Total Effective Tax Rates

Household Type	Reagan	Bush	Clinton	F-value	Post Hoc
All					
Lowest Quintile	09.05	08.35	06.33	31.31***	Clinton < Bush, Reagan
Middle Quintile	18.03	17.70	17.13	10.80**	Clinton < Bush, Reagan
Highest Quintile	23.51	25.30	27.70	17.49***	Clinton > Bush, Reagan
Top 1%	28.60	29.55	34.66	30.73***	Clinton > Bush, Reagan
With Children					
Lowest Quintile	10.01	08.23	04.84	45.17***	Clinton < Bush < Reagan
Middle Quintile	20.30	19.75	18.93	12.40***	Clinton < Bush, Reagan
Highest Quintile	24.19	25.05	28.10	53.80***	Clinton > Bush, Reagan
Top 1%	27.40	29.10	35.23	51.35***	Clinton > Bush, Reagan
Elderly without children					
Lowest Quintile	12.40	13.20	11.49	19.39	Clinton < Reagan, Bush
Middle Quintile	19.71	19.83	19.70	00.24	
Highest Quintile	25.44	25.86	26.51	21.26***	Clinton > Bush, Reagan
Top 1%	28.54	29.50	34.65	33.05***	Clinton > Bush, Reagan

***p < .001, **p < .01.

households and for lowest income quintile of households without children. For lowest income households with children, the total effective tax rates were significantly lower during the Clinton administration than the G.H. Bush administration, which in turn were lower than the Reagan administration.

As can be seen in Table 2, the share of after-tax income was significantly higher during the Clinton administration than either the Reagan or G.H. Bush administrations, which were similar, among all households only for those in the highest quintile and among households with children only for those in the highest quintile.

Among households with children, the share of after-tax income was significantly higher during the Clinton administration than that of the Reagan administration for those households in the top one percent. Among households with children, the share of after-tax income for the top one percent during the Clinton administration was similar to that of the G.H. Bush administration, which in turn was higher but nonetheless statistically similar to that of the Reagan administration. Also among households with children, the share of after-tax income for middle quintile households during the Clinton administration was lower than that of either the Reagan or G.H. Bush administrations, which were statistically similar.

Among elderly households without children, the shares of after-tax income for middle quintile households during the Clinton administration and during the G.H. Bush administration were comparable and higher than that of the Reagan administration. Also among elderly households without children, the shares of after-tax income for lowest quintile households during the Clinton and Bush administrations were comparable. During both the Clinton and G.H. Bush administrations the shares of after-tax income for lowest quintile households were lower than that of the Reagan administration.

Finally, as can be seen in Table 3, among all households, after-tax income (adjusted, 2000\$s) during the Clinton administration was higher than that of the Bush administration, which in turn was higher than that of the Reagan administration among lowest and middle quintile households. Among the highest quintile and top one percent of all households, after-tax income during

Table 2
ANOVA Results—Shares of After Tax Income

Household Type	Reagan	Bush	Clinton	F-value	Post Hoc
All					
Lowest Quintile	05.56	05.28	05.25	01.85	
Middle Quintile	15.96	15.90	15.44	03.17	
Highest Quintile	46.15	47.20	48.54	04.45*	Clinton > Bush, Reagan
Top 1%	10.21	10.80	12.21	02.67	
With Children					
Lowest Quintile	07.01	07.20	07.13	00.60	
Middle Quintile	19.75	18.95	17.53	16.18***	Clinton < Bush, Reagan
Highest Quintile	35.80	35.93	39.99	06.96**	Clinton > Bush, Reagan
Top 1%	07.58	07.85	10.19	04.39*	Clinton > Reagan; Clinton, Bush, Reagan
Elderly without children					
Lowest Quintile	07.18	06.38	05.44	06.74**	Clinton, Bush < Reagan
Middle Quintile	16.18	18.40	19.10	16.57***	Clinton, Bush > Reagan
Highest Quintile	44.75	43.45	47.19	03.23	
Top 1%	15.40	13.45	14.91	01.25	

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

Table 3
ANOVA Results—After Tax Income (2000\$s)

Household Type	Reagan	Bush	Clinton	F-value	Post Hoc
All					
Lowest Quintile	11,413	12,175	13,350	34.11***	Clinton > Bush > Reagan
Middle Quintile	35,575	37,250	39,800	19.01***	Clinton > Bush > Reagan
Highest Quintile	95,138	104,775	119,850	09.39**	Clinton > Reagan; Clinton, Bush, Reagan
Top 1%	410,875	477,525	613,113	05.66*	Clinton > Reagan; Clinton, Bush, Reagan
With Children					
Lowest Quintile	14,688	15,750	18,150	33.64***	Clinton > Bush > Reagan
Middle Quintile	43,113	45,600	49,250	17.97***	Clinton > Bush > Reagan
Highest Quintile	116,713	127,725	151,138	09.63**	Clinton > Bush, Reagan
Top 1%	529,488	565,100	780,100	04.26*	Clinton > Bush, Reagan
Elderly without children					
Lowest Quintile	9,650	9,700	10,225	04.96*	ns
Middle Quintile	31,863	33,875	36,225	22.71***	Clinton > Bush > Reagan
Highest Quintile	102,550	108,200	119,938	04.09*	ns
Top 1%	365,800	609,450	818,632	23.79***	Clinton > Bush > Reagan

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

the Clinton administration was higher than that of the Reagan administration. Although the dollar amount of after-tax income during the Bush administration exceeded that of the Reagan administration among the highest quintile and top one percent of all households, the differences were statistically not significant.

Among households with children, after-tax income during the Clinton administration was higher than that of the G.H. Bush administration, which in turn was higher than that of the Reagan administration among lowest and middle quintile households. Among the highest quintile and top one percent of households with children, after-tax income during the Clinton administration was higher than that of the Bush administration. Again, although the dollar amount of after-tax income during the Bush administration exceeded that of the Reagan administration among the highest quintile and top one percent of households with children, the differences were statistically not significant.

Among elderly childless households, after-tax income during the Clinton administration was higher than that of the G.H. Bush administration, which in turn was higher than that of the Reagan administration among middle quintile and top one percent households. After-tax income for the lowest and highest quintile elderly households without children was found to be similar across presidential administrations.

Discussion

With exceptions noted below, findings of this study reveal that the distributional effects of Federal tax policies during the Clinton administration differed more often than not than those between the Reagan and G.H. Bush administrations. Differences, however, do not necessarily suggest that economically more vulnerable households, that is, lower-income households, with or without children, headed by a person age 65 or older or not, fared better under the Democratic administration of President Clinton than they did under the Republican administrations of Reagan and G.H. Bush. In some instances they did, such as total effective tax rates among low-income households, but in others such as shares of after-tax income they did not. Further, middle-income households with children appear to have lost ground during

the Clinton administration at the expense of lower-income and higher-income households with children in regard to after-tax income shares.

In regard to total effective tax rates, the lowest- and middle-income households overall and those with children were lower during the Clinton administration than both previous presidential administrations. Concomitantly, the top one percent and highest income quintile households overall, with children, and headed by an elderly person age 65 or older without children were higher during the Clinton administration than those comparable households under the Reagan and G.H. Bush administrations. The lowest-income households headed by an elderly person without children also had lower total effective tax rates under the Clinton administration than under either the Reagan or G.H. Bush presidential administrations. Although the Clinton administration moved the Democratic Party to the right of the political spectrum, its tax policies nonetheless shifted the Federal tax burden from less to more affluent households. This shift may in part account for the efforts of the G.W. Bush administration to return the Federal tax burden to levels obtained during the Reagan and G.H. Bush administrations.

The Clinton administration also differed from the Reagan and G.H. Bush administrations in regard to amount of after-tax incomes. Nearly every category of household type and income level had more income to a statistically significant degree under the Clinton administration than during either the Reagan or G.H. Bush administrations. Among all household types, the lowest- and middle-income households had greater levels of income during the Clinton administration than during either of the two previous administrations. Households with children rather than households headed by a person age 65 or older without children account for these findings. It should be noted, however, that the lowest- and middle-income groups of all households and those with children also had greater amounts of after-tax incomes during the G.H. Bush administration than during the Reagan administration. These findings suggest that the Clinton administration continued to advance the plight of lower- and middle-income families with children begun during G.H. Bush administration.

The upper quintile and top one percent of income households with children also had a greater increase in after-tax income during the Clinton administration than they did during either the Reagan or G.H. Bush administrations. In absolute dollar amounts all households with children gained more so under the Clinton administration than under its two predecessors. Such was not the case for elderly households without children. Here the amounts of income of the lowest and highest income quintile households were similar across the three presidential administrations. Only the top one percent and middle-income households fared better in regard to after-tax income during the Clinton administration than either the G.H. Bush or Reagan administrations. These upper-income households invariably benefited from capital gains associated with increased stock prices during the second term of the Clinton administration in the latter part of the 1990s.

This picture of broad gains in regard to after-tax income during the Clinton administration vis-à-vis the G.H. Bush and Reagan administrations changes somewhat in regard to shares of after-tax income. During the Clinton administration the share of after-tax income increased only for highest quintile income households. The shares of after-tax income were similar across the three presidential administrations for the lowest-income quintile households with children, while the share of after-tax income for middle-income quintile households with children actually declined. Hence, despite gains in absolute income and lower total effective tax rates, low-income households with children fared equally as well (or poorly) under the Clinton administration than was the case under the Reagan and G.H. Bush administrations, while middle-income households with children fared worse. Hence, in terms of the share of after-Federal-tax income that went to low-income households with children, the Reagan, G.H. Bush, and Clinton administrations were similar. Among middle-income families with children, the share of after-Federal-tax income was worse than it was under the Reagan and G.H. Bush administrations. Rather than holding their own or improving their standing relative to lower or more affluent households during the Clinton administration vis-à-vis its two predecessors, middle class households were relatively worse off, perhaps where

it counted most, namely in the share or portion of after-Federal-tax income they had to spend. Liberal Democrats should take note of these findings. They in part explain why the G.W. Bush administration marketed its tax relief agenda, which included tax rate reductions and an expansion of the child tax credit, to families (Bush, nd) and why such an agenda passed Congress. The overall tax cuts of the G.W. Bush administration, however, are nonetheless less progressive than the former tax rates with respect to current income and they disproportionately benefit the top one percent of the income distribution (Gale & Potter, 2002).

The bottom line is that lower income households are slightly better off and that middle income households, especially those with children, are faring no better if not worse in regard to the net effect of the Federal tax burden across presidential administrations throughout the 1980s and 1990s. For purposes of policy, findings suggest that lowered tax rates do not necessarily translate into additional "in-pocket" cash for increasingly vulnerable middle-income households and that a higher rate of taxation on upper-income households does not necessarily result in lower levels of their income, although the level might be lower than it could have been otherwise. For purposes of political economy, findings are more complicated and less clear-cut. On one hand, more after-tax income for all income groups suggests that people had more to spend, thereby enabling lower- and middle-income household demand and upper-income investments to contribute to the economic growth characteristic of the 1980s and 1990s. On the other hand, the decrease in the share of after-tax income for middle-income quintile households with children is nonetheless troubling, given the historical and contemporary importance of a reasonably vibrant and secure middle class to the economic and democratic well-being of the U.S. (Johnston, 2003) and elsewhere around the globe (Barro, 1999). Hence, it is no accident that Congress agreed to extend the "middle-class tax cuts" that were scheduled to expire on December 31, 2004 without provisions to offset related costs. Such action invariably suggests political expediency in a national election year, but it nonetheless reflects, arguably, a potentially corrective action to past policies (Greenstein & Shapiro, 2004).

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FAMILY STRUCTURE EFFECTS ON PARENTING STRESS AND PRACTICES IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY

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The predominant approach to African-American parenting research focuses on disadvantages associated with single parenthood to the exclusion of other issues. The current research suggests that this does not represent the diversity in family structure configurations among African-American families, nor does it give voice to the parenting resilience of single mothers. We argue that rather than marital status or family configuration, more attention needs to be given to the inadequacy of resources for this population.

In the current study, we examined the parenting of infants by African-American mothers and found that mothers' marital status and family configuration did not affect parenting stress or practices. This suggests, then, that single mothers parent as well as their married, partnered, and multigenerational counterparts. It seems that the economic status and parenting perceptions of mothers contributed more to parenting stress than did marital status or family structure. Our study, then, challenges the accepted wisdom in our political and popular culture that has insisted upon the centrality of the nuclear family to all aspects of familial and even national health. Instead, we have shown that a true commitment to strong families and healthy children begins with a focus on the debilitating effects of poverty in the African-American community.

Key words: *African-American, infant parenting, parenting stress*

Parenting an infant is a stressful occupation, even under ideal circumstances. Infants require constant attention and, particularly in the first few months of life, must have their every need met constantly (see Combs-Orme, Wilson, Cain, Page & Kirby, 2003, for a discussion of the essentials of parenting specific to infants). Thus it is clear that the full-time job of parenting an infant ideally involves more than one parent. Yet the reality is that many children grow up in homes that do not have two parents present. This is especially true in the African-American community, in which nearly 50% of children are born outside of marriage (or live at some time in a home without one parent or the other) (Andersen, 2000). This study seeks to identify the family structure circumstances that make parenting more or less stressful and successful, and thus seeks to contribute to knowledge that might support parents and families in their efforts to provide the best care possible for every child.

Current research on parenting practices within the African-American community is limited due to an absence of longitudinal research; a severe lack of attention to intragroup variability; a disregard for the inherent diversity in the African-American community; and a minimization of the staggering effects of economic deprivation, racism and social stratification on processes and functioning in the African-American home (Garcia-Coll, Lamberty, Jenkins, McAdoo, Crnic, Wasik & Garcia, 1996). When race is the focal point of research on parenting, between-group differences are paramount in analysis (i.e. European-American vs. African-American), and researchers typically employ a cultural-equivalent theoretical framework (employing theoretical shifts from Allen, 1978). This framework touts European-American, middle-class values and practices as the ideal or norm, and compares African-American values and practices to that norm. African-Americans that are more acculturated and exhibit the values and behaviors of the normed group are depicted as legitimate and are highlighted. However, much of the "race-comparative" research encourages the documentation of unfavorable outcomes of African-American children and families (McLoyd, 1990), and conclusions often concentrate on how African-American children are abnormal, deficient, or incompetent when compared to the middle-class European-American

mainstream (Barbarin, 1993; Garcia-Coll, et al., 1996; McLoyd, 1990; Myers, Rana & Harris 1979; Washington & McLoyd, 1982). Thus, the current state of literature on African-American children and their families has as its core the explanation of developmental deviations in comparison to European-American, middle-class norms. Critics of this approach assert that race-comparative research often blames African-American parents for not transmitting the "right" educational, moral, and ethical values to their children, while ignoring situational, contextual, and systemic factors (McLoyd & Randolph, 1984; Spencer, 1990).

Franklin and Boyd-Franklin (1985) contend that traditional African values and beliefs have been transmitted from generation to generation and continue to influence African-American parenting. One of the most important of these traditions is that parents traditionally view childrearing as a communal task to be shared by all members of the community (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985; Garcia-Coll, Meyer & Brillion, 1995; McAdoo, 1978). Thus, historically African-American parents have relied on extended family networks (i.e. relatives, neighbors, fictive kin, and church members) to share in child care (Wilson, 1989). Research that examines communal childrearing practices in the African-American home asserts that this tradition may mitigate some of the negative effects of single parenthood (Jackson, 1993; Young, 1970).

The traditional Western model of the family includes two married parents and their children (the model nuclear family). However, not all families can or want to model themselves after this norm. Baca Zinn and Eitzen (1999) report that only 10% of U.S. families fit the ideal of a two-parent family in which the male works and the female stays home to care for the children. Thus, in order to properly study parenting, we must ask who exactly provides love and support to children. And, for African-American families, marital status and extended kin networks are significant variables in the study of parenting.

Encouraged by a review of studies on African-American mothers (Murray, Bynum, Brody, Willert & Stephens, 2001) the current study employs a risk and resilience approach to the study of African-American parenting practices from a cultural-variant theoretical perspective (Allen, 1978). The cultural-variant perspective views African-American families as different, yet

functional in their own right. The perspective is encapsulated by bell hooks' infamous charge to bring marginalized groups, "from margin to center" (hooks, 1984), and this is the basis of an Afrocentric and risk and resilience approach. To place African-Americans in the center of their reality, we will offer a critical examination of intragroup variability in infant parenting practices.

The research on co-caregiving influences on parenting practices in the African-American home is sparse. In particular, there is very little research on parenting practices in intact, two-generation African-American families. Much of the research focuses on single African-American mothers and young African-American mothers parenting with the assistance of their mothers. Moreover, more diverse family structures (i.e. co-residence with unmarried partners) are often not examined due to the use of marital status as a proxy for family structure (Murray et al, 2001).

The literature reveals that race-homogeneous studies find that maternal grandmothers are typically the co-caregivers with single, African-American mothers (Brody, Flor & Neubaum, 1998; Hunter, 1997; Pearson, Hunter, Ensminger & Kellam, 1990). However, Hunter, Pearson, Ialongo, and Kellam (1998) found that biological fathers are more frequently nominated for co-caregiving in a race-comparative sample. Hunter, et al. (1998) suggests that family proximity and residence in the rural South are primary considerations for the election of maternal grandmothers as the co-caregivers in single-mother, African-American families. Maternal age is also associated with co-resident co-caregiving with grandmothers. The youngest mothers are more inclined to parent with the assistance of their mothers due in part to reduced options. However, Chase-Lansdale, Books-Gunn and Zamsky (1994) found that the age at first birth was not a significant predictor of maternal parenting quality, nor were grandmothers more effective parents than co-residing adolescent mothers.

The relationship between the co-caregiver and the African-American mother appears to have an effect on the quality of parenting provided by the mother. Barbarin and Soler (1993) found that, with the exception of mother-grandmother combinations, the beneficial effect of living in a two-adult household holds true only for biological parents. Tolson and Wilson (1990) found that two-generation African-American families tend to be

more organized than multigenerational families. Several studies (Chase-Lansdale et al., 1994; Jackson, Gyamfi, Brooks-Gunn & Blake, 1998; Wakschlag, Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn, 1996) have established that maternal co-residence with grandmothers was negatively associated with parenting, whereas maternal maturity and autonomy was associated with competent parenting. Jackson (1998) and Jackson and her colleagues (1998) speculate that the instrumental support provided by a co-residing grandmother can be a source of distress for the mother because of differing views on parenting practices and boundary issues. And, Brody, Flor and Neubaum (1998) found that co-caregiver conflict was associated with less mother-child involvement.

In related research, mothers were significantly more likely to parent appropriately when the mothers and grandmothers did not live together (Wakschlag et al., 1996). This may be due to modeling effects. That is, modeling appropriate parenting practices "from a distance" is thought to be more effective because multigenerational relationships are more individuated when mothers and grandmothers live separately (Wakschlag et al., 1996, 2141). Modeling is thought to be less effective in co-residing conditions because grandmothers' participation in the parenting role may contribute to tensions between mothers and grandmothers (due to differing views on parenting practices) and mothers and children (due to blurred boundaries between the parental sphere and the child sphere). In addition, there may be a "selection effect" (Wakschlag et al., 1996, p. 2141) in that more mature (i.e. older, more autonomous) mothers may live separately from their mothers, be more open to learning from their mothers, and practice more appropriate parenting. Clearly, the age of the mother must be taken into account in examining the effects of co-residence on parenting. Inversely, positive co-caregiving behaviors practiced by mothers and grandmothers in the African-American home, such as the provision of instrumental support and practical assistance, have been found to be positively associated with high levels of parental control, the use of physical punishment, and affectionate behaviors toward children (Brody, Flor & Neubaum, 1998). Wilson, Kohn, Curry-El and Hinton (1995) also found that having more adults in the home significantly influenced maternal perceptions of punishment behavior. That is, the more adults in

the home, the more favorable maternal perceptions about punishment (spanking and yelling).

Intragroup studies on maternal co-caregiving in the African-American family suggest that maternal grandmothers are most often selected as co-caregiving partners. We investigated co-caregiving partners in the present study and extended the scope of co-caregiving to include unmarried partners, married partners, and maternal grandmothers. We also compared parenting with a co-caregiver to parenting alone.

Contrary to popular perceptions about the positive effects of multigenerational households on young mothers' parenting quality, maternal co-residence with grandmothers appears to be negatively associated with positive parenting. However, this relationship may be mediated by the quality of the co-caregiving relationship and by maternal maturity. Inversely, maternal autonomy and psychological maturity appear to be associated with competent parenting. We examined the quality of mother—grandmother relationships, maternal age, and co-residence on parenting stress and practices in the current study. Moreover, previous research has found that instrumental support and practical assistance by grandmothers is associated with high levels of parental control and the use of physical punishment, and that the number of adults in a home influence perceptions of punishment. Thus, we examined maternal attitudes toward the use of corporal punishment in relation to family structure in the present study.

Methods

This study was part of a larger longitudinal study of maternal parenting practices with newborns (The Volunteer Infant Parent Study–VIPS) (Combs-Orme, Cain, & Wilson, 2004; Combs-Orme et al., 2003). A total of 246 European-American and African-American mothers were recruited from the population of delivering mothers at a University-affiliated, publicly-funded hospital in a mid-size southeastern city between February and November, 1999. Approximately 3200 babies are delivered annually at this urban hospital surrounded by suburban areas and remote mountainous counties without delivery facilities. Interviews were conducted in mothers' hospital rooms within 36 hours after birth. The

sub-sample of predominantly urban, African-American mothers is used in this study ($n = 103, 42\%$).

We provided mothers with \$10 gift certificates for a large discount department store chain for participation. Due to the sensitive nature of some of the questions in the recruitment interview, mothers were only interviewed in private. The recruitment interview took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

An opportunity sample was used because circumstances did not permit probability sampling, as the hospital was not willing to provide an enumeration of its delivering patients, and resources would not permit an interviewer to be on the Unit at all times.

The recruitment interview included an Informed Consent Form, the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory-2 (AAPI-2) (Bavolek, 1984), the Parental Bonding Inventory (PBI) (Parker, Tupling & Brown, 1979), and extensive tracking data to facilitate follow-up.

We maintained early and continuous tracking of respondents between recruitment and follow-up using personal letters and with the help of collaterals and resources such as internet web-sites, local utility companies and public housing boards. In total, 93% ($n = 96$) of the African-American mothers were interviewed at follow-up between August, 1999, and July, 2000.

Mothers were given gift certificates valued at between \$10 and \$60 for a large discount department store chain to participate in the second interview, with mothers who were hard to schedule being encouraged to participate with increased incentives. Of the follow-up interviews, 97% ($n = 93$) were conducted in mothers' homes, the homes of family or friends, or at various community locations including coffee shops, offices or jail, and 3% ($n = 3$) were conducted over the telephone when this was the only way mothers would participate.

There were no differences in maternal age, education, marital status, employment, total family income or previous parenting between African-American mothers who stayed in the sample for follow-up ($n = 96$) and those who did not participate at follow-up ($n = 7$) ($X^2(6) = 7.59, p = .270$).

The follow-up interview included measures of: parenting stress, behavioral and emotional adjustment, parenting practices and the home environment.

Extensive demographic data were gathered at recruitment and follow-up, including household composition or family structure. In eight cases mothers reported living with great-grandmothers, foster-grandmothers, or aunts and were coded as living with "grandmothers." Five mothers reported living with grandmothers and unmarried partners and were coded as living with "grandmothers." We also recorded mothers' date of birth, previous parenting experience (binary), and maternal education. Data were collected at follow-up about changes since delivery in household composition or family structure (see above for coding), maternal employment (binary), and family income.

Family structure, as described above, is used as the main independent variable in the study, with possible confounders of the relationship between co-caregiving and parenting entered as control variables. Control variables include: maternal age (due to the presumed influence of maturity on parenting practices); maternal employment (due to the possible influence of work- and time management-related stress on parenting); prior parenting (due to the presumed learning curve associated with parenting); and total family income (due to the relationship between adequacy of resources and parenting). It should be noted that infant co-caregiving is inferred based on co-residence.

Research has indicated correlations among the nurturing individuals receive in childhood, relationship quality, and subsequent parenting (Brody, Flor & Neubaum, 1998; George & Solomon, 1999; Solomon & George, 1996). The quality of the co-caregiving relationship was estimated using two measures of mother-grandmother relationship. The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) (Parker et al., 1979), administered at delivery, is a 25-item instrument that measures an adult's perceptions of his/her primary caregivers on dimensions of caring and protection. Of the 83 mothers in the current study who reported the identities of their primary caregivers, 95% reported maternal caregivers.

The care subscale of the PBI has 12 items allowing for a maximum score of 36 (higher scores indicate greater care), and the protection subscale has 13 items allowing for a maximum score of 39 (higher scores indicate greater overprotection and control). The overall measure and the subscales (care and protection)

show acceptable published test-retest, split-half, and inter-rater reliability and concurrent validity (Parker et al., 1979).

At follow-up, mothers also rated their relationships with their own mothers using a three-point scale (worse, average or better when compared to others) on the Young Adult Self Report (YASR) (Achenbach, 1997), which measures adaptive functioning in social relationships. Achenbach (1997) reports acceptable one-week test-retest reliability.

According to Abidin (1995), parenting stress is the tension parents feel in fulfilling their parenting functions. This tension or stress may be associated with mothers' self-perceived competence in the parenting role, feelings of social isolation and emotional closeness to their infants, physical health, feelings of restriction within the parenting roles, and depression. Also associated with parenting stress are infant qualities that make it difficult for parents to fulfill their parenting roles, such as hyperactivity or demandingness. Parenting stress is important in the study of parenting because stress can lead to child abuse.

The Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF) (Abidin, 1995), a 36-item, standardized instrument used to measure stress related to parenting and parent-child interactions, is widely used in investigations of parenting stress and intervention research. The measure was standardized for use with parents of children from 1 month to 12 years of age.

The PSI-SF has three subscales (parental distress, difficult child, and parent-child dysfunctional interaction), each with a range from 12 to 60, with higher scores indicating greater parenting stress. For comparison, raw scores are converted to percentile scores, and scores above the 90th percentile represent clinical levels of stress that should be referred for professional assistance.

Published coefficient alphas for the PSI-SF subscales vary from .70 to .84. Construct validity is supported by theoretically meaningful correlations between the PSI-SF scores and constructs such as child adjustment. In addition, studies show higher (more stressed) PSI-SF scores among neglectful, drug-addicted, mal-adjusted, and abusive parents (Abidin, 1995). For low-income African-American mothers, Hutcheson and Black (1996) found the PSI-SF to have acceptable levels of internal consistency and stability over six months and high concurrent validity.

The Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) Inventory for Families of Infants and Toddlers (Caldwell & Bradley, 1984), the most widely used measure for observational data on the quality of the home environment, is a naturalistic observational technique used to measure parenting practices. Scoring for the HOME is based on a minimum of an hour of observation, along with information gleaned during the interview.

Four subscales in the HOME that measure various aspects of parenting behaviors were used as dependent variables: emotional and verbal responsivity, acceptance, provision of appropriate play materials, and parental involvement. Scores are based on dichotomous responses (present or not present) for each question, and summated scores are compared to norms, with respondents in the lowest quartile considered "at risk" for poor child development related to poor parenting.

Published internal consistency estimates summarized by Bradley (1994) are consistently over .80 for total scores, with subscale coefficients from .30 to .80. Inter-rater reliability has been consistently reported to be .80 or greater. A review of the concurrent and predictive validity of the HOME showed significant relationships to children's intellectual level and cognitive development (Benasich & Brooks-Gunn, 1996). Although Berlin, Brooks-Gunn, Spiker, and Zaslow (1995) contend that the HOME Learning Materials Subscale may overlook some ways in which poor mothers provide general learning experiences without economic resources, Bradley, Caldwell, Rock, Barnard, Gray, Hammond, Mitchell, Siegel, Ramey, Gottfried, and Johnson (1989) and Bradley, Mundfrom, Whiteside, Casey, and Barrett (1994) assert that the HOME is valid for use with economically disadvantaged and African-American families.

Maternal attitudes toward the use of corporal punishment are measured using the Strong Belief in the Use and Value of Corporal Punishment Subscale of the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2) (note that maternal attitudes toward the use of corporal punishment are measured, not the actual use of corporal punishment). The AAPI-2 is a validated and reliable 40-item inventory designed to measure parenting attitudes (Bavolek & Keene, 1999). Bavolek (1984) reports that sampling considerations in the establishment of the AAPI norms included

“geographic region, urban and rural settings, ethnic group, sex, socioeconomic status and age” (p. 45). The Corporal Punishment subscale has eleven items. Age-specific (adolescent and adult) scores are compared to norms (sten scores). Low sten scores (1 to 4) indicate a risk for practicing known abusive parenting practices (i.e. hitting, intimidation, pain and belittlement); high sten scores (7 to 10) indicate parenting attitudes that reflect a nurturing, non-abusive parenting philosophy (i.e. the use of alternative strategies to corporal punishment); and mid-range sten scores (4 to 7) represent the parenting attitudes of the general population.

Results

The objective of these analyses was to identify how family structure/co-caregiving affects maternal stress, parenting, and attitudes toward the use of corporal punishment. In order to investigate these research questions, multiple linear regression was used due to the continuous nature of the dependent variables. To test the effect of co-caregiving, the control variables were entered into the regression equation first; family structure was entered into the regression equation after entry of the control variables. Two-tailed tests ($\text{Alpha} \leq .05$) were used because results in either direction were of importance and there is inadequate prior research for definitive predictions about the directions of the relationships.

Few scale items had missing data; items with missing data had only a small percentage missing data; and few respondents had any missing data. Missing item values were imputed with expectation maximization using non-missing values for the other items in the particular scale (Acock, 1997) (SPSS Version 10).

Coefficient alpha was computed for each measure. All measures used in the study had good to excellent internal reliability, ranging from .64 to .89. Statistical power is the probability that the null hypothesis will be correctly rejected, and it is the complement of a Type II error. The sample sizes used in the regression analyses reported here are adequate to detect medium to large effect sizes, but not small effect sizes (Cohen, 1988).

Table 1 shows that of the 96 mothers and infants in the study, 36% were living alone, 23.9% were living with grandmothers,

25% with unmarried partners, and 14.5% with married partners. Family structure was significantly related at the .000 level to both age of mother and total family income. The youngest mothers were living with grandmothers and the oldest with married partners. Those living alone were the poorest: nearly three-quarters had incomes under \$5,000. Next disadvantaged were those living with grandmothers, followed by those with unmarried partners. Married mothers had the greatest economic resources.

Table 1 also reveals family structure was significantly related at the .005 level to both previous parenting and maternal education, but not related to maternal employment. Over three-quarters of married mothers reported prior parenting experience (85.7%), whereas only about one-quarter of mothers living with grandmothers did. Mothers living alone, and mothers living with unmarried partners, were about as likely to have parented prior to the index children as not.

Only mothers living with unmarried partners were more likely to be employed (54.2%). Between 57.1% and 69.6% of the other mothers were unemployed. Of the mothers who were working (42%), 30% were doing so full-time.

The majority of all mothers, regardless of family structure, had at least a high school education (range from 87% of mothers living with their mothers, to 100% of mothers living with unmarried partners and married partners). Over half of mothers living with married partners had some college (57.1%).

Tables 2 and 3 show the results for the multiple regression analyses. Co-caregiving did not affect maternal stress after controlling for maternal age, education, employment, total family income, previous parenting, maternal care, maternal overprotection, and maternal relationship quality with her caregiver. However, as high as 16% of our sample reported parental distress levels in the clinical range, and 17% of the variance in parental distress could be explained using maternal demographic variables. In particular, bivariate correlations reveal that parental distress significantly increased as total family income decreased. Distress also significantly increased for mothers who reported that as children they received less optimal care from their primary caregivers.

Co-caregiving also was not related to maternal parenting after controlling for the possible cofounders. However, 16% of the

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Percent Mother & Baby (n = 35)	Percent Mother, Baby & Grandmother (n = 23)	Percent Mother, Baby & Unmarried Partner (n = 24)	Percent Mother, Baby & Married Partner (n = 14)
Maternal Age*				
14–18 years	17.1	65.2	20.8	7.1
19–23 years	54.3	21.7	37.5	28.6
24–28 years	20.0	8.7	25.0	35.7
29–33 years	2.9	4.3	12.5	21.4
34–37 years	5.7	0.0	4.2	7.1
Income**				
<5,000	71.4	39.1	29.2	7.1
5,000–19,999	28.6	34.8	37.5	50.0
20,000–34,999	0.0	21.7	33.3	14.3
35,000–49,999	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3
50,000+	0.0	4.3	0.0	14.3
Previous Parenting***				
Yes	54.3	26.1	54.2	85.7
No	45.7	73.9	45.8	14.3
Maternal Employment****				
Not employed	60.0	69.6	45.8	57.1
Part-time	11.4	13.0	12.5	7.1
Full-time	28.6	17.4	41.7	35.7
Maternal Education*****				
8th grade or less	0.0	8.7	0.0	0.0
GED	11.4	4.3	0.0	0.0
High School	54.3	69.6	58.3	35.7
Voc. Training	22.9	8.7	25.0	7.1
College	11.4	8.7	16.7	57.1

Note. The percentage of missing data ranged from 0 to 2%.

*F = 7.8, p = .000

**F = 11.5, p = .000

*** χ^2 = 12.7, p = .005

**** χ^2 = 3.9, p = .69

***** χ^2 = 13.0, p = .005

Table 2

Co-Caregiving Effects on Maternal Stress ($N = 92$)

Variables	Total Stress			Parental Distress			Dysfunctional Interaction			Difficult Child		
	B	t	Beta	B	t	Beta	B	t	Beta	B	t	Beta
Age	-.65	-1.35	-.25	.03	.11	.02	-.39	-1.85	-.34	-.38	-1.63	-.30
Education	1.40	.62	.10	-1.01	-.07	-.11	1.25	1.26	.20	.61	.55	.09
Employment	-1.67	-.45	-.06	1.28	.54	.07	-1.29	-.80	-.11	-.51	-.28	-.04
Income	-1.10	-.52	-.08	-1.72	-1.25	-.19	.27	.29	.05	-.64	-.61	-.09
Previous Parenting	1.88	1.12	.17	.21	.20	.03	1.08	1.46	.22	1.01	1.23	.18
Care	-.28	-1.35	-.15	-.22	-1.65	-.19	-.02	-.24	-.03	-.19	-1.82	-.21
Overprotection	.06	.29	.03	.14	1.03	.11	-.03	-.29	-.03	.07	.71	.08
Relationship Quality	-1.10	-.76	-.08	-.80	-.86	-.09	-.15	-.23	-.03	-.58	-.82	-.09
Step 1	$R^2 = .13$ ($R^2_{adj} = .04$)			$R^2 = .17$ ($R^2_{adj} = .09$)			$R^2 = .07$ ($R^2_{adj} = -.02$)			$R^2 = .14$ ($R^2_{adj} = .06$)		
	F (8,83) = 1.51,			F (8,83) = 2.07,			F (8,83) = .81,			F (8,83) = 1.70,		
	$p = .165$			$p = .048$			$p = .599$			$p = .111$		
Married Partner	-9.34	-1.70	*	-2.02	-.57	*	-5.85	-2.42	*	-2.66	-.99	*
Unmarried Partner	-5.21	-1.33	*	-2.21	-.87	*	-3.20	-1.85	*	-.48	-.25	*
Grandmother	-6.35	-1.45	*	-1.70	-.60	*	-4.07	-2.11	*	-1.25	-.59	*
Step 2	R^2 change = .04,			R^2 change = .01,			R^2 change = .08,			R^2 change = .01,		
	F change (3,80) = 1.27,			F change (3,80) = .28,			F change (3,80) = 2.59,			F change (3,80) = .37,		
	$p = .289$			$p = .838$			$p = .058$			$p = .777$		
Overall Model	$R^2 = .17$ ($R^2_{adj} = .05$)			$R^2 = .18$ ($R^2_{adj} = .06$)			$R^2 = .15$ ($R^2_{adj} = .04$)			$R^2 = .15$ ($R^2_{adj} = .04$)		
	F (3,80) = 1.46,			F (3,80) = 1.54,			F (3,80) = 1.33,			F (3,80) = 1.31,		
	$p = .164$			$p = .133$			$p = .225$			$p = .236$		

* Standardized Beta Coefficients are not used with dummy coded variables

Table 3

Co-Caregiving Effects on Maternal Parenting ($N = 81$)

Variables	Responsivity			Acceptance			Involvement			Learning Materials		
	B	t	Beta	B	t	Beta	B	t	Beta	B	t	Beta
Age	.01	.12	.03	-.05	-.74	-.17	-.01	-.09	-.02	.01	.19	.04
Education	.19	.60	.10	.34	1.13	.19	.18	.61	.10	.34	1.04	.18
Employment	.11	.22	.03	.18	.38	.06	-.28	-.57	-.08	-.32	-.61	-.09
Income	.04	.13	.02	.13	.48	.08	.62	2.32	.35	.43	1.51	.24
Previous Parenting	.03	.11	.02	.24	1.03	.19	-.28	-1.16	-.20	-.12	-.49	-.09
Care	-.01	-.20	-.03	-.03	-1.03	-.14	-.00	-.12	-.02	.00	.04	.01
Overprotection	.00	.14	.02	.03	1.07	.13	.01	.34	.04	.02	.63	.08
Relationship Quality	-.24	-1.22	-.15	-.04	-.21	-.03	-.21	-1.09	-.12	-.01	-.07	-.01
Step 1	$R^2 = .05$ ($R^2_{adj} = -.06$) $R^2 = .05$ ($R^2_{adj} = -.05$) $R^2 = .16$ ($R^2_{adj} = .06$) $R^2 = .11$ ($R^2_{adj} = .01$) $F = (8,72) = .43$, $F = (8,72) = .49$, $F = (8,72) = 1.67$, $F = (8,72) = 1.09$, $p = .899$ $p = .859$ $p = .121$ $p = .384$											
Married Partner	.24	.32	*	-.48	-.69	*	-.38	-.53	*	.07	.09	*
Unmarried Partner	.65	1.19	*	.50	.94	*	.65	1.22	*	.19	.34	*
Grandmother	.65	1.14	*	.64	1.16	*	-.48	-.86	*	-.01	-.01	*
Step 2	$R^2_{change} = .03$, $R^2_{change} = .04$, $R^2_{change} = .05$, $R^2_{change} = .00$, F change (3,69) = .65, F change (3,69) = 1.10, F change (3,69) = 1.45, F change (3,69) = .05, $p = .588$ $p = .356$ $p = .235$ $p = .985$											
Overall Model	$R^2 = .07$ ($R^2_{adj} = -.08$) $R^2 = .10$ ($R^2_{adj} = -.05$) $R^2 = .21$ ($R^2_{adj} = .08$) $R^2 = .11$ ($R^2_{adj} = -.03$) $F = (3,69) = .48$, $F = (3,69) = .66$, $F = (3,69) = 1.63$, $F = (3,69) = .77$, $p = .907$ $p = .773$ $p = .109$ $p = .667$											

* Standardized Beta Coefficients are not used with dummy coded variables

mothers exhibited "at risk" levels of maternal acceptance and involvement, potentially placing their infants at risk developmentally.

In addition, co-caregiving did not affect maternal attitudes toward the use of corporal punishment after taking account of the control variables. However, the mean score for the corporal punishment subscale was 34.29 ($SD = 5.46$), indicating that these mothers (67%) may be at risk for abuse (i.e. hitting, intimidation, pain and belittlement). Maternal demographic variables did not affect maternal attitudes toward the use of corporal punishment.

Discussion

The current study reveals that with respect to parenting stress and practices, the multigenerational and two-parent family is not necessarily an improvement over single motherhood. Poverty and the quality of the parenting experienced by mothers influenced parenting more than marital status or family structure. Moreover, the relative lack of severe parenting dysfunction among the poor and single-parent mothers in our study suggests great hidden assets, resilience, and strengths in the African-American family. Our study, then, has important implications for the way we think about single motherhood in general and African-American parenting in particular on levels ranging from the clinical to the political. In other words, our study challenges the accepted wisdom in our political and popular culture that has insisted upon the centrality of the nuclear family to all aspects of familial and even national health. Instead, we have shown that a true commitment to strong families and healthy children begins with a focus on the debilitating effects of poverty in the African-American community.

A brief review of our sample reveals that the majority of African-American mothers were parenting their infants with the help of co-caregivers, however, the largest single proportion of mothers were parenting their infants alone. Mothers parenting alone were the poorest; however, they experienced comparable levels of parenting stress, and were as responsive, accepting, and involved with their infants as mothers parenting with the help of married partners, unmarried partners and their infants'

grandmothers. In addition, single African-American mothers had comparable learning materials in their homes as mothers parenting with the help of co-caregivers, and promoted the use of corporal punishment in a comparable manner. These findings suggest overarching parenting resilience among poor and single mothers.

While marital status and family structure did not affect parenting stress, 16% of our sample reported parental distress levels that warranted referrals for professional assistance. Lower incomes and mothers' reports that they themselves were not nurtured adequately increased parenting role stress. Not surprisingly, the financial burdens of parenthood contributed to parenting role stress regardless of family structure. Of interest is the finding that mothers' perceptions of the parenting they received significantly affected their distress, indicating a potential pathway for the transmission of parenting practices across generations.

Moreover, while our study found that marital status and family structure did not affect maternal parenting practices, 16% of our mothers exhibited "at risk" levels of maternal acceptance and involvement, potentially placing their infants at risk developmentally. Again, the vast majority of mothers (upwards of 84%) scored in the normative range for acceptance and involvement, indicating that the majority of mothers are faring well in their parenting capacities.

The mothers who appear to be significantly less accepting and involved with their infants may be exhibiting culturally acceptable and traditional parenting practices. Maternal acceptance appears to be closely related to discipline style. Bradley (1998a,b,c) contends that firm, hands-on discipline in the African-American culture is traditional, functional, and appropriate. However, this sentiment is widely contested. Maternal involvement, measures how consistently the mother talks to the infant, provides toys and structural play for the infant, and keeps the infant in visual range. Young (1970) found that African-American children are not commonly encouraged to converse with adults but are encouraged to listen and follow orders and interact with other children. The adaptive strengths suggested in African-American families (i.e. extended family support and shared family roles) (Franklin &

Boyd-Franklin, 1985; Garcia-Coll et al., 1995; McAdoo, 1978; Young 1970) would also suggest that African-American mothers' involvement with children is not as developmentally salient as it would be under European standards due to additional caregivers' involvement. These culturally acceptable practices could conceivably decrease the level of involvement between the infants and mothers, but whether they are detrimental to the infant developmentally should be determined empirically. Even if low maternal involvement is detrimental, involvement by other family members may act to protect African-American infants from negative effects.

Similarly, while marital status and family structure did not affect maternal attitudes toward the use of corporal punishment, 67% of mothers reported agreement with very strict, rigid, and authoritarian discipline practices (i.e. hitting, intimidation, pain and belittlement). This finding urges a review of a point of contention in the African-American parenting literature regarding the use of harsh, physical discipline. Bradley (1998a,b,c) takes one side of the debate. She summarizes "seminal studies" on African-American parenting to conclude that African-American parents embrace a firm, hands-on approach to child discipline that is functional, appropriate and administered by caring supportive parents. She discusses this firm discipline approach as an unconscious influence transmitted from slavery where African-American parents maintained harsh controls over children to protect them from suffering and death inflicted by the slave owners. And, she extends this model to a contemporary context, arguing that firm discipline is needed in today's society to prepare African-American children to live, work and function in a racist society. Raymond, Jones and Cooke (1998) take the opposing position and find Bradley's sentiments regarding the functional and appropriate use of corporal punishment unfounded. They state that although "slave-parenting" techniques may have been transmitted to this generation, they are no longer functional or adaptive and may be transmitting underachievement and a violent propensity.

The problem with this debate is that African-American parenting practices and child outcome studies have not been explored sufficiently to make any conclusions. Our study suggests

that the majority of African-American mothers embrace very strict, rigid, and authoritarian attitudes toward discipline. However, actual practices and outcomes for children were not measured. This is an important area that requires further exploration.

The aforementioned results should be understood in light of study limitations. Probability sampling was not achieved, possibly threatening external validity. Additionally, the sample sizes used to test co-caregiving and parenting stress and practices were sufficient only to detect large effect sizes. Thus it is conceivable that co-caregiving does affect parenting stress and practices in practically significant ways that could not be detected in the current study.

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THE POVERTY OF UNATTACHED SENIOR WOMEN AND THE CANADIAN RETIREMENT INCOME SYSTEM: A MATTER OF BLAME OR CONTRADICTION?

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Structural and financial inadequacy of Canada's retirement income system, especially with respect to income support benefits (i.e. Old Age Security), are often identified as one major reason unattached senior women experience poverty. While it may be compelling to blame low benefit levels and changing eligibility requirements, particularly because 'crisis' policy discourses have influenced questionable restructuring over time (i.e. the clawback), this paper argues that this is too simplistic of an account of the relationship between these women's poverty and the retirement income system. Other broad social-structural factors are at play in women's lives that have the potential to disentitle their access to income security in old age. Specifically, the mismatch between women's economic situations over the life course and their claims to pension or retirement savings income is presented as an important reason for why many women are still poor despite policy provisions for their retirement.

Key words: *poverty, unattached senior women, retirement income, policy discourse*

Canada's retirement income system consists of three levels: income supports benefits (Old Age Security), social insurance (Canada Pension Plan) and occupational pension plans and registered retirement savings plans. As a system that expanded with the evolution of the post-war welfare state, it was designed to provide income security to elderly persons who may experience

economic risks associated with age related factors such as compulsory retirement and health problems. Despite these intentions, many senior citizens are still poor. According to recent Census data, more than 600,000 Canadians over the age of 65 were living in low income in the year 2000. More unattached senior women live in low income than unattached senior men (approximately 428,300 compared to just over 173,000, respectively) (Statistics Canada, 2003).

The inadequacy of Old Age Security is often identified as one major reason behind the poverty experienced by unattached senior women. This blaming of the first level of Canada's retirement income system is not surprising, especially in view of the 'crisis' policy discourses surrounding population aging and the federal debt that have influenced questionable restructuring of income support benefits over time (i.e. the clawback). However, this is not an accurate portrayal of the relationship between these women's poverty and the retirement income system. It is the argument of this paper that other, broad social-structural factors inhibit women's realization of economic security through the second and especially third level of the system. Across their life course, women overwhelmingly experience occupational segregation, income disparity, and unpaid work responsibilities prior to old age. These significant barriers impede their access to suitable pensions and/or their ability to save for their future economic security through occupational pension plans or retirement savings plans.

In exploring the relationship between the poverty of unattached (widowed, divorced/ separated or ever single) senior women and Canada's retirement income system, the first section of this paper provides a brief description of the structure and provisions of the three levels of the system. Attention is drawn to the persistence of poverty among senior women and how particular discourses, sometimes contradictory, have influenced restructuring of the system in the second section. In the third section, I describe social-structural factors at play in women's lives and show how they have the potential to disentitle them to economic security through the second and third levels of the retirement income system. This discussion demonstrates that the mismatch between women's economic situations over their life course and their claims to retirement income security is an impor-

tant reason why they are still poor despite policy provisions for their retirement. In the final section of this paper, it is suggested that future restructuring of the retirement income system needs to incorporate a new policy discourse that recognizes this mismatch.

Providing Economic Security for Senior Women (and Men)

Upon disengagement from the labour force, women may seek economic stability through the three levels of the retirement income system. The first level, Old Age Security, was implemented in 1952 and reflected post-war Canada's concern with establishing a 'social safety net' that recognised all individuals' shared vulnerability to forces beyond their control, such as risks associated with unemployment, sickness and old age (Armstrong, 1997, p. 53–54). Senior women are eligible for Old Age Security (OAS) if they are over age 65, have Canadian citizenship and have resided in Canada for over 20 years (Rice & Prince, 2000). They qualify for maximum old age pensions providing their net incomes are less than \$60,806 (see Table 1). Seniors who have net incomes over this amount have some of their benefits withheld (re: the 'clawback') each month and seniors with net incomes above \$98,547 do not receive any benefits (Social Development Canada, SDC, 2005a). The old age pension is subject to income tax but continues to be fully protected against inflation; benefits are reviewed and indexed according to increases in the cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index (SDC, 2005b).

Pensioners with zero or very limited income are eligible for another core component of this first level of the system, the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). Implemented in 1967, this benefit is now paid monthly to seniors with net incomes below \$35,592 and is non-taxable (SDC, 2005a). In 1975, the Spouse's Allowance was introduced to help low-income persons married to recipients of the Guaranteed Income Supplement. Currently known as the Allowance, it is entitled to persons (age 60–64 years) whose partner has died or who are not entitled to their own pension and are living on the pension of their partner until they become entitled to receive OAS at the age of 65. To qualify for the Allowance, the combined yearly income of a senior couple or the income of the survivor must be below \$25,152 (SDC, 2005a) (see

Table 1

Old Age Security Payment Rates (in Canadian funds, January to March 2005)

<i>Type of Benefit</i>	<i>Recipient</i>	<i>Average Monthly Benefit (Oct. 2004)</i>	<i>Maximum Monthly Benefit</i>	<i>Maximum Annual Income</i>
OAS	all persons	\$450.11	\$471.76	^a
GIS	single persons	\$388.91	\$560.69	\$13,464.00
	- spouse of non-pensioner	\$378.19	\$560.69	\$32,592.00 ^b
	- spouse of pensioner	\$236.87	\$365.21	\$17,568.00
	- spouse of allowance recipient	\$304.27	\$365.21	\$32,592.00
Allowance	all persons	\$323.74	\$836.97	\$25,152.00 ^c
Allowance for the survivor	all persons	\$523.39	\$924.04	\$18,456.00

Source: Adapted from Social Development Canada (SDC) 2005a.

^apersons with net income above \$60,806 must repay part or all of their OAS, normally through deductions from monthly payments; OAS is eliminated when net income is \$98,547 or above.

^bThe GIS stops being paid at \$35,592.

^cThe Allowance stops being paid at \$25,152.

Table 1 for an overview of these components of the first level). Although beyond the scope of this paper, readers should note that Canadian senior women and men are also eligible for income security benefits through provincial/territorial governments and benefits (i.e. the Age Credit and Pension Income Credit provided through the income tax system) (Clark, 1998, p. 78; Gee & McDaniel, 1991).

The OAS was intended as a foundation for individuals' retirement incomes. Women and men were expected to add to their pensions through the second and third levels of the retirement income system. The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) was introduced in 1966 to provide basic pension income, survivor and disability

insurance benefits to people age 65 and over who were past members of the paid labour force and had contributed to the plans alongside their employers (Armstrong, 1997; NCW, 1999; Rice & Prince, 2000) (for a complete discussion of the different designs and implementation of the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans (C/QPP), see Bryden, 1974). The amount of the CPP is dependent on the number of years worked and the level of past earnings (O'Grady-Leshane, 1993) (see Table 2 for maximum benefit amounts). Outside of Quebec, all members of the paid work force must contribute to the plan, whether they are employees, employers or self-employed. As a pay-as-you go plan, contributions from individuals in the paid labour market are used to pay the pensions of those who are retired (Townson, 1995). These contributions are paid on earnings between \$3,500 and \$40,500, are tax deductible, and are adjusted for inflation every January (SDC, 2005c).

The CPP provides a retirement pension as early as age 60 for seniors and replaces approximately 25 percent of the contributions paid into it (SDC, 2005c). The period of contributions required for a full CPP benefit is 40 years (O'Connor, Orloff, & Shaver, 1999; Rice & Prince, 2000). For individuals who do not contribute to the plan because of time spent outside of the labour market, the CPP excludes 15 percent of the lowest earnings (roughly seven years) from the calculation of retirement income (Townson, 1995). Time spent outside of the labour force to raise children under the age of seven can also be dropped out of the calculation of CPP (SDC, 2005c).

Aside from accommodating family responsibilities, the CPP offers several other advantages to pensioners, particularly women. The CPP covers all sectors of the economy, it includes part-time and self-employed workers, it is portable upon change of employment, and it can be shared by spouses upon divorce or upon retirement (Townson, 1995; Townson 2000). The CPP provides other supplementary benefits, such as disability benefits to persons unable to work including supplementary child benefits for disability recipients, pensions to surviving spouses, benefits to dependent children of deceased plan members, and lump sum death benefits (Clark, 1998; NCW, 1999: 15–16) (see Table 2 for benefit amounts).

Table 2

Canada Pension Plan Payment Rates (in Canadian funds, January to December 2005)

<i>Type of Benefit</i>	<i>Average Monthly Benefit (Oct. 2004)</i>	<i>Maximum Monthly Benefit (2005)</i>
Retirement pension (at age 65)	\$456.92	\$828.75
<i>Other benefits:</i>		
Disability benefit	\$749.08	\$1010.23
Survivors benefit (under age 65)	\$336.68	\$462.42
Survivors benefit (65 and over)	\$274.27	\$497.25
Children of disabled contributor benefit	\$192.68	\$195.96
Children of deceased contributor benefit	\$192.68	\$195.96
Combined survivors & retirement benefit (pension at age 65)	\$622.03	\$828.75
Combined survivors & disability benefit	\$889.59	\$1010.23
Death benefit (lump sum)	\$2,219.07	\$2,500.00

Source: Adapted from Social Development Canada (SDC) 2005d.

Occupational pension plans and registered retirement savings plans remain as the final and third level. Because they originated in the 1800s, these plans have had a much longer history than the first two levels (Clark, 1998). These plans are sponsored by employers, labour unions, and professional organizations. They are paid into by employees or employees and sponsors to defer wages to provide for their retirement (NCW, 1999). The government assists in seniors' savings for retirement by deducting contributions to these plans from taxable income and not taxing investment income as it is earned. Taxes are paid on these plans when funds are withdrawn or received as pensionable income. The amount of income received by pensioners who participated in employer sponsored pension plans depends on their age of retirement and the plan's benefit formula (SDC 2005e). In comparison, the amount of income a pensioner can expect from their own personal registered retirement savings plan is dependent on how much money they have invested into this plan prior to

retirement. These plans are intended to provide pensioners with up to 70 percent of their pre-retirement earnings (NCW, 1999).

Contradictions and Persistent Poverty:
System Inadequacies or a Mismatch?

Despite these provisions for their income security in old age, poverty among senior women is persistent. In 1983, 62 percent of unattached women were living in poverty (Baker 1993, p. 294, cited in Baker & Tippin, 1999, p. 93). In 1991, 34.9 percent of women aged 65–69, 48 percent of women aged 70 to 75, and 53 percent of women over 85 who lived alone had incomes below Statistics Canada Low Income Cut Offs (LICOs) (Moore & Rosenberg, 1997, cited in McDonald, 1997). Data from the 2001 Census show that of those living alone in 2000, the low income rate was still higher among women than men (43 percent and 31 percent, respectively) (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Not only are these women more likely to be persistently poor (their incomes are below Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut Offs for two consecutive years) than women in married or common-law relationships (Lochhead & Scott, 2000), their experiences of poverty differ depending on their marital status. McDonald (1997) discovered that although government transfers were indeed crucial to maintaining the income of some married, widowed, divorced/separated, and ever single women over the Low-Income Cut Offs (LICOs) in 1993, almost one half of all widows over the age of 65 (49 %) lived below the poverty line. Widowhood continues to negatively affect women's economic situations. Many widows even experience continuous decline in income years after they are first widowed. Following the impact of widowhood on women aged 65 and over between 1990 and 2001, Li (2004) found that median family income declined 9.8% among widows over approximately five years, compared to the 1.5% decline experienced among women not widowed.

Since unattached senior women depend on government transfers in the form of OAS/GIS and these transfers do not raise them above the poverty line (NCW 1999), this would appear to suggest that the continued poverty among these women is due to an inadequate level of income support benefits. This view

is especially compelling because of 'crisis' policy discourses—*population aging as paradigm* (McDaniel, 1987, p. 334) and *deficit as paradigm* (McDaniel & Gee 1993, p. 60)—that have increasingly influenced discussions and changes to this level of the system.

In the 1980s, the growing population of seniors (as a result of increased life expectancy and low fertility) and expected rise in pension expenditures, in conjunction with the growing deficit and debt, signalled to the federal government an impending crisis. An already economically stressed system was predicted to become more expensive and less likely to be sustained in the future (Baker & Tippin, 1999). It was in the federal budget speech of April 1989 that the Conservative government announced that seniors with high incomes would receive their old age pension cheques but would be obligated to repay some or all of the amounts they received (NCW, 1999; Cheal & Kampen, 1998) (above \$50,000 in individual net income) at a rate of 15 percent in income tax (Pierson & Smith, 1994). Gee and McDaniel (1991) argue that this 'clawback' was largely a response to the crisis discourse surrounding population aging.

The CPP has not escaped the influence of these crisis discourses either, albeit with less controversial but interesting consequences. For example, increases in pension contributions were agreed upon in order to cover the future costs of an aging population (Baker & Tippin, 1999). In 1966, the contribution rate for the CPP was 3.6 percent (1.8% from employees and 1.8% from employers) of contributory earnings. In 1995, this rate was increased to 5.8 percent of earnings (2.9 % from employees and 2.9% from employers), with maximum pensionable earnings set at \$35,400, and increased to 7.0 percent in 1999, with maximum pensionable earnings set at \$37,400 (Baker & Tippin, 1999). In the year 2003, the contribution rate increased to 9.9 percent (NCW, 1999; SDC 2005f). Other changes made in 1997 negatively affect seniors' economic situations. Freezes made to the maximum death benefit (frozen at \$2,500) and the Year's Basic Exemption (frozen at \$3,500) means that these CPP provisions and stipulations are no longer increased with inflation.

Blaming inadequate benefits and questionable restructuring of especially the first level of the system for women's poverty, however, is too simplistic of an argument for two inter-related

reasons. First, the income guarantee for seniors through OAS has improved even when considering the 'clawback.' For example, in 1952 the maximum OAS for residents living in a large city (over 500,000 population) provided singles \$2,956 and couples \$5,912 compared to \$10,264 and \$16,642 in 1995 (constant 1995 dollars) (Battle, 1997, p. 528–529). Second and not surprisingly, the overall poverty among seniors has declined. In 1980, the national poverty rate was measured at 33.6 percent but by 1990 it had declined to approximately 19 percent (NCW, 1992, p. 10–11, cited in Myles and Street, 1995, p. 339) and remained at this level in 1994 and 1995 (Lee, 2000; National Advisory Council on Aging, NACA, 1999). By the year 2000, the poverty rate among seniors declined to 17%, nearly half of the 30% rate in 1980. The decline in poverty is credited to higher CPP premiums and rising OAS and GIS benefits, the latter of which make up 2/3 of the income of low income seniors (Statistics Canada, 2003).

This overall decline in poverty, however, should not mask the fact that when urban and rural differences in measurements of poverty are taken into account, the national poverty rate can be misleading. For example, considering the 19 percent rate of 1995, Lee (2000, p. 30) uses 1996 Census data to show that 25 percent of seniors in cities were poor in this same year—among the 1.4 million elderly in cities, 349,900 lived below the poverty line. The National Council of Welfare (1999, p. 10) confirms that a normal OAS pension, in addition to the maximum GIS, provided single seniors and couples with an income very close to the poverty line for rural areas but below the poverty line of a large city. The combination of maximum CPP benefits with normal OAS benefits does somewhat improve the economic situations of seniors but this too is dependent on whether seniors reside in urban or rural areas and are either single or couple unions. Readers are therefore cautioned to note that depending on what type of measurement of poverty is used, which variables, and whether references are to single unattached seniors or senior couples, a different picture of poverty among seniors can emerge (as noted, the majority of the studies referred to in this paper rely on Statistics Canada's LICOs, Statistics Canada, 1999a).

Moreover, this decline in overall poverty should not mask the need to consider what does account for the persistent pov-

erty among women. Setting aside the convincing and influencing nature of crisis discourses, and given the overall improvement of the economic situations of seniors over time, it appears too easy to credit women's poverty to inadequate old age pensions. Although women are the persistent poor, they are faring better than before the post-war design of policy provisions for their retirement. Other factors must be at play, then, and partially account for the persistence of their poverty. Specifically, what must be taken into account is the mismatch between women's economic situations over the life course and their claims to pension or retirement savings income.

Social-Structural Factors at Play in Women's Work and Family Lives Preceding Retirement

Over the past three decades, women's labour force participation has dramatically increased. In 1953, the labour force participation rate for women was only 23 percent. By 1999, the percentage of women in the labour force had increased to 58 percent; the participation for men was 71 percent (Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, FPM, 2001). Prior to retirement, women are much more likely to be involved in the labour market today than in the past. This involvement, however, is not necessarily a guarantee of their income security in the short-term. Women experience particular social-structural factors in their work and family lives that have implications for their income security in the long-term.

Women have increased participation within the labour force but this has occurred predominantly in non-standard jobs, which are characterised by low wages, lack of security over time, and have little to no benefits (Freiler & Cerny, 1998; NACA, 2000). Women are most often employed as part-time, seasonal, or contract workers, or are self-employed (Baines, 1996; Benoit, 2000; Chaykowski & Powell, 1999) in the service sector or have clerical roles (O'Connor et al., 1999). In contrast, men are over-represented as employees in transport and communications, and manufacturing sectors (O'Connor et al., 2000) and are more likely to occupy jobs that are full-time with supervisory responsibilities (Statistics Canada, 1999b). In 1998, 71 percent of working women worked

full-time compared with 90 percent of working men (FPM, 2001). Not surprisingly, Cheal and Kampen (1998) find that women aged 54–63 have about half of the number of years of past work experience of men at this same age and about three fifths of their current weeks of employment.

Women's engagement in work that is unequal to men's in terms of time spent is related to their primary responsibility for domestic labour within the home. Women still engage in more household chores and caregiving than men (Benoit, 2000; Gazso-Windle and McMullin, 2003; O'Grady-Leshane, 1993). Indeed, ideological assumptions about appropriate gender behaviour tend to maintain the division of separate spheres of work for men and women (public or paid labour v.s. unpaid private or domestic labour) in a subtle fashion, even for women who do engage in paid work (Gazso-Windle and McMullin, 2003). Women can experience a high probability of having to juggle their family demands (i.e. housework and child care) with their engagement in paid labour, and thus, face a double day of work in terms of hours spent in domestic labour within the home and hours spent in paid work. Further, many women are expected to interrupt their careers in the work force more often than men to meet their family responsibilities (NACA, 2000). These interruptions are not always for rearing children. An implication of population aging is that many women are now the primary providers of care to aging family members (O'Grady-Leshane, 1993) and have disengaged from the labour market even before the age at which they would retire to provide this care.

This differential participation of women and men in the labour force due to occupational barriers and family responsibilities produces substantial differences in net family incomes. In 2001, the average income of women who worked full-time, full year was \$35,258 and was \$49,250 for men (Statistics Canada, 2004a). With respect to all earners, including part-time and contract workers, women still had a lower income than men (\$24,688 and \$38,431 respectively). It is these experiences of occupational segregation, income disparity, and responsibility for family members among women over their life course that are relevant to women's experiences of poverty in old age. As discussed below, these social-structural factors have the potential to inhibit

women's realization of economic security through the second and especially third level of the retirement income system.

The Second and Third Levels and Women's Income Insecurity

With respect to the social-structural factors of occupational segregation and income disparity experienced by women, recall that lifetime earnings and number of years of coverage from the CPP affect the amount of old age pension a person receives. Given women's lesser wages and varying degrees of participation in the labour market, it is not surprising that women who engage in paid labour prior to retirement experience unequal CPP coverage compared to men. Data demonstrating gender differences in coverage show that for January 1999, the average monthly retirement pension paid to pensioners (ages 65 to 69) was \$533 for men and only \$299 for women (the maximum CPP rate was \$752); women received 56 percent of the average amount paid to men (NCW, 1999).

Women's ability to obtain adequate income security through the CPP is also unlikely if they engaged in low-wage part-time work that resulted in their incomes being below the Year's Basic Exemptions. Women who spend more than seven years outside of the labour force caring for children or family members will exempt themselves from adequate CPP coverage. Many women do not even receive full CPP pension but rely on survivor benefits that are not equivalent to the full amount (Ross, 2000). Finally, for women who are divorced, their economic security can be challenged by not only the economic consequences of marital dissolution, but also by the fact that provincial governments have the option to over-ride the mandatory credit-splitting of CPP benefits upon marital dissolution. According to the National Council of Welfare (1999), mandatory credit-splitting as an option for economic security for divorced women is far from the norm.

Some women do rely on occupational pension plans and registered retirement savings plans for income security. Relying on data from Statistics Canada Survey of Consumer Finances, the National Council of Welfare (1999) states that of the total number of poor unattached women identified in the Survey (359,000), 29 percent reported income as a result of investing and saving and 15 percent reported income as a result of occupational

pension plans. Today, more women in the paid workforce are being covered by employer-sponsored (registered) pension plans in both public and private sectors than in the past (Schembari & Anderson, 2004). Most often, however, women's access to these plans in order to save for their retirement is challenged by their labour force participation and family responsibilities prior to retirement. Understandably, fewer women benefit from private pension plans than men because proportionately fewer women worked all of their lives compared to men, and thus, contributed less to these plans over time compared to men (NACA, 1999).

For women who did engage in paid work, their ability to access occupational pension plans is also not absolute. Occupational pension plans, because they are a private component of the retirement income system, are not readily available to all employees. For example, in 1997, less than half of all Canadian workers (42%) were covered by occupational pension plans (NCW, 1999). By the year 2002, nearly 40% of all paid workers (self-employed, unpaid family workers and unemployed are non-eligible) were covered by employer-sponsored plans (Schembari & Anderson, 2004). The public sector also experiences higher coverage by occupational pension plans than the private sector; women's recent increased access to plans has occurred in the public sector (Schembari & Anderson, 2004). However, since women are more likely to be employed in the private sector in low-wage paying jobs, their lower occupational plan coverage can therefore be attributed to where they work and their lack of financial ability to contribute to these plans. O'Connor et al. (1999) explain that men are more likely to benefit from the third level of the system because they are more likely to be highly paid professionals or managers in organized businesses or unions that are likely to encourage participation in occupational pension plans or enable investment for retirement because they produce disposable income. In addition, women depend on public pensions more than men for their economic security simply because they are more likely to lose private pension credits when they interrupt their employment for family reasons (Baker & Tippin, 1999). Even if women are able to access this level of the retirement income system, they may experience low-income because few occupational plan members have automatic protection from inflation (NCW, 1999). Indeed, while women may

receive a pension at age 65, the absence of inflation coverage may mean the pension erodes to the point of insignificance, especially if their life span increases another thirty years.

Women's participation in low paying jobs can further deny their opportunity to save for their retirement through retirement savings plans. Women who engage in low-wage work and experience costs associated with child rearing or the care of a sick family member do not necessarily have the ability to place money aside and benefit from tax savings through registered retirement savings plans. For example, in 1996, only 4 percent of low wage-earners belonged to contributory plans, with an average contribution of \$253 for plan members with incomes less than \$10,000 (NCW, 1996). Cheal and Kampen's (1998) discovery that fewer women aged 53–64 had substantial retirement income pensions or annuities than men (5.8% and 13.2% respectively) in 1993 is therefore to be expected.

In her study of the factors that affect the economic situations of widows, McDonald (1997) provides excellent evidence of how occupational barriers and family responsibilities can disentitle these women from adequate economic security through the second and third levels of the retirement income system. While the first level of the retirement income system does not protect widows from poverty simply because government transfers in the form of the OAS/GIS/SPA do not raise many widows above the poverty line, the second level is equally ineffective because widows are often self-employed or are the most likely to have worked in bad or non-standard jobs with low wages and few fringe benefits. Prior to the death of their spouse, many widows also retire early out of necessity to caregive for their spouse. The third level has the potential to guarantee women an economic situation that is above the LICOs but few widows have access to these sources of funding simply because of their inconsistent patterns of paid work and family responsibilities (McDonald, 1997) over their life course. In a more recent study, Li (2004) maintains that the decline in family income experienced by widows over time is due to an equal decrease in several income sources. Among all income sources considered (i.e. OAS, pensions, other transfers, earnings, assets, other income), Li found that each contributed to about 20% of the total decline.

O'Connor et al. (1999) maintain that the first two levels of public provision for retirement can be thought of as primarily a welfare state for women and the third level can be thought of as a welfare state for men. This statement captures the mismatch between women's economic situations over the life course and their claims to economic security through the second and third levels of the retirement income system. Although the first level of the retirement income system is not the sole cause of women's poverty, the system is essentially unbalanced simply because its third level is still largely the preserve of high-income seniors (usually men) (Battle, 1997).

Toward Rethinking Retirement Income for Unattached Senior Women: Encouraging a New Discourse

The improvement of unattached senior women's economic situations seems like a daunting task, especially given policy discourses that promote restructuring the retirement income system to be sustainable and affordable in the future and do not make mention of the interrelationships among labour force participation, family responsibilities, and retirement. Population aging as paradigm and deficit as paradigm, as well as interest in targeting benefits to the appropriate segment of the elderly population, continue to influence discussions of restructuring income security benefits for seniors.

In 1995, the Liberal government proposed the combination of the OAS and GIS to form the Seniors Benefit, which was designed to make the system more affordable and sustainable by improving the targeting of benefits to low-income seniors (Armstrong, 1997, p. 65). The benefit was to be based on net family income, rather than individual income, and was non-taxable. It would have paid maximum benefits to seniors with net family incomes under \$25,921, but would have been clawed back at a rate of 20 percent over this amount up to \$52,000 (McDonald, 2000). The Seniors Benefit would have been completely clawed back from an individual who made over \$52,000 in net family income and from a family who made over \$78,000 in net family income.

In cutting benefits to middle-income and higher-income seniors by assessing eligibility on the basis of net family income

and imposing a large clawback, the Seniors Benefit would target low-income seniors. This benefit, however, would have only paid \$120 more per year than the support of the OAS and GIS it was intended to replace (NCW, 1996; McDonald, 2000). And, aside from this very modest increase, the Seniors Benefit would have removed the pension rights of low-income women who were married to men with net family income above the threshold (Baker & Tippin, 1999). Overall, the Seniors Benefit is more accurately seen as a means to resist the impending costs of maintaining an aging population of seniors and as a means to reduce the federal deficit. As McDonald (2000) explains, the federal government would have saved considerable amounts of money through this proposed benefit. Originally anticipated to commence in January 2001, the Seniors Benefit was abandoned in July 1998, and thus, restructuring of the first level of the retirement income system has temporarily stalled.

At the same time that these policy discourses continue to hold sway, two notable Canadian policy publications reflect growing awareness that social-structural factors can negatively impact the economic security of women in their old age. The 2001 Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women publication lists the labour market, income and earnings, the balancing of employment with family responsibilities, and unpaid work as the social structural factors that impinge upon a woman's economic situations over their life course (p. 9). Similarly, the National Advisory Council on Aging (1999, p. 54) writes that the economic situation of all future seniors, especially women, can be immediately improved by tackling the polarization of the labour market, the professional ghettoization of women and unequal access to employment, and wage disparities between women and men for comparable work. By combining these points with the discussion of this paper, I have summarized the major social-structural factors at play in women's work and family lives that implicate their retirement income situations in Table 3.

It is understood that immediate and dramatic corrections of the barriers to women's security in old age are unlikely. This should not mean that there are no possible avenues available to change women's economic experiences in their old age. Indeed,

Table 3

A New Discourse: Summarizing Social-Structural Factors of Importance to Women's Lives

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- Women and men experience an increasing polarization of good and bad jobs
 - Women and men experience gendered paid work opportunities
 - Women have lower incomes from paid earnings than men
 - Women spend less time than men in the labour market in terms of hours worked per week
 - Women are still primarily responsible for domestic labour within the home (including housework, child care, and care of other family members)
 - Women's eligibility for the CPP and occupational pension plans/registered retirement savings plans is dependent on their wage earnings
-

the growing awareness of these social-structural factors suggests a necessary thread of a burgeoning policy discourse on how women's experiences in the short-term impact their economic experiences in the long-term. By recognizing and discussing these social-structural factors in discussions of the experiences of senior women and/or future proposals to restructure the retirement income system, this new discourse has the potential to link with and challenge existing crisis discourses. For example, policy makers need to recognize that the rising number and percentage of the elderly *and* the growth of non-standard jobs will create heavy pressure on the elderly benefits system in the future (Battle, 1997, p. 541). The less women can achieve income security through the second and third level of the retirement income system because of negative labour market experiences and family responsibilities, the more they will rely on the first level of the retirement income system.

This new discourse also recognizes that the retirement income system is not fully responsible for preventing the poverty among women (Townson, 2000). Other social support systems need to be in place. Community support for the care of elderly family members, affordable, accessible, and quality child care, and adequate pay equity and equal employment opportunity policies can

ensure that family responsibilities do not undermine the financial security of women upon retirement. In addition, by inviting further social recognition of the unpaid work done by women in the home, this new discourse prompts serious consideration of one major proposal to ensure women's economic security in old age offered by several feminist policy analysts (i.e. Daly, 2002; Neysmith & Reitsma-Street, 2000; Waring, 1953)—socially recognizing and valuing (and/or financially compensating) women who do exit the labour market to provide care to children and ill or elderly family members.

A most recent development in the province of British Columbia (B.C.) suggests that this idea is not far fetched nor does it need to be gendered. The Human Rights Commission tribunal recently ruled that the provincial government must stop discriminating against disabled people who desire family members as their caregivers rather than government-funded caregivers. It ordered the government to pay more than \$100,000 in lost wages, interest and damages to a father who was forced to quit working and access social assistance in order to care for his disabled daughter (The Globe and Mail, July 15, 2004). Now in his 70s, the father provided care for his daughter for seventeen years. Although the B.C. government has responded with a call for a judicial review of this decision of the tribunal, this case may mark the way toward developing policy measures that actually build upon and incorporate this new discourse and in doing so, improve the economic situation of senior women.

Conclusion

Designed with the best of intentions, the retirement income system has not benefited all senior citizens. Unattached senior women consistently experience severe poverty. The influence of crisis discourses that surround discussions of pension policy even appear to sometimes enhance or perpetuate poverty amongst seniors by producing and/or proposing questionable changes to the retirement income system. And yet, it can not be denied that the poverty among senior citizens, including women has declined as a result of targeting benefits to low-income seniors who are in most in need of them. This targeting may even further benefit senior women in the future. The 2005 Budget of the Lib-

eral government proposes boosting the GIS by \$2.7 billion over five years. Benefits would climb to \$36 for singles and \$58 for couples by January, 2007 (Weber, 2005). Blaming the first level of the retirement income system for the continued poverty among unattached senior women denies the existence of other broad, social-structural factors that have the potential to disentitle these women to economic security through the retirement income system. Women do work for less money than men, do engage in more domestic labour than men, and therefore, may not access adequate CPP benefits to 'top up' the income support benefits they receive from the first level and may not be able to save for their retirement through private savings plans.

The intent of this paper was to reveal that these factors must be accounted for in any attempt to understand the poverty among unattached senior women and in policy discussions of restructuring the system to better benefit seniors. Although it can be anticipated that the 'crisis' of population aging and the federal debt will impact future restructuring of the system, this should occur at the same time that a new discourse acknowledges that all three levels of the system interrelate, and more importantly, intertwine with the economic experiences of women over their life course. As Gee and McDaniel (1991, p. 467) argued more than ten years ago: "Income inequalities in later life are largely a function of income inequalities at younger ages." Working toward, investing in, and saving for retirement can not occur if costs associated with population aging hide the costs associated with employment in gendered occupations and primary responsibility for domestic labour, costs most severely experienced by women.

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AGING AND FAMILY POLICY: A SOCIOLOGICAL EXCURSION

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The contemporary focus on family policy and old age has become increasingly important in social discourses on aging both within the discipline of Sociology and social policy practices of welfare institutions that attempt to define later life. Using the United Kingdom as a case study, sheds light on wider current trends associated with aging in United States, Canada, Europe and Australia. Social welfare is a pivotal domain where social discourses on aging have become located. Narratives are 'played out' with regard to the raw material supplied by family policy for identity performance of older people. Therefore, grounding developments in 'narrativity' provides a sociological framework to assess the changing discourses associated with family policy and older people as advanced through different policy positions.

Key words: *aging; narrative; family; grandparenting; social policy*

Introduction

A startling continuity across North America, Europe, and Australia, is that different governments recognize that the 'family' is essential for social and economic needs; epitomised famously by former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's view that there is 'no thing such as society only families' (Biggs and Powell, 2000, 46). Families are made up of interpersonal relationships both within and between generations that are subject to both the formal rhetoric of policy discourse, and the self-stories that

connect them together. The concept of family is an amalgamation of policy discourse and everyday negotiation.

The rhetoric of social policy and the formal representations of aging and family provide a series of spaces in which identities can be legitimately performed. The 'success' of a family policy can be assessed from the degree to which people live within the narratives of family created by it. Further, the relationship between families and older people has been perpetually re-written in the social policy literature. Each time a different story has been told. It can be argued that the family has become a key site upon which expected norms of intergenerational relations are being built.

The structure of the paper is fourfold. First, we commence by mapping out the emergence of neo-liberal family policy and its relationship to 'family obligation', state surveillance and 'active citizenship'. Second, we can highlight both the ideological tenets of the subsequent social democratic turn and effects on older people and the family. Third, research studies are drawn on to highlight how 'grandparenting' has been recognised by governments in recent years, as a particular way of 'storying' the relationship between old age and family life. Finally, we explore ramifications for researching family policy and old age by pointing out that narratives of inclusion and exclusion co-exist if a sense of familial continuity is to be maintained.

The 'Master Narratives' of Aging and Family Policy: Neo-Liberalism and Social Democracy

Political and social debate since the Reagan/Thatcher years in US/UK, has been dominated by neo-liberalism, which claims the existence of autonomous individuals who must be liberated from 'big government' and state interference (Gray, 1995). Indeed, Walker and Naeghele (1999) claim a startling continuity across Europe is the way 'the family' has been positioned by governments as these ideas have spread across France, Italy, Spain and Denmark.

Wider economic priorities, to 'roll back the state' and release resources for individualism and free enterprise, had become translated into a family discourse about caring obligations and the need to enforce them. Further, it appeared that familial caring was

actually moving away from relationships based on obligation and toward ones based on negotiation (Finch & Mason, 1993). Family commitment has, for example, been shown by Pike and Bengtson (1996), to vary depending upon the characteristic caregiving patterns within particular families. Individualistic families provided less instrumental help and made use of welfare services, whereas a second, collectivist pattern offered greater personal support. Whilst this study focussed primarily on upward generational support, Silverstein and Bengtson (1997) observed that 'tight-knit' and 'detached' family styles were often common across generations. Unfortunately, policy developments have rarely taken differences in caregiving styles into account, preferring a narrative of 'individualized' role relationships.

There has been a developmental challenge to the hegemony of neo-liberalism through a social democratic alternative (Giddens, 1998). Indeed, social democratic policies toward the family arose from the premise that by the early 1990's, the free-market policies of the Thatcher/Reagan years had seriously damaged the social fabric of the nation state and that its citizens needed to be encouraged to identify again with the national project. A turn to an alternative 'third way', emerging under Clinton, Blair and Schroeder administrations in the US, UK, Germany and other parts of Europe (Walker and Naeghele, 1999), attempted to find means of mending that social fabric, and as part of it, relations between older people and their families. Despite the return of neo-liberalism under George W. Bush in US from 2000-4, the social democratic alternative has a venal presence in the UK. The direction that the new policy narrative took is summarised in UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's (1996) statement that 'The most meaningful stake anyone can have in society is the ability to earn a living and support a family'. Work, or failing that, work-like activities, plus an active contribution to family life began slowly to emerge, delineating new narratives within which to grow old.

Both Giddens (1998) in the UK and Beck (1998) in Germany, both key proponents of social democratic politics, have claimed that individuals are faced with the task of piloting themselves and their families through a changing world in which globalization has transformed our relations with each other, now based on avoiding risk. According to Giddens (1998), a new 'partnership'

is needed between government and civil society. Government support to the renewal of community through local initiative, would give an increasing role to 'voluntary' organisations, encourages social entrepreneurship and significantly, supports the 'democratic' family characterised by 'equality, mutual respect, autonomy, decision-making through communication and freedom of violence'. It is argued that social policy should be less concerned with 'equality' and more with 'inclusion', with community participation reducing financial dependence.

Through a growing awareness of agism, the influence of European ideas about 'social inclusion' and North American 'communitarianism', families and older people found themselves transformed into 'active citizens' who should be encouraged to participate in society, rather than be seen as a potential 'burden' upon it (Biggs, 2001). A contemporary UK policy document, entitled *'Building a Better Britain for Older People'*, is typical of a new field of western policy, re-storying the role of older people :

"The contribution of older people is vital, both to families, and to voluntary organisations and charities. We believe their roles as mentors—providing ongoing support and advice to families, young people and other older people—should be recognised. Older people already show a considerable commitment to volunteering. The Government is working with voluntary groups and those representing older people to see how we can increase the quality and quantity of opportunities for older people who want to volunteer" (1998).

What is striking about this is that it is one of the few places where families are mentioned in an overview on older people, with the exception of a single mention of carers, many of whom 'are pensioners themselves'. The dominant preoccupation of this policy initiative is toward the notion of aging as an issue of lifestyle, and as such draws on the growth of the 'gray consumer' (Katz, 1999).

Whilst such a narrative is attractive to pressure groups and voluntary agencies; there is, just as with the policies of neo-liberalism, an underlying economic motive which may or may not be to the long term advantage to older people and their families. Again, as policies develop, the force driving the story of older people as active citizens was to be found in policies of a fiscal

nature. The most likely place to discover how the new story of aging, fits the bigger picture is in government-wide policy. In this case the document has been entitled '*Winning the Generation Game*' (2000). This begins well with "One of the most important tasks for twenty-first century UK is to unlock the talents and potential of all its citizens. Everyone has a valuable contribution to make, throughout their lives". However, the reasoning is explained in terms of a changing demographic profile: 'With present employment rates' it is argued, 'one million more over-50s would not be working by 2020 because of growth in the older population. There will be 2million fewer working-age people under 50 and 2 million more over 50: a shift equivalent to nearly 10 percent of the total working population'.

The 'solution' "third way" is to engage older people not only part of family life but also in work, volunteering or mentoring. Older workers become a reserve labor pool, filling the spaces left by falling numbers of younger workers. They thus contribute to the economy as producers as well as consumers and make fewer demands on pensions.

Most of these policy narratives only indirectly affect the aging family. Families only have a peripheral part to play in the story, and do not appear to be central to the lives of older people. However, it is possible to detect the same logic at work when attention shifts from the public to the private sphere. Here the narrative stream develops the notion of 'grandparenting' as a means of social inclusion. This trend can be found in the UK, in France (Girard and Ogg, 1998) Germany (Scharf and Wenger, 1995) as well as in the USA (Minkler, 1999).

Situation Grandparenting

In the UK context the most detailed reference to grandparenting can be found in an otherwise rather peculiar place—namely from the Home Office—an arm of British Government primarily concerned with law and order. In a document entitled '*Supporting Families*' (2000), 'Family life' we are told, 'is the foundation on which our communities, our society and our country are built'. . . . 'Business people, people from the community, students and grandparents' are encouraged to join a schools mentoring

network. Further: "the interests of grandparents, and the contribution they make, can be marginalised by service providers who, quite naturally, concentrate on dealing with parents. We want to change all this and encourage grandparents—and other relatives—to play a positive role in their families". By which it is meant: 'home, school links or as a source of social and cultural history' and support when 'nuclear families are under stress'. Even older people who are not themselves grandparents can join projects 'in which volunteers act as 'grandparents' to contribute their experience to a local family'.

Whilst the grandparental title has been used within the dominant policy narrative; bringing with it associations of security, stability and an in many ways an easier form of relationship than direct parenting; it exists as much in public as in private space. It is impossible to interpret this construction of grandparenthood without placing it in the broader context of 'social inclusion', itself a response to increased social fragmentation and economic competition. Indeed it may not be an exaggeration to refer this construal of grandparenting as neo-familial. In other words, the grandparent has out-grown the family as part of a policy search to include older adults in wider society. The grandparent becomes a mentor to both parental and grandparental generations as advice is not restricted to schools and support in times of stress, but also through participation in the planning of public services (Better Government for Older People, 2000).

This is a different narrative of older people and their relationship to families, from that of 'dependent' and 'burdensome'. Older people are now positioned as the solution to problems of demographic change, rather than their cause. They are a source of guidance to ailing families, rather than their victims. Both narratives increase the social inclusion of a marginal social group: formerly known as the 'dependent elderly' (Biggs and Powell, 2000).

First, each of the roles identified in the policy domain, volunteering, mentorship and grandparenting, have a rather second-hand quality. By this is meant that each is supportive to another player who is central to the task at hand. Volunteering becomes unpaid work; mentoring, support to helping professionals in their

eroded pastoral capacities; and grandparenting, in its familial guise, a sort of peripheral parent.

Second, there is a shift of attention away from the most frail and oldest old, to a third age of active ageing. It is striking that a majority of policy documents of what might be called the 'new aging', start from age 50. This interpretation fits well with the economic priority of drawing on older people as a reserve labour-force (Winning the Generation Game, 2000).

Finally, little consideration has been given to the potential conflict between ageing lifestyles based on consumption and those more socially inclusive roles of productive contribution, of which the 'new grandparenting' has become an important part. Chambre (1993) claims volunteering in the US decreases in old age. Her findings indicate the highest rates of volunteering occur in mid-life, where 66% volunteer. This rate declines to 47% for persons aged between 65–74 and to 32% among persons 75 and over. The UK charity, Age Concern, stated: 'One in ten grandparents are under the age of 56. They have 10 more years of work and are still leading full lives'.

What emerges from research on grandparenting as it is included in people's everyday narratives of self, indicates two trends. First, there appears to be a general acceptance of the positive value of relatively loose and undemanding exchange between first and third generations. Second that deep commitments become active largely in situations of extreme family stress or breakdown of the middle generation.

On this first trend, Bengston (1985) claims that grandparents serve as arbiters of knowledge and transmit knowledge that is unique to their identity, life experience and history. Similarly, Levinson (1978) claims grandparents can become mentors, performing the function of a 'life guide' for younger children. This 'transmission' role is confirmed by Waldrop et al's (1999) report on grandfathering. According to Roberto (1990) much US work on grandparenting has focused on how older adults view and structure their relationships with younger people. For example, Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) found that African American grandparents take a more active role, correcting the behaviour of grandchildren. Research by Kennedy (1990) indicates, however, that there is a cultural void when it comes to

grandparenting roles for many white families with few guidelines on how they should act as grandparents.

Girard and Ogg (1998) suggest that grandparenting is a political issue in French family policy. They claim that most grandmothers welcome the role they have in child care of their grandchildren, but there is a threshold beyond which support interferes with their other commitments. In the UK, Hayden, Boaz and Taylor (1999) claim that 'when thinking about the future, older people looked forward to their role as grandparents' and that grandparents looked after their grandchildren and provided them with 'love, support and a listening ear', providing childcare support to their children and were enthusiastic about these roles. Coupled with this, the Beth Johnson Foundation (1998) found that older people as mentors had increased levels of participation with more friends and engendered more social activity.

Although, studies on Japan (Izuhara, 2000), the US (Schreck, 2000; Minker, 1998), Hispanic Americans (Freidenberg, 2000), and Germany, (Chamberlayne and King, 2000) provide little evidence that grandchildren are prominent members of older people's reported social networks.

Grandparental responsibility becomes more visible if the middle generation is for some reason absent. Thompson, (1999) reports from the UK, that when parents part or die, it is often grandparents who take up supporting, caring and mediating roles on behalf of their grandchildren. The degree of involvement was contingent however on the quality of emotional closeness and communication within the family group. Minkler, (1999) has indicated that in the US, one in ten grandparents has primary responsibility for raising a grandchild at some point, with care often lasting for several years. This trend varies between ethnic groups, with 4.1% White, 6.55% Hispanic and 13.55 African American children living with their grandparents or other relatives. It is argued that a 44% increase in such responsibilities is connected to the devastating effects of wider social issues, including AIDs, drug abuse, parental homelessness and criminal justice policy.

It would appear that grandparenting activities are rarely an integral part of 'social inclusion'. Minkler's analysis draws atten-

tion to 'race' as a feature of social exclusion that is poorly handled by policy narratives afforded to the family and old age.

Conclusion

Each policy phase of the Reagan/Thatcherite neo-liberalism of the 1980s and early 1990s, the Clinton/Blairite interpretation of social democracy in the late 90s, or the Bush administration, leaves a legacy. Moreover, policy development is uneven and subject to local emphasis, which means that it is quite possible for conflicting narratives of family and later life to coexist in different parts of the policy system. Each period generates a discourse that can legitimate the lives of older people and family relations in particular ways. Part of the attractiveness of thinking in terms of narrative, that policies tell us stories that we don't have necessarily to believe, is the opening of a critical distance between description and intention. Depicting policies as stories, rather than realities, allows the interrogation of the space between that description and experiential relations.

In terms of critical reflection, we need to ask what does the examination of social policy discourse and everyday stories of family and aging tell us?

First, a significant element in the 'riskiness' of building aging and family identities under contemporary conditions may arise from the existence of multiple policy discourses that personal narratives have to negotiate. Future research on the management of identity, should, then, be sensitised to the multiple grounds on which identity might be built and the potential sources of risk and uncertainty may bring.

Finally, the multiple sources for reconstructing stories 'to live by' and the tension between legitimising discourses and alternative narratives of self and family, would suggest that identities are managed at different levels of awareness. There are implications here for the practice of social research. The story that the researcher hears and then records may be tapping a particular level of disclosure, depending in how the research itself is perceived. Stories of aging and family provide a rich seam for theorizing and researching the positioning of identity performance and social welfare practices.

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GENDER POVERTY DISPARITY IN US CITIES: EVIDENCE EXONERATING FEMALE-HEADED FAMILIES

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Utilizing data from the 2000 Census, this study examines the impact of family composition, education, and labor force factors on the difference between female and male poverty rates in the 70 largest U.S. cities. A stepwise regression analysis indicates that 41% of the difference between female and male poverty rates can be explained by the percent of women in the three US Bureau of Labor Statistic's lowest wage occupations. There was no evidence of a unique impact from the percentage of female headed families in each city, or the study's other independent variables, on the gender poverty gap, with the exception of their contribution through the proportion of females in the lowest wage occupations. This study provides empirical support for the likely ineffectiveness of TANF initiatives promoting employment and marriage for alleviating female poverty.

In addition, the study found important non-random geographic variations in the difference between cities with the highest and lowest gender disparity in poverty rates. Only one of the ten US cities with the highest rankings in gender poverty disparity is located west of the Mississippi River.

Key words: gender, poverty, low-wage occupations, family composition, female-headed families

Introduction

Throughout history, female poverty rates have surpassed male poverty rates in virtually every society (Casper, McLanahan, & Garfinkel, 1994). Following Diana Pearce's (1978) conceptualization of the "feminization of poverty," researchers began in

earnest to explore multiple dimensions of the gender disparities in poverty rates. In light of the steady gains in women's education and workforce participation, once again there has been renewed interest in the endurance of this gender poverty gap, as it persists into the modern post-industrial era (Christopher, England, Smeeding & Phillips, 2002; Bianchi, 1999; McLanahan & Kelley, 1999).

Comparative studies, among technologically advanced western countries, consistently find the chasm between female and male poverty rates is widest in the U.S. (Daly & Rake, 2003; Christopher et al, 2002). Defining poverty as total cash income below half the median income in each respective country, single females were almost twice as likely as single males to live in poverty in the US (Christopher et al, 2002). In addition, this relatively high female poverty risk was maintained during a period when both females and males were benefiting (Bianchi's, 1999) from the eight consecutive years, between 1993 and 2000, of steadily declining US poverty rates (National Poverty Center, 2003).

Whereas this previous research examined gender inequality between nations, the current study is a within group examination of gender poverty disparity within the United States. Specifically, this study determines in which of the of the seventy largest U.S. cities the gender disparity in poverty rates is the greatest; and the factors contributing to such disparity. The US Census, which uses a comparatively conservative absolute poverty measure, reported in the last decennial census that overall 17% of females, compared to 13% of males, age 18 to 64 living in the largest US cities, had incomes below the poverty threshold (Bangs, Lichtenwalter, Hughes, Anthou & Shorter, 2003). Likewise, 36% of female headed families with children under age 18, compared to 21% of male headed families with children, in the largest 70 cities, had incomes below the poverty thresholds (Bangs et al, 2003).

The most recent national poverty statistics indicate poverty has increased again in 2001 and 2002 (American Community Survey, 2003; Parrott, 2003). Severe poverty, income below 50% of the poverty line, increased for nearly 1.5 million people between 2000 and 2002, and has returned to its 1996–1997 levels (Fremstad, 2004). Therefore, it is likely that there has been a further widening in the gender poverty gap since the last census. Increasing our

understanding of the factors contributing to the disproportionately high poverty rates among females is critical for formulating effective solutions.

The differences between female and male poverty rates are fundamentally attributed to two factors, both of which influenced the historic Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) and continue to inform the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) reauthorization debates. The first factor is the historical gender differences in paid and unpaid labor which direct much of women's energies toward childrearing, care-giving and unpaid domestic work (Crittenden, 2001; Folbre, 2001). In addressing this, TANF added 30 hours of weekly work requirements to welfare recipient's domestic responsibilities while providing modest levels of childcare assistance (U.S. Congress, 1996).

The second factor believed to contribute to female poverty is the demographic shift toward single female-headed families (Brown, 1997; Goldberg & Kremen, 1990; McLanahan & Kelley, 1999; Murray, 1994; Waite & Gallagher, 2000). Three out of four of PRWORA goals for reforming poor women's welfare provisions were related to the promotion of marriage and prevention of non-marital pregnancies (U.S. Congress, 1996). Furthermore, current TANF reauthorization proposals from Congress and the Bush Administration divert over \$1.5 billion in TANF work supports to marriage promotion activities (Parke, 2004; Pear & Kirkpatrick, 2004; White House, 2002).

The purpose of the current investigation is to contribute to research that begins to distinguish between the unique contributions of women's paid labor and family composition to the gender differences in poverty rates. Although access to labor market earnings serves as the primary determinant of poverty status, the workplace itself is a powerful stratifying institution with many factors operating against women and mothers (Crittenden, 2001; Budig & England, 2001; Waldfogel, 1998). Occupational sex-typing and within occupation status segregation and all manner of other gendered wage differentials and discriminatory practices contribute to the creation of a gender wage gap (Cohen, 2000). Therefore, despite women's increased education and participation in the waged labor market, females employed full-time,

full-year, with education attainment similar to that of males, still obtain work in different types of jobs and/or at different rates of pay (Figart & Lapidus, 1995; King, 2001; Levine, 2001). Accordingly, the influences of these labor dynamics on female's higher risk of poverty are captured in the current study through measures of gender wage inequality, and low-wage occupational sex-segregation, as well as through measures of general female labor force participation.

Occupational sex-segregation, which theoretically may be influenced by both demand and supply side considerations (Redskin, 1993), was of particular interest to the current study. Much of the recent scholarship on segmented labor market theory strongly suggests determinants related to a cultural devaluation of female labor, bias wage structures, and gendered work organizations (England, 1992; England, Hermsen & Cotter, 2000; Grube-Farrell, 2002; Tomaskovic-Devy & Skaggs, 2002).

Therefore, utilizing data from the 2000 Census, this study examines how much of the difference between female and male poverty rates, in the 70 largest U.S. cities, is explained by the prevalence of single female-headed families, as well as gender differences in education and labor related variables.

Data

The U.S. Census Bureau, with its budget of \$1.4 billion dollars, is an unparalleled source of aggregate data on the 281.4 million people in the United States (Cortright and Reamer, 1998). The current study utilizes census data from the year 2000 to examine women and men's poverty, education and labor, as presented by the *Pittsburgh Women's Benchmark Report* (Bangs et al, 2003). The University of Pittsburgh Center for Social and Urban Research prepared this *Benchmark Report* to assess the socioeconomic status of females relative to males in the 70 most populated U.S. cities. While the highest and lowest ranked cities on variables relevant to the current study are presented in this article, readers are referred to the original report with its ranking tables of all 70 cities for a comprehensive picture of important regional differences.

The aggregate level labor and poverty data utilized in this inquiry is appropriate for the selected unit of analysis, which is the

city. The poverty and education variables pertain only to working age adults. Occupation and earnings, by definition, are limited to employed individuals. Therefore, children and retirees have been eliminated from the study's variables.

Methods

The 70 most populated U.S. cities are ranked highest to lowest on each of the study's central variables. As appropriate, a within city female/male ratio on the variables were calculated for each of the 70 cities. These simple gender ratios are such that 1.00 represents female and male equality, and less than 1.00 indicates women lag behind men on the measure in that city. A ratio greater than 1.00 indicates that females surpass males on that specific indicator in the city. These gender ratios for each city were then utilized in between-city comparisons, which ranked gender disparities among the 70 largest US cities.

The descriptive analysis of the 70 city rankings is followed by a bivariate exploration of the relationships among the study's central variables. Then, a stepwise multiple regression analysis is conducted to determine how much of a city's female/male poverty ratio for working age adults can be explained by the study's independent variables.

Descriptive Statistics

Poverty The US Census' poverty criteria vary by the size, and adult/child composition, of each family. For example, the 2000 US Census poverty threshold was \$8,794 for an individual and \$13,874 for an individual with two related children under age 18. Poverty status is based upon the respondents' income from the preceding calendar year, so the 2000 Census' poverty statistics are based on the respondent's 1999 income. In addition, there is a presumption of shared family resources, so a married couple's poverty status is based upon the income of both spouses (U.S. Census, 2000). Therefore, wives and husbands are assigned the same poverty status, which reflects an underlying assumption that all married women benefit from their husband's income.

The proportion of females age 18–64 with incomes below the US Census poverty thresholds are higher than that of males

in every major US city. The mean for the percent of females with incomes below poverty in the largest 70 US cities was 17%. Virginia Beach VA has the highest gender poverty disparity at 1.76 (7.2% females below poverty/4.1% males below poverty), although this city's general poverty rates are well below the national mean. San Francisco CA's 1.07 (11.3% females below poverty/10.6% males below poverty) is the lowest female/male poverty ratio among the 70 largest US cities. See Tables 2 and 3.

Education All the education variables utilized in the analysis pertain to the population age 18 to 64. Overall, working age females in the 70 largest U.S. cities surpass males in their rate of high school completion, and equal the male rate of attaining a bachelor degree or higher. For the purpose of this study, college completion is the central variable.

Seattle has the highest percentage of working age females with a bachelor degree or higher (48.1%) and Santa Ana, CA has the lowest (7.5%). The 70-city mean for the percent of 18 to 64 year olds awarded a bachelor degree or higher is 24% for both genders. The percentage of females with at least a bachelor degree is equal to or greater than that of males in 26 (37%) of the 70 largest U.S. cities. The rates that women with bachelor degrees or higher surpass that of men by the greatest ratio is in Detroit 1.25 (11.4% females/9.1% males). Conversely, females trail men most in El Paso TX .82 (15.4% female/18.7% male).

Work force participation Although female labor force participation has steadily increased in recent decades, it still trails that of males in every city except Detroit.

Detroit MI had the highest percentage of females (50.3%) comprising the full-time, full-year work force and Santa Ana CA had the lowest (36%). The mean for the proportion of females of all full-time, full-year workers in the 70 largest US cities was 42.8%. Note that a ratio analysis is not calculated for this variable because it is inherent in the measure. For instance, if women comprise 36% of the full-time work force in Santa Ana, this implies that men comprise 64% ($100\% - 36\% = 64\%$) of the full-time work force. This will also be the case for the variables related to female participation in the lowest and highest wage occupations.

To capture females impacted by Crittenden's 'mommy tax', or the restrictive workforce participation imposed by care-giving, an additional measure of women's labor was included to reflect the large number of women with young children or other dependents who are by necessity employed less than 35 hours a week (Crittenden, 2001). The percent of females age 25 to 59 in the labor force, either full or part-time, ranges from a high in Seattle WA (80%) to a low in Santa Ana CA (58%). The mean for females in the labor force is 87.3% for the 70 largest US cities.

High and Low Wage Occupations The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) releases information on the occupations with the highest and lowest mean hourly wages. The BLS lowest wage occupations consist the following job categories: 1) food preparation and serving and related occupations, 2) Buildings, grounds cleaning and maintenance, 3) Personal care and service and 4) Farming, fishing and forestry. The farm, fish and forestry occupations were omitted from the current analysis due to the urban nature of the largest 70 US cities. The BLS reports the mean hourly wage for the composite of the three lowest wage occupations used in the current analysis as \$9.00 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2000).

The BLS highest wage occupations are a composition of the following professions: 1) Business and financial operations, 2) Architecture and engineering, 3) Computer and mathematical 4) Management and 5) Legal. The BLS reports the mean hourly wage for the composite of these five highest wage occupations as \$28.62 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2000).

Females comprise more than 50% of those employed in the BLS lowest wage occupations in 50 (71%) of the largest US cities. The 70 city mean for the percent of females employed in the BLS lowest wage occupations is 53%, with a high of 61.2% in Toledo OH, and a low of 42.6% in Santa Ana CA.

Females comprise 50% or more of those employed in the BLS highest wage occupations in 2 (3%) of the largest US cities. The mean for the percent of females employed in the BLS highest wage occupations is 41%, with a high of 55.8% in Detroit MI and a low of 34.5% in Colorado Springs CO.

1999 Gender earnings equality Despite the educational achievements of females, women's overall median earnings and income

trail men's in each of the largest 70 U.S. cities, even when limiting the comparison to full-time, full year workers. In addition, it is important to note that the cities with the highest overall (full and part-time) median earnings equality also tend to have the highest full-time earnings and income equality. This is evidenced by the fact that among the 10 cities with the highest ratio of female/male overall median earnings, 7 (70%) also have the highest ratio of full-time, full-year earnings and income equality.

The gender ratio in median earnings for full and part-time workers range from a high of in Washington DC of 88.2% (\$25,724 female/\$29,154 male) to the low in Bakersfield, CA of 57.2% (\$16,749 female/\$29,305 male). The mean of female/male median earnings for these workers is 74.7% in the 70 largest US cities.

The state of California lays claim to the cities with the highest and lowest gender ratios in median earnings for full-time, full-year workers ranging from Los Angeles' 94.7% (\$30,197 female/\$31,880 male) to Bakersfield's 69.9% (\$27,148 female/\$38,834 male). The mean of female/male full-time, full-year median earnings is 81.3% in the 70 largest U.S. cities. Therefore, limiting the inquiry to only full-time, full-year earners improves gender earnings disparities only about 9%.

Moreover, the range of full-time, full-year median income disparities nearly replicate those of earnings ranging from 94.0% (\$30,782 female/\$32,742 male) in Los Angeles, CA to 70.2% (\$28,202 female/\$40,175 male) in Bakersfield, CA, with a mean of 81.2%. This suggests that income from sources other than wages, such as investments or child support, have very little significance in aggregate gender income inequality.

Family Structure Female headed households, with no husband present, comprise more than half the families with children under 18 years in 9 (13%) of the 70 largest US cities, and the overall mean is 32.3%. Detroit, MI and Santa Ana, CA have the highest (55.2%) and lowest (15.0%) percent, respectively, of single female-headed families.

Bivariate Relationships

Correlations were calculated to ascertain which of the study's central variables were significantly associated with gender

disparity in poverty rates, or the 'poverty gap,' in the largest 70 US cities. Because several variables did not correlate as expected, a second series of correlation tests were conducted on gender earnings equality, or the 'wage gap,' to alleviate concerns related to the construct validity of the measures and integrity of the data. As noted in Table 1, when necessary the variables were appropriately transformed prior to testing for significant correlation using a Pearson correlation.

Poverty Gap As expected, high ratios of female/male poverty inequality were associated with cities with a higher percentage of female employment in low wage occupations ($r = .637, p < .001$) and a higher percent of single female headed households with children under age 18 ($r = .246, p = .04$). Poverty inequality was negatively associated with high general median earnings equality ($r = -.468, p < .001$) and high full-time earnings equality ($r = -.378, p = .001$).

Surprisingly, gender disparities in the poverty rates were not significantly associated with either of the two education variables, although this is consistent with the devaluation of women's work. There was also an absence of statistically significant correlations between the gender gap in poverty rates and both the percent of females in the labor force, and the percent of females of all full-time workers. This also is consistent with the devaluation of women's work, but it may also reflect limited workforce participation of married women who avoid poverty classification by virtue of their spouses' incomes. Less remarkable was the lack of a relationship between the dependent variable and female representation in high wage occupations, typically a status indicator rather than a standard poverty indicator.

Earnings Equality Gender earnings equality was positively associated with a high ratio of female/male with a bachelor degree or higher ($r = .477, p < .001$), and high percentages of females in the full-time workforce ($r = .487, p < .001$), and high percentages of females in high wage occupations ($r = .492, p < .001$). Gender median earnings equality were negatively associated with a high proportion of females in low wage occupations ($r = -.605, p < .001$).

Table 1

Initial and Transformed Distribution Statistics for Central Study Variables

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Original Skewness</i>	<i>Transformed Skewness</i>	<i>Procedure</i>
EDUCATION					
Ratio Female/ Male, Ages 18 to 64 w/ less than High School Diploma	.89	.085	1.24	.698	Log
Ratio Female/ Male, Ages 18 to 64 w/ Bachelor Degree +	.99	.064	1.04	.649	Log
OCCUPATION					
% Females in Low Wage Occupations	53.2%	.034	-.54	—	Unnecessary
% Females in High Wage Occupations	41.4%	.041	.81	.642	Square Root
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION					
% Females age 25-59 in labor force	71.3%	.049	-.523	—	Unnecessary
% Females of full- time, full-year workers	42.8%	.030	.279	—	Unnecessary
EARNINGS					
Ratio Female/ Male Median Earnings	74.7%	.065	-.43	—	Unnecessary

(continued)

Table 1
(Continued)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Original Skewness	Transformed Skewness	Procedure
Ratio Female/ Male FT-FY Median Earnings	81.2%	.055	.13	—	Unnecessary
FAMILY STRUCTURE					
% of all families w/ children under 18 that are Female Headed Families	32.3%	..106	.700	.165	Log
POVERTY (Poverty Disparity)					
Ratio Female/ Male Ages 18–64, with Income below Poverty	1.27	.112	1.04	.572	Log

Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to ascertain the extent to which the ratio of female/male median earnings, female representation in BLS’s high/low wage occupations, and female labor force participation account for the amount that poverty rates for working age females exceed those of males. The percent of single female-headed families with children in each city was also included in this analysis to determine the contribution of family structure to gender poverty disparities. To capture the impact of the social assignment of care tasks to women, which often influences the hours available for paid employment (Crittenden, 2001; King, 2001) the wage gap for part-time and full-time workers is combined in the variable selected in this analysis. However, as

would be expected, the main conclusions were supported when the analysis was replicated with a sample restricted to full-time, year-round workers, women whose work patterns most closely resemble those of men.

The initial standard multiple regression analysis revealed high levels of colinearity among the independent variables. The stepwise selection technique is a variation of the standard multiple regression that permits the elimination of variables that are measuring much the same construct as other variables in the analysis. Therefore, a stepwise selection technique was employed to eliminate the redundancy among the independent variables and identify the unique portion that each contributed to gender poverty disparity. The stepwise selection eliminated the common portions that the other variables were contributing to the model. Only the percent of female employment in low wage occupations remained as a significant contributor to gender disparity in poverty rates ($\beta = .637, p < .001$). The stepwise selection reported that female employment in low wage occupations predicts 41% of the variance in poverty between females and males 18 to 64 in the largest US cities. In essence, the analysis indicated that there is a bivariate relationship between poverty disparity and the percent of females in low wage occupations that explains much of the impact of the other independent variables.

Discussion

The series of basic bivariate analysis indicated that both female education premiums, and female's increased work force participation, have positively impacted female earnings and lowered the gender wage gap, but failed to have a significant direct impact on the gender poverty gap. Although working age females in the 70 largest cities surpass males in their rate of high school completion and equal the male rate of attaining a bachelor degree, this has not translated to sufficient labor market gains to offset higher poverty rates. This is consistent with occupation segregation theory that posits female's labor and human capital garners fewer rewards than that of males.

The stepwise multiple regression results indicate that in the 70 largest US cities the poverty gap is primarily influenced by

female's overrepresentation in the lowest-wage occupations. The impact of female labor force participation, earnings inequality and single motherhood, on the poverty gap, all appear to be operating through women's overrepresentation in the lowest wage occupations.

This study establishes an important parallel between the economic research on the gender wage gap and the social science research on the gender poverty gap. Labor economists have established that while education and labor force participation help to offset the gender wage gap, it is by far the power of occupational segregation that contributes the strongest impact upon the gender wage gap (Boraas, & Rodgers, 2003). At the city level, or aggregate level, occupational segregation is the factor contributing the single strongest impact to both the poverty and the wage gap between females and males.

In addition, the study's use of the city as its unit of analysis reveals important regional variations in the gender poverty gap. (See Tables 2 and 3) Colorado Springs is the only city among the ten cities with the highest gender poverty disparity that is located west of the Mississippi River. Likewise, Raleigh NC and Lexington KY are the only two cities ranking among those with the lowest gender poverty disparity that are located east of the Mississippi River. Gender poverty research rarely explores geographic variations among urban areas, however, examining the regional dynamics that relegate women to the lowest wage occupations, and consequently, a disproportionate share of the poverty burden is important.

The US Census reports that the highest overall national poverty rates are in the southern and western states (Dalaker, 2001) and the Institute for Women's Policy Research reports that women in particular are most likely to live below the poverty level in many southeastern and western states (Caiazza, Shaw & Werschul, 2004). Clearly, the current study's findings that the cities with the lowest gender poverty inequality are primarily Western cities, begins to illuminate such data, not only from a singular urban perspective, but also by positioning female poverty statistics in light of male poverty. The feminization of poverty is more extreme in the mid-west and southeastern cities in Table 3 than in any other region in the nation, whereas in San Francisco, Seattle,

Table 2

Ten US Cities with the Lowest Gender Poverty Disparity, Presented w/ Low Wage Occupation and Earnings Variables

	Ratio Female/ Male Rates Poverty (Ages 18–64)	Percent Females in Lowest Wage Occupation	Percent Female/ Male Median Earnings	Percent Female Headed Families w/ children > 18
70 City Mean	1.27	53.2%	74.7%	32.3%
<i>San Francisco, CA</i> [^]	1.07	45.5%*	79.6%	22.1%*
<i>Seattle, WA</i> [^]	1.07	49.5%	79.7%	24.5%
<i>Honolulu, HI</i>	1.11	49.4%*	76.1%	21.4%*
<i>Sacramento, CA</i> [^]	1.12	49.2%*	81.8% ⁺	32.3%
<i>Raleigh, NC</i> [^]	1.12	49.5%	78.8%	28.4%
<i>Minneapolis, MN</i> [^]	1.14	49.7%	85.1% ⁺	35.2%
<i>Lexington Fayette, KY</i>	1.14	53.0%	71.7%	26.5%
<i>Phoenix, AZ</i>	1.15	48.7%*	78.5%	22.5%
<i>Oakland, CA</i> [^]	1.15	52.0%	85.6% ⁺	36.4%
<i>Denver, CO</i> [^]	1.15	51.2%	83.1% ⁺	28.2%

*Indicates presence on the list of lowest 10 among the 70 largest US Cities.

[^]Indicates presence on the list of highest 10 among the 70 largest US Cities.

⁺Percent of females with bachelor degrees or higher, equals or exceeds that of males.

Honolulu, and Sacramento, the gender poverty gap is relatively narrower. However, the study's findings raise more questions than answers. The most significant being what factors contribute to variations in the occupation segregation associated with this gender disparity in poverty rates?

In a national study with a focus on wages rather than poverty, McCall examined why some places appear to systematically foster gender inequality while other places appear to systematically reduce it. McCall suggests that regional labor market factors such as the concentration of high-technology service providers and manufacturers, insecure or 'flexible' employment conditions, immigration, and union presence offers much insight into inequality patterns (McCall, 2001). Other studies of occupation segregation

Table 3

Ten US Cities with the Highest Gender Poverty Disparity, Presented w/Low Wage Occupation and Earnings Variables

	Ratio Female/ Male Rates Poverty (Ages 18–64)	Percent Females in Lowest Wage Occupation	Percent Female/ Male Median Earnings	Percent Female Headed Families w/ children > 18
70 City Mean	1.27	53.2%	74.7%	32.3%
Virginia Beach, VA [^]	1.75	59.2% ⁺	64.3% [*]	20.7% [*]
Jacksonville, FL	1.46	55.2%	72.8%	30.0%
Toledo, OH	1.44	61.2% ⁺	60.4% [*]	36.8%
Atlanta, GA	1.42	53.8%	80.3%	53.4% ⁺
Memphis, TN [^]	1.42	56.0%	76.5%	47.1%
New Orleans, LA [^]	1.41	55.9%	68.0% [*]	50.0% ⁺
Tampa, FL	1.41	52.0%	73.9%	34.9%
Cincinnati, OH	1.39	55.7%	76.9%	50.1% ⁺
Indianapolis, IN	1.39	55.8%	70.0%	32.0%
Colorado Springs, CO	1.39	56.1%	62.6% [*]	20.4% [*]

^{*}Indicates presence on the list of lowest 10 among the 70 largest US Cities.

⁺Indicates presence on the list of highest 10 among the 70 largest US Cities.

[^]Percent of females with bachelor degrees or higher, equals or exceeds that of males.

in metropolitan areas suggest the physical dispersion of jobs, residential planning, commuting patterns and other spatial considerations, impact women's labor segmentation (Hansen & Pratt; 1991; Hwang & Fitzpatrick, 1992; Wyly, 1999).

Mcall's study also found that a complex configuration of racial and class inequality interacted with gender inequality. She found that the region with the lowest level of gender wage inequality *between* men and women also had higher than average levels of racial and class wage inequality *among* both men and women (McCall, 2001).

Therefore, the absence of a racial analysis, as well as local labor market indices, are importation limitations in this current poverty disparity study, particularly since more than half the population

of African Americans live in U.S. cities and reside in southern states (U.S. Census, 2000). Other important limitations of the current study were also a result of its reliance upon aggregate census data, which contributed to the decision to simplify the analysis by omitting race variables due to an inability to classify the study's central variables by race. Replicating this study utilizing the 2000 PUMS, which was not available at the time, would maintain the inclusive sample size while expanding the capacity to conduct within group analysis related to age, education, marital status and racial groups.

Policy Implications

TANF legislation, which has been operating under a series of short-term congressional resolutions since its expiration in August of 2002, offers little potential for closing the gender gap in poverty rates. This is not only because it fails to address the poverty impact of occupation segregation, but in many ways its low benefits, work requirements, time limits, and education restrictions actually assure the continuation of such poverty patterns (Piven, 2003). Legislator's current proposals continue to reflect the central tenets of PROWRA, which sought to replace public assistance with earnings and encourage "proper" family formation. However, for many women funneled into society's least desirable jobs, work paying poverty level wages has been a poor substitute for public assistance (Fermstad, 2004; Hays, 2003). In addition, there is no evidence to substantiate the benefits of marriage promotion programs (Lerman, 2002; Epstein, Ooms, Parke, Roberts & Turetsky, 2002). Indeed, serious concerns have been expressed about any programs that potentially pressure vulnerable low-income women to remain in abusive relationships (Brush, 1999, 2000; Brandwein & Filiano, 2000).

This study indicates that it is the percent of females employed in the BLS lowest wage occupations rather than the proportion of single female-headed families that is the primary determinant of the gender poverty gap in the largest U.S. cities. Nonetheless, the marriage related provisions in current welfare reauthorization proposals include \$1.2 billion in Federal funding and \$600

million in state matching funding for marriage promotion activities (Parke, 2004). Although these criticisms are not directed toward the elimination of TANF, the reauthorization legislation's stringent work requirements, lack of meaningful education supports and prospects of childcare reductions (CLASP, 2004) will continue to compel TANF recipients into employment that will consign these women and their families to continued poverty.

The concentration of female employment among a restricted number of jobs has been an acknowledged contributor to significant gender pay differentials in the US since 1918 (Cohen, 2001). However, there is no evidence that occupational segregation results in wage inequality because Scandinavian countries with high levels of occupational segregation have a relatively narrow wage gap, while Japan with less occupational segregation has higher wage inequality (Rosenfeld & Kalleberg, 1991). Therefore, while for almost a century there has been no shortage of pay equity propositions, few have attracted the necessary level of political support.

Women comprise over 61% of the minimum wage workers, so setting and maintaining an above-poverty-level legislated minimum wage, through annual cost of living increases, is one method for addressing female poverty disparities due to women's over representation in low wage jobs (Economic Policy Institute, 2003; Figart & Mutari, 1999). The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), though not a replacement for the minimum wage, is currently the most powerful poverty relief program for working families. Therefore, in absence of minimum wage reforms, maintenance and actual increases in the EITC represent an essential poverty reduction measure (Economic Policy Institute, 2003).

Living wage campaigns seek to pass local ordinances requiring private businesses, which benefit from public money, to pay their workers a living wage that is set substantially above the current minimum wage (ACORN, 2003). Research related to successful living wage campaigns have found that the modest number of workers impacted by living wage initiatives have enjoyed improved standards of living, while neither city budgets nor unemployment rates have significantly increased due to the adoption of these living wage mandates (ACORN, 2001).

Mother's managing home and work responsibilities frequently must reduce their waged work to part-time hours and sustain disproportionate economic penalties (Williamson, 2001). Proponents of equitably valuing part time work contend that part-time employees should enjoy proportionate pay and advancement opportunities. It has been demonstrated that such policies actually save companies money by increasing productivity and reducing turnover for both men and women deciding to spend more time with their families (Williamson, 2001).

Feminist theorist assert that appropriately valuing the nurturing and female dominated occupations with just compensation would reduce poverty while restoring prestige to the underpaid, but economically necessary and vital, work performed by women, as well as men, in the secondary labor market (Folbre, 2001). Recall that one of the three BLS lowest wage occupations was personal care work. Significant attention has been bestowed upon the poor pay in this female dominated occupation and state subsidies for personal care work have been proposed. Providing state subsidies to supplement the wages of care workers is an important proposal for internalizing the costs of the positive externalities produced by care workers that all members of society use when they are young or ill (England, Budig, & Folbre, 2002).

Other work oriented anti-poverty initiatives include, improving family leave policies, implementing comparable worth programs, strengthening labor unions, and adopting 'solidarity wage' policies, which keeps wages up at the bottom and reduce wage inequalities (King, 2001).

Note that each of the previous propositions benefit females and mothers, as well as males and fathers, in low wage occupations. Almost all these strategies emphasize an attack on women's low-wage jobs directly, rather than indirectly through a comparison to male occupations and wage structures (McCall, 2001). In 1973, 23.5% of full time workers earned less than the poverty level for a family of four and by 1997, in the midst of the US last 'economic prosperity' boom, that percentage increased to 28.6% (Hallock, 2001). Initiatives that diminish the disproportionate level of female poverty benefit both females and males. Therefore, strengthening the entire workforce with just-wage policies is beneficial for all, and a worthy national priority.

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THEORIES OF URBAN POVERTY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING POLICY

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Urban poverty has been the subject of sociological and political debate for more than a century. In this article I examine theories of urban poverty and their place in American housing policy. I first discuss theories that have arisen out of the sociological and policy discourse on urban poverty and the research that supports and challenges these theories. I then review current public housing initiatives and discuss the impact of these theories on current housing policy.

Keywords: urban poverty, sociological theory, poverty concentration, neighborhood effects, housing policy, HOPE VI

Urban poverty has been the subject of sociological and political debate for more than a century. The debate over the causes, consequences, and solutions to poverty has gained renewed interest and significance in recent decades due to the dramatic concentration of urban poverty. Since the mid-1960's, poverty has become more concentrated in inner-city neighborhoods across the nation and has had the greatest impact on the black urban poor. For example, between 1970 and 1980 alone, the poor black population living in extreme poverty areas increased by 164 percent, while the increase was only 24 percent for poor whites (Wilson, 1987). The increase in poverty concentration has coincided with a dramatic increase in joblessness, female-headed households, welfare dependency, out-of-wedlock births, segregation, and crime.

Early Theories of Urban Poverty

Urban ecological theory, which dominated in the United States in the early 1900s, analyzed cities through a human ecology

lens and saw poor urban neighborhoods as transitional and functional zones of larger urban metropolises; places where new immigrant groups would pass through for a temporary period of time (Park & Burgess, 1925). Other ecological theorists examined the disorganized nature of cities and the negative effects of social disorganization in certain poor neighborhoods (Wirth, 1938; Shaw & McKay, 1942). The traditional urban ecological perspective has been denounced for not recognizing the permanent nature of many poor black neighborhoods and for ignoring factors other than market forces that can shape the movement of groups and land use (Sampson & Morenoff, 1997).

Another influential theory was the "culture of poverty", which suggested that the norms and behaviors of the poor can be distinguished as a subculture of larger society and characterized by a distinct way of life, including an atypical worldview and low aspirations (Lewis, 1968; Moynihan, 1965). This culture was said to perpetuate itself from generation to generation. The culture of poverty thesis has been widely criticized for being too deterministic, blaming the victim, and diverting attention away from the structural causes of poverty. Another perspective suggested that welfare policies were to blame for the disintegration of the urban black family by offering disincentives for work and marriage (Murray, 1984). Although influential, this perspective has been discounted with evidence that shows welfare rates rose even when the relative advantage of work at a minimum wage job outweighed that of welfare income (Wilson, 1987).

Social Isolation and Concentration Effects

Perhaps more influential than any other previous work on urban poverty is William Julius Wilson's thesis in *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987). Wilson maintains that two key factors best explain why the social conditions of the "urban underclass" deteriorated so rapidly since the mid-1960's: changes in the structure of the economy and changes in the social composition of inner-city neighborhoods. Wilson argues that major shifts in the structure of the American economy, including the suburbanization of jobs and the decreasing demand for low-skilled labor, contributed to a downward spiral for urban blacks (1987, 1996). At the same time

jobs were relocating away and the economic base shifted from manufacturing to the service sector, more jobs began requiring formal education and credentials that many inner-city residents lacked.

Coinciding with the major economic shifts that led to increased joblessness were significant changes in the socioeconomic makeup of urban residents. From the 1940's to the 1960's, inner-city neighborhoods were integrated with lower, working, and middle-class black families. In the 1970's and 1980's, however, middle-class, and eventually working-class blacks, moved out of the inner-city, leaving the most disadvantaged residents behind—the group Wilson labels the *underclass*. Wilson also argues that changes in the age structure of urban neighborhoods contributed to the increase in social problems. Between 1960 and 1970, the number of inner-city blacks aged 14 to 24 increased by 78 percent (while only 23 percent for whites) (1987, p. 36).

Essentially, the removal of entry-level jobs from the inner-city compounded with the removal of middle-class blacks to produce the devastating and isolating effects of concentrated poverty. Wilson suggests that as time went on, poor residents became increasingly isolated from informal job networks, working role models, mainstream institutions, and mainstream patterns of behavior. Middle and working-class families were important for these communities because they enhanced stability and social organization by sustaining the basic community institutions (such as schools, churches, and businesses) and reinforcing societal norms and values pertaining to employment, education, and family structure. Thus, Wilson argues, urban communities today are suffering from *concentration effects*—the effects of concentrated neighborhood poverty on individual residents. Neighborhood concentration effects are at the heart of Wilson's thesis in *The Truly Disadvantaged*, where he provides a compelling argument that neighborhood poverty affects individual level outcomes, independent of individual and family characteristics.

Residential Segregation and Discrimination

Although Wilson's thesis has been very powerful, other theories of urban poverty remain influential as well. Several

emphasize the role discrimination plays in limiting the employment, educational, and housing opportunities for poor, urban, minority families (Massey & Denton, 1993; Leventhal et al, 1997; Sampson & Morenoff, 1997). In their book *American Apartheid* (1993), Massey and Denton argue that racism and residential segregation are the key factors that explain the increase in concentrated poverty and the plight of the black urban poor. They argue that the changes in the economy during the 1970's, which Wilson suggests led to the increase in urban poverty, concentrated the economic shock in black neighborhoods precisely because of residential segregation. Thus, if there were no segregation, the effects of any increase in black poverty would be spread throughout the entire community. With severe segregation, any increase in black poverty is absorbed entirely by black neighborhoods, altering the environment in which blacks live.

Massey and Denton provide a stunning account of America's history of segregation and document how "the black ghetto was constructed through a series of well-defined institutional practices, private behaviors, and public policies by which whites sought to contain growing urban black populations" (p. 10). They argue that white America has systematically put up barriers to black spatial mobility, which essentially confined blacks to disadvantaged neighborhoods. The authors analyze how federal housing policy contributed significantly to the disinvestment in black urban neighborhoods and the expansion of the suburbs for white America. In addition, locating public housing projects in predominantly poor black communities further increased the poverty concentration in urban areas (Massey & Denton, 1993; Leventhal et al., 1997).

Despite the Fair Housing Act of 1968, residential segregation persisted through the 1970s and 1980s. In 1980, blacks in 16 metropolitan areas were *hypersegregated*, meaning these cities scored very high on at least four of five dimensions of segregation (Massey & Denton, 1993). Massey and Denton point out that blacks living in hypersegregated areas are especially socially isolated because they are unlikely to have contact with others unless they work outside of the ghetto. Given the rates of black joblessness, it is unlikely that a large portion of these residents have any meaningful contact with the larger society.

Massey and Denton's theory has been criticized for overstating the role of racial discrimination in causing urban poverty. Wilson suggests that "... people who argue that current racial bias is the major cause of the deteriorating economic plight of the black poor fail to recognize how the fate of poor blacks is inextricably connected with the structure and functioning of the modern American economy" (1987, p. 134). Further, Wilson says his thesis

... cannot be reduced to the easy explanations of racism advanced by those on the left, or of 'culture of poverty' posited by those on the right. Although historic racism created the ghetto and although contemporary discrimination has undoubtedly aggravated the economic and social woes of its residents, an adequate understanding of the sharp increase in these problems requires the specification of a complex web of additional factors, including the impact of shifts in the modern American economy. (2003, p.101)

Nevertheless, while theorists will continue to debate the causes of the increase in concentrated urban poverty, the one thing they do seem to agree on is that neighborhood *matters*. In fact, it has become generally accepted that neighborhood poverty, as opposed to just family poverty, can play an important role in child and family outcomes (Brown & Richman, 1997; Leventhal et al., 1997). Largely as a result of Wilson's work, a new wave of research began focusing on *neighborhood effects*—the effects of living in extremely poor neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Effects

The 1980's and 1990's experienced a boom in studying neighborhood effects and rethinking theories of urban poverty. This multidisciplinary research has looked into the relationship between neighborhood effects and unemployment (Massey et al, 1991), school dropouts (Brooks-Gunn et al, 1993), crime (Sampson et al., 1997), and teen pregnancy (Coulton & Pandey, 1992). Most studies, however, have been unable to draw causal links between neighborhood effects and life chances (Small & Newman, 2001). There are also several methodological problems with many of these studies, including inconsistencies and disagreements over the definitions and measures of neighborhood and

disadvantage (Brown & Richman, 1997; Small & Newman, 2001). Despite these drawbacks, there have been several important studies suggesting that neighborhood poverty affects child development (Brooks-Gunn et al, 1993; Chase-Linsdale et al, 1997), adolescent achievement (Brooks-Gunn et al, 1993; Duncan, 1994), delinquency (Peeples & Loeber, 1994), and parenting practices (Klebanov et al, 1994).

While it is evident that neighborhoods with high concentrations of poor residents experience more social problems than higher income communities, the factors that account for this correlation remain unclear (Briggs, 1998; Brown & Richman, 1997; Small & Newman, 2001). A number of theories have been formulated, many of which build off Wilson's theory of concentration effects, including hypotheses about collective efficacy, collective socialization, contagion effects, and social capital (Small & Newman, 2001). For example, a collective efficacy model has been used to explain neighborhood effects on crime and delinquency. Collective efficacy refers to the social cohesion among residents and their shared expectations and has been measured by residents' willingness to intervene in supervising neighborhood children, their involvement in voluntary associations, and the density of their social networks (Small & Newman, 2001). Sampson et al. (1997) found that neighborhoods with high levels of collective efficacy and social organization had lower crime rates, regardless of their poverty level. In addition, concentrated poverty and increases in poverty from 1970–1990 predicted low collective efficacy in residents in 1995 (Sampson & Morenoff, 2004). It has been argued that structurally disorganized neighborhoods that have high levels of poverty, distrust, and instability undermine a community's ability to realize its common values, resulting in cultural disorganization (Sampson & Morenoff, 1997). Collective efficacy research has focused on the structural dimensions of community organization, including social networks, informal social control, the organization of neighborhood institutions, and residential stability.

Neighborhoods can also affect children indirectly by affecting parenting practices and family functioning. The stress of living in unsafe poor neighborhoods can affect parental practices, in addition to community socialization. Effective parenting practices can be undermined by the practices of the majority of

the parents in the community (Leventhal et al, 1997). Collective socialization theory suggests that neighborhoods indirectly affect children by influencing the presence of successful adult role models and supervision (Small & Newman, 2001). The theory argues that children growing up in high poverty communities with few successful adult role models will have low expectations of themselves. One study found that children's IQ scores were positively associated with the presence of wealthy neighbors, regardless of family characteristics (Chase-Lansdale et al, 1997). This finding could be indicative of the effects of greater social organization, role modeling, and adult supervision; or the effects of better funded schools, or some combination of these factors.

Another way that neighborhoods may affect children is through contagion effects, which are said to operate through peer influences on children's behavior. Children growing up in poor urban neighborhoods are exposed to street norms as well as conventional norms. The more opportunities to attain conventional goals are strained, the more likely it is that children will be drawn to street norms, which are often opposed to mainstream culture (Leventhal et al., 1997; Small & Newman, 2001).

One mechanism that has gained a great deal of attention in recent years to explain how neighborhoods affect residents' wellbeing is social capital. Research has shown that people who live in heterogeneous neighborhoods tend to have greater human capital (education and earning power) as well as greater *social capital*, which is important for peoples' life chances and mobility prospects (Putnam, 2000). Robert Putnam defines social capital as "the connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (2000, p.19). Thus, social capital exists in the structure of relationships and helps individuals and groups achieve goals (Coleman, 1988). Xavier de Souza Briggs (1998) conceptualizes social capital as having two dimensions. One element is made up of the social ties that provide us with social support and help us *get by* in life. The other element is made up of the ties that act as social bridges and provide us with leverage to help us *get ahead* in life.

Some researchers suggest that a lack of social capital amidst poor inner-city residents perpetuates poverty, welfare dependency, and crime. Much of this social capital and social network research is grounded in Wilson's theory. Several studies have

shown that poor urban residents often have insular and localized social networks that offer little opportunity for advancement (Tiggs, et al., 1998; Wacquant & Wilson, 1989; Wilson, 1987, 1996). In effect, such residents are isolated from the social capital of mainstream society. Yet, another set of studies have found that rich social networks *do* exist in low-income communities and that these kin networks provide an important safety net for the poor (Edin & Lein, 1997; Stack, 1974; Vale, 2002). These studies point to tight functioning social networks as one of the greatest assets in poor communities and challenge the notion that the social networks of the poor are inferior.

Using Briggs' (1998) definition of social capital, we might conclude that while residents in poor communities may have an abundance of strong ties, these ties usually provide only one form of social capital: *social support*. What they lack is access to bridging ties that can provide *social leverage* and connection to the outside world. Granovetter's (1974) research supports this reasoning with his finding that people most often find jobs through *weak* rather than close ties. Thus, there is "strength in weak ties" because weak ties provide individuals with information they do not already have, such as job opportunities. Therefore, having relations, albeit informal or weak, with different types of people who have access to different resources and information is critical to learning about new opportunities and becoming upwardly mobile.

Wacquant and Wilson (1989) found that blacks living in high poverty neighborhoods had significantly fewer social ties and less 'social worth' among their ties than blacks living in low poverty areas. Another study found that neighborhood poverty asserted an independent effect on social isolation and access to social resources above and beyond race and class (Tiggs, et al., 1998). It was found that "high neighborhood poverty severely reduces network size and is especially detrimental to blacks' chances of having an employed or college-educated discussion partner" (p.72-73). Another study found that the size, density, and heterogeneity of the social networks of low-income women influenced their ability to access opportunities for upward mobility (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003).

While there is research supporting the social capital thesis, a number of studies offer conflicting evidence. A Chicago study

found that neighborhood poverty concentration did not have an effect on the size or composition of social networks among black men, yet it did have a negative affect on the social networks of black women (Tiggs et al., 1998). A related study found that "public housing does not significantly affect social network structure or characteristics, and has no effect on the likelihood of finding a job through word of mouth" (Reingold et al, 2001, p.489).

Despite the inconsistencies in the current research base, many policies are constructed on these debatable assumptions regarding social capital and social networks. While this is risky in many ways, policies and programs do have the potential to help researchers further test and refine some of these hypotheses. Recently, theorists and policymakers have taken Wilson's poverty concentration thesis and argued that if concentrated poverty contributes to unwanted behavior and social ills, then deconcentrating poverty should reverse this effect. This rationale has led to recent housing dispersal programs and mixed-income housing initiatives that intend to deconcentrate poverty, and consequently, reduce the social problems attributed to poverty concentration in urban public housing developments.

Public Housing Policy

In the 1930s and 1940s, public housing in the United States was constructed to house working families. By the 1960s, the targeted recipients of public housing had shifted to those most in need of housing assistance. As this shift occurred, many working families (especially whites) moved out of public housing, the physical condition of public housing declined, and the stigma of living in "the projects" grew (Vale, 2002). Since then, public housing has been treated as "housing of last resort." Tenant selection and rent calculation procedures aimed to provide housing to those in greatest need, resulting in extremely isolated and disadvantaged communities. These sorts of regulations also demoralized residents by discouraging work and savings (Spence, 1993). As a result, housing policy has been criticized for contributing to the concentration of poverty, race, and social problems in urban communities.

The Section 8 program was one policy response to the growing problem of poverty concentration in public housing. Section 8,

now called the Housing Choice Voucher Program, was created in 1974 as a housing assistance program that provided portable vouchers for people to rent in the private housing market. More than 1.4 million households currently receive vouchers through this program (HUD, 2004). Another way in which policymakers have responded to growing concentrations of poverty in public housing is through deconcentration—dispersing public housing residents by providing them vouchers to relocate to better neighborhoods. The Gautreaux program, for example, was established by the courts in 1976 to address discrimination in Chicago's public housing. To desegregate public housing, Gautreaux relocated low-income black families from isolated developments to predominantly white higher-income suburbs. Although adult movers experienced little improvements in employment or wages, the children of the relocated families proved to be much better off than those who remained in the city. They graduated high school at higher rates, entered college in greater numbers, and attained employment with benefits to a greater degree (Rosenbaum et al., 1998).

Inspired by some of the positive results of the Gautreaux program, HUD's Moving To Opportunities (MTO) demonstration program was created in 1994 as an experimental initiative to assess the effects of relocating public housing residents from concentrated developments to more heterogeneous communities. The five-city program randomly assigned public housing residents to an experimental group who received housing vouchers that could only be used in low poverty neighborhoods; to a control group that received unrestricted vouchers; or to a control group that remained in public housing. To date, research has found positive effects for the experimental group, including improvements in housing quality, neighborhood safety, and mental and physical health (Orr et al, 2003; Goering & Feins, 2003).

In 1989, in response to the growing poverty concentration and the increase in other social problems in public housing, Congress appointed the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing to assess the state of the nation's public housing (Pitcoff, 1999). In 1992, the commission issued a report in which it recognized the critical need for a paradigm shift in public housing policy. It described public housing communities as being

extremely disadvantaged and noted that “high unemployment and limited opportunities for the meaningful employment of residents” was a significant problem facing residents of these projects (Van Ryzin et al., 2001, p.2). The commission suggested that public housing can attend to more than residents’ housing needs by better shaping their environment and providing more social services and resident initiatives. These recommendations were praised by many, as the deficit-focused public housing policies of the past had long been criticized for contributing to the perpetuation of poverty by focusing on “housing of last resort” and discouraging employment and asset-building. However, the commission also received criticism for not addressing residents’ need to access jobs, even though it found this to be one of the most pressing problems (Spence, 1993).

HOPE VI

In response to the commission’s recommendations, in 1993 Congress passed the Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program, now known as HOPE VI.¹ The HOPE VI program is aimed at redeveloping the “most severely distressed” housing projects throughout the country. These include developments that suffer not only from physical deterioration, but also from isolation, inadequate services, crime, chronic unemployment, welfare dependency, and high concentrations of minorities, extremely poor residents, and single parent families (HUD, 2001). Recognizing the negative effects of the isolation and poverty concentration in older distressed projects, the HOPE VI policy focuses on reducing the concentration of poverty, encouraging self-sufficiency, and building sustainable mixed-income communities.

HOPE VI redevelopment entails the demolition of decaying housing developments and building new housing that blends in with the larger community. Between 1993 and 2002, HUD allocated \$5.3 billion to 193 HOPE VI sites around the nation

¹ HOPE is an acronym for Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere. Initially enacted in 1990, it consisted of three homeownership programs (HOPE I-III), a program that combined housing vouchers with support services to help frail elders live independently (HOPE IV), and a job training program for youth called Youthbuild (HOPE V).

(HUD, 2003). Thus far, 57,772 public housing units have been demolished and 23,109 units constructed or rehabbed (GAO, 2003b). The program entails the construction of a total of 95,100 replacement units, only 48,800 of which will be public housing units (Cunningham, 2004). In addition to transforming the physical structure of buildings, HOPE VI transforms the social and economic structure of public housing by bringing in new residents—those of higher incomes—to the redeveloped site to offset the concentration of poverty. The goal is to create mixed-income communities where low-income public housing residents live among higher income families who pay market-rate rents. HOPE VI differs from previous policies by attempting to revitalize the public housing community itself, rather than strictly dispersing residents into different communities.

HOPE VI also reflects a shift away from past public housing programs because in some ways it considers more than just peoples' housing needs. Many of the problems associated with public housing developments have been attributed to a severe lack of social infrastructure; therefore, HOPE VI provides funds for social services. Services provided include a range of programs designed to help residents move toward self-sufficiency, such as case management, education, job training, and child care. HOPE VI grantees in the years 1993–2001 had budgeted a total of \$714 million for Community and Supportive Services programs (GAO, 2003a). While this may not be enough to realistically help residents achieve self-sufficiency, the program has been admired for the fact that social service money is built into a public housing policy, representing a shift towards a more comprehensive housing program.

HOPE VI has received praise for recognizing the negative effects of concentrating extremely poor residents in disadvantaged housing developments and for bringing a more innovative approach to public housing. However, the program has received much criticism for its major drawbacks, including that it displaces many families and reduces the nation's public housing stock. Because HOPE VI demolishes more units than it rebuilds and reserves a proportion of the rebuilt units for higher income families, some public housing units are lost. For example, 81 HOPE VI sites approved in 1998 involved the demolition of 37,449

units, with a total loss of 9,923 public housing units (GAO, 1998). Thus, in order to deconcentrate poverty and make room for higher income residents, HOPE VI displaces a substantial number of low-income families. For this reason, the program has been highly criticized and debated.

Vale points out that bringing in people who could otherwise find alternative affordable housing represents "a withdrawal from the central challenge of public housing: finding a way to assist the least advantaged renters" (1998, p.754). HOPE VI has also been criticized as being a revamped federally-funded urban renewal program with goals of gentrification aimed at eliminating low-income black neighborhoods, reallocating scarce inner-city land to higher income residents, and revitalizing central business districts (Keating, 2000).

Policymakers suggest that HOPE VI can improve the life chances of public housing residents by altering the social and economic composition of their communities. Clearly, theories of concentration effects, isolation, and social capital are imbedded in the policy. Supporters expect the program to increase the social mobility of the poor by having them live in closer proximity to better-off families. It is assumed that higher income families will be good role models for the poor, and that low-income families will benefit from having close contact with working families (ie. by diversifying their social networks). Many anticipate that the values of higher income families, such as their work ethic, community commitment, and family preferences, which are presumed to be lacking in high-poverty neighborhoods, will somehow rub off onto lower income families. However, as previously discussed, the research base supporting these assumptions is lacking. And since not all original residents can return to the redeveloped sites, these proposed benefits would likely only reach a segment of the community.

HOPE VI Research

Residents who have to relocate for HOPE VI typically have three relocation options: move to another public housing development, move to the private market with a voucher, or move on their own with no subsidy. Although relocation trends vary site

to site, one study reported that of five sites, 38 percent of residents still lived in the original developments (they did not relocate yet), 30 percent relocated with vouchers, 23 percent relocated to other public housing developments, and 9 percent relocated without a subsidy (Cunningham, 2004).

Just as there is the potential for positive effects on families who return to the new mixed income communities, there is also a potential for positive impacts on families who relocate to low-poverty neighborhoods with vouchers. Yet, residents often have a difficult time finding replacement housing with vouchers because the availability of affordable housing is severely limited in many regions, many landlords are reluctant to accept vouchers, and most residents are inexperienced with using vouchers (Finkel et al., 2000). The families who end up relocating to other public housing developments or to other extremely poor, distressed, and racially segregated communities with or without vouchers are the families likely to fare the worst.

Studies show that HOPE VI relocation is improving the neighborhood conditions in which many residents live. For example, the average neighborhood poverty rate decreased from 40 percent to 28 percent (in five HOPE VI sites studied) (Buron, 2004). Approximately 32 percent of residents who relocated from eight sites studied now live in census tracts with poverty rates under 20 percent (Buron, 2004), and 40 percent of movers from five other sites now live in such neighborhoods (Buron et al, 2002). Despite these gains, about 40 percent of residents still reside in neighborhoods marked by concentrated poverty (over 30 percent) and the majority still live in neighborhoods marked by extreme racial segregation (Buron et al, 2002; Buron, 2004). Seventy-six percent of relocated residents (from five sites) live in neighborhoods where 80 percent or more of the population is minority (Buron, 2004).

In addition, movers reported improvements in neighborhood safety (especially voucher holders). The percent of movers who had significant problems with shootings and violence dropped from 67 percent in their old developments to 20 percent in their new communities (Buron, 2004). Many residents also experienced improvements in housing quality, with voucher holders experiencing the greatest gains. One multi-site study reported that 33 percent of residents pre-relocation reported three or more

problems with their housing, compared to 12 percent post-relocation. However, it was found that the housing quality of all movers was still lower than other poor people nationwide (Comey, 2004)

Although many residents relocate temporarily (usually for a few years until redevelopment is complete) before returning to the new communities, others must relocate permanently since there are never enough units for all original residents to return to the rebuilt communities. Reoccupancy by original residents varies from site to site and in many sites only a small portion of the original residents returned (NHLP, 2002; Keating, 2000). A recent GAO report (2003b) analyzed 39 sites where reoccupancy was complete and found that less than 25 percent of original residents returned to 17 sites; 75 percent or more returned to 7 sites. Many residents do not return to the redeveloped sites because stricter move-back criteria, such as employment requirements or background checks, make them ineligible. Others may be eligible but decide not to return because they are comfortable in their new communities and do not want to move their families again. The fact that many original residents do not return to redeveloped HOPE VI communities is not necessarily a bad outcome if these families made informed decisions to relocate to better housing in better neighborhoods.

A study that assessed the relocation choices of residents at four HOPE VI communities found that residents make relocation choices "based on significant misinformation about Section 8 procedures, HOPE VI move-back criteria, and availability of relocation services" (Smith, 2002, p.1). Others indicate that relocation assistance is significantly lacking, especially for hard-to-house families, such as those with many children, problems with domestic violence, gang affiliation, substance abuse, chronic health problems and disabilities (Keating, 2000; Popkin et al, 2002; 2004b). These residents may face increased housing instability and even homelessness since they are unlikely to be successful finding suitable units in the private market with vouchers, and they are unlikely to return to the rebuilt communities due to the restrictions in the number of units, the size of units, and the new eligibility criteria (Popkin et al, 2004b). The *HOPE VI Resident Tracking Study* (Buron et al, 2002) found that residents who moved

to private market housing with or without vouchers faced new challenges with economic stability. For example, about 50 percent said they were having difficulty affording enough food for their households, and 40 percent indicated they were having problems paying rent and utilities.

Other research has looked into the important question of whether HOPE VI has any impact on residents' prospects for self-sufficiency. At one Atlanta site, the average household income for public housing residents rose from \$4,142 prior to redevelopment (1990) to \$10,621 after redevelopment (1996) (Keating, 2000, p.3). While this could be due to rising employment levels among residents, it is also possibly due inflation, welfare reform, or to the new tenant selection procedures that allow housing authorities to give preference to working and higher income residents. The *HOPE VI Panel Study* (Levy & Kaye, 2004), which tracks the living conditions and well-being of residents from five sites, found that employment rates did not change from baseline to follow-up (a two year period). Perhaps not surprisingly, it was found that many residents cycled in and out of employment and significant barriers to employment included poor health and having young children. In Chicago, residents who relocated for HOPE VI redevelopment experienced improvements in mental health, which could have positive effects on employment and self-sufficiency in the long run (Popkin & Cunningham, 2002).

Further, nearly half the residents in the *HOPE VI Panel Study* cited a lack of jobs in the neighborhood as a barrier to getting or keeping a job (Levy & Kaye, 2004). Although self-sufficiency is a key goal of HOPE VI, research does not show that the program is successful in preparing residents for or connecting them to the job market. The combination of social services and increased proximity to higher income people (ie. better job networks) is intended to help residents achieve upward mobility. However, at one Boston site the impact of the social service component on the self-sufficiency goals of the program was assessed and it was found that while residents were using an array of new social services, utilization was not related to employment, a key program outcome (Collins et al., 2004). In a New York HOPE VI community it was found that two social capital indicators (social support and civic engagement) had no association with

self sufficiency (Van Ryzin, et al., 2001). Because of its apparent failure to connect residents with employment, HOPE VI has been criticized for falling short of its self-sufficiency goals.

Another key issue explored by researchers is the impact of HOPE VI on residents' social networks and social interaction. While several previous studies and theoretical perspectives (ie. Wilson, Granovetter, Briggs) suggested that programs like HOPE VI might help improve low income residents' opportunities for social mobility by diversifying their social networks, HOPE VI research to date does not support this notion. In fact, HOPE VI research appears to support the previous work of other researchers (ie. Stack, Edin and Lein, Putnam, Vale) that suggested that relocation might actually impose additional barriers to mobility and self-sufficiency by severing residents' strong social networks and weakening social capital building opportunities. HOPE VI researchers have found that relocation often breaks up strong social networks, which may lead to negative outcomes for families and communities (Saegert & Winkel, 1998; Greenbaum, 2002; Popkin et al, 2004b; Clampet-Lundquist, 2004). Further, coping with the stresses of relocation can be difficult for many residents whose complex problems and situations may be exacerbated by relocation.

In addition, although the mixing of incomes was intended to expand opportunities for low-income residents, research to date on redeveloped HOPE VI communities shows low levels of interaction among neighbors (Buron et al., 2002; Smith, 2002). A study of resident interactions in the pre-HOPE VI mixed-income community of Lake Parc Place in Chicago found that beyond simple interactions (everyday greetings; brief conversations), neighbors engaging in more complex interactions were relatively rare (eating a meal with a neighbor; watching a neighbor's child) (Rosenbaum et al., 1998). Moreover, when residents were asked whether they saw other neighbors as role models, researchers reported that residents "found this idea rather insulting, implying that they were childlike, inferior, or needing improvement" (p.732). A separate ethnographic study reported that residents' sense of ownership and involvement, as well as the management company's performance, were much more important

to their quality of life than interactions with neighbors (Nyden, 1998).

In summary, the HOPE VI program has the potential to have major positive and/or negative effects on the lives of low-income families. As a result of HOPE VI, poverty is deconcentrated at the original public housing sites as intended. Yet, poverty is also reconcentrated in other public housing developments and other poor communities where many residents permanently relocate. Thus, while some residents may benefit from better housing and better communities, others end up in housing and communities similar to those they were forced to leave. As for its intended social effects, evidence to date does not suggest that HOPE VI is successful in helping families achieve social and economic mobility through the creation of economically integrated developments (for those who move into the new developments) or through relocation to other communities. It is plausible that the intended social and economic benefits of income mixing and relocation will take more time to generate. The gains in neighborhood and housing quality for some relocated residents may lead to longer-term benefits such as improved health and better job networks. Longitudinal studies examining impacted families before, during, and after HOPE VI relocation (including those who do not return to the redeveloped site) are still very much needed (Popkin et al, 2002).

Overall, there is a lack of consistent data across HOPE VI redevelopment sites, which makes research and evaluation of the program difficult (Popkin et al, 2004a). This is in part because HUD did not require evaluations of HOPE VI programs until the year 2000; and there are no strict criteria or guidelines for current evaluations. Further, the program has been evolving and changing since it began and looks different site to site due to the flexibility given to housing authorities. HUD initiated 'baseline' and 'interim' assessments (Fosburg et al., 1996), but these were not focused on collecting data on original residents and their outcomes; rather, they were case studies focused more on the physical redevelopment of the sites. Although there are several informative longitudinal studies of small samples of HOPE VI sites (reviewed in this article), the data on HOPE VI in general is not ideal for assessing its impact on residents or the theories

behind it. On the whole, few studies have explored the actual impact of the policy on the lives of the original residents or the low-income families that currently reside in HOPE VI communities, which is concerning since the potential negative effects of HOPE VI may be as great as the potential positive effects.

Conclusion

Despite the advancement of theories of urban poverty, the implementation of policies reflecting these theories, and the existing research base, important questions remain. For example, what role do factors such as social isolation and inadequate social capital play in causing and/or perpetuating urban poverty? In addition, are factors such as racial segregation and low social capital causes or outcomes of concentrated poverty, or both? What methods work best to enhance social capital and decrease social isolation? Can the desired social and economic effects be achieved through income-mixing initiatives? More specifically, can this sort of social engineering lead to long-term social mobility, as theory might suggest? Answering these sorts of questions is critical to the development of policy that accurately targets the 'problem'. More qualitative and ethnographic research in particular is needed to better understand the mechanisms by which poverty concentration affects residents' life chances. Future research should explore the differential effects of relocation to different types of housing and neighborhoods (ie. public housing, vouchers, new mixed income communities) on outcomes such as residents' social networks, economic stability, and health. Through longitudinal mixed-method research, future studies can better assess the effects of housing mobility programs such as HOPE VI; and this will ultimately help future theory development and precision and lead to a better understanding of urban poverty.

Finally, if future research finds that HOPE VI is successful in the long run in producing positive neighborhood effects and improving the life chances of the poor through a combination of mixed-income communities and portable vouchers, then the program must create enough of these communities and provide enough vouchers in order for all residents to benefit. If research continues to find negative effects on residents' social networks

and little positive effects on self-sufficiency and upward mobility, then policymakers and scholars must rethink the theoretical basis for such programs. They must explore other ways of building social capital and improving the social and economic mobility of low-income families in these communities.

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TAKING A JUVENILE INTO CUSTODY: SITUATIONAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE POLICE OFFICERS' DECISIONS

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Situational factors that influence police officers decisions to take juveniles into custody were investigated. A cross-sectional self administered survey was conducted. Four-hundred and twenty-eight male and female police officers from six police districts in Cleveland Ohio completed and submitted a twenty-five item questionnaire. Using a logistic regression model the study identified: adolescents who disrespect police officers; adolescents who are out late at night; adolescent males; anyone looking suspicious; and the age of the police officer as the most significant predictors. This was an exploratory study that sought to investigate police/juvenile encounters from a street level situational perspective. The results provided a basis for continued research in this area of inquiry.

Key words: *juvenile, custody, police officers, adolescent male*

Introduction

Today, police officers hold a unique and powerful position in our criminal justice system. Unlike judges and prosecutors, they make decisions on the streets and out of the public spotlight. Consequently, they exercise a wide range of discretion and power over who will be subject to legal intervention and social control (Smith & Visher, 1981). Police officers patrol in urban communities that are inundated with high unemployment, disinvestments, and crumbling infrastructures. In these communities there are disproportionate rates of illiteracy and high levels of drug activity, both of which are symptoms of social forces that weaken social

control. It is reasonable to expect such conditions to influence how police officers perceive and interpret the behavior and conduct of youth. Moreover, it is within these contexts that the stage is set for understanding factors that influence police officers' decisions about taking juveniles into custody. These contexts set the boundaries within which a number of factors can join together including the formation of specific situations in which police officers and youth interact, and the transactions that trigger the actual decision to take youth into custody. Because of the powerful implications of police discretion, the point of interest in this paper is those factors that influence police officers' decisions to take juveniles into custody. The aim of this paper is to identify situations and circumstances that may increase the probability that police officers will take juveniles into custody.

Related Literature

Very few researchers interested in the decision making process within the juvenile justice system have studied factors that influence police officers' decision to take juveniles into custody. Most researchers have focused on process decisions made after juveniles have been arrested and their primary interest has been on race effects at various decision points throughout the juvenile justice system (Wordes 1994; Wu, 1997; Wu & Fuentes, 1998). Morash's study (1984) is an exception. She found among other things that being male increases the chance of being taken into custody. Not since then has any research focused on factors that influence the decision to take juveniles into custody beyond the issue of race. Other scholars suggest that the demeanor of a suspect is the most influential determinant in shaping a police officer's decision to take a juvenile into custody (Ludman, 1996; Skolinick & Fyfe, 1993; Worden & Shepard, 1996). Klinger (1994) stands alone in his position that previous findings are of questionable validity because the research has conceived and measured demeanor improperly.

Only a few studies have focused specifically on police encounters with juveniles (Pope & Synder, 2003) which is not surprising because these encounters are rather difficult to measure. They tend to be nonviolent, low-profile events that take place

spontaneously on the streets. The number of juveniles taken into custody for violent crimes in which police have little to no discretion declined by 41% between 1991 and 2000 (Synder, 2002). However, during that same period, the number of juveniles taken into custody for drug abuse violations increased by 145% and curfew and loitering violations increased by 81% (Snyder, 2002). These encounters, in addition to vandalism, disorderly conduct, vagrancy and runaways are events that make youth visible within their communities and, therefore, help shape police officer's decisions to take young people into custody.

Of the four studies that specifically examine police/juvenile encounters (Pillivan & Briar, 1964; Black & Reiss, 1970; Ludman, Sykes & Clark, 1970; Morash, 1984) none use police officers as the primary source of information. It is virtually impossible to measure the stress and strain that police officers must endure on a daily basis and how it affects their decision-making without asking them directly. Analyzing records and observing behavior cannot capture the essence of the decision-making process.

While I can assert that situational factors are important, I cannot say with certainty which ones are most influential, an observation that supports the need for the research this paper summarizes and one that justifies an exploratory approach. This research provides an impetus for juvenile justice researchers to investigate the interaction between juveniles and police officers in urban communities. The question of what factors (other than race) influence police officers decision to take juveniles into custody is not fully appreciated in juvenile justice research.

Research Design

The participants in this study were drawn from the Cleveland Police Department in Cleveland Ohio. One hundred questionnaires were passed out at each of six police districts. Four hundred and twenty-eight usable questionnaires were returned completed for a total response rate of 71%. The participants were asked twenty-five force choice questions related to their interactions with juveniles as Cleveland police officers. The questionnaire included questions that measured the qualities of the communities where respondents patrolled, the perceived relationship

between respondents and the communities where they patrolled, and their perceptions of adolescents in these communities. The instrument was developed to measure areas of juvenile justice research that had been previously ignored in the literature. Thus the exploratory nature of this study sought to provide a basis for continued research.

The primary concern was to collect baseline data that could be used to develop a more reliable instrument in the future to measure a police officer's decision to take a juvenile into custody. To the extent that validity was tested the criterion used was face validity. The researcher in this study developed an instrument to measure a police officer's decision to take a juvenile into custody based on the literature and his personal interest. However, the researcher does not contend that the instrument is either reliable or valid, but suggests that the absence of available, tested instruments is evidence of the need for juvenile justice researchers to develop instruments that can accurately measure the interaction between juveniles and police officers.

Research Findings

The logistic regression model reported in Table 1 identifies the five strongest predictors in the study regarding a police officer's decision to take a juvenile into custody. The odd ratios statistic put into perspective the likelihood that a police officer would take a juvenile into custody under a specific set of circumstances. For example, the strongest predictors of "The Decision to Take a Juvenile into Custody" were the respondents' agreement with a series of statements (1) Adolescents who disrespect police officers should be taken into custody (2) Adolescents who are out late at night are probably committing a delinquent act (3) Adolescents males have a more suspicious demeanor than female adolescents (4) Anyone looking suspicious of committing a delinquent act should be stopped and questioned and The age of a police officer was a factor.

The results from this analysis suggest that adolescents who disrespect these police officers are four times more likely to be taken into custody. If it is late at night and they look suspicious they are more than three times more likely to be taken into

Table 1

Logistic Regression Odds/Ratios for the Decision to Take Juveniles into Custody

Step	Variable	Nagelkerke R Square	Level of Significance	Odd/ Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	
					Low	Upper
Step 1						
	Disrespect	.179	.000	4.96	3.12	7.96
Step 2						
	Late	.286	.000	4.15	2.51	6.84
	Disrespect		.000	4.59	2.80	7.51
Step 3						
	Demeanor		.000	2.46	1.49	4.04
	Late		.000	3.56	2.13	5.97
	Disrespect	.324	.000	4.69	2.83	7.79
Step 4						
	Look		.000	3.42	1.68	6.99
	Demeanor		.000	2.43	1.46	4.03
	Late		.000	3.46	2.05	5.86
	Disrespect	.361	.000	4.29	2.56	7.19
Step 5						
	Age		.024	.957	.921	.994
	Look		.000	3.32	1.62	6.83
	Demeanor		.000	2.41	1.45	4.02
	Late		.000	3.28	1.93	5.58
	Disrespect	.376	.000	4.15	2.47	6.96

custody. And if they have a suspicious demeanor they are two times more likely to be taken into custody. The arresting officer will probably be younger than 34 years of age. These five predictors provided insightful and useful information toward understanding factors that contribute to police officers' decision to take juveniles into custody. In this study the notion of "respect" and "suspicious demeanor" was intentionally not conceptualized. It was left open to the discretion of the observing officer. To limit them to a specific definition would have been a disservice to the goals and objectives of the research. The range of behaviors that

influence police decisions cannot be captured in a forced choice statement.

Discussion

Disrespect More than three fourths (76%) of police officers agreed with the statement that "adolescents who disrespect police officers should be taken into custody." It was the strongest predictor of whether or not a police officer would make an arrest, an observation consistent with previous literature. (Ludman, 1996; Skolinick & Fyfe, 1993; Worden & Shepard, 1996). It is assumed that police officers expect to be treated with respect because of their status, and the perception of lack of respect might motivate some officers to exercise their authority to take a juvenile into custody.

On the streets late at night "Adolescents who are out late at night are probably committing a delinquent act" Police officers were asked this question because presumably delinquency is more prevalent at night than at any other time. Consequently, police officers' level of anxiety may be heightened at night because of the increased possibility of a delinquent act occurring. Therefore they are more likely to take juveniles into custody if they encounter them exhibiting suspicious behavior at night. Almost three fourths (73%) of police officers agreed that if an adolescent is out late at night he/she is probably committing a delinquent act.

More suspicious demeanor While suspicious demeanor is a matter of perception, it may be also gender related. The criminal justice literature clearly supports the notion that adolescent males are more prone to be involved in delinquent activities than are female adolescents, especially if there are two or more of them together (Conley, 1994). The officers in this study overwhelmingly (86%) agreed that if two or more males are together they are probably committing a delinquent act.

Need to stop and question Suspicious demeanor might also be race related. Pillivan & Briar (1964) found that the criteria police officers used to stop and question potential suspects were a result of their perception of suspicious behavior. Type of clothing worn, hair style, and facial expressions unique to African Americans

youth were considered indicators of suspicious behavior. This study allowed participants to determine what "suspicious behavior" is, and respond based upon that judgment. Today, unlike forty years ago, there are a significant number of African American police officers patrolling urban communities. Therefore it is necessary to revisit this issue because African American police officers should be sensitive to these stereotypes and not let them influence their interactions with juveniles. That is, they should be less inclined than non-African Americans to perceive a youth as "suspicious" simply because they dress or act a certain way. The majority (61%) of the police officers participating in this study believe that anyone looking suspicious should be stopped and questioned.

The age of the police officer The mean age of police officers participating in this study was 34 years old. In this research the older and more experienced police officers were less likely to take juveniles into custody is noteworthy for future research.

The decision to take a juvenile into custody is perhaps the most important decision in the juvenile justice process because it can have far-reaching and devastating implications on the life chances of juveniles who are subjected to the harsh and punitive life-style of juvenile institutions. Being taken into custody can perpetuate "a loss of social status, restrictions of educational and employment opportunities and future harassment by law enforcement personnel as well as the possible formation of a deviant self-concept and the amplification of future misbehavior" (Dorne & Gewerth, 1995, p.90). This is particularly true with African American juveniles who are four times more likely to be taken into custody than white juveniles (Snyder, 2002). Being taken into custody does not in and of itself assure that one will be charged with a crime. However, the likelihood of being charged is increased when a juvenile suspected of engaging in delinquent activity is taken into custody. Observation of suspicious behavior is probable cause for stopping a youth. What is suspicious behavior is strictly a discretionary call on behalf of the observing police officer. As a result, there is an extreme amount of latitude offered to police officers when making the decision to take a youth into custody (Snyder, 1995).

The basis of this article is that the nature of juvenile/police interaction is influenced by the situation and circumstances under which police officers and juveniles interact. This paper has identified five factors that researchers have given little consideration when considering factors that influence police officers decisions to take juvenile into custody. Although the five factors identified only explained 38% of the variance, leaving 62% unexplained, the significance of these findings raises some interesting queries that should not go unnoticed. This is not to say or suggest that other possible factors such as crime, race and social class are unimportant, however, it is to suggest that perhaps a new paradigm of examining police/juvenile encounters should be considered.

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FOR THE CHILDREN: ACCOUNTING FOR CAREERS IN CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

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This paper analyzes autobiographical essays from women who work as social service workers in child-protection agencies. Working long hours in relatively low-paying jobs, these women have limited prestige and autonomy and increasingly, come under close scrutiny and public criticism. They are clearly exploited in terms of the emotional and "mothering" labor they are expected to perform and are held personally accountable for daily decisions that could have dire consequences for the children they serve to protect. This paper is an investigation of how their narratives explain and justify their willingness to continue working in these situations and how their professional identities are defined and defended.

Keywords: *social service, women, labor, children, narrative*

DCF in the News

"A year ago this month, Erica Jones was a 27-year-old woman with a bachelor's degree in political science. She had just enrolled in a two-month training program on how to become a state child welfare counselor. By the time she was fired by the state Department of Children and Families last week, Jones was handling 50 child abuse investigations, even though she had been on the job less than a year and lacked full certification as an investigator."

St. Petersburg Times, July 17, 2002

"Two workers with the Department of Children & Families resigned Wednesday, the same day that 13-month-old Christopher Cunningham died. It was the third child homicide this year in

Brevard County, each preceded by apparent mistakes by child-welfare workers. "It seems evident that high-quality casework has not been occurring in Brevard County," DCF spokeswoman Yvonne Vassel said."

Orlando Sentinel, March 15, 2003

"Embattled Department of Children & Families Secretary Kathleen Kearney resigned Tuesday; four months after the case of a missing 5-year-old girl put the department under scrutiny."

South Florida Sun Sentinel, August 13, 2002

"The family says DCF is trying to cover it tracks because someone dropped the ball." "We are not satisfied with DCF's conclusion that it properly handled the Behazadpour matter. I question their policies and practices handling sexual abuse cases of children, particularly that of Nikki's case," says a family spokesperson."

WFTV.com, January 26, 2004

DCF Workers Beleaguered and Belittled

These are the stories that appear almost weekly in local newspapers. Florida's Department of Children and Families (DCF) workers are regularly vilified, not only in newspapers but on radio and television stations as well. The resignation of DCF head, Kathleen Kearney, even made the national news (NBC Nightly News, August 13, 2002). Given the demanding working conditions and bad press, it is no wonder that there is a high turnover rate among DCF's child protection workers. More surprising, however, is that some stay—and in fact, the distribution is bimodal. There are many who come and leave quickly but there is also a surprising number who have worked for DCF for many years.

Introduction

It is this latter group that concerns us here, the people who continue to work in an environment where overwork (50–60 hours a week) and under-pay (\$31K average) is typical, the responsibility is overwhelming (caseloads of 50 or more), and there is little appreciation—either among the clients they attend or the public they serve. Why do they do it? How do they explain their

willingness to continue participating in a system that all agree is dysfunctional? What accounts do they offer for the apparent contradiction between their own best interest and their willingness to serve? In this paper, I present child protective worker's stories, in their own words, their accounts of how they got where they are and why they stay. In addition, I place these accounts within a larger theoretical context that helps to explain their tolerance of the contradictions inherent to their situations by way of a set of counterstories constructed to prevent or repair damage to their individual identities. Because child protection workers are mostly women (Gold, 1998) and, as we might expect, there are particular reasons for that, my focus in this paper will be only women's accounts of these issues.

Life History Narratives and Feminist Inquiry

Although the use of "narrative" means different things to different people, narrative research has become common across disciplines in feminist research. The "life history narrative" has been established as an important means of gaining insight into the life-experiences of individuals—both the actual events and the dynamic of interpreting those events. Among the many benefits of studying life history narratives, are that: "... they illustrate the relationship between the individual and society; they demonstrate how women negotiate their 'exceptional' gender status in their daily lives; and they make possible the examination of the links between the evolution of subjectivity and the development of female identity" (Bloom and Munro, 1995, p. 100).

An important focus of this recent interest in life history narratives is the issue of "nonunitary subjectivity" (Bloom and Munro, 1995). The idea of "nonunitary" subjectivity challenges the humanist notion that individuals have a "core" or "essence" that defines who they are. According to Moi, the concept of the "seamlessly unified self" as defined by the humanist tradition is based on a phallic logic that sees the self as "gloriously autonomous" and unambiguous (1985, p. 8). This approach denies the possibility of changes in subjectivity over time, implies that an individual's "core" is a constant that becomes fixed in one's formative years and operates as a filter for subsequent experience. Postmodern feminism takes the position that subjectivity is always active,

always being produced and identifies the humanist perspective as flawed by its failure to recognize the dynamic nature of the self. Some describe the self as more verb than noun, more process than entity (Smith, 1993). Such a view suggests that the self is precarious and " . . . always open to new ways to understand the world and the self, to act in and upon the world, and to think about experiences (Bloom and Munro, 1995, p. 101).

Nonunitary subjectivity is pertinent to an analysis of the narratives of child protective service workers because these positions place individuals in paradoxical roles. Their primary responsibility is the safety of children. But this often means making decisions that, in the immediate situation, cause emotional distress and may cause long term harm to a child's mental health. When a child must be pulled from a parent's arms and placed with strangers, it causes mental anguish among all concerned, not the least of which is the child protection officer who is responsible for the action. Individuals enter these jobs because they want to "help" but are then faced with day-to-day decisions that require re-definition of their role and purpose. They see things they've never imagined and must deal with one impossible situation after another. This affects their outlook on both their jobs and their personal identity—and this would be true even without the negative press and stereotyping associated with their positions. Adding these aspects to the mix requires a complex consideration of who they are and how to explain what they do and why they do it.

One could argue that nonunitary subjectivity is a requirement of the job. Child protection workers are required to act as nurturing agents of the state, to apply a set of bureaucratic principles to assure that children are parented in appropriate ways. In a sense, they are acting as surrogate mothers who tend the public young by the authority of legal statute. These women are asked to intervene in the most intimate realm of society, to insert the public arm into the private sphere of family life. Their personal calling to "help" becomes an unwanted interference into personal and embarrassing matters.

Female socialization in this culture is focused on nurturing. It creates an orientation for "pleasing" and "serving" others, not for abrupt and confrontational entrances into another family's life. On one hand, child protection workers can justify their actions as

necessary for “saving” children—sometimes quite literally. The rewards of intervening successfully to improve a child’s life are obvious. On the other hand, however, the determination that her actions have been “successful” is only made in retrospect, if recognized at all, while the negative components of her intervention are unavoidable and immediate.

No one is happy to see a child protective worker appear at the door. It means that there is a serious problem—or suspicion of one. It means someone is accused of something unpleasant, perhaps unspeakable. Adults’ responses can be expected to range from anger and indignation to shame and humiliation. By definition of the situation, there is no way for her to be pleasantly welcomed into a home to investigate child abuse. She must, instead, enter as an unwelcome outsider who is there to question the judgment and actions of family members, all the while making it clear that her authority as an agent of the state surpasses the existing familial hierarchy. Her very presence undermines extant and “normal” family processes. The implication is that this particular family’s children are in need of protection—from the very individuals who are charged with their wellbeing.

Someone To Do The “Dirty Work”

This role—examining a family’s most private habits—is not unlike others classified as “dirty work” in the society. The sociologist, Everett Hughes defined “dirty work” as something that is necessary for the survival of society but unpleasant, even degrading (1958). “Dirty work” may involve contact with *things* that are considered “dirty” or unclean (Mary Douglas, in her 1984 classic *Purity and Danger*, explains how cultures construct “clean” versus “dirty” things) or it may involve contact with *behavior* that is considered “impure” or objectionable. In a study of garage workers, Dant and Bowles (2003) describe “dirty work” that deals with objects considered “dirty” (in a literal sense) as well as work that no one else wants to do. It is this latter variety that concerns us here. Hughes describes what he refers to as a “moral division of labor” which “always separates those willing to undertake society’s dirty work from the ‘good people’ who would rather not get their hands dirty—it is this capacity of the interaction [sic.] between in-groups and out-groups that enabled members

of the S.S. to undertake the 'dirty work' of the Nazi regime (Dant and Bowles, 2003).

Dressel refers to "service work" as dirty work, one reason being that individuals who provide social service are "located at the intersection of potentially conflicting subsystems of the welfare enterprise" (1984, p. 6). She goes on to explain the difficult task of juggling the various demands of policy makers, agency administrators, service recipients, and the general public. It is the street-level worker who must do the "dirty work" of making policy into action. It is also the service workers who receive most of the criticism associated with the policies they are tasked with applying.

In addition to delivering policies from above, service workers also buffer the rest of society from the clients they serve. Child protective workers, along with other social service workers, are thus "caught in the middle" (Dressel, 1984, p. 40) between those at the top of the system who make and deliver policy and those at the bottom of the system who are regulated by in it some of the most intimate areas of their lives.

Child protection workers are, of course, not alone in this regard. Other examples of "dirty work" include bail bondsmen (Davis, 1984), nursing home attendants (Stannard, 1973, Allen, 2004), and law enforcement officers (Heinler, Kleiman, and Stenross, 1990).

Not surprisingly, an outcome of fulfilling a position identified as "dirty work" has negative consequences for the individuals performing those roles. Even if individuals experience a form of nonunitary subjectivity that allows them to define their actions as "right," there may be negative consequences for their personal identities. Changes in personal identity might produce self-imposed social isolation. The bail bondsmen described by Davis (1984) are one example. In that case, the individuals saw themselves as unjustly portrayed as corrupt by the more "respectable" members of society. Their response was to socially isolate themselves as a kind of insulation against the negative attitudes they perceived from the larger society.

Personal identity is a "... complicated interaction of one's own sense of self and others' understanding of who one is" that acts as a "... lever that expands or contracts one's ability to

exercise moral agency" (Nelson, 2001, p. xi). How others define us establishes what we are permitted to do—if we are identified as defective in some way we are not fully free to act. Operating within environments that restrict our actions leads to changes in our own identification of ourselves. We may begin to mistrust our abilities, suspect our own motives or exempt ourselves from full responsibility for our behaviors (Nelson, 2001). Such self-doubt eventually restricts our moral agency and inhibits our willingness to act.

Nelson discusses the problems that occur when members of particular social groups are "compelled by the forces circulating in an abusive power system to bear the morally degrading identities required by that system." This causes trouble in two realms: the limitations placed on individuals by the larger society and the harm done as a result of individuals' reduced self-worth. From the perspective of society, certain expectations develop regarding the behavior of individuals who share these identities—prescriptions for "what they can know, to whom they are answerable, and what others may demand of them." This, Nelson refers to as "deprivation of opportunity." From the perspective of the individuals, they assume *damaged* identities as a result of an imbalance of power. The more powerful group defines members of the less powerful group as "unworthy of full moral respect, and in consequence unjustly prevents her (them) from occupying valuable social roles or entering into desirable relationships that are themselves constitutive of identity." The damage is done when "she endorses, as part of her self-concept, a dominant group's dismissive or exploitative understanding of her group, and loses or fails to acquire a sense of herself as worthy of full moral respect. We call this *infiltrated consciousness*." Either of these types of trouble (coming directly from society or self-inflicted) "constricts the person's ability to exercise her moral agency" (Nelson, 2001, p. xii).

The personal identities of long-time DCF workers have been damaged in several ways. The constant negative attention of the media, a lack of respect from law enforcement officers and court officials, and the day-to-day resistance of clients take a toll on the psyches of these women. In the words of a 23-year DCF veteran:

"... family safety work is emotionally intense, leaving little left over to invest in our own support systems and families."

Sally

This same woman, in talking about the adjustments necessary to remain in the job, says:

"That first year is where the idealism is lost and the real work begins."

Sally

Her description of this turning point—where "idealism is lost"—provides insight. The high turnover at DCF is in no small part related to the disillusionment of individuals who seek "helping" roles only to confront the realization that their jobs are "dirty work" that will require adaptations of their subjectivity and adjustments in their personal identities.

Stories and Counterstories

This is not to say that such adjustments are impossible. They are made daily by workers in "dirty" jobs. Nelson argues, "... because identities are narratively constituted and narratively damaged, they can be narratively repaired. The morally pernicious stories that construct identity according to the requirements of an abusive power system can be at least partially dislodged and replaced by identity-constituting *counterstories* that portray group members as fully developed moral agents" (Nelson, 2001, p. xii).

Counterstories are "purposive acts of moral definition" that work in two ways. First, they uproot the negative stories that constitute the subgroup members' identity from the perspective of the dominant group. Ideally, this alters the level of disapproval toward the subgroup and allows greater freedom to exercise moral agency. Second, by redefining the situation in more positive terms, the counterstory reshapes self-reflection and allows individuals to see themselves in a more favorable light. In this case, she begins to reject others' degrading representations of her and redefines her identity as more worthy (Nelson, 2001, p. xiii).

Counterstories are positioned against various master narratives that exist in society. Master narratives are summaries of socially shared understandings, often archetypal, with familiar plots and characters. We use them both to make sense of our

social experiences (Nisbett and Ross, 1980) and to justify what we do (MacIntyre, 1984). Master narratives are not necessarily oppressive but those that reinforce power hierarchies in the larger society obviously are.

Women's (Usually Unpaid) Emotional Labor

The traditional role of women as caregivers is such a narrative. Although caregiving in itself is not an oppressive master narrative, it becomes oppressive with the expectation that *women*, regardless of their job title, will be caregivers. This has been described as the "female ethic of caring," a structurally determined attribute that women express in personal terms (Gold, 1998). The problem is not so much that women are defined as caregivers but that their labor is "degraded and devalued" (Kemp, 1994). Caregiving is defined as "domestic" labor and is usually unpaid. It is relegated to women, and is seen as "unproductive" within the larger patriarchal-capitalist society. Child caregiving is likewise seen as inferior in this superior/inferior power relationship. During the twentieth century the socialization and success of children became the exclusive domain of women (Anderson, 1988). Since child care within the family is unpaid and undervalued, its status transfers to childcare in environments outside of the home. This is evidenced in the average earnings for every occupation in which childcare is its primary responsibility.

The master narrative is that women are "natural" caregivers and caring for children is the most natural kind of care. Given the gender socialization of girls, it is no wonder that many women are drawn to child protective services. The recognition, once inside, that she has become one of society's "dirty" workers, helps to explain why they leave. In fact, Dressel (1984) defined this as the "service trap" in which one enters for altruistic reasons and becomes trapped in dirty work.

Research Setting and Methods

All study participants were (at the time of data collection) employed by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). The autobiographical essays were collected over a six-month period between February and July of 2003. A total of 32 essays were collected; 20 of these were used in this paper.

The remaining essays were not considered because (1) they were written by men (2 essays, deemed an insufficient number for comparison) or (2) they did not answer a sufficient number of questions to allow comparison with the other essays.

All participants had had direct field experience (as child protection workers) but several of them were in supervisory positions and were no longer directly involved in the day-to-day "frontline" defense of children. Those women who had moved up the career ladder (into supervisory roles), while no longer responsible for meeting the demands of individual caseloads, were responsible for supervising a number of case workers with 50 or more cases each. Thus the cumulative experience of the sample represents thousands of child protection cases over a span of more than 20 years.

Study participants were asked to write "career autobiographies" based on a list of questions. Questions were given to provide focus in the narratives with particular interest in the effects of personal life history on career trajectory. Respondents were also asked to consider the effects of their race, class, or gender on their careers. The study was undertaken as a qualitative inquiry and, other than the focus provided by the list of questions, the analysis was handled inductively, i.e., themes were identified and refined from the essays themselves rather than identified in advance.

The 20 "guided" autobiographies used in this paper range in length (6 to 10 pages) as well as depth. Some are highly descriptive and insightful while others are more guarded and less personal. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of study participants.

Findings

For the Children

Some of the narratives describe childhood recognition of the desire to provide care as a social worker while others explain that they arrived in their position by accident or some odd course of events in their career path. Many include "for the children" in their list of reasons. What follow are typical explanations.

"When I was 10 years old I read a story about a New York City social worker. I thought being a social worker was surely the most wonderful and exciting job in the world (remember, I was only 10 years old). From that day forward, my only career aspiration was social work."

Barbara, 9 years service

"To be fulfilled and content in what I do . . . it is important that what I do is making a difference and is a contribution to society."

Bonnie, 17 years service

"I thoroughly enjoy working with children and families and I believed if I could save one child or family in my career then I would be considered successful in what I was doing and ultimately in making a difference in society."

Susan, 15 years service

"I [have] always believed I was working for the children and families I encountered, not the state."

Megan 9 years service

"I believe the main reason people stay is the chance to make a difference in a child's life, to have some positive impact. This is the reason I have stayed. As my position within DCF changed through promotions, the rewards have grown. I now find rewards in working with staff and supervisors in mentoring and teaching them my knowledge of the job."

Louise, 10 years service

"The most important characteristic in a career for me has always been feeling I was doing something worthwhile for people and society. It helped—I enjoy coming to work. I feel blessed for the life I have and want to help people; especially children improve their chances for a happy, productive life."

Marie, 24 years service

The Counterstory

The DCF counterstory has two components. The first addresses the issue of their jobs as "dirty work" as defined in the media and the second defines their role as essential for society. I will address each of these in turn.

As a group, DCF workers are extremely sensitive to the negative public perception of the agency. A clear component of their counterstory is that media coverage is biased toward the negative. There is a high level of agreement that the media are not likely to cover DCF successes—some of this is due to privacy issues and some because success is not as interesting (i.e., sensationalist) as tragedy. In their words:

“The Department works very hard to keep children safe and does not get the recognition it deserves. All the media is concerned about is the negative, not the positive. You will never hear on the news the good things the Department has done. That would just be too boring to report.”

Lisa, 3 years service

“... the public has a negative perception of what the Department does... the public is only informed of things which go wrong, not the good things that happen on a daily basis. Due to this, many employees feel that they are undervalued and often leave the Department due to scrutiny from the public and the media.”

Susan

“I’ve learned over the years not to expect others from the outside to praise the department. Most often they have no idea what child protection employees have to do in their daily work. They do not understand the risk of going into crack neighborhoods and in homes of domestic violence, the difficulty of assessing child safety and the lack of successful service resources in the community.”

Kirsten, 9 years service

“When I first arrived in Florida, I saw a bumper sticker that read ‘HRS-Florida’s Gestapo’ [Health and Rehabilitative Services, HRS was the name of the agency for many years]. That was the perception at the time.”

Edna, 18 years service

The same woman, in another part of her story, also said:

“All of us live with the specter of our name in the paper as a neglectful DCF worker who was responsible for a child getting injured or killed, even though we work an average of 110 hours every two weeks to try and prevent any tragedy. The Department

is damned if they do and damned if they don't, an easy target for the press and politicians."

Edna

Comments such as these, that acknowledge a negative public image, come closest to recognition of theirs as "dirty jobs." They describe threats of damage to their personal identities as theorized by Nelson (2001) and provide a counterstory with alternative explanations as Nelson predicted. They turn the criticism back onto the media themselves, claiming that media coverage of DCF is sensationalist and shallow.

The other essential component of the DCF counterstory identifies their role as essential to the future of society. In their stories, the DCF workers describe their willingness to withstand criticism and work long hours in a sometimes hostile environment by explaining their belief that they are contributing to the larger good. They see themselves as providing essential services—in spite of the difficulty of their jobs and the public's lack of appreciation. Here are three typical examples:

"The Department as a whole plays a critical role in our society. Each community relies on the services it provides for children . . . By assisting with the welfare of the public and its children, the Department proceeds to shape the future of each generation. I feel honored to be a part of touching the lives of so many families."

Marie, 24 years service

" . . . working in social service makes me feel complete because I am making a difference in people' lives . . . I know I am helping children that are our future."

Lisa

"If it were not for people within the Department protecting children on a daily basis, there would be much more tragedy in the news. I feel proud to be a part of this agency and although the community may not see it, I know that I have made a difference in the life of a child. I would recommend this field of work to anyone who feels the desire to help others in need."

Andrea, 10 years

These women present evidence of a powerful counterstory that operates to mend the damage done by the negative aspects of their

jobs. Their female socialization has prepared them to seek lives of service and, as Gold points out, this structurally determined fact is experienced as personal (1998). Their narratives illustrate how this group of women makes sense of their work lives by constructing a counterstory to replace the power they lose by doing "dirty work" in society. Their explanation is that they are actually saving the society from itself, in spite of the obstacles put before them.

Conclusion

Much has been written from the deconstructionists' perspective that calls into question the very idea of representing a life in the form of text. Derrida, for example, holds that there is "no clear window into the inner life of a person" (Denzin, 1989, p. 14, summarizing Derrida, 1972). Our only insights are ultimately filtered through linguistic signs and cultural codes. Philosophers like Sartre and Ricoeur assert that narratives are creations rather than accounts. Constructing meaning from the events of one's life is an ongoing activity; memories and explanations are never finished. We may identify a nonunitary subjectivity within which an individual's core (identity) lies and it is necessarily multifaceted and dynamic. Personal narratives are always open to reinterpretation as situations and circumstances change.

The accounts analyzed here provide a snapshot of these women's explanations of how they mediate compassion and compromise in their work. While these observations may not be widely generalizable (due to the limitations of the study), there are important lessons here about negotiation of terrains in which a negative public image prevails. We have seen how positive self worth may be established within negative work environments. I have explained this within a larger theoretical context that focuses on the importance of counterstories to mend the damage that is built-into positions such as theirs. The counterstory provides an alternative explanation with which they may identify. They must have strength of conviction that their counterstory is true—and theirs is a powerful one. It helps them tolerate the contradictions inherent to their jobs and it provides a means to prevent or repair damage to their individual identities. The stories they tell portray

the lived experiences of real women who, in many ways represent the stereotypical “mothers” we (women) were socialized to be. But they also explain how individuals find the strength to maneuver the obstacles inherent to doing society’s “dirty work” in a way that is sustainable in spite of the “broken” system they work to improve.

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Engendering Citizenship? A Critical Feminist Analysis of Canadian Welfare-to-Work Policies and the Employment Experiences of Lone Mothers

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Like other liberal-welfare states, Canada, in a climate of balanced budgets and deficit reduction, has been active in developing policies intended to move welfare recipients into employment in order to achieve self-sufficiency. The purpose of this paper is to employ a critical feminist analysis to examine the extent to which these policies, developed under the ideological umbrella of neo-liberalism, are gender sensitive. Literature on the economic and non-economic impacts of welfare-to-work policies is reviewed to evaluate whether these initiatives, while mandating lone-mothers into employment, recognize the gendered nature of work, employment and poverty. Gaps in current research are identified and questions are posed about the implications of welfare-to-work on the citizenship entitlements of low-income lone mothers.

Key words: *citizenship, gender, lone mothers, welfare-to-work*

The 1990s signaled a dramatic change in how Canada addresses income security. The trend in Canada, as in several other liberal-welfare states, has been to approach welfare reform through a market-oriented approach known as welfare-to-work. According to this approach, welfare recipients who are deemed employable by government receive benefits only if they are taking steps towards gainful employment through participating in employability programs, attending school, or actively engaging in job-search activities (Gorlick & Brethour, 1998). Although welfare-to-work programs have existed in Canada in one form or another

since the 1970s, there was a "seismic shift" in the expansion of these programs in the 1990s (Peck, 2001). The Province of Alberta, for instance, began a process of revamping its social welfare system through developing regulations to restrict eligibility and financial support for welfare recipients and mandating welfare recipients into job training programs (Gorlick & Brethour, 1998; Vosko, 1999).

The introduction of welfare-to-work policies in Canada is but one indication of a neo-liberal shift which is moving Canada from a model of social citizenship, where all citizens are entitled to a base level of benefits, to a model of market citizenship, where citizenship entitlement is contingent upon a person's attachment to the labour market (Baker & Tippin, 1999; Brodie, 1997). This shift in citizenship entitlements could have significant consequences for low-income lone mothers, given that women have different labour-market experiences than men which are further exacerbated for lone mothers due to difficult labour-market realities and a greater burden of unpaid caring work (Mason, 2003). Baker and Tippin (1999) state that "gendering the concept of employability . . . requires acknowledgement that drawing low-income people into paid work may have different consequences for them, depending on their gender (as well as social class and culture)" (p. 263). If welfare-to-work employability initiatives—while encouraging lone-mothers into employment—fail to recognize the realities of the labour market for low-income women, as well as the caring work that mothers do, they will be unresponsive to the realities of women's lives and therefore ineffective.

In this paper, I utilize a critical feminist approach to examine the development of Canadian welfare-to-work policies within the influential, if often unseen, ideological umbrella of neo-liberalism, deconstructing the concepts of gender equality, dependency and self-sufficiency as they are understood in current welfare-to-work initiatives. Reviewing literature on the economic and non-economic impacts of welfare-to-work policies, I evaluate the extent to which these policies, while mandating lone-mothers into employment, recognize the gendered nature of work, employment and poverty. Identifying gaps in current research, I then pose some questions about the implications of welfare-to-work on the citizenship entitlements of low-income lone mothers.

Critical Feminist Theoretical Framework

Where critical theory may be understood as a critical analysis of social institutions in order to illuminate the structure of domination and oppression (Fay, 1987), feminist theory may be thought of as "an analysis of women's subordination for the purpose of figuring out how to change it" (Gordon, 1979, p. 107). Critical feminist theory is an amalgam of these two theories, seeking to reveal structural oppression, transform systems, and emancipate oppressed individuals, using gender as a key category of analysis. By making visible previously invisible female experiences, critical feminist theorists work to correct "both the invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position" (Lather, 1991, p. 71). Showing the connection between individual experiences and societal contexts, critical feminists theorize issues such as poverty to emphasize structural explanations over individualistic explanations of particular phenomena. A critical feminist theoretical approach thus offers an opportunity to examine the connection between structural oppression and the individual experiences of women (Bloom, 1998). Specifically, it serves as an important theoretical lens for researching the impact of welfare-to-work policies on the lives of families in poverty, with its focus on the importance of personal experience and the emancipation of particular groups of people from elements of society that are oppressive.

The Canadian Social Policy Context

Within the Canadian federalist system, provincial governments have jurisdiction over health, education and social services. However, the federal government provides substantial funding for these programs, with the condition that provinces adhere to federal guidelines (Baker & Tippin, 1999). The mix of policies in Canada is best described as a hybrid of universal and targeted programs, reflecting elements of European social-democratic states on the one hand, and U.S. style market individualism on the other (Peck, 2001). Generally, social programs unrelated to labour-market protection are universal or quasi-universal and include healthcare benefits for physician and hospital care, elementary and secondary education, old age security, and the Canada Child

Tax Benefit. In contrast, programs designed to protect citizens from labour-market failures are more reflective of U.S. targeted and means-tested programs (Noel, 1995; Peck, 2001). Social assistance benefits, for example, are provided through a means-tested eligibility program. Families and individual adults may be eligible for social-assistance benefits, although individuals receive significantly fewer benefits than parents and their children, privileging families over individual claimants. Employment insurance (EI) is offered through a national, public contributory program to all employees, but tightened eligibility requirements and cut-backs in the 1990s have made it more difficult for an increasing number of employees to claim benefits (Baker & Tippin, 1999).

Although social-assistance benefits have always been targeted in Canada, fundamental changes in federal legislation created an opportunity for a watershed of change to its administration. Prior to 1996, the Canadian federal government distributed monies to provinces through the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) with the goals of preventing poverty and providing assistance to citizens in need (Armstrong, 1997). Importantly, CAP specified that social assistance be provided without work requirements. In 1996, however, CAP was replaced with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), which provided block-funding from the federal government to the provinces for health, social services and post-secondary education, giving provinces increased discretionary power about how to prioritize spending, and removing the requirement that social assistance be provided without strings. Consequently, provinces began to enact welfare-to-work policies, fundamentally altering the previous notion that welfare was a rights' based program (Armstrong, 1997). This shift was influenced by the global ideological winds of neo-liberalism.

The Ideological Context of Welfare-to-Work

Neo-liberalism

Neo-liberalism, rooted in classic 19th century liberalism, is characterized by its focus on the primacy of the market, individualism, small government and de-regulation (O'Connor, Orloff & Shaver, 1999; Teeple, 2000). Central to neo-liberalism

is the concept of economic rationalism, which emphasizes deficit reduction, cost-effectiveness and government efficiency, and deemphasizes increased government services and poverty reduction (Baker & Tippin, 1999). Given its emphasis on privatization and government downsizing to achieve these ends, the neo-liberal agenda has had important implications for the restructuring of welfare programs, and has been used to justify welfare-to-work trends. A neo-liberal agenda works to convince citizens that the main role of the state is fiscal responsibility, not the provision of a social safety net. As McDaniel (2002) states, "Attempts by civil society or citizens to assert social rights or the public interest are recodified as against progress" (p. 131).

The complex matrix of reasons for the development of neo-liberalism is beyond the scope of this discussion. Stated simply, however, the rise of neo-liberalism occurred in many industrialized nations in the 1980s, including Canada, due to the emergence of the global economy evidenced by the internationalization of capital and the proliferation of trans-national companies, coupled with rising national deficits and declining national growth (Teeple, 2000). The gloomy economic landscape of Canada during this time period led to increased unemployment, and subsequent burgeoning usage of social welfare programs. The costs of these programs thus began to escalate (Baker & Tippin, 1999; Pulkingham & Ternowetsky, 1996; Vosko, 1999). In such a climate, governments increasingly blamed welfare recipients for rising public expenditures (Klein & Montgomery, 2001; Peck, 2001; Shragge, 1997). Critics of the welfare-to-work trend argue, however, that the claims that welfare recipients were responsible for the economic crisis are unfounded, given that social welfare expenditures were just six percent of the federal debt (Pulkingham & Ternowetsky, 1996). Rather, they suggest that the welfare-to-work bandwagon has more to do with the persuasive ideology of neo-liberalism than impending financial calamity (Piven & Cloward 2001).

Neo-liberalism has dominated the discourse on how to address income security and has led to a shift in the conceptualization of citizenship entitlements (Baker & Tippin, 1999; Brodie, 1997). According to this approach, market limitations must direct the provision of income assistance, and social benefits are viewed

as a privilege rather than a right. Welfare is more likely to be understood as a contingent and temporary benefit to sustain a person until s/he can obtain self-sufficiency through employment. The result is that economic security for citizens is increasingly reliant upon an individual's attachment to the labour force. The requirement to be attached to the labour market in order to have any kind of income security is called market citizenship, and suggests a significant departure from a more inclusive notion of citizenship, otherwise known as social citizenship (Baker & Tippin, 1999; Brodie, 1997).

Under the umbrella of market citizenship, employment is equated with independence and independence is increasingly associated with worthy citizenship (Baker & Tippin, 1999). The shift to market citizenship has significant implications for those who are not attached to the labour force at all, or whose attachment is precarious at best. Low-income lone mothers are particularly at risk because their labour-market attachment is unstable and low-paying. Furthermore, the juncture at which unpaid caring work and paid employment meet may be even more difficult to negotiate for low-income lone mothers than for middle-class employed mothers due to decreased access to financial and non-financial resources and increased demands, making it challenging for them to sustain employment.

Gender equality

Perhaps one of the most contentious words in policy development is the term "equality." Contemporary policy discourse tends to understand gender equality as gender neutrality (O'Connor, Orloff & Shaver, 1999). Although the notion of gender equality is upheld, this understanding of equality is based on the presumption of sameness in the economic and caring aspects of the family. In other words, men and women are assumed to contribute equally to the family purse and the childcare and household responsibilities within the family. Importantly, the logical outcome of this assumption is that a single parent is equally as capable as a two-parent family in providing economic and caring needs for the family. Clearly, this is not the case. Significant inequalities exist in the economic opportunities of women and men where women are significantly disadvantaged (McDaniel, 2002). Furthermore,

women engage in more caring work than men, especially in relation to the care of dependent children or aging parents.

Today, most feminists, while acknowledging the importance of “equality as sameness” in particular instances, argue that to treat people equally does not always mean treating them the same (Eichler, 1997). Equality discourse in this sense recognizes that people experience different structural barriers based on race, class, gender, age, and sexual orientation, and accommodates those differences. In the context of welfare-to-work initiatives, a feminist discourse on equality highlights the reality that women experience the labour force differently from men due to the pink ghetto of female labour and the greater childcare and other caring responsibilities that women engage in. That this is not factored into welfare-to-work policy initiatives will have a substantially negative impact for lone mothers.

Dependency

Within neo-liberal society, welfare dependency is seen as the trap entangling welfare recipients. Dependency, in most situations, is not considered to be a desirable status, but rather one that is indicative of shortcomings which should be addressed. Even in situations where dependency is accepted, such as the dependence of a child, the goal is to move the individual—in this case, the child—into a state of independence. The conceptualization of dependency as negative, and welfare recipients as dependent, is critical in the ideological play to blame impoverished individuals for the failings of the market economy. Through individualizing dependency—making it the responsibility of the individual in poverty—society is able to abdicate responsibility for lone mothers in poverty.

Various authors have discussed the multitude of paradoxes that exist in relation to notions of dependency (Baker & Tippin, 1999; Fraser & Gordon, 1994; O'Connor, 1996; Robertson, 1998). In an historical analysis on the concept of dependency, Fraser and Gordon (1994) argue that the social construction of dependency ties in significantly to the development of understandings about acceptable and unacceptable dependency. Fraser and Gordon point out that while dependency was once understood within a social context where few people had independence and

power due to a lack of legal, political, social and economic rights, dependency in industrial and postindustrial times was and is understood within a different context. Within modern day western societies, citizens are perceived to have equal access to legal, political, social and economic rights. Therefore, most individuals perceived as dependent within this society are considered flawed (Fraser & Gordon 1994). The meaning of dependency has thus become individualized.

In debating welfare reform, fascinating, contradictory notions of dependency arise. The most striking contradiction is that although some welfare states encourage middle-class women to be "stay at home" moms and dependent on their husbands for financial sustenance, they simultaneously require low-income lone mothers to work for wages and pay someone else to care for their children. Thus, while "stay at home" mothers with male breadwinners are saluted for their outstanding "family values," poor women who wish to raise their children full-time are declared lazy and psychologically dependent on the state. Another contradiction in the rhetoric on dependency is that male breadwinners are considered independent despite their considerable reliance on women to care for them, their children, and their homes (Baker & Tippin, 1999). Although there are various ways to reconceptualize understandings of dependency, within the welfare reform environment policies clearly indicate that financial dependency upon the state is negative, and financial independence is positive. The stigma attached to being dependent on the state further marginalizes lone mothers who rely on income assistance.

Self Sufficiency

If dependency is the trap, self-sufficiency is the trapdoor, intended to free individuals from their dependent status. Within current welfare reform initiatives in Canada, self-sufficiency is a clear policy goal. If a person is dependent, the logical solution is to lead him or her along the path to self-sufficiency. For example, an early policy document from the Government of Alberta stated that the social assistance program, Supports for Independence (SFI) would "provide support which promotes independence—*financial independence for those who are able to work*" (Alberta Family and Social Services, 1990, p. 5). Surprisingly, although self-sufficiency is a central concept in welfare restructuring, it is not

defined in policy documents. Rather, it is assumed that the meaning of self-sufficiency is known. To be self-sufficient, according to Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1986), is to be "able to maintain oneself or itself without outside aid: capable of providing for one's or its own needs" (Gove, p. 2061). This definition suggests that self-sufficiency is only attained when an individual is completely self-reliant in all ways. It has undertones of understandings about the "self-made man"—one who achieves success without any support or assistance from others. Yet, the self-made man is anything but self-made. Any successful individual achieves success within a complex matrix of support and assistance from others. This definition thus seems to fall short as it denies the inter-connectedness of individuals within families and communities.

Long (2001), an American author, has attempted to define self-sufficiency within the context of welfare reform. He formulates the definition of self-sufficiency as: "having income that is above the poverty threshold *and* not derived from any form of public assistance" (Long, 2001, p. 391, author's emphasis). According to Long's definition, then, self-sufficiency can be measured according to two components: adequate income *and* complete financial independence from the state. The corollary, then, is that self-sufficiency will be equivalent to employment (unless one is independently wealthy). However, this assumption is incorrect in several ways. First, if self-sufficiency is equated with employment, and it is assumed that welfare recipients are not self-sufficient, it also assumes that they do not work. Welfare recipients, however, have always engaged in paid employment, albeit intermittently (O'Connor, 2000). Additionally, paid work, even when full-time, does not guarantee an income above the poverty line, thus resulting in the increasingly familiar phenomenon of "working poor." The notion that the absence of welfare receipt is equivalent to self-sufficiency has been proved false by much research evidence (Elton, Siepper, Azmier, & Roach, 1997; Frenette & Picot, 2003; Harris, 1996; Shragge, 1997). Long (2001) too concedes that leaving welfare is no longer a "reasonable proxy for substantially increased family self-reliance" (p. 390).

The second part of Long's definition of self-sufficiency—that self-sufficiency entails the absence of financial support from public funds—is clearly problematic. All Canadians, like citizens of

other liberal-welfare states, receive public funds. So, according to Long's definition of self-sufficiency, it follows that no Canadians are self-sufficient due to the provision of universal healthcare and education. Taking that argument one step further, we could make a compelling case that no-one in any liberal welfare state is self-sufficient, because middle-class and wealthy citizens benefit from many public funds, most notably tax concessions.

In summary, understandings of gender equality, dependency and self-sufficiency reflect a shift to neo-liberal understandings and market-based approaches to policy interventions. In this context, gender equality is equated with gender neutrality, and dependency upon the state is understood as a shortcoming of individuals rather than a structural problem of society. Consequently, self-sufficiency has become the Holy Grail of welfare reform, and hence the key goal of welfare restructuring. The rhetoric of achieving self-sufficiency is challenged, however, by research which examines the outcomes of welfare-to-work initiatives on lone mothers.

Impacts of Welfare-to-work Policies on Lone-Mothers

Economic Impacts

A significant body of research that looks at the patterns of welfare use and employment behaviour of current and former welfare recipients, particularly lone mothers, suggests that although welfare recipients are obtaining jobs, they are not able to survive solely on market income for more than short periods of time, and continue to live in poverty upon leaving welfare (Frenette & Picot, 2003; Gorlick & Brethour, 1998; Harris, 1996; Michalopoulos et al., 2002; Pavetti & Acs, 1997; Shillington, 1998; Vosko, 1999). Using tax data, Frenette and Picot (2003) examined the economic well-being of those leaving welfare in Canada during the 1990s. They selected persons who left welfare between 1992 and 1997, and were still off welfare two years later. Their findings show that income increased overall for welfare recipients who left the welfare rolls. Importantly, however, one-third of those leaving welfare had a substantial decrease in income, and almost 60 % of the study participants were still living in poverty two years after leaving welfare. Similarly, The Self-Sufficiency

Project, a Canadian study using random assignment methodology to assess the impact of financial incentives on labour-force participation among lone parents on social assistance, found that although income increased for those in the program group, by the middle of the sixth year of the study, the use of income-assistance programs was the same in both the program and control groups (Michalopoulos et al., 2002). In other words, market income alone was not enough to keep study participants out of poverty. The questions remain as to the effectiveness of welfare-to-work programs, and the reasons why so many lone mothers return to welfare.

The answers lie in the type of work obtained by welfare recipients. Similar to U.S. findings (e.g., Cancian & Meyer, 2000; Harris, 1996), Canadian research indicates that welfare-to-work programs lead to part-time, temporary, low-paying, "precarious" jobs (Gorlick & Brethour, 1998; McFarland & Mullaly, 1996; Shillington, 1998). Moreover, most jobs that people obtain from welfare-to-work programs do not include flexibility, autonomy or benefits such as paid sick time (Vosko, 1999; Gorlick & Brethour, 1998; Shillington, 1998). Yet parents need these benefits to accommodate the needs and schedules of their children. When employment related costs such as childcare, transportation and suitable workplace clothing are incurred, the disposable income of the employees may be less than that obtained from welfare payments (Elton, Siepper, Azmier, & Roach, 1997). It is not surprising, then, that many lone mothers move from welfare to work and back to welfare again. Tellingly, Edin and Lein (1996) conclude that "working in the low-wage sector was often not compatible with parenting" (p. 263).

Non-Economic Impacts: Childcare

In examining the non-economic implications of moving lone mothers with preschool children into employment, childcare becomes a critical issue. Parents have children, and if they are required to work, they will have to find childcare for their children. Research suggests that childcare costs and availability impact the labour force participation of all women, regardless of socio-economic status (Chaykowski & Powell, 1999; White, 2001). Childcare issues become particularly critical for low-income

families, especially welfare-to-work participants, given that many parents in this transition have low-paying jobs with irregular hours. Issues of accessibility and affordability are thus paramount for this particular group of childcare seekers. Although there is a lack of literature on the intersection of welfare-to-work and childcare in Canada to date, American research shows, not surprisingly, that accessible, affordable, and quality childcare is crucial in determining whether or not a parent will be able to sustain employment after welfare (Edin, 1994; Edin & Lein, 1996; Harris, 1996; Meyers, 1997; Seccombe, Battle Waters & James, 1999). Harris (1996) found that childcare responsibilities were significant in explaining a lone mother's return to welfare after a stint of employment. The lack of access to affordable childcare was the primary barrier to maintaining employment for these women. Lone mothers on welfare favoured welfare reform if adequate supports were given for childcare (Seccombe et al., 1999). Recognizing that people leaving welfare are most likely to obtain low-paying jobs, researchers recommend comprehensive childcare subsidies to remove the childcare barrier for welfare-to-work participants.

Although childcare subsidies are important, they alone do not solve childcare challenges. In Canada, the cost of childcare for low-income families may be less significant than in the U.S. due to greater availability of daycare subsidies for low-income families. Currently, subsidies are available in Alberta to a maximum of \$475.00 per month per child for families earning \$31,680 per annum or less (Doherty, Friendly & Beach, 2003; Government of Alberta, 2002). However, even with full subsidies available, childcare is still reported as a barrier to employment due to a shortage of licensed daycare spots, and the fact that the average costs of daycare often exceed subsidy amounts (Doherty et al. 2003). In addition to cost barriers, inflexible childcare arrangements are significant in determining a mother's reason for not obtaining employment, or going back on welfare after working (Cook, 2000; Mason, 2003; McMullin, Davies & Cassidy, 2002). Examining why low-income families did not often utilize program-based childcare or childcare subsidies, Lowe and Weisner (2004) found that childcare centres without flexible hours prevented low-income families from accessing their services. Thus, daycare centres that

accommodate parents who work irregular shifts would potentially be more successful in meeting the needs of low-income workers. Flexible childcare arrangements become paramount in maintaining employment because low-skill jobs are more likely to involve evening and night hours, as well as rotating schedules (Meyers, 1997).

A lack of affordable and flexible childcare leads to a variety of childcare arrangements which may be unstable, unregulated and poor in quality (Elton et al., 1997; Kohen, Hertzman, & Wilms, 2002). Findings from the Self Sufficiency Project, for example, indicate that the instability of childcare arrangements for pre-school children increased significantly for those in the program group (Michalopoulos et al., 2002). In other words, parents who were working 30 hours or more per week had difficulty finding stable childcare for their pre-school aged children. Henly and Lyons (2000) found that low-income parents desired childcare that was affordable, convenient and safe. Parents were most likely to find informal childcare arrangements that met the first two criteria, and sometimes the third. However, informal childcare is not available to everyone, and may be poor in quality. Unstable childcare arrangements are thus significant in determining a mother's reason for going back on welfare (Edin, 1994; Harris, 1996). Clearly, policy which requires the labour force participation of low-income parents must look carefully at the cost, flexibility and quality of childcare programs.

American researchers have also begun to recognize the interface between childcare and health, finding that a child's health status may lead to childcare challenges. Romero, Chavkin, Wise, Smith and Wood (2002) found that, for low-income women who tried to work in the last three years, lack of childcare was cited as a challenge to finding employment almost twice as often than for women who were currently or previously employed. Upon further examination, it was found that numerous welfare recipients could not find childcare due to the health needs of their children. Thus, the health status of children very much impacts the affordability, accessibility and quality of childcare. Although Canadian researchers have yet to examine the relationship between childcare needs and health, it is reasonable to assume that a similar situation could be found in Canada, given that

low-income Canadian children have a disproportionate number of health problems compared to middle-income children (Ross, Scott & Kelly, 1996). Despite the salience of child health status in obtaining suitable childcare, the connection between child health and childcare availability has seldom been made. Issues such as childcare, while acknowledged as a need in welfare-to-work policy development, are often underemphasized and inadequately addressed.

Gaps in the Literature

Using a gender lens to review the impacts of welfare-to-work policies on lone mothers, I have identified several gaps in the conceptual and empirical literature about welfare reform to date. First, I have suggested that welfare reform has been examined in a vacuum. A variety of social policies, including welfare-to-work initiatives, have been significantly influenced by neo-liberal assumptions about gender neutrality and the primacy of the market in decision-making. Yet most of the literature evaluating the impacts and effectiveness of welfare reform has not considered how ideology locks policy into a particular mode of development. Identifying and critiquing the ideological context within which welfare policy is created, however, provides a window in which to push policy development in another direction. Furthermore, contextualizing welfare policies within the ideological context of neo-liberalism raises fundamentally important questions about how current welfare policy directions are redefining notions of citizenship. This redefinition of citizenship could have long term consequences for all of society in increasing social inequities and decreasing social cohesion (Coburn, 2000).

Second, I have proposed that welfare-to-work policies, while claiming gender neutrality, have actually been based on an implicit understanding of gender equality which assumes gender sameness. This understanding of gender, while seemingly progressive at first glance, overlooks the differential impacts of gender which still marginalize women today. Yet because most of the literature on welfare reform does not use a gender lens to analyze the impact of policies of welfare recipients, the gendered nature of the policy gets overlooked (see Baker & Tippin, 1999; Miranne, 1998; Monroe & Tiller, 2001; O'Connor, 1996; and Seccombe et al.,

1999 for notable exceptions). Using a gender lens, policies which inherently, albeit subtly, discriminate against women in poverty could be made explicit.

Third, the non-economic impacts of welfare policy require further study. Existing research suggests that policy makers have not adequately considered how childcare might prevent low-income individuals from seeking and maintaining employment. Much more work is needed to understand the longer-term implications of welfare reform for families living in poverty.

Finally, one aspect of this analysis is glaringly obvious in its absence. That is, "researchers need to give closer consideration to beneficiaries' responses to initiatives that work to change their motivations and behaviour, rather than seeing them as passive recipients of change" (Baker & Tippin, 1999, p. 264). Indeed, little is known about the perspectives and day-to-day experiences of those who are affected by welfare-to-work initiatives. Particularly, much needs to be learned about how welfare-to-work affects the day-to-day management of work/family balance for lone mothers moving through this transition. How do welfare-to-work reforms impact the health of low-income lone mothers and their families? Where do welfare-to-work participants seek and find support? How do welfare-to-work policies affect interactions between parents and their children? Further research will need to address these questions.

Conclusion

Bashevkin (2002) posits that addressing issues pertaining to social reform "entails sifting through a veritable freight-load of ideological weights" (p. 3). Such is certainly the case when examining the development of welfare-to-work policies. Contextualizing welfare-to-work within changing notions of citizenship entitlements influenced by neo-liberal influences is particularly telling. If citizenship within contemporary Canadian society is based upon labour market attachment, what are the implications for lone mothers dependent upon the state for income? In other words, must low-income lone mothers work for pay to be considered full citizens? If so, will welfare-to-work initiatives facilitate labour-market attachment?

Research on the impacts of welfare-to-work initiatives suggests that these policies have not been effective in securing stable labour-force attachment for lone mothers. Caught in a web of neo-liberal assumptions about what it means to be self-sufficient, the failure of this set of policy initiatives is, in part, related to its inability to adequately address class and gender related issues such as the labour-market realities of low-income women and the childcare responsibilities of lone mothers. Stated succinctly, jobs in the low-wage, low-skill sector of the present market economy do not provide a living wage, nor do they entail the flexibility and autonomy needed to successfully combine paid employment and unpaid caring work. Welfare-to-work policies, as they are currently formulated, will most likely only further impoverish lone mothers and will require a substantial facelift in order to pass the litmus test of gender-sensitive social policy.

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Book Reviews

Donald F. Roberts and Ulla G. Foehr, *Kids and Media in America*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. \$75.00 hardcover, \$25.00 papercover.

In an earlier television era, a frequently-run public service announcement posed the following challenge to parents: "It's ten o'clock. Do you know where your children are?" Parents confronted with such a question today can no longer reassure themselves, as a previous generation did, that they need not worry as long as their children are in their rooms at home. As this and countless other media studies are demonstrating, the average American child's exposure to media messages has reached the point where it is virtually all-encompassing. In fact, media exposure now occupies more of our children's time than any other activity except sleeping and, as this study reports, media exposure is growing especially rapidly within the home but often without parental supervision or even awareness.

As the authors point out, being sent to one's room was, in the past, a form of parental discipline, involving isolation from the pleasures of social interaction and entertainment, including television. Nowadays, with over half the children in this study having their own television, radio, tape-player, and CD-player in their bedrooms, and with growing numbers adding computers and cell phones with Internet access to their personal media staples, bedrooms now contain a cornucopia of entertainment, information and social interaction media. Consistent findings from decades of media research have generated concern about the negative consequences, for some children, of uncontrolled exposure to the electronic media, including heightened aggression, obesity, illiteracy, innumeracy, or poor social skills. With increasing access by children to the Internet, exposure to pornography and potential sexual predators are additional concerns. Without causing undue alarm, the authors of this study present research findings that they hope will alert parents and policy-makers to the risks inherent in the media-saturated environment in which our children live.

The study reported in this book was carried out under the auspices of the Kaiser Family Foundation for the Study of Media Entertainment and Health. It was initiated in 1997 and the results were first disseminated in a detailed technical report in 1999. The present book is a more user-friendly version of that report, accessible to interested professionals and the serious reading public, including parents.

While the media literature is replete with findings on the impact of specific media, especially television, on children, the authors undertook what they claim is the most comprehensive and rigorous study ever attempted of American children's exposure to the total array of media available to them. It is hard to argue with the authors' claim to comprehensiveness. For example, if you want to find out the time budget devoted to reading by a specific age group, the differential exposure to television between suburban and rural children, or their access to and specific uses of home computers, you can find this information in the dozens of tables in this book. Among the variables studied are age, sex, race/ethnicity, residence location, family composition, parent education and socioeconomic status.

The study is well-designed and as well-executed as can reasonably be expected in such an ambitious project. As the authors readily concede, drawing firm conclusions on a large number of variables, based on a sample of 1,000 two-seven year olds and 2,000 eight-eighteen year olds needs to be done cautiously and they deserve credit for making clear where their data are weak. Unfortunately, the findings on children's use of home computers were outdated by the time the initial report was written in 1999 and certainly do not reflect current reality. The authors made a valiant effort to supplement their data with findings from later studies but, almost inevitably, given the dynamic nature of developments in personal computer technology and its especially-rapid adoption by young people, their efforts were less than fully successful. The emergence of the computer as a primary music resource for young people and, along with the cell phone, a major social interaction tool, is scarcely considered. However, there is much information that is useful, especially in highlighting areas for future research.

In summary, this book presents convincing evidence that the daily lives of our children and young people are even more media-saturated than we may have suspected. It is no longer much disputed among media scholars that the influence of the mass media is at least as powerful as the other principal socialization institutions—families, schools and churches. Not all media influences are pernicious, of course, but some clearly are and, given the all-pervading and rapidly-changing nature of our children's exposure, it behooves us to pay attention. This book helps focus that attention by providing a comprehensive picture of the media environment in which our children live and how they budget their time among the large and growing array of media options available to them.

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Lynellyn D. Long and Ellen Oxfeld (Eds.), *Coming Home? Refugees, Migrants and Those Who Stayed at Home*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. \$42.00 hardcover, \$14.00 papercover.

Historically, immigration has been a one-way street. Emigrants and exiles rarely returned to their homelands—the former, often because the economic costs of the journey were prohibitive; the latter, because of political prohibitions. When returns were made, they often took the form of pilgrimages; like the Islamic injunction to visit Mecca once in a lifetime, most immigrants have felt a pull to see their birthplace once before they die. In other cases, such as persons displaced by World War II, refugees returned to discover that there was nothing to return to, and thus they were compelled to migrate yet again.

This situation, however, has changed dramatically in the past twenty years. Economic and political revolutions around the globe have given rise to entirely new categories of world citizens—transnationals, who regularly cross borders and cross lives between their old and new countries; and repatriates, who have permanently returned to their homelands. The scholarship of immigration and exile is only now beginning to catch up to this

reality. As such, Long and Oxfeld's edited volume represents an important advance in the field.

The book begins with an introduction that establishes the scope and context of the phenomenon of return. The purpose of the book is presented as a collection of ethnographic case studies intended to illuminate the phenomenological, political, social, economic, and cultural sequelae of returns. The editors then present a rudimentary framework for the analysis of returns, dividing them into three categories: imagined, provisional, and repatriated returns.

The subsequent three sections of the book are organized in accordance with this framework. Part I examines imagined returns. These include a case study, told through letters, of a male Rwandan war refugee; a study of Eritreans resettled in North America and Europe; and an analysis of the self-portrayals sent by Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong to their families at home. Part II addresses provisional returns. Included are a study of young Vietnamese returnees; an examination of returns to a Chinese village from the perspective of the villagers who did not leave; and a chapter that presents the stories of several Hong Kong domestic workers who have made periodic returns to their native Philippines. In Part III, permanent returns are examined from a diversity of perspectives and locales, including the post-war situations in Germany, Nicaragua, Sarajevo, and Ethiopia; and returns of West Indians to Barbados.

The book achieves its stated purpose of illuminating the experience of return from multiple perspectives. The chapters all do a fine job of illustrating the myriad conflicts that characterize this phenomenon: internal identity conflicts of the returnees; social conflicts between returnees and stayees; and conflicts between policy goals and manifest realities, among others. The descriptions of the individuals' experiences are vivid, compelling, and clearly recounted with compassion. However, these personal accounts sometimes get buried in what seem to be overly minute details of military, insurgent, and political maneuvers, which become an alphabet soup of acronyms of the various groups.

This book is likely to be of interest to anthropologists and area studies specialists.

However, it may be somewhat disappointing to social researchers and social workers. There is a significant lack of methodological description in all of the chapters. Details about issues such as participant selection, interview content, data recording, and analytic methods are largely missing, creating questions about the authenticity and credibility of the findings, as well as limiting replicability by others who may wish to study this topic. Additionally, there is a lack of an overarching theoretical explanatory framework, apart from the rudimentary typology of returns. Social workers will be disappointed by the absence of articulated policy, programmatic, and practice implications of the findings.

Nonetheless, as stated earlier, this book is an important step forward in immigrant and exile studies and establishes a starting point for further work. As one who is at this moment aboard a flight back from a provisional return to the homeland I left thirty-five years ago, and one who readily recognizes the phenomenological and social nuances portrayed in this volume, I applaud the editors and chapter authors for illuminating this minority experience.

Miriam Potocky-Tripodi
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James J. Heckman and Alan B. Krueger, *Inequality in America: What Role for Human Capital Policies?* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004. \$40.00 cloth.

Income inequality has increased substantially during the last three decades, reversing the trend toward more equal incomes that characterized much of the twentieth century. According to the introduction to this book, since 1974, the share of income going to families in the top fifth of the income distribution has increased from 41 to 48 percent, while the share going to the bottom fifth has declined from 6 to 4 percent. Much of this increase in inequality may be attributed to a growing wage gap between highly-educated and less-educated individuals. Those with the most education have seen their incomes increase, while the incomes of those with less education have stagnated or even declined. These

patterns lead to the central question of the book reviewed here: If differences in education and skills (human capital) contribute substantially to inequality, what can and should the government do to promote human capital?

The book includes papers and discussions presented at the third Alvin Hansen Symposium on Public Policy, sponsored by the economics department at Harvard University. The first two chapters consist of invited papers, one by Alan Krueger and one by Pedro Carneiro and James Heckman. These economists are well-known for their work on the economics of education, and these chapters are the heart of the book. The third chapter consists of comments on the Krueger and Carneiro/Heckman papers by five other distinguished economists. The last two chapters consist of responses and rejoinders by Krueger and Carneiro/Heckman.

Both the Krueger and Carneiro/Heckman chapters are grounded in economic theory, and both marshal a wealth of empirical evidence to support their arguments about what policies are likely and unlikely to increase human capital for those in the lower half of this distribution. Both give attention to non-cognitive skills such as persistence, reliability, and motivation, as well as cognitive skills.

The areas of disagreement between the two papers are large, however. Krueger asserts that there is too much inequality in the U.S. economy and argues that the government should increase investments in a broad range of existing programs. For example, he calls for full funding of Head Start, smaller K-12 classes, and greater funding for vocational training. Krueger is also in favor of allocating disproportionately more resources to programs that serve disadvantaged individuals in order to reduce inequality.

The recommendations offered by Carneiro and Heckman place less emphasis on reducing inequality and more on efficiency. These scholars argue that investments should be targeted toward young children and away from less-skilled adults. Citing evidence that cognitive and non-cognitive deficits appear early in life, they argue that human capital policy should focus on families, not just schools. And, they emphasize the need for policy evaluations to account for a full range of costs, including the efficiency costs associated with taxation and the loss of programs

that could have been funded in the absence of chosen human capital programs.

When these very different recommendations are combined with the response and counter-response structure of the book, the text takes on the flavor of an intellectual debate. This characteristic is both strength and weakness. Many readers will find it stimulating to be in the company of such bright minds who attack an important question with intellectual rigor. In the end, however, the debate seems to somewhat overshadow the policy questions. Finding the answers to the book's central question, "what role for human capital policy?" may require a second and even third reading. And different readers will likely formulate different answers. In other words, this book offers no simple five-step formula for increasing skills and reducing inequality. This is the murky reality of policy, however, where decisions require value judgments and different conclusions are inevitable. For readers who are familiar with economic terminology and who are interested in weighing opposing arguments and even grappling with value questions involving trade-offs between efficiency and equity, this book will stimulate thinking about policies to improve education and skill levels.

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Aaron Rosen and Enola K. Proctor (Eds.), *Developing Practice Guidelines for Social Work Intervention*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. \$62.50 hardcover, \$29.50 papercover.

The influence of the evidence-based practice movement has begun to change the landscape of both social work practice and intervention research. Yet, despite increased attention to empirically-tested knowledge, front line practitioners continue to face significant challenges as they select and implement intervention strategies and struggle with decision-making processes. While few would argue with the value of offering services with solid empirical support, practice realities often make application difficult and cumbersome. Practitioner resistance to evidence-based practice is common, and many would claim that the gap between

research and practice in social work has actually widened in recent years.

In response to these and other dilemmas, Rosen and Proctor's edited collection offers an ambitiously comprehensive look at the development of practice guidelines, conceptualized as a concrete tool for social work practitioners seeking to utilize an evidence-based approach. The case for practice guidelines is made in a logical and persuasive fashion, with an impressive group of social work scholars providing valuable contributions. The collection is organized into four sections: (1) precursors to practice guideline development; (2) needs and challenges; (3) responsiveness to diversity in populations and settings; and finally (4) practitioner, organizational, and institutional factors in the utilization of practice guidelines. Each section provides a refreshing blend of overview, analysis, critical discourse, and direction for the future. The book ends with thoughtful and cohesive essays from Rosen and Proctor.

Rosen and Proctor have wisely chosen a broad spectrum of authors to present multiple sides of the issues. Ever mindful of historical precedents and debates in allied professions such as medicine (where the practice guideline movement began), the editors have successfully articulated a cogent and persuasive argument. The level of attention to history and context is evidenced in the early chapters by Fraser, Gambrill, and Reid and Fortune who help the reader to understand current challenges and issues. Gambrill sets the stage in a particularly clear fashion by contextualizing the evidence based practice movement, distinguishing between evidence based practice and practice guidelines, and providing implications for the development of social work practice knowledge.

The various authors do not shy away from controversy, and the editors demonstrate an admirable ability to consider multiple viewpoints and divergent opinions. Easy solutions are not proffered; rather a spirit of discourse and critical engagement with the material is encouraged. One thought-provoking example is Thyer's call for an interdisciplinary rather than social work specific approach to practice guidelines. In a series of separate chapters, several authors (including Proctor, Rosen, Kirk, and Mattaini) grapple with how best to organize intervention knowl-

edge. They offer an intriguing discussion of the relative benefits of using diagnostic or problem classification systems rather than taxonomies of the targets of interventions (advocated by the editors). These discussions, as well as those offered by Videka and others on ways to account for variability among setting, client, and population factors, are treated in some depth. Marsh also provides a thorough consideration of institutional theory and the multifaceted issues of professional authority, knowledge, and legitimation. These topics are often left out of discussions on evidence based practice.

After taking into account the range of perspectives offered here, the editors conclude by presenting a structured research agenda that will hopefully lead to the development and utilization of practice guidelines by social workers. The overarching message is one of optimism tempered with awareness of the need for ongoing reflection and critical dialogue. The editors clearly recognize the limitations and challenges, as well as the inherent strengths of the practice guideline approach. It is their willingness to tackle difficult tensions and issues that solidifies their primary argument. Successfully avoiding any urge to simplify the discussion, they provide a much needed focus and clarity to the issues. This book is certainly one of the best volumes on social work practice and research published in recent times. Its only potential weakness lies in the relatively sparse attention given to issues of cultural competence and diversity. A short yet useful chapter from Zayas takes a step in this direction, but the editors have missed an opportunity to adequately link evidence based and cultural diversity issues and thus to enhance the field.

Taken as a whole, the book is a major step towards resolving some of the challenges the social work profession currently faces. It offers an invaluable guide for practitioners and program administrators seeking to bring their practice efforts into a new era of accountability and effectiveness. Rosen and Proctor are to be commended for enhancing the level of discussion about evidence-based practice in social work and for offering a novel way to ease the divide between research and practice. They have compiled a fascinating and intellectually stimulating book that will be an excellent resource for both social work practice and research courses, particularly ones taught with emphases on

evidence-based practice and critical thinking methods. Those interested in breaking the divide between research and practice, and seeking to advance the profession's commitment to knowledge development should read this book. It should also be required reading for doctoral students, faculty teaching practice courses, and social work practitioners.

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Jonathan Gruber and David Wise (Eds.), *Social Security Programs and Retirement Around the World: Micro Estimation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, \$99.00 hardcover.

Social Security Programs and Retirement Around the World: Micro Estimation presents analyses of the effects of structural incentives to retire on labor force participation rates among older workers in each of twelve OECD nations. All of these nations, with the exception of Japan, are in North America or Western Europe. Each chapter (other than the introduction) reports results for a different OECD nation. Both editors are distinguished economists. Jonathan Gruber is a professor of economics at MIT and David Wise is a professor of political economy at the John F. Kennedy School of government at Harvard University. As contributors the editors have managed to assemble an impressive list of thirty-one economists most of whom are affiliated with institutions outside the United States.

This book presents the results for the second stage of an ongoing research project sponsored by the National Bureau of Economic Research. The overall project is dedicated to the study of the relationship between the structure of social security systems and labor force participation among older workers. This volume is the second of what the editors hope will eventually be at least three volumes to come out of the project. The first, published in 1999 and titled *Social Security and Retirement Around the World*, was also edited by Gruber and Wise.

It is very likely that the most widely read and useful single chapter in this book will prove to be the clearly written and forty page "Introduction and Summary" by Gruber and Wise that precedes Chapter 1. This introduction seeks to summarize

the major findings presented in the other twelve country specific chapters. It presents numerous summary charts and tables based on comparative data from all twelve countries. It also lays out the goals of the project and situates this second volume within the context of the larger project. To this end, they review what was done in the 1999 volume and distinguish how the goals of this book different from that book.

In the 1999 volume, the objective was to describe the incentives inherent in social security systems in the countries under study and then to relate those incentives to the labor force participation of older workers. In that volume they found that in many of these countries the social security systems provided strong incentives for older workers to leave the labor force. The research in that first volume also established that there is a causal impact of many of the structural characteristics of these social security systems on labor force participation. However, that research did not provide estimates of the strength of the likely effects on labor force participation among older workers in response to various possible changes in the structure of these schemes. That is the gap that this second volume seeks to fill. For example, it addresses such questions as how much retirement age would be likely to change in response to this or that change in the provisions of the scheme in a particular country. The current volume does not attempt to present an historical analysis of the development of the social security systems in these countries. Rather, the focus is on the presentation of the results derived from simulation models.

Each chapter makes use of simulations based on micro-data for one specific country and attempts to measure the link between structural incentives in the social security scheme and the decision to retire. A strength of working with this type of data and these simulation models is that they provide a way to test whether or not incentive effects linked to a particular structural characteristic differ or are very similar across countries. Their results suggest that the incentive effects are very similar and this helps rule out alternative explanations based on cultural differences between countries. Another advantage of the micro-data based simulation models is that they offer a way to estimate the likely change in labor force participation rates for different categories of workers in response to various possible changes in the current provisions in

these social security schemes. One of the conclusions of this study is that "ellipsisa reform that delays benefit eligibility by three years would likely reduce the proportion of men age fifty-six to sixty-five out of the labor force between 23 and 36 percentellipsis"

The structure of the chapters 1 through 12 is very similar. Basically the same type of analysis is done in each chapter so as to facilitate the comparison of results across nations and the preparation of summary tables based on results for all twelve nations. The quality of the analysis is consistently strong throughout the book. The target audience for this book is graduate students in economics and professional labor economists with an interest in retirement behavior. It will be all but impossible for graduate students in sociology and social work to grasp much of the analysis presented in this book and certainly the fine points unless they happen to have strong backgrounds in econometrics and experience working with simulation models.

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Cass Irvin, *Home Bound: Growing Up with a Disability in America*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004. \$59.50 hardcover, \$19.95 papercover.

Those involved in the disability rights movement have long talked about such issues as prejudice, inaccessibility, the need for attendant care, and the mystifying concept of 'normalcy'. Cass Irvin, a disability advocate, teacher, and writer, brilliantly illustrates these issues through a series of essays about her personal experience as a woman with a disability, her own encounters with discrimination and stigma, and her awakening as a disability activist in the 1970s. These essays, some of which were previously published in *The Ragged Edge* or *The Disability Rag*, tell an intimate and compelling story, and serve as a primer on disability identity and disability rights for the uninitiated.

Underlying Irvin's personal narrative is the concept of the social model of disability, which Irvin never names, but adeptly describes as: "it is not the disability itself that handicaps us," but the people that "do not see us as capable (p. 111)." Irvin demonstrates this concept through numerous examples from her

own life. For example, she shows how, as a bright young college student, an instructor refuses to make accommodations to a library research assignment that is clearly physically inaccessible to her, causing her to receive a C for the course. In addition, as a student teacher, her supervisor gave her a lower grade with the only rationale being simply "you, after all, are handicapped."

A key handicapping factor that appears frequently throughout the book is the role of economics in the lives of people with disabilities. Irvin frequently compares herself to one of her heroes, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who like Irvin, went to Warm Springs, Georgia for rehabilitation from polio. Although FDR could not walk without assistance, he had the financial capability to hire attendants, and thus the capability to do anything, including being president. Irvin, who grew up in an upper middle class family in Louisville, also had the resources to hire attendants, to attend college, and to live in her own home. Irvin describes how her economic situation both shielded her from some of the barriers other people with disabilities faced, yet also kept her from realizing the commonalities that she shared with others with disabilities.

Drawing from the American feminist tradition, most prominently from Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique*, Irvin outlines what she calls 'the gimp mystique.' People with disabilities feel they have to hide their needs for accommodations or assistance because it is not 'normal' to need such things. People with disabilities are often made to feel stigma or shame due to having a disability or being dependent on others, and are praised for not being too demanding or by not being similar to others with disabilities. Irvin demonstrates the gimp mystique with personal examples of her own feelings of stigma and questions of her own intelligence and self-worth, despite the fact that Irvin is clearly gifted in many ways. Additionally, Irvin recounts the many years she spent in bed as a teenager so as not to be a bother to her family or others. Even FDR experienced the gimp mystique, with his self-reference as a 'cured cripple' when his condition was not 'curable', and his concealment of his disability while in public.

Irvin outlines the notion of how the feminist notion of the personal being political is particularly relevant to people with disabilities. Society often views problems people with disabilities

face as being an individual problem resulting from an individual's condition. However, when viewed collectively, the problems people with disability have are in reality social problems caused by the society's inaccessibility and discrimination. The book also discusses how each individual with a disability is part of the disability movement in their day-to-day requests for accommodations or demands for inclusion. Moreover, when people with disabilities join together, as Irvin did when she first joined a disability advocacy organization in the 1970s, they can not only raise their consciousness about their common experiences with discrimination and the gimp mystique, but also begin to change society's ideas of normalcy.

Irvin's book is destined to become a classic in disability studies, disability history and disability policy. Written with eloquence and humor, it provides convincing examples of the key concepts of the disability rights movement. The one thing missing from this important work is an index, which hopefully will be included in the second printing. While this book reads like an autobiography or a novel, it is a book to be revisited many times.

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Friedan, B. (1963). *The feminine mystique*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Book Notes

Anna Gavanas, *Fatherhood Politics in the United States: Masculinity, Sexuality, Race and Marriage*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004. \$32.50 hardcover.

Although science research has challenged the notion of a “natural” order of family structures and relationships, showing that these institutions are socially constructed and culturally specific, the idea that traditional family patterns are either biologically or supernaturally determined continues to have much appeal. Many people today believe that traditional family patterns, with their culturally defined gender roles, marriage customs and child rearing practices, are “natural” and universal, and that deviations from these norms are “unnatural” and harmful. Proponents of gay marriage, single parenting, gay and lesbian adoption and reproductive choice are all accused of challenging this “natural” order and undermining the very fabric of society. These views have now been championed at the political level and have inspired numerous policy initiatives designed to preserve the traditional family.

As Anna Gavanas shows in this very thoroughly researched book, recent developments in family and gender politics in the United States have been closely linked to popular masculinity or fatherhood movements as exemplified by the Promise Keepers organization and the Million Man March of October 1995, during which more than 800,000 African American men gathered in Washington DC to affirm their commitment to responsible fatherhood. Founded in 1990, Promise Keepers has organized numerous gatherings in churches, community centers and football stadiums as well as a major rally in Washington in 1997 which was attended by at least half a million, predominantly white men. Both organizations have actively promoted the idea of responsible fatherhood, encouraging men to commit themselves to stable relationships, sexual fidelity, marriage and the fulfillment of what is believed to be their natural, traditional roles as family heads, role models and mentors particularly to male children.

Gavanas studied these and other organizations concerned with fatherhood politics in considerable depth. In addition to

reviewing their reports and other documents, as well as the burgeoning scholarly literature on the subject, she engaged in in-depth interviews with the leaders and members of various fatherhood organizations. These included Promise Keepers, the Center on Fathers, Families and Public Policy; the National Fatherhood Initiative; the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization; and the Institute for American Values to name but a few. The author classifies these organizations into two categories, namely pro-marriage groups and fragile families groups. The former are comprised primarily of white, middle class men who have a strong moral commitment and believe that the problems facing families today can be solved through the promotion of Christian marriage ideals. On the other hand, fragile-families groups are primarily concerned with low-income African-American and other minority men who have fathered children but who are not in stable, marital relationships. These organizations believe that the problems facing fragile, low income families must be understood in the context of poverty, unemployment, inadequate educational opportunities and social deprivation.

Contrasting these two types of organizations, Gavanas provides an incisive account of how they deal with family issues and particularly with questions of masculinity, gender and sexuality. She reveals the very divergent perspectives and preferences these groups bring to an analysis of family politics in the United States today. Her account of the way pro-marriage groups have campaigned effectively to influence the national political agenda is of particular interest and relevance when seeking to comprehend recent national policy shifts in the field of social welfare. Indeed, her book is essential reading for anyone interested in welfare policy in the United States today and for understanding the way earlier commitments to eradicate poverty through income transfers have been replaced with programs that emphasize the inculcation of traditional middle-class American values.

Maria Guadalupe Moog Rodrigues, *Global Environmentalism and Local Politics: Transnational Advocacy Networks in Brazil, Ecuador, and India*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003. \$57.50 hardcover, \$18.95 papercover.

The role of national and transnational organizations in affecting change at the local level has been discussed widely in the development literature. Transnational non-governmental organizations have the technical, legal, political and monetary resources to focus on issues that local networks do not possess. These resources can be used to apply external pressure in the form of reduced funding from international sources, political pressure from other countries, and swings in national and international popular opinion.

Global Environmentalism and Local Politics examines the interplay between local, national, and transnational organizations in three different countries. The author is not only interested in describing the process and results of these networks, but also examining the balance of power between local, national, and transnational players. One of the authors' primary arguments is that "the effectiveness of a transnational environmental advocacy network depends, primarily, on the role that local member organizations play in determining the network's goals and strategies." To examine this argument the author asks several key questions: first, who participates in advocacy networks and how do they participate; second, what strategies are available and used by transnational groups and are they successful and third, what are the results of the transnational advocacy?

The book consists of eight chapters, four of which focus on the examination of the Rondônia network in Brazil. The examination of transnational networks in Ecuador (an anti-oil network) and India (the Narmada network) consist of one chapter each. The first chapter introduces the concept of transnational networks and concisely describes the goal of the book, the key questions employed, and the methods used. Chapters two through five examine various aspects of the Rondônia network in Brazil: the history of the network; its successes and failures; and the consequences transnational organizations have on local politics. The writing, particularly in these chapters, is thorough, yet dense. There are numerous abbreviations and acronyms that make it difficult to maintain the flow of the discussion. The text does include four pages at the front of the book describing the acronyms and abbreviations but the reader has to refer to these again and again. Additionally, a time line of significant events would have been

helpful in summarizing the examination of the Rondônia network and focusing the discussion. Chapters six and seven discuss the history, main actors, and effectiveness of transnational networks in Ecuador and India respectively.

The two chapters on Ecuador and India are really used to provide comparisons to the discussion of the Rondônia network, and as such the level of analysis is not detailed. These chapters are, however, thorough and offer insightful analyses of the successes and failures of the transnational networks in both countries. Readers interested in the political interplay and power sharing between local, national, and transnational groups in the environmental field will find this book useful for its analysis and description of the issues.

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David B. Reynolds (Ed.), *Partnering for Change: Unions and Community Groups Build Coalitions for Economic Justice*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2004. \$66.95 hardcover, \$24.95 papercover.

Unions have traditionally focused on the needs of their own members. They first emerged to mobilize workers who campaigned for improved working conditions, increased secure job security and the end of exploitative practices that characterized 19th century industrial employment. However, they not only offered workers an opportunity to promote their own interests but to express solidarity with working people and to join wider campaigns for social reform. Although social welfare history textbooks often pay more attention to the role of politicians and the leaders of the social reform movement in bringing about progressive social change, the unions made a critically important contribution to efforts to introduce social security, expand social services for families and children, and formulate policies designed to reduce poverty.

Although unions have long been involved in partnering with social reform movements and progressive politics, their contribution has not been properly recognized. The problem has been exacerbated in recent times as unions have been portrayed in the media as self-interested, corrupt and economically irresponsible. Many corporations have successfully exploited these images to

discourage and even prohibit union activities. As union membership has continued to decline, unions have been challenged to address these challenges and to reinvent themselves in order to enhance their relevance not only to their members but to the wider community.

In this significant book, David Reynolds shows how unions are working more closely with community organizations to create coalitions that address social and economic justice issues and to promote progressive causes. The book consists of 14 chapters organized into four sections. The first deals with the way unions and community organizations have established coalitions, while the second focused on a number of areas of fields of activity in which these partnerships have been successful. This section forms the core of the book and shows how union-community partners have worked together to promote living wage campaigns, foster corporate accountability, assist progressive urban development policies and programs and build political coalitions. The next section deals with institution building while the final section discusses cooperation with employers.

This book makes an important contribution to the literature on union-community partnerships and it should be widely consulted by anyone involved in community practice either as educators or practitioners. The link between union and community activism has not been widely discussed in the literature on community practice and this book will certainly help fill the gap. Its coverage of issues such as living wage campaigns is particularly informative and useful. Its deserves to be widely read.

Elhanan Helpman, *The Mystery of Economic Growth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004. \$5.95 hardcover.

Although previously neglected, the topic of economic growth (or economic development) has gained prominence not only in economic and social science circles but more widely in popular discourse. Reports of growth rates, and the factors likely to impede continued growth, are regularly presented in the news media, and ordinary people are now more likely to pay attention when reports of sluggish economic growth are headlined. In academic circles, a concern with growth was previously thought to be the appropriate purview of social scientists working in the

field of international development, but today, the topic has been mainstreamed. Indeed, the volume of publications concerned with economic growth has increased significantly in recent years and many more theoretical accounts of the factors responsible for rapid economic growth have become available.

Despite greater interest and scholarship in the field, Elhanan Helpman believes that the subject is still a mysterious one. He points out that no single theoretical account has satisfactorily explained the factors responsible for the remarkable rates of economic growth that have characterized the 19th and 20th centuries and transformed traditional economies in many parts of the world. Tracing the history of economic growth and the way that growth has increased incomes and created previously unimagined wealth, he believes that the causes of economic growth can be discovered and that this knowledge can be used to formulate effective policies designed to promote prosperity. The bulk of the book describes and assesses the diverse theoretical explanations that have been offered to discover and explain the causes of growth. Successive chapters review the work that has been done on capital accumulation, the role of human capital, the contribution of technological innovation, entrepreneurship and international trade. The author also examines the question of whether inequality hinders economic growth and whether policies designed to address the problem are needed. Finally, the author focuses on the relevance of social and cultural institutions in fostering growth. He points out that economic scholarship on the role of institutions is still underdeveloped but he notes that further research on this topic offers promising directions for unraveling the mystery of economic growth.

This is an engaging book and it should be read by anyone interested in bridging the divide between economics and social policy. As many more social policy scholars have recognized, the study of human welfare needs to make greater use of economics and the insights that economists have provided. Helpman provides an interesting account of the most important contemporary theories of economic growth, and his book will be a useful resource for those who would like to know more on the subject. Mathematical notation is kept to a minimum and much of the book's subject matter is directly relevant to the concerns of social

policy and social work educators. The book not only provides much useful and relevant information but is enjoyable and very readable.

Robin H. Rogers-Dillon, *The Welfare Experiments: Politics and Policy Evaluation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004. \$55.00 hardcover, \$21.95 papercover.

The idea that social science knowledge can be applied to inform and even shape public policy is an old one. Inspired by the positivist belief that the methods of the natural sciences can be effectively employed to study social phenomena, 19th century American social reformers engaged in scientific "fact gathering" to reveal the extent of poverty and deprivation in the country's rapidly growing cities. The hope that their discoveries would foster progressive social change succeeded and paved the way for the more extensive application of social science knowledge in the 1930s when the New Deal implemented policies that reflected decades of policy relevant social science research. During the 1960s, research played a major role in social policy formulation, and it appeared that social scientists had attained widespread respect for their dispassionate efforts to provide politicians with sound data and information on which to base policy making.

These developments have fostered what Robin Rogers-Dillon believes is the myth that social policies are rational, non-ideological and largely based on carefully formulated research. In her erudite and readable book, she shows that the waiver experiments carried out by many states and evaluated by a variety of think tanks, universities and research organizations during the late 1980s and early 1990s to test "what works" in welfare, were in fact shaped by political agendas. The welfare experiments conducted under these waiver programs negate the view that social science research informs policy making in a technocratic and neutral way. Indeed, the waiver programs turned out to be an effective way of promoting a partisan policy agenda in the face of Congressional intransigence. Rogers-Dillon points out that attempts to significantly alter the AFDC program through legislative action had repeatedly failed, and there seemed little prospect that the system could be reformed through the Congress. The introduction of waiver projects during the late 1980s at the behest of the

National Governor's Association effectively bypassed Congress creating an administrative mechanism for testing conditionality ideas such as regular school attendance for welfare children, job training and time limits. As politically savvy governors claimed success for their pilot projects, the waivers (and the social science research which supported their claims), undermined the institutional basis for welfare and resulted within a relatively short space of time in radical changes to the nation's federal social assistance program. To elaborate on this argument, Rogers-Dillon focuses on Florida's Family Transition Program showing in great detail how this particular demonstration project was used to support the political goal of ending the AFDC program.

There is much in this book which will be of interest not only to those who have studied the changes that have been implemented in the American welfare system in recent years but to anyone concerned with the social policy making process. The author presents her argument in a clear and incisive way and provides a rich source of information about how the waiver projects gradually evolved to shape a coherent political agenda. She also makes good use of theory adding a new twist to the historical institutionalist perspective which has placed much store on the path-dependence of social policy. By providing an opportunity for politicians to use administrative rather than legislative mechanisms to achieve their goals, the waiver projects produced rapid results. These insights are important not only for scholarly purposes but to inform those dedicated to identifying and implementing a future progressive social policy agenda.

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