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# Globalization, Precarious Work, and the Food Bank

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*This paper explores whether people are better off working in the precarious employment associated with a neoliberal globalized economy. Firstly, we show the impacts of globalization on the composition of food bank users in Toronto, Canada. We then compare two groups of food bank users, one with at least one household member working, the other without. Our findings demonstrate that the life experiences of the two groups remain depressingly similar: those employed remained mired in poverty and continued to lead marginalized, precarious lives. The lack of investment in education or training characteristic of 'work-first' welfare reforms leads to unstable, low-paid work for the vast majority of those leaving welfare.*

**Keywords:** globalization, food bank, Toronto, Canada, precarious work

As modern welfare states developed during the post-war years the prime focus was on reducing the dependency of male "breadwinners" and their families on the uncertainties of markets (Lewis, 1992). Policies and programs sought to provide protection against "old social risks" such as interruptions to income from sickness, unemployment and retirement. These post-war welfare states were arguably well adapted to industrial societies, built on assumptions of secure jobs and

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stable families.

Structures of social risk, however, have shifted dramatically over recent decades as a result of profound economic and social transformations. Primary among these is the overarching umbrella of neoliberal globalization: Within this framework are additional challenges such as a new post-industrial, knowledge-based economy, an aging and diversifying population, the entrance of large numbers of women (and others previously excluded) into the labor market and changing patterns of family formation and dissolution. Both individually and collectively, these transformations have created a range of “new social risks” such as precarious employment and social exclusion (Beck, 1998; Giddens, 2000; Taylor-Gooby, 2004).

As a result of these transformations, traditional social safety systems have been subjected to increased pressures and challenges, both internally within individual societies and externally within a globally competitive international economy. In general, highly divergent countries have all prioritized access to employment as the best way to deal with these new risks and to secure the sustainability of welfare systems (Scharpf & Schmidt, 2000; Jenson & St. Martin, 2003).

In the field of welfare reform, there has been a general transformation from passive programs of entitlement based on need, to active labor market policies with an explicit welfare-to-work orientation (OECD, 2005a, 2005b). However, as a result of political-institutional differentiation and “path dependency” (Alcock & Craig, 2001; Gough, 2000), no single model of active labor market policy has emerged. Broadly speaking, the social democratic welfare states favored models emphasizing longer-term human capital development. Among the liberal states, such as the United States and, more recently, Canada (Esping-Andersen, 1996), a convention solidified around work-first approaches with an emphasis on rapid labor force attachment through compulsory participation. The priority is on the first entry into the labor market—any job is a good job—as welfare recipients are believed to stand a better chance of moving out of poverty and into ‘good’ jobs if they are already working.

This paper begins with a brief overview of the impact of globalization after 1995 on the composition of food bank users in Toronto, Canada. We find the breadth and depth of

deprivation increased dramatically in the face of globalized neoliberal markets. We then explore one of the key premises of this debate, the assumption that people are, in fact, better off working in the precarious employment characteristic of neoliberal globalized economies. We compare two groups in Toronto, both of whom rely on the local food bank to supplement their incomes: One group has at least one household member participating in the workforce, while the other group does not. The premise of the neoliberal discourse is that people will be better off working, even at low-paying jobs, as they engage in employment en route to a better life of autonomy and financial independence. Much of the critique questions this model as simplistic and unrealistic. We attempt to examine this question empirically.

### Canada in a Global Context

It is widely recognized that the development of the global economy, characterized by the intensification of international economic exchange, represents one of the key challenges to contemporary welfare states (Esping-Anderson, 1996; Held et al., 1999; Sykes et al., 2001). All countries now face economic pressures to open their economies, to become “attractive” to investment and to create flexible labor markets. The need to compete in the globalized, knowledge-based economy exerts a powerful influence over the policy choices available for welfare state reforms and increases the likelihood of restructuring, if not retrenchment.

While globalization per se is neither good nor bad, the dominant form has been that of neoliberal globalization (Clarke, 2003). Evident in the “Washington Consensus” of markets, flexible labor and a diminished state role, disseminated through supranational bodies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and embedded through binding trade treaties such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), neoliberal globalization is strongly associated with the promotion of inequality and the removal of state funded social protections as sources of ‘rigidity’ in the labor market. It is no surprise, therefore, that there have been

unequal outcomes, both between and within states and among various groups. For some, globalization has created unprecedented opportunities for growth and prosperity. But for many others, the realities of globalization and the new economy are widening poverty and inequality and increasing social marginalization and exclusion. In short, neoliberal globalization is creating both "winners" and "losers."

There is a wealth of evidence in Canada testifying to deepening poverty and widening inequalities, notably in earnings and income inequality and increasing part-time, episodic and contingent work (Jackson & Robinson, 2000; Vosko, 2005; Yalnizyan, 2000). Recent decades have seen fundamental shifts in the nature of work and the organization of labor markets with the goal of promoting productivity and international competitiveness (Riches & Ternowetsy, 1990). Recession in the early 1990s resulted in significant restructuring, especially in manufacturing, with a shift away from full-time, sustainable employment. Indeed, in the 1990s, full-time jobs comprised only 18% of all employment creation and, despite economic recovery, it was not until 1998 that there were as many full-time jobs in absolute terms as existed in 1989 (Jackson & Robinson, 2000).

Over the same period, there was significant growth in "non-standard" or "precarious" employment such as temporary jobs, part-time employment with atypical hours, own-account self-employment and multiple job-holding (Cranford et al., 2003; Galarneau, 2005; Jackson, 2003; Picot & Heisz, 2000; Vosko, 2005). Consequently, despite a largely positive macro-economic environment and substantial growth in the educational attainment and experience of workers, for many, work simply does not pay. The earnings of many people who work full-time, full-year, still fall far short of the income required to support a family (Chung, 2004; Saunders, 2005). Moreover, the incidence of low-paid work has risen significantly among less educated, young workers (25-34) and recent immigrants (Morissette & Picot, 2005). For increasing numbers of people, the labor market has become not only an increasingly turbulent place, but also an increasingly polarized one with the hollowing out of middle income jobs and a growing divide between the top and bottom layers (Lowe, 2000).

As a result, many workers in precarious jobs have come to rely to a greater extent than in the past upon social safety nets—both formal programs such as Employment Insurance or social assistance, and informal initiatives delivered by voluntary, charitable and community-based agencies. At the same time, Canada has witnessed profound shifts in federal and provincial social policy as safety nets have been restructured to meet the needs of the new economy (Lightman, 2003; Lightman & Riches, 2001, 2000). Most significantly, the replacement of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) in 1996 fundamentally changed the philosophy and practice of Canadian social policy. Whereas previously eligibility for social assistance was based on a sole unconditional determination that an individual was “in need” (or likely to be “in need”), the new legislation freed the provinces from this constraint. Provinces were free to adopt “work for welfare” (or workfare) programs and to disqualify certain groups from receiving assistance. As a result, provinces and territories increasingly introduced work-first programs with compulsory participation and financial sanctions for non-participation (Morel, 2002; NCW, 1997).

With no enshrined right to welfare, no national standards and no guaranteed right of appeal, all of which were found in the previous legislation, this new post-1996 welfare framework bore little regard for the realities of the lives of low-income people (Caragata, 2003; Little 1998). Workfare became not only an acceptable practice, but also a widely accepted practice across the country. In addition, severe cutbacks in the levels of public support led to increasing dependence on a patchwork of charitable emergency relief agencies, in turn undermining collective health and well-being and generating long term societal costs. Indeed, the negative impact of these changes has been a powerful and consistent research finding in Toronto (City of Toronto, 2006, 2004; Herd, 2006, 2002; Herd et al., 2005; Lightman et al., 2005a, 2005b, 2005c). As elsewhere, work-first welfare reform has resulted in many welfare leavers finding employment, but in jobs that are low paid and poor quality, with limited job retention and even lower job progression (Acs & Loprest, 2004; Urban Institute, 2005). Significantly, most welfare leavers who work remain in poverty.



Dramatic economic restructuring on the one hand and reduced benefits, tightened eligibility and work requirements on the other have combined to increase the “holes” in traditional safety nets, to narrow the focus and reduce the availability and generosity of benefit programs. Restricted access to Employment Insurance reduced the proportion of the unemployed who had contributed and received benefits from 87% in 1989 to about 38% by 2000 (Lightman, 2003). In turn, this created greater demands on social assistance–welfare, while increased decentralization and localization associated with liberal markets has placed increased demands on regional, urban, and local community sectors to deliver solutions to more complex social problems, typically with fewer resources.

As a result of government cutbacks to social assistance, unemployment insurance, and skills-upgrading programs in the 1990s, many of those left behind by the labor market no longer receive the supports they require. One consequence of this erosion of safety nets has been an increase in hunger and food insecurity (Riches, 2002) with approximately 15% of Canadians, or an estimated 3.7 million people, living in “food-insecure” households in 2000-01 (Statistics Canada, 2005). Essentially, the increased need for social safety nets is combining with the reduced availability of such supports to create a crisis in social welfare provision (Curtis, 2005; Evans & Shields, 2000).

## Methodology

This paper explores the question of whether people are, in fact, better off working at the precarious jobs that we associate with the globalized economy, as compared to ongoing dependence on welfare. While the neoliberal discourse suggests that people will inevitably be better off working, our hypothesis (and the literature) suggests the contrary. Given the low skill levels and limited training of many ‘graduates’ of workfare, we suggest that their life experiences will differ little from those left behind on welfare.

To test this question, we explore the experiences of two groups of marginalized people in Toronto. The first is a sample of people (typically on welfare) in households where no one is working and the local food bank is being used. The second

group are people in households where at least one person is in the paid workforce, but the support of the food bank is still necessary.

Both samples were drawn from clients of the Daily Bread Food Bank, the largest food bank in Toronto, during a six week period during the early spring, 2005. Each year at this time, in conjunction with many local food providers, the food bank conducts an annual survey of users of their services: In 2005, 54 such providers participated. A common questionnaire was developed and pretested, and about 250 volunteers were trained to administer the survey instrument. People using the food bank—about to enter or just in receipt of their food—were approached and asked to complete the largely precoded questionnaire. The goal was to interview roughly 3% of the users at each participating food bank. While no claims as to pure random selection of respondents can be made, the volunteers were alerted to the need for representativeness to reflect the diversity of the Toronto community.

The final demographic profile of the respondents appears to have face validity, as confirmed by food bank staff and the researchers. Additionally, the large sample size ( $n=1050$ ) should add further confidence to the results generated. Inasmuch as no names, addresses or other identifying information were sought or recorded by interviewers, there is no *a priori* reason to question the candor of the responses.

### Globalization and Food Bank Use

We begin with a brief overview of the impacts of globalization, as reflected in the changed composition of food bank users in Toronto, beginning in 1995: In that year, the federal government dramatically slashed financial transfers to the provinces, resulting in immediate cutbacks in all areas of the social services. As well, 1995 marked the election of a neoliberal provincial government in Ontario (Lightman et al., 2005b), which rapidly moved to cut back and eliminate existing welfare state entitlements and workplace protections. By 2002, the full effects of the neoliberal globalized agenda were being felt in the province.

Table 1 presents summary statistics on food bank users in

the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), which includes the City of Toronto plus adjoining exurban municipalities, over the ten year period from 1995 to 2005. Overall, the figures reflect the processes by which globalization has extended the reach of the contingent labor market and created significant new and broader groups of marginalized, unemployed and underemployed workers (Vosko, 2005). The figures are all the more remarkable in that they cover the period of the economic recovery in Canada that followed the recession of the early 1990s. Annual unemployment rates in Canada peaked at 11.4% in 1993 and began falling thereafter, reaching 6.8% in 2005, a level not seen in Canada since the mid-1970s (Statistics Canada, 2002). In many respects, therefore, the period represents the "high water" mark of globalization in Canada, providing a favorable labor market for the operation of work-first welfare reform.

Table 1: Food Bank Users in the greater Toronto Area (GTA)

	1995	2002	2005
Number of people using food relief programs in the GTA	115,000	155,000	175,000
Average age of household head	37.4	41.2	41.9
Percent of Households headed by a person with a disability or long-term illness	30.0%	41.0%	41.3%
Percent of immigrants with at least some college or university education	12.0%	59.0%	53.1%
Percent of household heads who are working	8.0%	19.0%	17.1%
Median after-rent income per day per person	\$ 7.40	\$ 4.11	\$ 4.47
Percent of food bank recipients who go hungry at least once a week	15.4%	42.6%	44.1%
Percentage of children who go hungry at least once a month	18.0%	32.0%	28.0%

Despite this favorable economic environment, the number of people using food banks in the Greater Toronto Area *rose* over the period—from approximately 115,000 per month in 1995 to 175,000 per month in 2005. This represents growth of

over 5% per year, compared to growth of the total GTA population of less than 2% per year from 1996 to 2001. The average age of food bank users moved upward by almost five years over the period, from 37 to 42, again marking the transformation of the food bank user population from one of traditionally marginalized groups such as younger adults and single parents to include more of what might be termed the 'prime age' working population. The percentage of food bank users who reported a disability or illness that restricts them from holding regular employment rose from 30% to 41%, suggesting the increased marginalization of this group within a neoliberal globalized economy.

Approximately 45% of food bank users were immigrants, a proportion that is roughly consistent with the proportion of immigrants in the overall GTA population. However, the proportion of immigrant food bank users who report having at least some college or university education rose dramatically from about one in eight in 1995 to over half in 2005.

The percentage of users who were employed but still required the assistance of a food bank more than doubled from 8% to 17%. While the expectation of work-first reforms is that work of any sort will result in an improvement in the situation of welfare recipients, in fact the degree of hunger and deprivation of food bank recipients deepened over the period. The amount of money available to food bank households, after rent and utilities, dropped from \$7.40 to \$4.47 per person per day, reflecting in part an October 1995 22% across-the-board cut in provincial welfare rates. This was accompanied by a dramatic rise in the percentage of respondents who reported frequent hunger. The percentage of food bank users who reported going hungry at least once per week rose from 15% to 44%, while the percentage of children who went hungry at least once per month rose from 18% to 28%.

Table 2 examines the demographics of the 2005 survey respondents in more detail. The average age was 42 years and, though not reported in the table, approximately 7% were under age 25, while another 20% were between the ages of 25 and 34. The age groups 35-44 and 45-54 contained the largest numbers of food bank users, with 33% and 26% of respondents respectively. Another 14% of respondents were aged 55 and

over. Fifty-six percent of respondents were female.

Transformation of labor markets and welfare reform have changed the nature of the social assistance caseload from a predominance of unemployed single persons to one with larger numbers of other family types. This is reflected in the food bank usage figures, which show that while 47% of food bank respondents were single people, lone parents made up the next largest group at 24%, followed by couples with and without children at 19% and 10% respectively. The average household size was 2.5 persons.

Table 2: Profile of food bank users, Greater Toronto Area, 2005

<i>Average Age, in years (N = 1,597)</i>	42
<i>Percent Female (N = 1,619)</i>	56%
<i>Family type (N = 1,582)</i>	
Couple with children	19.2%
Couple without children	10.2%
Lone parent	23.9%
Single	46.8%
<i>Average household size (N = 1,620)</i>	2.5
Adults	1.6
Children	0.9
<i>Percent immigrant (N = 1,619)</i>	45.3%
<i>Percent Aboriginal (N = 794)</i>	5.4%
<i>Education (N = 1,597)</i>	
Grade school or less	6.9%
Some high school	25.8%
Completed high school	20.4%
Some college or university	14.5%
Completed college or university	27.4%
Trade certification	5.1%

Immigrants made up 45% of the respondents, roughly in proportion to their share of the overall GTA population, while Aboriginals (First Nations) made up over 5% of food bank



users—more than 10 times their share of the overall population, which was less than one-half of one percent in 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2006).

Table 3: Work, earnings and income of Food bank users, Greater Toronto Area, 2005

<i>Years of work experience (N = 1,545)</i>	
< 1 year	6.8%
1 - 4 years	11.1%
5 - 9 years	16.5%
10 - 14 years	15.2%
15 + years	50.4%
<i>Currently employed (respondent) (N = 1,620)</i>	17.1%
<i>Someone in Household currently employed (N = 1,379)</i>	27.1%
<i>Received Employment Insurance when previous job ended (N = 1,149) [respondent not currently employed]</i>	29.9%
<i>Wage level (best job) [N = 268]</i>	
< \$7.45	4.9%
\$7.45 - \$10 per hour	43.7%
> \$10 per hour	44.8%
Salaried	6.7%
<i>Average number of jobs held in last year (N = 261)</i>	1.9
<i>Type of employment (respondent, N = 255):</i>	
Full-time	37.7%
Part-time	40.8%
Casual, seasonal or day-labor	21.6%
<i>Average weekly hours of work (among those employed) (N = 255)</i>	27.1
<i>Require child care (N = 1,013)</i>	72.0%
<i>Average monthly earnings</i>	
Respondent (among those employed) (N = 276)	\$ 658
Household (among households with employed members) (N = 372)	\$ 783
<i>Percentage of those employed receiving social assistance (N = 1,379)</i>	35.4%
<i>[Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program]</i>	

One of the central tenets of the globalized economy is that while lower skilled jobs may migrate to lower-wage economies, education and skill development will maintain the prosperity and standard of living of the advanced economies. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of the era is the widening divide between the skilled and the unskilled. However, food bank data shows that even advanced education credentials are often not

Table 4: Household circumstances and employment, by household employment status of Food bank users, Greater Toronto Area, 2005<sup>1</sup>

	No one employed	One or more people employed	Signif. <sup>2</sup>
<i>Housing</i>			
Private kitchen	77%	85%	**
Private bathroom	78%	86%	***
Residence in good or very good condition	58%	56%	n.s.
Number of household members, per bedroom	1.4	1.7	****
Pay rent or mortgage on time every month	82%	65%	****
Evicted or threatened with eviction	16%	18%	n.s.
<i>Health</i>			
Self-reported health excellent or very good	31%	40%	***
Specific foods required for health reasons	38%	26%	****
Foods desired for well-being, but cannot afford	81%	79%	n.s.
<i>Community and support systems</i>			
Sense of belonging to local community is strong or very strong	61%	64%	n.s.
Financial support all or most of the time	14%	17%	n.s.
Emotional support all or most of the time	41%	53%	****
Believe circumstances will improve in next year	70%	79%	**
<i>Food bank use and income</i>			
Average number of months using a food bank in GTA	30.5	23.3	**
Number of food bank visits in past three months	4.4	3.5	**
Food bank part of monthly budget plan all or most months	71%	59%	****
Household social assistance benefits, adjusted for family size <sup>3</sup>	\$ 438	\$ 152	****
Monthly household income, adjusted for family size <sup>3</sup>	\$ 587	\$ 781	****
Household income, per person per day, after rent and utilities	\$ 5.55	\$ 7.83	***
Household income, as a percentage of Low Income Cut-Off (LICO)	38.3%	52.7%	****

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001, \*\*\*\*p < .0001

<sup>1</sup>N ranged from 1,240 - 1,501 depending on the question.

<sup>2</sup>Differences in categorical variables tested using chi-square statistics. Differences in means for continuous variables tested using t-tests and 95% confidence intervals.

<sup>3</sup>Adjusted using OECD equivalence scale.

sufficient to protect one's position in the labor market. Fully 27% of users had a completed university degree or college diploma. Five percent were certified in a trade. Only a minority (about one-third) had less than a high school education. Moreover, 19%, or nearly one in five respondents, were currently attending school, either full- or part-time.

### *Work, Earnings and Income*

Just as the education levels of food bank users challenge the preconception that they are vastly different from the rest of the population, so too do employment histories. One-half of the food bank users had 15 or more years of work experience. About one in six food bank users (17%) were employed at the time of the 2005 survey, and 27% of respondents lived in a household where someone (the respondent or someone else) was employed.

However, their precarious labor market status is reflected in their employment status: 62% were employed either part-time or on a casual or seasonal basis—they worked on average only 27 hours per week, and nearly half earned \$10 per hour or less, the unofficial but widely used informal threshold for 'working poor' status. Low wages and part-time hours translate into low earnings—\$783 per month in households with employed members. As a consequence of this, 35% of households with employed members reported receiving social assistance. Among those not currently employed, only 30% received Employment Insurance when their last job ended.

### *Work and Well-being*

While the presumption of work-first reform is that employment of any kind provides a pathway to progression, the crux of the issue is whether work in fact improves household circumstances, particularly for those at the margins of the labor market who are the direct and indirect subjects of welfare reform. Table 4 presents data on housing, health, community belonging and support and food bank use and income, comparing those users who are in working households and those who are not.

In terms of the quality and security of housing, in only two

of the six indicators are the employed food bank users demonstrably better off than the non-working food bank users. While they were more likely to have a private kitchen and a private bathroom, the two groups were equally likely to report that their residence was in good or very good condition. The employed respondents experienced a significantly greater degree of crowding, reporting an average of 1.7 persons per bedroom, compared with 1.4 among the non-working respondents. Only about two-thirds of working food bank users paid their rent or mortgage on time every month, compared to 82% of the non-working users. (This may be attributable to an increasingly widespread practice whereby social assistance pays rents directly to landlords.) Both groups experienced a similar risk of eviction, at around 16-18%.

In the realm of self-reported health, the working food bank users were more likely to report excellent or very good health, and possibly related to this, were less likely to say that there were specific foods they required for health reasons (e.g. diabetic, lactose-free). Both working and non-working users were highly likely to report that there were foods they wished to have for their well-being, but could not afford.

Turning to issues of family and community support systems, the working and non-working survey respondents were equally likely to say that they had a strong sense of belonging to their local community. Very few in either group felt that there was someone outside their immediate household (friends or family) to whom they could turn for financial support in an emergency. Interestingly, the working respondents were more likely to report that there was someone who could provide emotional support to them, and that they thought their circumstances would improve in the future.

Finally, in the area of food bank use and household income, there were significant differences across all indicators. Employment did reduce the reliance of respondents on food banks: The employed respondents had been using a food bank for an average of 23 months (compared to 31 months among the unemployed) and had made 3.5 visits to a food bank in the previous three months, compared to 4.4 visits among the unemployed. Employment also reduced the degree to which food banks were a regular part of monthly budgeting, with 59% of

the working respondents reporting that visits to the food bank were a regular part of monthly budgeting, compared with 71% of those who were not working.

The amount of family income derived from social assistance in working households was approximately one-third that of the non-working households (adjusted for family size), while overall household income was approximately one-third higher. The income available for household consumption after rent and utilities was \$7.83 per person per day, approximately 41% higher than the non-working household average of \$5.55. Overall, household income as a percentage of the Statistics Canada Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO)—which is widely used as an unofficial poverty line—rose from 38% among non-working households to 53% among working households.

That there were measurable improvements in the self-reported health and material circumstances of those food bank users who were working is not surprising. What is remarkable is the degree of continuing deprivation among the working food bank users. The latter group had better housing conditions by some indicators, but worse in others, and even in cases where their housing situation was better on average, their housing situation was still very marginal and insecure by mainstream standards. Working food bank users were only about 8 percentage points more likely to have access to a private bathroom or kitchen and were more crowded than their non-working counterparts. Only about two-thirds paid their rent or mortgage on time every month.

While the self-reported health of working food bank users was better than those not working, it was still very poor: Only about 40% felt that their health was excellent or very good compared to others their age. Similarly, their sense of isolation or belonging to their local communities and the availability of support from family or friends were either not significantly different from non-working food bank users or were poor regardless of any statistical improvement over the non-working food bank users.

Food banks continued to be a regular, not emergency, part of monthly budgeting for the families who made only one fewer trips to a food bank in the previous three months than their non-working counterparts. Their household incomes,



although higher, provided only \$2.28 more per person per day to meet all needs after their housing costs were accounted for than the non-working food bank users had available to them. Finally, their household incomes, adjusted for family size, left them still considerably below the LICO poverty line—about half the poverty line—albeit in less severe poverty than the non-working food bank users.

## Conclusion

Driven by the demands of neoliberal globalization, precarious jobs have become increasingly common over recent years. The underlying logic of work-first welfare reform is that those who leave welfare and secure such employment will be better off in work, en route to a better life of autonomy and financial independence. In stark contrast, comparison of the experiences of two groups of food bank users in Toronto—one group with a connection to employment and the other without—demonstrates that their life experiences remain depressingly similar in many regards. While those who were employed reported measurable improvements in income and well-being, they remained mired in poverty and continued to lead marginalized, precarious lives.

In ongoing debates over the impacts of globalization, labor market transformations and welfare reform, outcomes that result in precarious employment are often equated with success. Shaped by a “technocratic relativism” (Peck & Theodore, 1999, p. 6) slight income gains for one group, either relative to another or over time, are seen as evidence of success. As this analysis demonstrates, this not only overstates modest outcomes, but it also fails to make clear the realities of continuing poverty, hardship and despair. Indeed, for those passing through the welfare system, the lack of investment in skills-based training or education means that the vast majority who exit assistance end up entering unstable, low-paid employment with no benefits. As we have seen, such precarious employment does little to change their lives and provides little stability for future progression.

Given that these findings emerged against the backdrop of highly favorable labor market conditions, it is evident that the

focus of work-first strategies on immediate labor market entry clearly fails the most vulnerable. More positively, the emphasis of policy dialogues has shifted in recent times to signal a shift away from narrow work-first models of reform (which have dominated in Canada and other advanced liberal economies) to broader, mixed models offering the pre- and post-employment services and financial supports necessary to make work both realistic and sustainable. However, if this new direction is to sustain real transformations in the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable, it will not only require significant and sustained investment—it will also need to challenge the belief that work of any kind provides the best, and frequently only, route out of poverty for all groups within society.

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# Family Foster Care for Abandoned Children in Egypt

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*The profile of Egyptian foster children has changed tremendously since the establishment of Egyptian family foster care in 1959. This is a result of changes in foster family practice and changes in the profile of foster families. The changes in family foster care practice included terminating the use of wet nurses and replacing them with Childhood and Motherhood Care Centers and by determining a specific age that foster children would leave the foster care system. The changes in the foster family profile included the educational qualifications of foster mothers, the jobs of foster mothers and foster fathers, the motivation to be a foster family, and the number of bedrooms in a foster family home. These changes have been made in the hope of offering the highest quality of welfare for foster children and their foster families and achieving the best interests for both of them.*

**Key words:** *Egypt, foster children, foster care, family foster care, child abandonment*

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to describe the current profile of Egyptian foster children and their foster families and to inform

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the reader how and why this profile has changed over time since the establishment of Egyptian family foster care system in 1959 and during the period of the first Family Foster Care Act of 1968 and the second Act of 1996. These two Acts regulate the structure and the function of the Egyptian Family Foster Care System. They have defined the goals of Egyptian family foster care: established which children are eligible to be foster children; set the terms of fostering; defined the roles of the foster care social worker, the Family and Childhood Administrations, the Family and Childhood Directorates, and the Foster Care Committee. The main objective of creating these two Acts is to arrange relevant social welfare for abandoned babies [for more details, please see Egyptian Ministry Decree 17 (1968) and Egyptian Children Act 12 (1996)]. While the changes in the Egyptian family foster care legislations (1968 and 1996) will be highlighted in a forthcoming paper, this paper is concentrated mainly on the changes in the profile of foster children and foster families (family foster care practice).

Egyptian family foster care deals with the international problem of abandoned babies (Browne, Hamilton-Giachritsis, Johnson, Agathonos-Georgopoulou, Anaut, Herczog, Keller-Hamela, Klimácková, Leth, Ostergren, Stan, & Zeytinoglu, 2005) and their rights within the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. The discovery of dead and discarded newborn infants appears to have become a constant aspect of life across the United States (Sanger, 2006). It was found that in 1998, 105 babies had been left in public places. Further, there are also a handful of abandoned babies every year in England and Wales recorded by the Office for National Statistics (Mullender, Pavlovic, & Staples, 2005). These children should be granted their rights, including the right to know their real birth circumstances, to search for their biological families, to contact their biological families, and even to be reunited with them. These children need help from policy makers, researchers and practitioners to obtain these rights, in order to be equal to adopted children. Adopted children already have such rights (Midford, 1994; Gair, 1999; Feast, Marwood, Seabrook, & Webb, 1998). To help abandoned children to get their rights, Egyptian family foster care has established the foundations.

The uniqueness of the Egyptian family foster care system

is that it includes health care services and social care services. In some countries, such as the United Kingdom (U.K.), the arranged social care for abandoned babies includes a small amount health care. Health care services for abandoned babies, such as the Childhood and Motherhood Care Center are unique, because these centers are dedicated to the welfare of abandoned babies (Abdel Mageed, 2004, 2005). The abandoned babies have to remain in this center for up to two years. They receive welfare services such as clothing, milk, periodical medical examinations and a medical card. These services are delivered by a team of professionals which includes a qualified social worker

Concerning social care services, Egyptian family foster care policy has set up two guidelines which are practiced to encourage reunification between abandoned children and their biological families. The first guideline is to record the circumstances of the abandonment. The Egyptian personal Affairs Law no. 11 (1965) states that an abandoned child must have a general population birth certificate, and that the child's particulars should be registered as follows: (1) date of birth (the day the baby was found); (2) place of birth (the location where the baby was found); (3) age (estimated by a pediatrician); (4) gender; (5) name and address of the individual who found the baby; and (6) name given to the baby by the police department.

The law also states that the exact details of the abandoned baby should be recorded in a special file which includes a baby photograph, birth certificate, full description of the baby (including fingerprints and any marks on the baby), what the baby was wearing when found, any objects found with the baby, the baby's condition and mood (i.e. warm, cold, crying, asleep), and appearance (clean, dirty, etc.). This information has been used to help abandoned children to search for, contact and be reunited with their biological families (Kellanay, 2001). These procedures are emphasized by English researchers (Winter & Cohen, 2005).

The second guideline of the law stresses the importance of the reunification process as a requirement for use in the recruiting of potential foster families. In the Egyptian Children Act of 1996, article 87, term 10 states:



The prospective foster family should promise to keep [the child safe from] all contact and not reunite the child even for a short period of time to their biological parents if they know them or [unite the child with] any other person except through the Family and Childhood Administration.

According to term 11:

The prospective foster family should...cooperate with the Family and Childhood Administration in planning for the child[']s interest; including the return [of] them to their biological family or moving them to a new foster family or a child care home.

This unique aspect of Egyptian family foster care could be transported to other countries. In England and Wales, adopted children have rights of access to their original birth certificates and adoption contact registers have been established by law; abandoned adopted children have no such rights. Official help is available to adopted children in attempting to establish the identities of their biological families; the same official help is not available to abandoned adopted children. There are always abandoned children who are unable to know their parents (O'Donovan, 2000). Fifty-eight babies were abandoned from 1990 to 1997. Of those, there was only one case of reunification with a biological family (Towers, 2006).

In the situation of abandonment, infant identity rights are not mentioned and identity rights are overlooked. Further, these children are unable to know their real circumstances and to search, contact and reunite with their biological families when they grow up. More importantly, there has only been one study concerning searching, contacting and reunifying abandoned children with their biological families. This study shared some useful pointers about searching and reunifying abandoned children with their biological families, and further stated that, "...as the last English adoption bill of 2001 has overlooked such issues of abandoned children, there is an urgent need to explore such issues" (Winter & Cohen, 2005).

Twenty-five years ago there was no statutory right of access

to birth records. That right was introduced by the English Children Act 1976. While the adoption contact register has been a good idea for normal adopted children, it has been less useful for the ever-increasing number of abandoned children. Therefore, there is a need to do far more for abandoned children and their families. There should be an official Abandoned Contact Register, operated like the Adoption Contact Register but using the known facts of abandonment as linking information to make a match between abandoned children and their biological families (Mullender, Pavlovic, & Staples, 2005).

In the U.S., while there are many legal efforts to deal with infant abandonment, so far there is no child welfare effort regarding the identity rights of abandoned children, their knowledge of their real circumstances, and aid with searching for, contacting and reunifying with their biological families when they grow up. In early 2000, Infant Safe Haven Laws were enacted across the U.S. to decriminalize abandonment of newborns in response to much-publicized discoveries of dead and abandoned infants (Sanger, 2006; Cesario, 2003). Sanger (2006) has analyzed the enactment of Safe Haven Laws. She suggests that these laws have been succeeding. Although enactment of these laws is widespread, no efforts toward abandoned children's identity rights are found. Therefore, it is hoped that this paper will stimulate child welfare practitioners, researchers and policy makers to start thinking about the rights of abandoned babies and that it will further inspire research ideas to promote ongoing growth in this field.

## Method

The data for this study were collected from foster children's and foster parents' case files during the first phase of the larger research project. This larger research project was concerned primarily with using qualitative and quantitative research methods to explore the stressful fostering experiences of Egyptian foster families, including parenting stress and the emotional and behavioral problems of their foster children. The findings reported here provide basic information about the profile of foster children and foster caregivers in the Cairo Region. The files of 78 Egyptian foster children

and 78 foster caregivers in five different Family and Childhood Administrations in the Cairo Region were examined.

Data were collected between January 5 and March 5, 2005. This incorporated two types of information: first, data about foster children, such as gender, the age of abandonment and admission to the Childhood and Motherhood Care Center (CMC), length of stay in the Childhood and Motherhood Care Center, child care home, or foster family, the foster child's current age and education. Second, data were gathered about the foster family, such as the present age of foster caregivers, their educational qualifications, their motivation, their occupation and monthly income, and the number of bedrooms in their homes.

The larger research project was focused on foster families and their foster children in Family and Childhood Administrations in Cairo, because the majority of foster children and foster families are located in two main regions, Cairo and Alexandria. These areas contain 50 % of all foster families and foster children in the country (Arab Republic of Egypt, 1997).

Five Family and Childhood Administrations were selected out of thirty across Cairo. Each selected area contributes in a different way to the understanding of the profile of foster families and foster children (from below average to the highest socio-economic educational level of foster families). An effort was made to ensure that the five Family and Childhood Administrations are representative of the social demographics of the foster families population (N=776) in the Cairo Region. This study used procedures that were used by Rowe and Lambert (1973) for selecting research areas. This research has been considered a classic of foster care research, as they had significant research experience in the field of child welfare, especially foster care (Rowe, Hundleby, & Garnett, 1989; Rowe, Cain, Hundleby, & Keane, 1984).

The decision as to which areas should be involved was left to the directors of the Family and Childhood Department in Cairo and their staff, because this seemed the only practical method in these circumstances. Their choices were influenced not only by the need to obtain the right number of foster children and foster caregivers, but also by the more personal

problems of staffing, the physical movement of area teams into new offices, the probable interest of the staff and their willingness to take part. It is likely that this bias favored the best-organized areas and those with a high proportion of social workers in senior positions, since they were the ones most likely to be interested. On the other hand, some areas may have been selected because it was known that they had a sufficient number of children aged 5 to 15 years (Rowe and Lambert, 1973). It was agreed from the outset that the names of the participating administrations and their children would not be given to anyone except the researcher so as to ensure confidentiality.

The five participating Family and Childhood Administrations represented different socio-economic and educational levels of the general population. One represented a below-average sector, one was average, two served above-average clients, and one drew from the highest sector. Foster children whose foster families were involved in disciplinary proceedings, who had been in care less than four years, who were younger than 5 or older than 15, or who had siblings in foster care were all excluded from the study.

After applying the previous criteria on the five Family and Childhood Administrations, 86 foster children were identified. Eight children were further excluded: two were older than 15 years; in one case it was deemed that there would be communication difficulties that were too severe for the researcher to overcome without assistance; four children had stayed less than four years in foster families; and one child had a sibling being fostered. Therefore, the total sample was 78 foster families, 78 foster children and 11 social workers. The Family and Childhood Administrations had between 6 and 20 families with one child each and two to five social workers.

## Results

The characteristics of Egyptian foster children included demographic and fostering aspects. They involved the foster child's gender, current age, and type of school. Fostering features were comprised of age of abandonment and admission to

the Childhood and Motherhood Care Center, length of stay in the Childhood and Motherhood Care Center, length of stay in a child care home, and length of stay in the foster family.

Of the 78 foster children in this study, 53 (68%) were female. Most abandoned children (64, or 82%) were taken into the Childhood and Motherhood Care Center (CMC) within a week of their birth. Five (6%) were placed within the first year, another 5 (6%) in their second year, and only 2 (3%) beyond the second year.

Table 1. Length of stay for abandoned babies in the Childhood and Motherhood Care Center

Length of Stay	N	%
<6 months	26	33
7 - 11 months	23	30
12-24 months	28	36
Missing	1	1
Total	78	100.0

Table 2. Length of stay for abandoned children in a child care home

Length of Stay	N	%
> 11 months	3	4
12-24 months	7	9
25-36 months	2	3
Fostered from CMC	65	83
Missing	1	1
Total	78	100.0

Table 1 illustrates that length of stay for abandoned babies in the Childhood and Motherhood Care Center was fairly evenly distributed. Table 2 shows that length of stay (LOS) for abandoned children in a child care home was short. While the majority of the sample (83%) was fostered from CMC, only 16% of foster children were fostered from a child care home. The longest stay for abandoned children (3%) in the child care home was between 25 and 36 months. The shortest stay (4%)

was less than 11 months.

All children in the sample stayed in foster care at least four years. The most common length of stay was 6 to 7 years (30%). Another 21 children (27%) stayed less than six years. Eighteen (23%) were cared for 8 to 9 years, six (8%) stayed 10-11 years, and ten (13%) were in care 12 to 15 years.

Foster children represented a wide range of childhood ages. Less than one quarter of foster children (21%) were in the 5 to 7 year age group. About half (51%) ranged from 8 to 11 years. Less than a third (29%) were 12 to 15 years old.

Table 3. Foster Children's Types of School

Type of School	N	%
Secondary School	1	1
Industrial School	1	1
Extreme Disable	1	1
Commercial School	3	4
Pre-nursery	4	5
Nursery	6	8
Preparatory School	6	8
Primary School	56	72
Total	78	100.0

Table 3 shows the types of school that foster children have joined. As can be seen, the main type of school was primary. A small minority (5%) were ready for school, and a few (8%) attended a nursery. A similar number were in preparatory school (this is an uncompleted educational stage and spans for three years after primary school). Another small minority of them (4%) joined commercial schools (this is a final educational stage after preparatory school and takes three years to finish). A tiny minority of them (1%) joined secondary schools (a pre-university educational stage of three years offering general, non-vocational subjects) or industrial schools (also three years, parallel to secondary schools). Only one foster child did not join schools due to extreme physical and mental disability.

Foster family characteristics included demographics, fostering, and children's well-being aspects. Demographic

features were the foster parent's ages and the foster mother's educational qualifications. The only fostering feature was motivation to be a foster family. The three aspects of children's well-being were foster parent occupation, foster family's monthly income, and number of bedrooms in the foster home. These characteristics are highlighted in the tables that follow.

Foster families in this research have become foster parents for three main reasons which are commonly expressed as "substitute child," "pleasing God," and "filling the nest." Substitute child means that the potential foster family has biological children who have died or have grown up and become independent. These parents want to continue offering children love and security. Pleasing God means there are religious reasons for fostering—altruism and philanthropy. Filling the nest means that foster families have space in their homes which motivates them to look after an abandoned child. In the current research, the most common of motive for fostering was the desire to look after a substitute child. For a minority of foster families (18%), pleasing God was a primary reason for fostering. Only one family expressed filling the nest as their motivation.

Table 4. Ages of Foster Parents

	Foster Mother's Age		Foster Father's Age	
	N	%	N	%
Deceased	1	1	7	9
Divorced	-	-	1	1
26 - 31 yrs	2	3	-	-
32 - 37 yrs	12	15	3	4
38 - 43 yrs	21	27	7	9
44 - 49 yrs	17	22	26	33
50 - 55 yrs	12	15	19	24
56 - 61 yrs	8	10	10	13
62 - 65 yrs	5	6	-	-
62 - 71 yrs	-	-	4	5
Missing	-	-	1	1
Total	78	100	78	100

One of the first demographic features is foster parent ages. Table four shows that a great number of foster parents have reached Shakespeare's fifth stage of aging (Shakespeare,

1599).

In terms of education, foster mothers in the sample were comparatively well-educated. Only a small minority of them (6%) was illiterate. Almost one third (32%) had a Bachelor's degree. More than one quarter (28%) had obtained a diploma in a particular field (there are four forms of diploma: commercial, industrial, agricultural, and nursing, which are achieved after three years studying in preparatory school). A minority of foster mothers (5%) gained a certificate in a particular field (this is two years studying in the same field after earning one's diploma). About one quarter of foster mothers (24%) could read and write. A small minority of them (1%) achieved a Ph.D. degree.

Table five shows that a slight majority of foster mothers were employed outside the home, and slightly less than a half (47%) were housewives. In Table six, we see that more than half of foster fathers (58%) are administrators, engineers, and army or police officers; the others have taken up unique positions.

Table 5. Foster Mother's Occupation

Occupation	N	%
Nurse	1	1
Accountant	1	1
General Practitioner of Medicine	1	1
Social Worker	1	1
Head of Department in the University	1	1
Pharmacist	2	3
Manager	2	3
Teacher in Preparatory School	4	5
Administrative Employee	20	26
Housewife	37	47
Missing	8	10
Total	78	100

A great number of foster families in this study had low monthly income. For a vast majority of foster families (76%), their monthly income ranged from £ 30 to £ 249. A minority of foster families' monthly income ranged from £ 250 to £ 499 (12%) and £ 500 to £ 1000 (1%).



Table 6. Foster Father's Occupation

Occupation	N	%
Accountant	1	1
Salesman	1	1
Manager	1	1
Medical Analyst	1	1
Builder	1	1
Lawyer	1	1
Pharmacist	1	1
Veterinarian	1	1
General Practitioner of Medicine	1	1
Chef	2	3
Restaurant Owner	2	3
Merchant	2	3
Driver	2	3
Teacher	2	3
Free Trading and Business	5	6
Engineer	7	9
Military or Police Officer	8	10
Retired	9	12
Administrative Employee	21	27
Missing	9	12
Total	78	100

The majority of foster families (65%) had two bedrooms in their homes. About one quarter of them (23%) had three bedrooms. A small minority of them (5%) had more than three bedrooms, and a minority of them (6%) had only one bedroom in their homes.

## Discussion

There have been significant changes in the profiles of Egyptian foster children which differ from previous research. In previous research, the proportion of male and female foster children were almost equal—48% males and 52% females (Mustafa & Eywais, 1980). There are many reasons for Egyptian families to voluntarily abandon their babies at birth

(Sujimon, 2002; Diop-Sidibe, Campbell, & Becker, 2006). There are four main reasons for child abandonment. First, parents may abandon a child out of lack of concern for, or interest in the child. They may be unwilling to maintain the child because of its physical condition or ancestry (Boswell, 1988).

Second, parents may abandon a child if they are unable to provide for it and hope that someone of greater means or higher standing might find the child and bring him or her up in better circumstances (Boswell, 1988). In developing countries, including Egypt, child abandonment is a phenomenon whose context is related to the coping strategies fashioned by poor people. The abandonment of children allows the rest of the family to survive. Biological families in despair abandon their biological children, while other families rescue them, offering a life with care due to the kindness of strangers (Georgopoulou, 2002).

Third, a mother may abandon an out-of-wedlock child to avoid the shame on herself and her family (Sujimon, 2002). Finally, unwanted pregnancy may be a consequence of domestic violence (Diop-Sidibe, Campbell, & Becker, 2006). About one third of Egyptian rural women (34%) have been beaten by their current husbands. Beaten women are more frequently reluctant to ask their husband's permission to go to the clinic to get a contraceptive method. Moreover, they are less likely to have post-natal care for their most recent babies (Diop-Sidibe, Campbell, & Becker, 2006).

Further, it is perfectly normal for children to separate from their families at an early age and care for themselves with only occasional visits home. This separation of children from their biological families may be for shorter, longer, or permanent periods. They often operate within a family-based order that allows them to contribute to their families and siblings (Ransel, 2002).

Children fostered from a CMC are now greater in number than children fostered by the previous wet nurse system. In previous research, 53% of abandoned children were fostered by wet nurses (Mustafa & Eywais, 1980). In the current research, 83% of foster children were fostered by a CMC. Alternatively, they were fostered by other agencies, such as hospitals. The creation of CMCs as medical centers dedicated to care for these

abandoned babies has attracted prospective foster families.

Currently, abandoned babies are fostered at an earlier age than in the past, because infants and very young people have ideally been considered more adaptable (Kemp & Bodonyi, 2000). Fostering young children is easier than fostering older children (Wilson, Sinclair & Gibbs, 2000), because young children adjust more easily than older children. Due to successful recruitment efforts, the number of foster placements of abandoned children at early ages has increased (Arab Republic of Egypt, 1997). Foster care committees also feared that some families who fostered older children may want to use these abandoned children as maids (El Noshokaty, 2002).

Although more children enter CMCs, the length of stay for abandoned children with wet nurses was longer than their length of stays in CMCs. Of those fostered by a wet nurse, less than a quarter of them (13%) remained from 10 to 20 months. One third of abandoned children (34 %) stayed with a wet nurse for between 20 to 30 months. Less than a quarter of them (13%) remained from 36 to 40 months and 4% of them stayed more than 8 years (100 months) [Mustafa & Eywais, 1980]. Of those fostered by a CMC, 33% stayed less than 6 months, 30% remained from 7 to 11 months and 36% of them stayed from one to two years. This is because there was no time limit for a wet nurse to transfer an abandoned child to a foster family or to a child care home, while there is a two-year time limit for CMC stays.

The current age of foster children tends to be younger and the length of stay in their foster families tend to be shorter than in previous research. In previous research, 24% of foster children ranged in age from 6 to 11, 18% of them ranged from 12 to 15, and 50% from 16 to 20. Five percent of them ranged from 22 to 27 (Mustafa & Eywais, 1980). Currently, the age of foster children has become younger, because abandoned babies are currently placed in foster families earlier, due to cancellation of the wet nurse system and the emerging CMC. Additionally, the majority of prospective foster families (83%) tend to foster very young babies under two years old. Further, foster children's cases are closed when the foster child reaches 18, or 21 years old for those who are still in school. In the Act of 1968, there was no final and limited closing for foster child cases.

Concerning the length of stay in foster families, the previous research stated that about 57% of children stayed in a foster family between 11 to 16 years and 2% of cases stayed less than 10 months (Mustafa & Eywais, 1980). The average length of placement was 17 years (Abedel Mageed, 1990).

The educational situation of foster children has improved from the previous research. In the previous research, 27% of them could only read and write, 41% of foster children were in primary and preparatory schools, and 22% of them had a diploma. Three percent of them were in university and 5% were above the diploma level (Mustafa, & Eywais, 1980). In the current research, most foster children (72%) have entered primary school. A minority of them (8%) are in preparatory school. This improved educational situation for foster children may be due to better-educated foster mothers, the specific motive of seeking a substitute child for fostering, the occupations of foster fathers and mothers, the adequate number of social workers and other professionals, and the smaller case-loads of social workers.

There are key changes in the profile of the Egyptian foster family that differ from the previous research. The age of both foster mothers and foster fathers is now lower. In the previous research, 36% of foster mothers were between 40 and 49 years old and 40% of them were between 50 and 59. The average age of foster mother was 43 (Abdel Mageed, 1990). Currently, 49% of foster mothers are between 38 and 49 years old and 25% of them are between 50 and 61. Regarding the current age of foster fathers in the previous research, less than half of foster fathers (43%) were between 40 and 56 years of age; a minority of foster fathers (16%) were between 61 and 69 years (Mustafa & Eywes, 1980). Currently a great majority of foster fathers (83%), range from 32 to 61 years old. This may be a more appropriate age for foster parents looking after abandoned children.

The educational qualifications of foster mothers have also changed. In the previous research, the majority of foster mothers (71%) were illiterate, while a minority of them (22%) could read and write (Mustafa & Eywes, 1980). In another study, 70% were illiterate while 26% could read and write. Very few (4%) of them had primary school certificate (Abdel Mageed, 1990). Presently, about one quarter of foster mothers (24%)

can read and write. Almost one third (32%) have Bachelor's degrees. More than one quarter of them (28%) have obtained a diploma in a particular field. This is the result of changes in foster parent recruitment (El Noshokaty, 2002).

Motives for fostering have changed somewhat. In previous research, the motive of one third of foster families (30%) was the desire to care for a substitute child. Twenty four percent of cases wanted to please God (Team of Social Workers, 1965). Another study found 37% of foster families wanted to look after a substitute child, 24% wanted to please God, and 16% were motivated by financial rewards (Mustafa & Eywais, 1980). Currently a majority of foster families (81%) want a substitute child and eighteen percent want to please God.

Experience has shown that foster families whose motive for fostering was to look after a substitute child have cared for foster children better than other foster families. They have adequate time and energy to look after these children. Consequently, family foster care practitioners have preferred to recruit a large number of foster families with this motive (Sadden, 1980; Salem, 1987; Michael, 1990; Abdel Mageed, 1990).

The number of foster families whose motive was to please God has been decreasing. This motive is common among older people, and social workers prefer not to recruit them. It was discovered that grandmothers raising their grandchildren are likely to get depressed or feel stressed and have less satisfaction in parenting (Rodgers-Farmer, 1999; Kelley, 1993; Daly, 2000).

Foster mothers have more varied employment now. In previous research, about 85% of foster mothers were housewives. Presently, less than a half of foster mothers (47%) are housewives and 43% are employed in various jobs. This change is due to the increased educational qualifications of foster mothers. Further, when women work, husbands may share the parenting responsibility. Sharing parental responsibility may in return give foster children a fruitful and relevant experience.

Foster families have more bedrooms in their homes than before. In the previous research, 74% had two bedrooms and 21% had one (Mustafa & Eywais, 1980). Currently the majority of foster families (65%) have two bedrooms and about one

quarter of them (23%) have three. A minority of them (6%) had only one bedroom. A small minority of them (5%) have more than three bed rooms.

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# Potential Impact of EITC Adjustments on Financial Self-Sufficiency among Low-Income Families: A Simulation Model

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*Policies that help low-income mothers find and keep employment as a means of obtaining self-sufficiency have been a focal point of the welfare reform debate in the past decade. In the midst of this dialogue, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) has gained popularity as one of the core work support programs for America's low- and moderately low-income families with children. This study compares the estimated effects of EITC when its value deteriorated in the late 1990s with that of a simulated EITC for which the real value kept pace with the actual cost of living on welfare caseload reductions. Results indicate that the simulated EITC model showed a significantly greater impact on promoting financial self-sufficiency among low-income families. Policy and practice implications for strengthening the purchasing power of the EITC conclude this article.*

*Key words: Earned Income Tax Credit, cost-of-living, low-income working families, families with children, financial self-sufficiency*

Over the past decade the focus of welfare policies has shifted from providing a social safety net to providing conditional and transitional support to families with children

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headed by single mothers. This shift in focus started gradually in the 1980s when the federal government began waiving some program requirements governing Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), thus allowing states to run their own welfare programs to reduce burgeoning welfare caseloads. This change process swiftly overhauled the welfare system in the U.S. in the 1990s when former president Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) into law in 1996. PRWORA replaced AFDC with Temporary Aid to Needy families (TANF), a policy that discontinued entitlement programs to poor families, and capped funding at the 1994 level of state spending on financial assistance for eligible residents of those states.

In response to both the growing number of single mothers receiving AFDC benefits and to the heightening negative sentiment of the public toward public assistance, states implemented a new set of welfare rules whose primary goal was to increase the participation of those on welfare in the workforce through work incentives. Between 1994 and 2000 new and stricter welfare eligibility and program rules were implemented. At the core of the overall work support package is the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a cash benefit paid to low-income working families through the tax system. Low-income families with positive labor earnings are eligible for the EITC, a refundable tax credit. Previous research shows that the federal EITC, along with other work-enforcing policies, significantly reduced welfare caseloads during the years following its widespread expansion in the 1990s (Lim, 2008, 2006). However, the real value of the federal EITC for low-income working families has actually deteriorated since 1998 and through 2000, the period of observation for this current study. This current research extends the primary author's (2008) previous work, which estimated the effect of the fully phased-in federal EITC and state supplemental EITCs on welfare caseload reductions between 1994 and 2000. That investigation controlled for the influence of AFDC waivers and TANF implementation; macro-economic, demographic and political factors; and other state-specific and time-specific unobservables. Using the same data set, this current study estimates the effects of EITC on welfare caseload reductions for the time period during which its value

actually deteriorated (after 1997) between 1998 and 2000. These latter estimated effects are then compared to the effects of a simulated EITC for the same three years, using a hypothetical model that retains the real value of the EITC by keeping pace with the actual cost of living. The purpose of this present study is to provide empirical evidence for policymakers who are in a position to annually modify and adjust the federal EITC to ensure that it viably subsidizes the income of the working poor while simultaneously retaining their participation in the labor force.

## Review of Literature

### *The Federal EITC: Definition and History*

The federal EITC provides a cash benefit to low-income working families through the tax system. To receive the EITC benefit, a family must have positive labor earnings and total income less than a specified threshold, and they must file for the credit. The size of the credit depends on the number of children in the family. The family receives a refund if the tax credit exceeds the tax the family would otherwise owe.

The EITC schedule consisted of three ranges in 2000. If a family had no earnings from labor, then it received no credit. In the phase-in range, the EITC acted as a wage subsidy; that is, as the family's earnings increased, the credit amount also increased. In the stationary or plateau range, the family received a maximum credit amount, regardless of earnings. In the phase-out range, the EITC performed similarly to a negative income tax as the family earnings continued to increase. Then, finally, if the family earnings exceeded the specified ceiling, the family received no credit.

The EITC was first enacted in 1975 as a means of offsetting the tax burden to low-wage taxpayers with children, by providing these taxpayers with relief from the Social Security payroll tax (Hoffman & Seidman, 1990; Scholz, 1993) and enhancing incentives to work (Childman, 1995). When enacted in 1975, the EITC parameter was 10% of the first \$4,000 of earned income and was phased out at a rate of 10 cents per dollar of earnings or Adjusted Gross Income (U.S. House of Representatives, 1996). Over time, changes in legislation have

adjusted the income range affecting EITC eligibility and maximum credit amounts. With the Tax Reform Act (TRA) of 1986, the EITC became an integral component of national anti-poverty efforts. With the passage of the TRA, the dollar amount of the EITC was indexed for inflation (U.S. House of Representatives, 1996), and, as a result, nearly offset all of the erosion that occurred between 1975 and 1984. It is important to note that the actual value of the EITC's maximum credit, in real terms, had eroded by 35% (Steuerle & Wilson, 1987). By adjusting the EITC, the 1986 TRA eliminated the tax burden for more than six million impoverished Americans who were facing deteriorating wages and continued poverty (Conlan, Wrightson, & Beam, 1988).

#### *EITC Expansions in the 1990s*

The TRA of 1986 restored the original value of the EITC, subsequently reducing the tax burden on low-income families. However, a more substantial expansion of the credit was implemented with the passage of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1990 and 1993. OBRA 1990 substantially increased the maximum credit and also began differentiating between families with only one child and families with two or more. The Clinton administration placed the EITC at the center of its plan to make work a more attractive alternative than welfare, and additional changes were enacted in 1993. The 1993 bill extended the credit to childless, low-income working adults (Ventry, 2000), although the credit amount was minimal. The rate remained constant for seven consecutive years (U.S. House of Representatives, 2000). In 1996, when OBRA was fully phased in, taxpayers with two or more qualifying children could claim a credit of 40% of their earnings up to \$8,890, resulting in a maximum credit of \$3,356. This maximum credit amount was available to those with earnings between \$8,890 and \$11,610. The credit benefit began to phase out at a rate of 21.06% of earnings above \$11,610. The credit was incrementally and ultimately phased out when earnings reached \$28,495 (U.S. House of Representatives). Thus, between 1984 and 1996 the total annual EITC amount in nominal dollars received by low-income families with children increased tenfold (U.S. House of Representatives). By 1996, the

EITC had become the largest means-tested transfer program for low-income working families with children (Phillips, 2001). Total EITC spending per family alone (\$31,900) in 1999 exceeded the combined amounts spent on TANF (\$13,449) and food stamps (\$15,766). [See Scholz and Levine (2002) for complete data.]

Expansion of the EITC program not only substantially offset the costs of Social Security taxes, but also offered an alternative approach to families living in poverty which demonstrated a commitment to participation in the labor market. As Scholz (1993) aptly observed, the fact that the EITC program has successfully provided income supplements to poor families without undermining work incentives undeniably justifies retaining EITCs in the anti-poverty legislation tool kit. What distinguishes the EITC from traditional welfare programs is that a person is expected to work in order to be eligible for the credit. It should be noted, however, that the EITC program is similar to other welfare programs in several ways. First and foremost, it is a means-tested program that seeks to change the work behaviors of potential or current recipients of the benefit (from underemployment or unemployment to gainful employment). Families may become ineligible for the credit as they steadily work and increase their earnings, well before they are financially self-sufficient. Further, families may resent being taxed (while the government is making a payment) on their additional earnings in the phase-out range due to its relatively higher marginal tax rate, which results in increasing net gain at a decreasing rate when compared with the rates by which net gains increase for families during the EITC phase-in period. Nevertheless, unlike previous welfare programs, the EITC unequivocally promotes employment for three reasons: (a) the credit increases with the workers' earnings during the phase-in period; (b) the credit rate decreases much less rapidly than typical welfare benefits during the phase-out period; and (c) the income level at phase out is much higher than that of TANF.

#### *Previous EITC Research*

A large body of literature describes the EITC (Dickert-Colin, Fitzpatrick, & Hanson, 2005; Phillips, 2001), and

describes its impact on various employment and income outcomes among single mothers (Blank, Card, & Robbins, 1999; Ellwood, 2000; Eissa & Liebman, 1996; Meyer & Rosenbaum, 2001), changes in welfare caseloads (Acs, Phillips, & Nelson, 2003; Council of Economic Advisors [CEA], 1999; Fender, McKernan, & Bernstein, 2002; Grogger, 2003), and poverty in households with children (e.g., Blank, 2002; Caputo, 2006; Johnson, Llobrera, & Zahradnik, 2003).

Researchers who have conducted welfare caseload studies using theoretical modeling (Acs et al., 2003; Fender et al., 2002) and quantitative empirical methods (Blank, 2002; CEA, 1999; Grogger, 2003; Ziliak, Figlio, Davis, & Connelly, 2000) have identified several factors that historically have contributed to welfare caseload reductions, such as lengthy and robust economic expansion, welfare policy changes, and other work-support programs, among which the EITC consistently emerges as a significant explanatory predictor. Results are consistent across the above-mentioned studies, regardless of the type of data used (i.e., micro data, administrative data, pre- and post-1996 data, and yearly and monthly data). However, because concepts were inconsistently operationalized in this body of research, estimates of the relative importance of factors used in the different models vary considerably across studies. Nevertheless, as a whole, studies show that the EITC has increased employment among families headed by single mothers (Meyer & Rosenbaum, 2001) and that it reduces poverty by providing work incentives to low-income families headed by single mothers with children, the population historically most prone to welfare dependency (Blank, 2002; Eissa & Liebman, 1996). In fact, single women with children are the largest group of workers eligible for the EITC, and families headed by single mothers comprise nearly 50% of the EITC-eligible population. It is estimated that three fourths of those eligible have participated in the EITC program during the 1990s (Dickert-Conlin et al., 2005).

According to Blank (2002), the sharpest increase in employment during the mid-1990s was found among lower-skilled single mothers with young children. Further, Meyer and Rosenbaum (2001) estimated that federal EITC expansions alone explained an approximate 60% increase in

employment during the 12-year time period between 1984 and 1996. Grogger (2003) similarly found that EITC expansions during the 1990s were the single most important policy change that contributed to reductions in welfare use via increased employment and earnings among single mothers. However, Grogger (2003) may have overestimated the true effects of the EITC on welfare use because he neither considered the circumstances of those who remained ineligible for welfare benefits nor controlled for other influential work-related welfare and non-welfare policies.

Despite substantial theoretical and empirical evidence that the EITC is significantly linked to increased employment and income, there is no current research that examines the largest and most recent expansions of the EITC program on welfare caseload reduction. Further, no study has examined how the continued erosion of this credit between 1998 and 2000 has impacted poor, working families. For example, the maximum EITC credit was \$3,756 in 1998, but decreased to \$3,734 (in 1998 dollars) in 1999 and then further decreased to \$3,680 (in 1998 dollars) in 2000. This current study estimates the impact of recent expansions of the EITC program on welfare caseload reductions and then compares these latter estimates with those of a simulated model in which the EITC is hypothetically and fully indexed to the cost of living for the years 1998, 1999, and 2000.

## Method

### *Conceptual Framework*

This study, which extends the primary author's (2006) previous research, employs a pooled time-series, fixed-effects model with welfare caseloads serving as the dependent variable. Federal and state EITCs, welfare policy, and demographic, economic, and political variables comprise the independent variables. Consistent with the author's previous work, the model for this current study uses the following natural logarithm form by:

$$\ln y_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 * EITC_{it} + \beta_2 * X_{it} + \delta_t + \eta_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}.$$



The dependent variable is  $y_{it}$ , which is welfare caseloads measured for state  $i$  in year  $t$ . The intercept  $\alpha$  is the individual state effect, which is taken to be constant over time. EITC is the Earned Income Tax Credit variable;  $\chi$  is a vector of other explanatory variables (e.g., demographic, economic, welfare, and political variables);  $\delta_t$  is time effect (constant across states);  $\eta_{it}$  is the state-specific time trends (the interaction of state dummies and the linear time trend variables);  $\beta$  is a vector of coefficients; and  $\varepsilon_{it}$  is the cross-section, time-series error component, which represents the effects of omitted variables specific to the state in a given time period.

Welfare caseload data were compiled from 50 states and the District of Columbia. Thus, 51 panels of annual, aggregate-level data, for the seven-year time period from 1994 through 2000 were available for analysis. (See Lim [2008] for a fuller description of data sources and variables.) Mathematical computations rather than statistical procedures were performed to calculate the subsidy rate for the years during which real value of the EITC deteriorated (1998, 1999, and 2000).

### *EITC Simulation Measures*

A basic model (Model A) is adapted from the primary author's (2008) research to this current EITC simulation study. The dependent variable, AFDC and TANF aggregate caseload data by state in each year, was defined as the natural log of the ratio of the number of recipients to the number of females between the ages of 15 and 44. The independent variables include the federal EITC and state EITCs, welfare policy changes, unemployment, political environment, and educational attainment. The EITC phase-in subsidy rate is a key parameter of the federal EITC used and state EITC is coded as a dummy variable for each year in the state in which it is implemented. Welfare policy changes during two distinct time periods were dummy coded in each state for the year observed: one to capture the period during which any major waiver was in effect and one to capture the period during which TANF was in effect. AFDC and TANF maximum monthly benefits for a family of three for each state and year are defined in the natural log form. The unemployment rate is used to measure the effect of macroeconomic performance on welfare caseloads. Three political

variables that capture the effect of political influences on welfare caseloads are measured as dummy variables (Blank, 2001) and are entered and tested simultaneously. If the governor of a state was a Democrat, if the majority of both state Houses and Senates was Republican, and if the majority of both state Houses and Senates was Democrat, a 1 was assigned to each condition, respectively. Educational attainment is measured as the proportion of people over 25 years of age who completed high school.

In sum, this study builds upon the primary author's (2008) previous research that used administrative data for the years 1994 through 2000. This current study incorporates a simulated model to compare the eroded phase-in rate (in real dollar terms) of the EITC on welfare caseload reduction with a phase-in rate that is hypothetically indexed to the cost of living for the years 1998, 1999, and 2000. The present study hypothetically indexes the EITC phase-in rate to the cost of living while controlling for (a) maximum monthly benefits; (b) the minimum wage; (c) economic, political, and educational factors; (d) AFDC waivers; and (e) TANF implementation.

## Results

### *Mathematical Computations of the EITC Subsidy Rate*

The EITC subsidy rate for families with multiple children has increased to 40% of the family's earned income since 1996, and, in nominal dollars, a family with multiple children could receive the EITC maximum credit of \$3,556 in 1996. However, the EITC maximum credit amount a family with two or more children could receive in 1996 was \$3,694 (in 1998 dollars). This maximum credit actually increased to \$3,756 in 1998, but decreased to \$3,734 (in 1998 dollars) in 1999. This credit amount further decreased to \$3,680 (in 1998 dollars) in 2000. If the credit level had been kept to at least the 1998 level, the maximum credit in 1999 would have been \$3,839 instead of \$3,816, in nominal dollars. This means that the phase-in subsidy rate of the federal EITC concomitantly should have increased from 40.00% to 40.42% between 1998 and 1999 for families with multiple children. Further, the phase-in rate of the EITC should have increased to 41.56% in 2000 in order to prevent erosion of

Table 1. Comparison of Effects of the EITC and Simulated EITC on the Welfare Caseloads

Variable	Current EITC	Simulated EITC
Federal EITC phase-in rate	-0.012*** (0.001)	-0.016*** (0.001)
Adoption of state EITC	-0.242*** (0.008)	-0.238*** (0.010)
Log (Maximum welfare benefits)	0.185** (0.091)	0.372** (0.165)
Log (Monthly minimum wage)	-2.252*** (0.180)	-2.393*** (0.071)
Unemployment rate	0.136*** (0.006)	0.080*** (0.030)
Republican governor	-0.101*** (0.009)	-0.086*** (0.025)
Both State Senate & House Republican	-0.051*** (0.013)	-0.075*** (0.013)
Both State Senate & House Democrat	0.007 (0.011)	0.024 (0.065)
Percent with high school diploma	-0.017*** (0.002)	-0.008*** (0.002)
Any major AFDC waiver implementation	-0.064 (0.069)	-0.036 (0.068)
TANF implementation	-0.169*** (0.016)	-0.097*** (0.034)
State-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Time-Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
R-Square	0.997	0.997
F-Statistics	8113.95	10510.16

Note. N = 357 (51 states from 1994-2000).

\*p < 0.10. \*\* p < 0.05. \*\*\* p < 0.01.

the real dollars of the EITC maximum credit.

### *Simulated EITC Model*

Table 1, column 2 presents the estimated coefficients of the variables from the simulated model, which was performed to estimate the effect of the EITC phase-in subsidy rate on welfare caseload reductions, assuming that this rate remained constant, rather than deteriorated in real value, at the 1998 benefit level.

As seen in Table 1, the results from the model that includes the simulated EITC phase-in subsidy rate show the larger coefficient of -0.016 in Column 2, as compared to the coefficient -0.012 in Column 1 of the current EITC. This means that a 1% increase in the EITC subsidy rate resulted in a 1.2% decrease in welfare caseloads with the EITC value eroded. This same increase in the EITC subsidy rate (1%) would have resulted in a 1.6% decrease in welfare caseload if the EITC subsidy rate had not eroded and had kept pace with the actual, current cost of living. (Readers interested in a full description of the relative impact of other variables on welfare caseload reduction listed in Table 1 are referred to the primary author's 2008 study.)

## Discussion

This study estimated the impact of the EITC on reduction of welfare caseloads by comparing the estimated effects with those obtained using a simulated model in which the real dollar value of EITC benefits was maintained at the 1998 level, thereby preventing erosion of the benefit due to inflation. Results show that the EITC would have had a larger impact on the decline in welfare caseloads had it kept pace with the cost of living during the years 1998, 1999, and 2000. In the hypothetical model, a 1.0% increase in the EITC subsidy rate was associated with a 1.6% percent decrease in welfare caseload. In more practical terms, the federal EITC would have been instrumental in rendering approximately 722,525 people ineligible for welfare benefits in any given year from 1994 through 2000, holding all other factors constant. This suggests that had the EITC amount been sustained to prevent erosion of its purchasing power, the EITC could have been even more effective in moving a greater number of families toward financial self-sufficiency. It is useful

to note that, in this study, "financial self-sufficiency" is defined as moving off of welfare or leaving public assistance as defined in Caputo's (1997) earlier study.

It is important to note that a limitation of this study is the use of administrative data, which precludes consideration of the circumstances of those who are removed from welfare caseloads and those who remain ineligible for benefits. This piece of information is an important factor when assessing the strength of work support programs, in light of the fact that many families ineligible for welfare benefits continue to receive other means-tested benefits, such as food stamps, Supplemental Security Income, and housing and child care subsidies, whether they are working or not (Besharov, 2006; Danziger & Seefeldt, 2000).

This current study makes an important contribution to knowledge about the EITC and outcomes of welfare reform efforts. This study presents compelling evidence that the EITC supports poor people who are committed to work and to receiving employment earnings. As many states further restrict eligibility for welfare benefits by imposing work requirements and by providing time-limited aid to their most destitute population, the findings of this study underscore the importance of federal- and state-level governmental accountability for strengthening a holistic work support approach that benefits those whose goal is to achieve financial self-sufficiency. This study also emphasizes the importance of continually adjusting EITC amounts to keep pace with the cost of living. Without adjusting for the effects of inflation, the EITC cannot viably provide wage subsidies of sufficient real-dollar value. Indeed, a more generous subsidy rate would increase the proportion of low-income families whose poverty is alleviated as they move toward greater financial self-sufficiency. If the real value of the EITC continues to erode, as it did during the time period between 1975 and 1985, then the EITC will lose its effectiveness as a viable component of the anti-poverty armamentarium. If this trajectory remains unaltered, then the EITC likely will suffer the fate of its welfare policy predecessors, AFDC and TANF. And, of course, the real victims of policy implementation failure are the children living in families whose income needs are never sufficiently met.

Future research should study the effects of changes in subsidy rates in relation to labor behavior using micro data, while controlling for economic and non-economic variables. Changes in family members' work behaviors intuitively would vary according to how EITCs are perceived. In other words, whether prospective EITC users see EITCs as a reward or a penalty depends upon how knowledgeable they are about how EITCs work. From a more practical standpoint, however, their perceptions of any benefit are inextricably linked to their experiences of financial need and their daily challenges with material hardship. For many families who struggle to make ends meet, it may not be realistic for them to forego traditional benefits during the months they need income, even though they intellectually understand the potential benefits of receiving a higher lump-sum payment from the EITC at the beginning of the subsequent calendar year.

More recently, the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 removed the marriage penalty for many couples and their families by increasing beginning and ending amounts of the phase-out ranges for married taxpayers who file a joint return (Seidman & Hoffman, n.d.). However, this policy has little effect on low-income, working families who are absolutely poor and who cycle in and out of the welfare infrastructure, facing temporary but frequent ups and downs. This brings us back to the most critical issue that the EITC is but one complementary program that comprises a holistic network of anti-poverty and family-strengthening social welfare policies and programs. The EITC cannot and should not replace a financial safety net for those who either cannot work or should not be expected to participate in the labor market, including single mothers with few work support resources who are rearing young children. Although married mothers with younger children are not forced into the labor market by societal norms, the same cannot be said of single mothers, whose work and marital choices have been the target of behavioral modification via punitive welfare reforms. A relatively sluggish reduction in child poverty while welfare case-loads plummet and income gaps widen (despite widespread, full-time, employment among single mothers) reflects the need for a far more comprehensive approach to addressing issues

of welfare dependency, child poverty, and work and marital choices among low-income single mothers.

With the devolution of responsibility for social welfare programs from the federal government to the states, it is timely for social workers to begin assisting state and local policymakers with clarifying and carrying out their new responsibilities more effectively. In terms of direct practice, workers employed in social service agencies that provide financial counseling should pay closer attention to the tax-filing histories and self-employment behaviors of their EITC-eligible clients. Such persons should be educated about their eligibility for the EITC. Self-employed clients should be provided with information about the economic advantages of filing for the credit. In order for practitioners to competently assist low-income families, social workers must be educated about EITCs and, when applicable, about how such programs are administered and implemented in their respective states. This is consistent with recommendations for schools of social work to include contemporary policy practice issues in their policy curricula (Rocha & Johnson, 1997), as well as to highlight policy practice approaches that concretely link social work with social policy (Weiss, Gal, & Katan, 2006).

At the present time, few low-income families receive traditional welfare benefits when they are not working. Thus, an appropriate focus for social workers and policymakers is working families in poverty (a) who no longer receive welfare benefits, (b) who have gained financial self-sufficiency, (c) who have not sought benefits (despite their eligibility), and (d) who have never been eligible for welfare benefits (Pear & Eckholm, 2006). However, bolstering EITCs at the federal and state level is not enough. Efforts to enhance the actual benefits of EITCs should go hand in hand with raising the minimum wage, creating more and better paying jobs, and enacting equitable tax and other policies that support families at work and with child-rearing (Clinton, 2006). This study shows that strengthening the EITC is an effective approach for not only supporting single mothers but also for enabling low-wage workers to earn more. This present study of the potential benefits of an adjusted EITC contributes to a growing body of scholarship that argues for the development and testing of progressive and

socially responsible approaches to facilitate real-life, sustainable changes for children in poverty and the working poor.

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# Transforming Caregiving: African American Custodial Grandmothers and the Child Welfare System

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*Growing numbers of African American grandmothers are raising grandchildren under the auspices of the child welfare system; however, little is known about the manner in which child welfare policies and practices impact custodial grandparenting. Based on focus groups with African American grandmothers who are raising grandchildren as formal kinship caregivers, this study explored the ways in which the new formalized relationship between the child welfare system and African American custodial grandmothers is transforming the meanings and practices related to intergenerational caregiving in African American families. Drawing on cultural and historical traditions, grandmothers forge a transformative partnership with child welfare that embodies the inherent tensions in the grandmothers' private-public role as formal kinship caregivers. Implications of an intergenerational approach to child welfare policy and practices are discussed in this paper.*

**Key words:** African American grandmothers, intergenerational caregiving, child welfare policy, kinship care, grandparents as parents

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The persistence of social and economic inequality, shifts in family demography, and family crises (e.g., substance abuse, incarceration, HIV/AIDS) have affected the need for kinship care in African American families in the U.S. This is visible in the steady increase in numbers of African American grandparents, mostly grandmothers, raising grandchildren (Minkler & Fuller-Thomson, 2005). Because of the disproportionate presence of Black children in the U.S. child welfare system (Department of Health & Human Services, 2000) and traditional patterns of kinship care (Roberts, 2002; Stack, 1974), a growing number of African American grandparents are raising grandchildren under the auspices of the child welfare system.

The role of the extended family in providing care and support for members within African American families is well documented (Billingsley, 1992; Dilworth-Anderson, 1992; Hunter & Taylor, 1998; Sudarkasa, 1997). However, little attention has been focused on the implications of greater involvement with the state (via child welfare) on the meanings or practices of intergenerational caregiving among custodial grandparents (Henderson & Cook, 2005; Murphy, 2005). With an interest in the way social policy can impact custodial grandparenting in African American families, this article explores the following: (a) grandmothers' perspective on caregiving within the context of the child welfare system; (b) interpretive practices that inform the grandmothers' perspectives of their emergent "partnership" with the child welfare system and the formalization of kinship care; and (c) how the child welfare system influences the meanings and practices of intergenerational caregiving among grandmothers.

### Child Welfare Policy and the (Re)Shaping of Kinship Care: Implications for African American Families

Sociology, gerontology, and social welfare scholars have turned their attention to the roles, experiences, and needs of grandmothers raising grandchildren as a result of the current pressures facing African American families (Burton, 1992; Gibson, 2002; Henderson & Cook, 2005). What has emerged from this work is a clearer description of custodial grandmothers who are committed to their grandchildren and

intergenerational care, but who are also often overburdened with limited economic resources and in need of formal support services. Thus, the patterns of custodial grandparenting (Burton & Dilworth-Anderson, 1991; Hunter & Taylor, 1998) among African American grandmothers cannot be separated from the influences of social location and the tenuous relationship between African Americans and other social institutions—particularly those institutions that are arms of the state (Collins, 2001).

Federal policy and child welfare practices that encourage the placement of children who are in the legal custody of the state to be in the physical custody of relatives, as opposed to group care or institutions, in many ways complement the culturally-based caregiving strategies of African American families (Hill, 1998; Stack, 1974). However, when rules and policies constructed from an etic perspective enter the intimate space of family life, the inherent power of state-based institutions may infringe upon, shape, or transform the experiences at the individual and family levels (Collins, 2001; Giddens, 1984).

A decade ago, Holstein and Gubrium (1995) engaged the issue of the role of the public sphere in the construction of the family and domestic life and suggested that the family is becoming more deprivatized. They suggested that because of the ways in which organizational contexts are increasingly involved in constructing family meanings, what was once thought of as a private function is increasingly governed by public regulations. Within the last decade, there has been a critical shift in the role the child welfare system plays in placing children in the legal custody of their grandparents. This shift has formalized what traditionally has been the informal practice of intergenerational caregiving (Henderson & Cook, 2005; Hill, 2001; Minkler & Fuller-Thomson, 2005). This shift is fueled by transformations in child welfare policy that include: (a) the development of kinship care as a resource for the foster-care component of the child welfare system (Berrick, 1997); (b) a focus on achieving legally permanent placements for children in the custody of the child welfare system within shorter time frames (Adoption and Safe Families Act [ASFA], 1997); and (c) the linking of federal funds to the achievement of such goals (Department of Health & Human Services, 2000).

These shifts have led to the emergence of child welfare policy that both piggybacks on and regulates kinship caregiving.

The concept of kinship care or relative placement is not new (Hegar & Scannapieco, 1995). However, the role, function, and central position of the child welfare system along with its reliance on aging grandparents have changed over time (Roberts, 2002; Scannapieco & Jackson, 1996). Since the incorporation of the Child-Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974, several ideological shifts in child welfare policy and practice have occurred. These shifts range from a focus on long-term foster care as a plan to efforts focused on preserving families, and, most recently, a focus on adoption and creating permanency for children in the child welfare system's custody. Although these policy shifts were developed with the child rather than grandmother caregivers in mind, they have influenced the ways in which the child welfare system views the role of grandmother caregivers.

In response to children remaining in foster care for extended periods of time, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-272) promoted a shift in thinking about the removal and placement of children. Specifically, this legislation introduced the goals of reasonable efforts to prevent the placement of children out of their homes, permanency planning for children in out-of-home placement, and placement in the least detrimental and restrictive environment for children who warranted out-of-home placement (McGowan & Walsh, 2000). These goals have stimulated the development of kinship care as a resource for the foster-care component of the child-welfare system (Berrick, 1997) that carries rewards and consequences for Black grandmothers. For example, although the formalization of kinship care strengthened the informal safety net of many struggling families by offering limited financial support and services, it increased the state's reliance on African American grandmothers and subsequent intrusion in African American family life (Roberts, 2002).

The increased use of kinship or relative caregiving by the child welfare system was grounded in the view that such arrangements offered benefits in line with PL 96-272. Initially, kinship arrangements were less formal and were thought to keep children that the child welfare system believed

warranted removal from their biological parents in the least restrictive, culturally sensitive family settings to reduce the foster care drift. A focus of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 was to expedite the adoption of children in foster care which has resulted in policies that call for more formalized kinship arrangements. Consequently, ASFA has fostered numerous changes in the child welfare system, especially in the area of foster care with regard to child permanency. One of the most significant changes pertains to the requirement to seriously consider terminating the parental rights of children in the legal custody of the state who are placed in out-of-home care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. The interpretation of ASFA has resulted in policies and practices that present a challenge for many African American grandmothers by confronting them with the dilemma of legally adopting their grandchild or watching him or her be placed outside of the family (Roberts, 2002).

The social welfare system, its policies, practices, and regulations have historically been situated on the permeable boundaries of the public and private spheres. Furthermore, the social welfare system is an important site from which hegemonic interpretations of the family have been re-inscribed for those who are in need of public support (Katz, 1989). Yet, as Holstein and Gubrium (1995) remind us, racial-ethnic and gendered communities, to the extent they represent "socially organized circumstances...[can] supply interpretative options, constraints, and agendas" (p. 899). In this qualitative investigation of African American grandmothers raising grandchildren under the auspices of the child welfare system, we address the following questions:

- 1) How do grandmothers' culturally-based understandings of intergenerational caregiving shape their interpretations of the child welfare system and the formalization of kinship care?
2. In what ways have grandmothers' interactions with the child welfare system shaped or transformed the meanings (or practices) of intergenerational caregiving?



3. What are the sites of contested meanings or fault lines in the emergent caregiving “partnership” between grandmothers and the child welfare system?

### Methods

This study is based on data from a larger project (Murphy, 2005) that explored the meanings among African American grandmothers raising a grandchild within the context of the child welfare system. In accordance with a Black feminist epistemological perspective, which emphasizes the importance of group dialogue in the meaning making process of Black women, we used focus groups to collect data (Collins, 1990). The focus groups represented five counties, in both rural and urban areas across North Carolina, and included 22 African American grandmother kinship caregivers. Criteria for study participation included self-report of being an African American grandmother residing in North Carolina who within the last 5 years had physical custody of at least one grandchild who was in the legal custody of the state. A purposive sampling method was used to maximize within-group variation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As a way to seek out diverse experiences and to consider divergent viewpoints (Drisko, 1997), attention was given to recruit participants from both large and small child welfare systems, and both urban and rural areas from counties in North Carolina that participate in different types of child welfare initiatives to enhance outcomes for children and families. Grandmother study participants received a \$20 cash honorarium in appreciation of their time.

#### *Study Participants*

*Sociodemographic characteristics and caregiving history.* Of the 22 participants, 20 completed the questionnaire. The ages of these 20 participants ranged from 41 to 67 years, with a mean of 54.9 ( $SD = 7.8$ ). The educational level of the grandmothers ranged from completing the 6th grade to completing undergraduate college, with 12 of the grandmothers having less than a high school education. The majority of the grandmothers were unmarried and functioning as single parents, with seven being separated, one divorced, five widowed, and three never

married. Eight of the grandmothers were employed full-time or part-time. Four of the grandmothers were retired. Another eight were unemployed, and of those unemployed, three were seeking employment. Although the majority of grandmothers reported receiving some financial assistance from the Department of Social Services, they consistently reported that the assistance was not sufficient to meet the basic needs of their grandchildren.

The grandmothers reported extensive histories of raising grandchildren. The years ranged from 1 to 27, average being 10.6 ( $SD = 7.2$ ). The number of years the grandmothers spent raising a grandchild who was in the custody of the child welfare system was significantly less, with a range of 1 to 15 years, with an average of 3.5 years ( $SD = 4.1$ ). Of the 20 participants, 19 reported neglect as being the main reason for the child welfare system taking custody of the grandchild. In most cases, substance abuse was identified as the underlying basis for child neglect.

### *Focus Groups*

The questions guiding the focus group discussion were as follows: (a) What were the experiences of grandmothers raising grandchildren who are in the legal custody of the child welfare system? (b) What are the meanings the grandmothers attach to these experiences? (c) What are the perceptions of grandmothers of their role as caretakers of grandchildren? (d) What are the perceptions of grandmothers in how the child welfare practitioners perceive a grandmother's role? (e) What are the perceptions of grandmothers of their commitment to their role? (f) What are the perceptions of grandmothers of the cost and rewards of their role as caretakers? and (g) What are the perceptions of grandmothers in how they view the policies and practices of the child welfare system in impacting their caretaker role—is it stressful or helpful? Participants were also encouraged to describe their experiences or raise any issues they wanted to discuss with us as facilitators of the study. At the end of each focus-group session, a brief self-administered demographic questionnaire was distributed, or read to persons with visual or literacy restrictions. The 90-minute focus groups were audiotaped, and transcribed. The lead author, who has a

Master's degree in Social Work (MSW) and 17 years of practice experience in child welfare, facilitated the focus groups. The facilitator kept memo notes to document group dynamics and insights. A review of the memo notes and transcripts of proceeding groups were used to better inform and restructure the successive focus groups, when necessary.

### *Data Analysis and Qualitative Rigor*

Patricia Hill Collins (1990), in her work *Black Feminist Thought*, argued that Black women have a certain level of wisdom or knowing that differs from the Euro-masculinist conceptualizations of knowledge. That is, those believed to be experts are not necessarily those who possess positions of power, titles, or education, but as Collins (1990) stated, "are those individuals who have lived through the experiences about which they claim to be experts" (p. 257). Using concrete experience as a criterion of meaning speaks to the ways practical images are used as symbolic vehicles that move the wisdom that comes from day-to-day experiences to a much broader, symbolic, theoretical dimension. The Black epistemology framework, in conjunction with a constructivist perspective, and social work values informed the methods and data analytical strategies used.

This study employed both thematic and interpretive analysis. In terms of thematic analysis, three different readers, all with various levels of child welfare related knowledge and experience, read, coded, and deciphered the emergent themes. This required each of the readers to do the following steps: (a) read the transcripts for a general emergence of themes; (b) reread and color code; (c) group or cluster the emergent themes; (d) label the emergent themes; and (e) prepare a narrative summary report. We then compared and contrasted the reading and coding notes, color-coded transcripts, selected themes, labels, and narrative summaries from each of the readers to capture the emergent themes relative to the research questions and grouped them into categories based upon each of these dimensions. Multiple readers were used, both to enhance interpretative validity and to strengthen reliability of the coding and data analysis.

The next step involved using modeling and diagramming

techniques to collapse and link the categories across a variety of conditions, contexts, and relationships (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The thematic analysis process was concluded by developing major categories around central explanatory categories. Then interpretive analysis was used to compare the themes with the existing literature. The thematic analysis process was concluded by providing a framework for understanding the relationship between the individual and the institution—that is, the interplay of child welfare policy and practice in the lives of African American grandmothers and the meanings that the grandmothers attach to their experiences as “partners” with the child welfare system. To further enhance rigor, the analysis involved triangulation of the data by juxtaposing the focus group discussions alongside observations of systemic occurrences across the focus groups, the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study, and current research literature on the phenomenon.

To confirm the data findings and to ensure its trustworthiness, we conducted follow-up telephone interviews with 4 of the 22 participants. During the interviews, grandmothers were asked the following questions: (a) Do the themes reflect what you discussed or what you heard others discuss during the focus groups? (2) Are the themes stated in such a way that they respect your story and do not minimize your experience? (3) Is there anything that is missing, inaccurate, or is not clear to you?

### Findings of the Study

Grandmothers’ interpretative practices and the meanings associated with intergenerational caregiving were embedded in African American cultural and historical traditions. As the child welfare system intersects with these traditions, it encounters socio-cultural meanings that are external to it and engage in family strategies that have grown out of a history of exclusion and oppression. These traditions and history form the interpretative lens through which African American grandmothers critiqued child welfare policy and practices, and, often struggled to resist the imposition of its regulatory guidelines. Despite ways they may have chafed under (and

contested) the policy and practices of the child welfare system, grandmothers did forge a tenuous partnership with them. However, the state's intervention (i.e., termination of parental custody and suggested legal custody of a grandchild) into the private realm of the family placed it as both rivals to and as arbiters of grandmothers and their caregiving practices.

In the sections that follow we highlight first the struggle of grandmothers for the rights and privileges of their position as "more than foster parents." This is a struggle that is mired in contradictions as grandmothers attempt to negotiate the child welfare's expectations and the state's obligations to them and their grandchildren across the public-private divide. We then explored the tensions between culturally-informed intergenerational expectations and obligations and competing constructions of the caregiving role. These tensions are reflected in the transformations occurring in the everyday practices of grandmothers with respect to intergenerational relationships (with grandchild and adult child), and in the ways women come to see themselves as mother, grandmother, or both. Finally, these transformations lead to resistance and meaning making for African American grandmothers that result in the grandmothers developing a sense of agency, voice, and activism.

### More than Foster Parents

African American grandmothers, because of their role and position within extended families, are often called upon to provide care to family members (Hunter & Taylor, 1998; Johnson, 1983) and to serve as "other mothers," that is, individuals who assist biological parents with parenting responsibilities (Collins, 1990). Many of the participants expressed pride in this legacy of caregiving. One grandmother stated, "We are raised to be mothers." Framed by a sense of ancestral connection, caregiving is a fulfillment of family obligation. Talking about her decision to raise her grandchild, one grandmother stated, "I did this, [became a kinship caregiver] because of the blood that runs through her [grandchild] veins also runs through mine, too." For another grandmother, it was the right thing to do, "to keep [her] family together." Referring to intergenerational lessons, yet another grandmother stated, "There's

an old saying my mother always told me. 'You never forget the bridges behind you, whether they are good, whether they're bad.'" Indeed, many women saw their caregiving as a familial obligation that linked them both to the past and future generations. As one woman contended, "My grandma would turn over in her grave if I would not keep my grandkids." It is this moral discourse of familial obligation and legacy of caregiving to which the child welfare system appealed, as is indicated by this grandmother's early talks with a child welfare practitioner: "They [child welfare system] say they are all about keeping families together. That was the big thing that was thrown at me. [They said] I'd rather for you to do it than for foster care to do it." However, unlike their foremothers, these grandmothers would be in public terrain as they raised grandchildren who were in the legal custody of the child welfare system.

As grandmothers navigate the inherent tensions in their private and public roles as kinship caregivers within the child welfare system, they see themselves as more than foster parents, and as one grandmother said, "I wish they [child welfare] could see us as grandparents; with a different set of rights [than foster parents]." Indeed, grandmothers have their own expectations of child welfare that is steeped in family meanings (reciprocity, respect, and the valuing of grandmothers) and in the understanding that they are partnering with child welfare to care for their grandchildren. For grandmothers in this study, there are expectations that go unfulfilled. As one grandmother stated with frustration:

When they brought him [grandchild] to me, they [child welfare] said 'you'll get this, we're going to help you with this and that.' You know? Y'all [child welfare] brought him to me and y'all just dropped him off. And it was like, 'Oh, we got him somewhere and now we don't need to worry.' And if I didn't call, you all wouldn't ever come.

The failure of the partnership with child welfare to materialize as expected left many grandmothers frustrated with what they saw as a lack of reciprocity and the devaluing by child welfare of their contributions as kinship providers. The participants felt their sacrifices went unacknowledged by the child

welfare system. As one grandmother contended, "They [child welfare] need to recognize all that I go through and give up to do this. It's a lot, but that's my child and those are my grandchildren." Another stated, "They [child welfare] should show us value" and by not recognizing their contributions, the child welfare system was "taking advantage" of the grandmothers. After all, as one grandmother stated, "We can give things most of them [foster parents] can never give." While the participants felt they were doing their part by giving "all that [they] have to give," they believed the child welfare system did not reciprocate as it should. The grandmothers described their relationship with child welfare as "one-sided" or being "just like a job without the pay." As one grandmother stated, "They want to have us do all the work with none of the credit they give foster parents." Given the limited support from child welfare, many grandmothers chafed under the state's intrusion into their families. In the words of one grandmother, "They want to come in and tell us how to live, how to raise our grandchildren, but they don't want to come in when we need help with things, then it is all on us."

Grandmothers did want to preserve their privileged position as family and as grandmothers, clearly stating that they "don't want to be treated like a foster parent," however, they were also critical of the ways child welfare emphasized family connection and obligation. At issue was the concern that child welfare emphasized family connection in ways that did not acknowledge the grandmothers' public role and contributions as formal caregivers. Furthermore, these grandmothers suspected that the child welfare system focused on family obligation as a rationale to limit their access to the public resources available to foster parents. As one grandmother put it when referring to the child welfare system, "Expecting us to do this with no extra help cause we family." Several grandmothers challenged the notion that Black grandmothers do not need help. One grandmother stated, "We don't have the support they think we do, but they think we [should] because we're in the family."

Family or not, these grandmothers were keenly aware of the services they provide the child welfare system. Echoing appeals made to them by child welfare, the grandmothers described themselves as providing a valuable resource to the

state. They also believed they were “saving the state money,” and as one participant put it, “Doing their [the child welfare system’s] job.” Another grandmother questioned, “If they did not have grandmothers to do it, can you imagine the overload?” Another challenged, “Imagine what they [child welfare] would be spending if us grandparents would stop taking care of our grandkids and just go see them every day to make sure the system is doing their job in taking care of them.” However, what was at issue was not just the money, but the help grandmothers needed and expected to get from child welfare, given that their grandchildren were in the legal custody of the state, as one grandmother explained:

Maybe grandmothers won’t ever be compensated like foster parents—and I don’t even think it is the thing about being compensated but trying to help us and holding up their end. We need help, we are women that are crying out. We are going under and we need help. We are doing it [caring for grandchild] because this is something that if we don’t do something bad will happen to the baby, and like I said, after all we are helping them [child welfare], you know. Because they don’t have to look for foster care, you know. And they are paying foster care more than they are paying us. So, actually, they are really getting over on us.

With resignation about the perceived inequities within the child welfare system, a participant suggested, “Being a Black grandmother in this day and age it’s like a curse, an unfair curse.” As several grandmothers mentioned, “It’s like we’re being punished for being grandmothers helping out.”

### Everyday Practices

As grandmothers took on the responsibility of custodial caregiving within the formal context of child welfare, grandmothers’ private constructions of their emergent roles, identities, and practices were now juxtaposed against the public expectations of the child welfare system. In the words of one grandmother: “It was like I lived—me and my husband lived in a goldfish bowl. We had guardian [court advocate]—and



social workers would come to our house at 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning, you know, just to see what was going [on]." Such regulatory practices, coupled with child welfare policy as embodied by ASFA, were vehicles via which grandmothers saw the child welfare system as transforming their everyday lives. All of the grandmothers talked of the shifts required in their roles, identities, and practices to accommodate custodial caregiving within the new formalized setting. Referring to the involvement of child welfare in her life, one grandmother stated, "My whole life has changed."

As the grandmothers attempted to sort out the meaning of their caregiving role and their identities, they also confronted child welfare's constructions of what was appropriate for them. Child welfare's view of grandmothers' appropriate role appeared to be driven by an effort to implement ASFA (via workers' practices and interpretation of policies) and by the apparent goals of the case plan (i.e., reunification or adoption). However, these external conceptions of grandmothers' roles and identity often contradicted what grandmothers may have chosen within the context of informal caregiving. For example, many of the grandmothers talked of how the child welfare system expected them to fully *take-on* the role of mother as opposed to grandmother. For example, one grandmother said, "They actually want me to adopt my grandchild, she [the grandchild] has a momma, I'm grandma." In contrast, other grandmothers were discouraged from fully taking on the role of mother. In the latter case, one grandmother expressed, "They [child welfare] told me to be careful about taking the place of the mother." Speaking about the imposing nature of child welfare in dictating her identity, another grandmother stated, "It's like DSS [the child welfare system] is momma. They [the child welfare system] see you as grandmother but you see yourself as momma."

When asked about ASFA and its subsequent child permanency goals, many of the grandmothers stated they were not aware of such a goal. However, the grandmothers did report that child welfare practitioners discussed adoption of their grandchildren with them. Some of the grandmothers favored adoption and viewed it as a formalization of their role as mother as opposed to grandmother. Other grandmothers saw

adoption as closing down the hope that their adult children would resume parenting roles and thus opposed adoption. One grandmother expressed her hopes in this way:

I don't really think I want to adopt them [the grandchildren] legally because I have to believe the parents might step back in, might want to step back in or get able at some point, be able one day to step back in. And, you know, they're welcome, even though I am mad at them [the adult child] right now, I wouldn't want to take [legally adopt] their kids because you know, I know they love their kids and but they are just young [immature] [but] I'm here.

The grandmothers' traditional family practices and perspectives were often in conflict with the regulatory guidelines of the child welfare system. Thus, another central tension in the everyday practices of the grandmothers was related to their goals of family continuity and the maintenance of family relationships across multiple generations. This tension was most prominent when the goal of the case plan no longer included parent-child reunification. Despite their adult child's current situation, several grandmothers wanted to preserve the family, and hoped that their adult children would resume their roles as parent. In talking about her adult child, one grandmother declared, "I have to believe that she will one day get it together. I don't give in to her, [but] I *am* her mother. If I stop believing [what then]?" As one grandmother expressed in discussing the competing expectations of child welfare and her adult child, "I feel caught in the middle."

Despite the nature of the crisis that led to the grandmothers raising their grandchildren, the grandmothers' continued relationship with adult children was informed by values of forgiveness and reciprocity. As one grandmother stated, "I don't want their parents [the adult child] to hate me, I just want the best for them [the grandchild], just like I wanted the best for my own children."

As formal kinship caregivers, grandmothers felt they were expected to implement and enforce the regulatory guidelines and practices of the state and to monitor their adult children. This dual role, as an extension of the state and as family, placed

grandmothers in a difficult position. The grandmothers talked of how the child welfare system expected them to restrict or deny visitation between the grandchild and the grandchild's parent, who was, more often than not, their adult child. One grandmother posited, "I don't like this much, because I am the one setting [enforcing] their [child welfare's] rules." Another grandmother added that fulfilling the expectations of child welfare often caused both their grandchildren and their adult children to view grandmothers as the barrier to the relationship between the grandchild and the parent, "One time she [the grandchild] took me for the enemy." Another grandmother contended that in her case, "Of course, I wasn't the enemy, I wasn't the one who went into her home and removed them [the grandchildren]." Another grandmother expressed, "You eventually become an eyesore to those grandchildren, because they really think that you don't like their parents." In talking about the challenges associated with working with child welfare and acting in the best interest of their grandchildren, one grandmother said, "It was really hard on me doing that, talking about her in court and telling her she can't come to my house and visit her own children, she [adult child] don't see it, but it was hard."

Regardless of whether they agreed with the necessity of the rules set by child welfare, the grandmothers felt the impact of child welfare policies or expectations on their family relationships:

We was not allowed to meet with his [my grandchild's] mother alone. They had to be supervised visits. And so...there's a lot of scars between my daughter and myself based on something I felt without DSS [child welfare] we might—we maybe could have worked them out in a more amicable manner.

### A Response to Anger: Agency, Voice, and Social Activism

The grandmothers told stories of the ways in which their lives were being transformed or renegotiated because of their formalized involvement with the child welfare system.

With language steeped in family meanings, one grandmother poignantly suggested, "What they [child welfare] really need to understand is that we want the same things they want. And we love just like they do....But [what makes us different] are our histories." Angered by the child welfare system's imposition on their informal historical practices and the lack of acknowledgement with regard to the resulting transformations occurring in their everyday lives, the grandmothers engaged a sense of agency, voice, and activism. The grandmothers challenged the lead author, as a co-interpreter, to retell and disseminate the stories of grandmothers in a manner that maintains the truthfulness and integrity of the meanings held by them and to serve as a conduit for grandmothers to access forums that may help others *get it*.

Grandmothers took on the multiple roles associated with raising a grandchild in a formalized context. However, they often found themselves experiencing anger and resentment, coupled with the feelings of obligation and responsibility.

I'm tired in my body. I'm tired in my mind. But I love my grandchildren. But I am like, When is it going to stop? It's just like I mean my whole life is in a whirlwind. But yet I got to [continue doing this].

Thrust into caregiving due to difficult family crises, many grandmothers feel the child welfare system either does not recognize or does not care about their pain. Describing her transition to parenting her grandchildren, one grandmother candidly stated, "I mean I was [mad] for the first month, I was mad at the world, and then people [the child welfare system] acted like they didn't know, or didn't care."

Despite the challenges of raising grandchildren under the auspices of the child welfare system, these grandmothers did attempt to advocate for themselves, to infuse their voices, and to incorporate their interpreted meanings into the child welfare system. One of the grandmothers interviewed makes this appeal:

We are people and we have hurt. We have guilt that we're probably dealing with. I mean bitterness, anger—

I mean we're probably walking time bombs ourselves that somebody really needs to understand how we feel and what we are going through.

Seeking opportunities to serve as advocates for themselves and their families, grandmothers frequently emphasized social justice, social action, and involvement in child welfare policy efforts. "[We] need to start voicing [our] opinion. And it's good that she [speaking of another grandmother] sits on the board [child welfare advisory board]." Patricia Hill Collins (1990) has argued that activism is often in response to the tensions that exist between efforts to mold the institution of Black motherhood to benefit systems of race, gender, and class oppression and efforts by African American women to define and value their own self-definitions. Taking a step toward activism at the conclusion of every focus group, grandmothers gathered to share their experiences and knowledge of resources with one another and to talk about how to become involved and how to get their voices heard.

### Summary and Implications

Among African American grandmothers raising grandchildren who are in the legal custody of the child welfare system, the following needs to be given attention: (a) the grandmothers' perspective on caregiving within the context of the child welfare system; (b) the interpretive practices that inform grandmothers' perspectives of their emergent "partnership" with the child welfare system and the formalization of kinship care; and (c) the ways the child welfare system influences the meanings and practices of intergenerational caregiving among grandmothers. While this study is exploratory, the findings suggest that the formalization of kinship caregiving is a deeply contested terrain, and that both grandmothers and the child welfare system are informed by interpretive practices that are often at best a mismatch, and are at worst in opposition.

It was found that African American grandmothers use their cultural traditions and history as the lens through which they interpret, critique, and negotiate their relationship with the child welfare system. African American grandmothers

stake their position that they are more than foster parents, and assert that the child welfare system needs to acknowledge their value as relative or kinship caregivers. The roles, identities, and caregiving practices of grandmothers are to varying degrees influenced by the child welfare system, particularly via its regulatory practices. Yet, these grandmothers struggle for self-definition, even as their roles, everyday practices, and family relationships come under the scrutiny of and are co-determined by the child welfare system. This is most evident in the ways African American grandmothers contest the transformations imposed by the child welfare system and seek to assert their voices via social activism. Furthermore, through processes of voice, resistance, meaning-making, and agency, African American grandmothers inhabit an interpretative position that moves back and forth across the public-private divide.

There is little debate that the child welfare system has a difficult role. In an effort to acknowledge the importance of both child safety and family preservation, most child welfare systems have evolved from a child-only approach to a family-centered approach used by the state represented in this study. The findings suggest the need for a more clearly defined intergenerational approach when working with African American grandmothers who are raising grandchildren under the auspices of the child welfare system.

Confirming other studies (Burton, 1992; Davidson, 1997; Hunter & Taylor, 1998), the findings from this study suggest that African American grandmothers are in need of a variety of support services. Generally, social services are divided into children services and adult services, and traditionally, few combined efforts toward service planning and provision exist between agencies that provide children, adult or aging services. Infusion of an intergenerational approach into child welfare suggests that in their practice, child welfare workers should place just as much emphasis on services and support to grandparents as they do to children to provide a stronger integration of adult and child services. In the words of one grandmother, "They [the child welfare system] should look at us [grandmothers and grandchildren] as a package deal. You know, the child and whoever they are living with. You are a package deal and they should look at you as one."

Using an intergenerational approach to practice would assist the grandmother caregivers in perceiving their partnership with the child welfare system as reciprocal and responsive to their needs as aging caregivers who are parenting both *off-time* and in a new formalized context. Specifically, services such as support groups that focus just as much on the needs of the grandparents as on the needs of the grandchildren and respite care services designed to give grandparents time off are needed.

Anger is widely accepted as a major stage of grief. Thus, what was presented as anger amongst these grandmothers may be a manifestation of grief. Consequently, counseling efforts supported by the child welfare system that acknowledge the grief experiences of the grandmothers and the difficulty of the transitions and transformations that the grandmothers are required to make from being informal to formal caregivers are needed. Additionally, regularly planned efforts by child welfare departments to display appreciation and acknowledge the contributions of grandparent caregivers, such as hosting grandparent caregiver celebrations and publicly acknowledging outstanding grandparent caregivers are examples of value recognition. Finally, efforts that acknowledge the expertise of grandparent caregivers are needed. Such efforts may include engaging grandparent caregivers as paid consultants, co-trainers and peer mentors, or inviting grandparents to have a voice or serve on agency and legislative work groups and policy-making committees and boards.

From the perspective of child welfare policy, taking an intergenerational approach to service delivery should accomplish two tasks. First, it should lead to child welfare policies and practices that favor partnerships with the adult and aging service programs that have the resources to meet the needs of custodial grandparent. Second, it should result in policies that require the broadening of case plans from child-only plans to intergenerational plans that are also concerned with the needs of the grandmother caregivers. Given the consequence of failing to meet the federal directive contained in ASFA to improve the well-being of children *and* their families, the child welfare system has a responsibility to take the lead in developing a stronger partnership with adult and aging service

programs.

Finally, the findings of this study raise the question of whether a re-conceptualization of the notion of permanency is needed when addressing grandparent caregivers. Specifically, should the child welfare system move away from policies that emphasize legal adoption by grandparents towards an emphasis on guardianship or another status that is situated somewhere between life-long and formal adoption and the loose structure of guardianship? To effectively address questions such as this and to inform child welfare policy and practice, culturally relevant, community-based participatory research designs that place the voices of African American grandparents at the center of policy discussions and evidence-based research that explores the effect that policy-driven practices have on the outcomes of children and families are needed.

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# Documentary Photography in American Social Welfare History: 1897-1943

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*This is a study of documentary photography in American social welfare history. The study examines the emergence of photography as a tool of social policy, and in particular, key practitioners who shaped the perception of American social welfare. Within the social welfare literature, this topic is largely unexamined yet invaluable to an understanding of American social welfare. Photography performed a highly instrumental role by providing visual evidence as an innovative way of seeing and analyzing social problems. This image-based approach to social welfare analysis influenced how society viewed itself and the social environment. The goal of this study is to understand this influence by exploring the emergence of documentary photography and the practice of documentary photography as a tool of social welfare policy.*

*Key words: social welfare policy, documentary photography, visual evidence*

## Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine the role of documentary photography in American social welfare history. Special attention is paid to the role documentary photography played in the perception of social problems. According to John Berger (1972), the advent of photography introduced a new way of

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seeing the social world. This new way of seeing, however, has been largely overlooked in the social welfare literature. Jussim (1984) interprets this shortcoming because "the literature of photography contains far more about the chronological history of 'documentary' than about how documentary photography succeeds in persuading, how the photographs manage to influence public opinion" (p. 103). Although the literature on the history of photography is extensive, few have examined photography's social welfare role. This role is examined here by looking at early practitioners who used photography to affect social change, i.e., *Charities and the Commons*, *Survey Graphics*, Paul Kellogg, Lewis Hine, and Roy Stryker of the Farm Security Administration (FSA). More specifically, the documentary approach is analyzed in terms of photography's persuasive and propagandistic qualities. No one photograph or individual photographer singularly altered American social welfare history; instead, the collective and accumulated affect of documentary photography shaped social welfare provision. The field of social welfare and the profession of social work stand to gain from this study by understanding more keenly the relationship between documentary photography and American social welfare history.

The adage "seeing is believing" was tested *writ large* during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in America. Rapid urbanization and rampant industrialization were wreaking economic and social havoc on millions of Americans. The social effect of this phenomenon created an experiential and perceptual chasm among citizens. Was it possible for rich and poor to see how the other half lived? Was it possible to bridge the perceptual gap dividing America's haves and have nots? The responsibility for making plain America's deepening economic inequality primarily fell on individuals adept at exposing hidden American lives. The "sober chronicling of the external world" (McCausland, 1939, ¶2) was no easy feat, but was important enough for some to passionately pursue the documentary approach.

## Photography and the Documentary Approach

The advent of photography and documentary photography in 1839 were complimentary dimensions of the same invention. Joseph-Nicephore Niepce and Louis-Jacques-Mande Daguerre in France, and William Henry Fox Talbot in England, simultaneously invented photography but in two different countries. The inventors discovered that mixing just the right amount of chemicals with just the right amount of light could record striking images of reality. The earliest photographic images were called daguerreotypes and were true-to-life in every imaginable way. Unlike anything witnessed before, the photochemical process made possible the uncanny ability to “write with light” with disbelieving accuracy. Alan Trachtenberg (1989) described photography’s accuracy as “a tool for making a past suitable for the future” (p. xiv). The capacity to record spread quickly as an innovative tool to document everyday events with persuasive authenticity. Even though the earliest daguerreotypes depicted reality in fuzzy shades of gray, and some were barely discernable, viewers intuitively grasped that what they were looking at was dissimilar to prior media, e.g., paintings or illustrations:

...all the minutest indentations and divisions of the ground, or the building, the goods lying on the wharf, even the small stones under the water at the edge of the stream, and the different degrees of transparency given to the water, were all shown with the most incredible accuracy. (Newhall, 1978, p. 17)

Noted historian of photography, Beaumont Newhall (1978), once described photography’s ability to authenticate reality as a “mirror with a memory” (p. 17). This ability to record reality inspired many to pick up the camera to document the world about them. By mid-nineteenth century, people were documenting their social environments the world over (Howe, 2004).

It was not enough though to simply take photographs—photographers wanted to display and disseminate their images as well. By the late nineteenth-century, national magazines, professional journals, and gazettes provided an outlet to

showcase photographs. In particular, western culture's acceptance of visual imagery allowed journals devoted exclusively to photography to emerge. For example, *The British Journal of Photography* was a leading magazine that provided the latest information on photographic invention, technological advice, equipment reviews, happenings within photographic society, and a forum in which to debate photography. According to Grow (2002), the earliest magazines emerged in the mid-1700s and privileged words over images. By the late 1800s, professional illustrations had come into vogue to supplement the almost exclusive reliance on text. Seeing the advantages of using images, newspaper and journal editors began combining image with text as a means to bear "faithful witness" to events (Newhall, 1978).

Prior to the advent of photography, social critics had relied on the perspicuity of words to describe and analyze social problems. If and when print media did report on social issues, graphs and drawings were used to supplement words rather than replace them. *Harper's Weekly*, the *Daily Graphic*, and *Charities and the Commons* often used drawings of tenement housing and lower-class life to illustrate the bleakness of slum life. The illustrations had high visual impact and had a powerful effect on readers (Bremner, 1992). The visual information provided a fuller understanding of dire social conditions which words alone could not convey.

Combining text and image attracted social welfare leaders who were bent on communicating social problems to a mass audience. As early as 1833, institutional and legislative bodies were already using pamphlets and annual reports to talk about social problems. Axinn & Stern (1997) report how pamphleteer Mathew Carey wrote emphatically describing the virtues of private philanthropy to combat poverty (p. 50). The pamphlet was a strategic means—using words—to describe extant poverty. The addition of images to words, however, provided America's charity movement an innovative tool to affect social change. This was especially true in order to break out of a pietistic framework that dominated social welfare. Social worker Robert Hunter argued in 1904 for "liberation from a moralistic approach" (Baldwin, 1968) to social problems. Leaders in the pursuit of Progressive ideals desired an objective and rational

approach to social problems. Conceptualizing social problems based on empirical evidence, rather than in moral and religious categories, positioned photography to affect change because of its straightforward and truth-telling qualities.

The term *documentary* was first coined in 1926 when Scottish filmmaker John Grierson (1898-1972) applied the word to describe moving pictures. Although writing a film review of *Moana*, for the *New York Sun* (Rosler, 1989; Tucker, 1984), Grierson's usage of documentation served a "larger purpose than a simple recording of reality" (Tucker, 1984, p. 41). Grierson was, in fact, defining a novel approach to seeing. To document meant "a desire to make a drama out of the ordinary...a desire to bring the citizen's eye in from the ends of the earth to the story, his own story, of what was happening under his nose" (Grierson Trust, ¶1). Documentation was about immediacy—it was about giving one's full attention to the existential moment. Grierson's films, "Drifters" (1929) and "Night Mail" (1936) exemplified his own approach to earn him the honorific "father of documentary."

Grierson's perspective on documentary is relevant to still photography in how he viewed film as other than a fine art. He believed the function of film was to "educate and persuade" the public about social issues (Tucker, 1984, p. 41). He felt America's artistic community over-romanticized life by portraying it in too detached a manner. Grierson instead sought to show life in its plainest of terms:

...the recording and interpretation of fact was a new instrument of public influence which might increase experience and bring the new world of our citizenship into the imagination. It promised us the power of making drama from our daily lives and poetry from our problems. (Newhall, 1978, p. 144)

Grierson wanted nothing less than to infiltrate people's minds with stark images of reality. Most importantly, he found in the documentary approach a way to directly connect the human experience with personal compassion. Stott (1973) understood this personal dimension in defining documentary as "the communication, not of imagined things, but of real things



only" (p. xi). He believed, "A document, when human, is the opposite of the official kind; it is not objective but thoroughly personal" (p. 7).

The psychological link between the human experience and personal compassion provided a motive for many to practice the documentary approach. When people saw for themselves the camera's faithful recording of reality, they too, wanted to document their everyday situations. The December 1839 issue of *The Knickerbocker* sums up the allure of documentary photography:

We have seen the views taken in Paris by the 'Daguerreotype,' and have no hesitation in avowing, that they are the most remarkable objects of curiosity and admiration, in the arts, that we ever beheld. Their exquisite perfection almost transcends the bounds of sober relief. (Leggat, 1995, ¶1)

Interestingly, the camera's ability to elicit an emotive connection between image and viewer was remarkably similar to how the human mind perceived and recorded events. Unlike the camera, the mind used words to mediate and interpret events. Words unfortunately were inherently risky, arbitrary, and open to manipulation. This arbitrary nature of words afforded the mind broad interpretive license to construct abstract meaning from words—and not always in harmony with the original meaning. Photographs, on the other hand, did not rely on the mediation of words but rather relied directly on the image of reality itself. Documentary photographs, moreover, were unadorned and straightforward representations of reality. Umberto Eco (1982) describes this hermeneutical advantage as an "iconic sign" (p. 32), suggesting that a photograph's "natural resemblance of an image is to the reality it represents" (p. 32). This capacity to more closely approximate reality gave the photograph its persuasive edge in documenting everyday phenomena.

### Context and the Documentary Approach: The Progressive Era (1890-1920)

Development of the documentary approach did not happen

in a cultural and political vacuum. The context in which the documentary approach gained influence is important to appreciate the photograph's persuasive and propagandistic qualities. For example, the Progressive Era (1890-1920) increasingly embraced science as the basis for social reform and solving social problems. Traditional forms of charitable relief were seen as inefficient and overly moralistic (Wenocur & Reisch, 2002). Progressives valued "social invention, believed in the authority of the expert, and possessed an interest in the communicative potential of visual explanation" (Finnegan, 2003, ¶13). Until the late nineteenth century, traditional charitable relief was exclusively motivated by religious underpinnings, i.e., helping orphans, widows and the disabled (Katz, 1969). In 1877, America's first Charity Organization Society (COS) was established in Buffalo, New York. The COS model focused on solving an individual's personal problems through organized charitable relief—or social casework. The approach assumed that help needed to involve more than mere alms-giving. The goal of COS was to instill self-reliance and individual social responsibility through a scientific approach to relief. In 1874 the National Conference of Charities and Corrections (NCCC) was held as the nation's first gathering of like-minded "social work" practitioners committed to applying a scientific and rational approach to social problems.

Having an informed public was vital for the COS movement to fulfill its mission. "Friendly visitors" informed by the latest research in academic psychology and sociology would provide a clear missional advantage to COS. Towards this end, in 1891 the New York Charity Organization Society established *Charities Review*, a journal that provided "advice and analyses" on a wide variety of social welfare issues (Finnegan, 2003, ¶2). The journal ascribed to high academic standards and narrowly focused on outlining bureaucratic solutions to intractable social problems. Its goal was to influence national social policy on the efficient delivery of charitable relief. According to Finnegan (2003), social welfare journals were a strategic outlet "for progressive thought and had substantial influence on public policy in their own time."

In 1897, leading social welfare author and expert, Edward T. Devine, created the journal *Charities* to directly compete

with *Charities Review*. To promote cooperation rather than competition, the two journals joined forces in 1901 under the title *Charities*. The new journal emphasized helping the poor by studying conditions that created poverty. It believed disseminating irrefutable social facts was strategic to advance efficiency in the delivery of services. The journal hoped to promote a national dialogue on service delivery grounded in scientific evidence. The strategy worked. Axinn and Stern (1997) describe how a March 1906 article on Washington DC, "Neglected Neighborhoods in the Alleys, Shacks and Tenements of the National Capitol," prompted a similar investigation in Pittsburgh (p. 140). As a sign of further cooperation, in 1909 the two major social work methods, "scientific charity" and the "settlement house" movement, came together to establish *Charities and the Commons*, with Edward Devine as its editor. Armed with in-depth scientific analysis of social conditions, the new journal set out to inform an already well-trained cadre of friendly visitors.

In 1912, Paul U. Kellogg became editor of *Charities and the Commons*. Kellogg renamed the journal *The Survey*, to reflect an emphasis on scientific research. While directing the Pittsburgh Survey project between 1907 and 1908, Kellogg had become convinced of a rational approach to social research. The project was the first of its kind to apply survey research methods on a large scale to study the effects of industrialization on a major American city (Axinn & Levin, 1997). The project taught him the persuasive power of brute facts to influence perception of social problems. Inspired by the success of the Pittsburgh project, Kellogg pursued an editorial vision using visual evidence to understand social problems. He self-consciously combined words with photographs to expose the harsh realities of social life. *The Survey* became the "leading social work journal" (Spartacus, 2006, ¶3) of the time, publishing innovative social analysis in a scholarly format. Its aim was to provide scientific evidence "as an investigator and interpreter of the objective conditions of life and labor and as a chronicler of undertakings to improve them" (Chambers, 1971, p. 53).

In the fall of 1921, Kellogg expanded his editorial vision by creating a companion journal to the *Survey* called *Survey Graphic*. The difference between the two journals was the

latter's emphasis on "the graphic depiction of social facts" (Finnegan, 2003, ¶16). According to Finnegan (2003), "Visual representation served as one way through which Kellogg sought to translate expert information for public consumption" (¶16). Kellogg wanted to reach an audience beyond professional social workers to "provoke citizens everywhere into an awareness of new programs for social reform (Finnegan, 2003, ¶9). He wanted common folk "to see for themselves the necessity for particular changes" (Finnegan, 2003, ¶9) using "charts, graphs, illustrations, cartoons and photographs" (Finnegan, 2003, ¶10). Kellogg was an intellectually devout social progressive who believed in the social benefits of technology. His commitment to the image made *Survey Graphic* visually appealing and much more accessible to the general public. In fact, *Survey Graphic* was the first non-governmental entity to publish government FSA photographs about rural poverty to influence public opinion (Finnegan, 2003, ¶24). The public took notice. By the early 1930s, subscriptions were a respectable 25,000 (Finnegan, 2003, ¶19). By the mid-1930s, the journal claimed to have developed a new "visual language" using text and image to describe America's social problems (Finnegan, 2003, ¶16).

Kellogg's vision, unfortunately, did not sit well with all sectors of society, e.g., America's social elite. For Kellogg to substantially affect social change he needed the trust and influence of the ruling upper class. The challenge was to be forthright yet discreet enough to overcome the elite's deep-seated disdain towards the lower-classes. Although the elite were curious about poverty, they wanted their curiosities quenched without having to leave the comfort of their homes. Writers thus took great pains to describe poverty in honest detail and presented destitution in such a way that it did not require direct contact except by way of imagination. Illustrations of poverty were therefore, more often than not, sanitized to mollify upper-class subscribers. Ironically, the descriptions of poverty were so vivid that they stirred the public's imagination to unintentionally spawn a literary movement which attracted socially conscious photographers and filmmakers alike.

## Lewis W. Hine and the Documentary Approach

Lewis Wickes Hine (1874-1940) was among the earliest to practice documentary photography in a compelling way. His work was akin to social work advocacy compared to his predecessors Jacob Riis and Mathew Brady. Trachtenberg (1989) refers to Hine's photography as social work because he "based his conception of photography as social work on an aesthetic theory" (p. 168). His photographs documented a nation pre-occupied with production and wealth at the expense of child labor, immigration and rapid urbanization. Born in 1874 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Hine picked up his first camera in 1904 to put his "beliefs to work" (p. 193). He believed in "change, experiment, and freedom" (p. 168) and in using his camera to affect social change. Committed to Progressive ideals of social reform, Hine called his own work "social photography" (Stange, 1989, p. 54) because he believed "photographic social work" (Trachtenberg, 1989, p. 166) was the best strategy to influence social reform. His goal was to influence public opinion in order to induce corrections to a flawed system gone amok.

Before practicing documentary photography on a full-time basis, Hine studied pedagogy and sociology. In 1900, he enrolled at the University of Chicago to study educational theory. After a year of study, his professor, Frank E. Manny, invited him to move to New York City. Manny had been appointed director of the progressive-leaning Ethical Culture School (ECS) and wanted Hine to teach with him there. Hine obliged Manny and began teaching nature studies at ECS. On his own time, he enrolled and graduated with a degree in education from New York University (NYU). After graduation, he then enrolled at Columbia University to study graduate-level sociology. In 1905, he graduated from Columbia with a "master pedagogy degree" (Stange, 1989, p. 52).

Manny taught Hine to respect the dignity and worth of immigrants. Manny felt America's newest immigrants deserved the same respect the Puritans received in the seventeenth century. Hine took this teaching to heart and brought ECS students to Ellis Island to experience immigrant life first-hand. The face-to-face contact made poverty much more real for Hine and his students. The visits inspired Hine to become

involved with immigration politics and to photograph their lives to "allow for an expression of individual qualities that lifts the portraits to a realm beyond mere depiction of immigrant 'types'" (Stange, 1992, p. 52). Hine was determined not to reinforce old clichés nor exploit immigrant stereotypes through his photography.

By 1906, Hine had become restless in his career and was anxious to engage in more direct forms of social work. He left ECS in 1908 and contracted work on a free-lance basis with the National Child Labor Committee [NCLC] (Trachtenberg, 1989). The work with NCLC was strategic, since it was "one of the major social work organizations" (p. 171) of the time. NCLC provided Hine the opportunity to pursue social work ideals using documentary photography on a full-time basis.

In 1907, his freelance work was published in two National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) leaflets, and in the same year he contributed two articles to *Charities and the Commons*. By 1908 he had published at least seven articles on photography, teaching and social work (Stange, 1989, p. 52). Hine photographed extensively for the NCLC, earning a national reputation as "perhaps the most successful social welfare photographer" (Photocollect, ¶5).

In the fall of 1907, Paul Kellogg hired Hine for three months to document the *Pittsburgh Survey* project. Hine accepted the free-lance job but was unsatisfied with only one line of work. With the Pittsburgh project completed, in 1908 he signed-on with *Charities and the Commons* as a staff photographer. Kellogg (1937), coincidentally, was its editor. He saw in Hine that rare talent to realize his editorial vision of combining word and image to document:

We chronicle developments...pool experiment and experience...afford a forum for free discussion...carry forward swift first hand investigations with a procedure comparable to that of scientific research...interpret the findings of others...employ photographs, maps, charts, the arts in gaining a hearing from two to twenty times that of formal books and reports. (p. 677)

Hine's position at *Charities and the Commons* was cause for

pride. He placed an ad in a local newspaper to show off his social work credentials and documentary photography skills:

...an experienced photographer who is in touch with social work, has joined the staff of *Charities and the Commons* to offer graphic representation of conditions and methods of work, through pictures for exhibits, reports, folders, magazines and newspapers articles, and lantern slides. (Trachtenberg, 1989, p. 197)

*Charities and the Commons* assigned Hine to travel the country photographing children working in cruel factory conditions. He described his young subjects as "human documents" because he saw in them the failures of an economic system which dehumanized its citizens for the sake of profit. Newhall (1978) said of Hine that "his photographs were powerful and readily grasped criticism of the impact of an economic system on the lives of underprivileged and exploited classes" (p. 142). Hine's photographs of children were widely published to influence the passage of major social legislation protecting children. Passage of the Child Labor Act of 1916 established a minimum hiring age of fourteen wherever non-agricultural goods were involved and destined for interstate commerce or export. The same year, Congress also passed the Keating-Owens Act, legislation that placed restrictions on employing children less than fourteen years of age in factories and shops. Owen Lovejoy, Chairman of the NCLC, believed Hine's social photography was critical to the advancement of child welfare. "The work Hine did for this reform was more responsible than all other efforts in bringing the need to public attention" (Spartacus Educational, 2006, ¶5). Hine understood the persuasive power of the documentary approach to educate and solve social problems. He used photography "to pose the question, to imply a situation for which some other medium might be needed to provide the answer" (Jussim, 1984, p. 112). Indeed, Hine's social photography helped persuade Congress to stop the exploitation of child labor.

The emerging profession of social work also appreciated Hine's social photography. In 1909, the National Conference of Charity and Correction invited Hine to present a paper at

its national meeting. His paper, "Social Photography: How the Camera May Help in the Social Uplift," argued that social photography must be brutally honest in order to "stand as evidence in any court of law." Hine pursued and produced photographs to adhere to the highest scientific standards of credible evidence. He photographed to document the "panorama of social facts" (Jussim, 1984, p. 195) in a scientific, rational, and systematic fashion. He believed photography:

...enlarged the reformist idea of the social survey to embrace the *process* of communication itself, inventing presentational forms through which social information might become the viewer's own concrete experience... visual facts as the occasion for awakening the viewer's awareness of and imaginative empathy with the pictured others, and thus the viewer's own social being. (p. 203)

For Hine, documentary photography was a scientific method as well as a social act. Picture-taking involved more than merely recording factual content, or social events—it was an interactive process where "the social act lay in the communication" (p. 203).

### The New Deal and the Documentary Approach

In response to the failed policies of President Herbert Hoover, presidential candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) promised a "new deal" for the American people—that is, an activist government in matters of social welfare provision. FDR campaigned to mobilize federal resources to stabilize America's crippled economy. To do this, he organized a "brain trust" of academic advisors and charged them with the task of developing economic recovery policies. After winning the presidency in 1933, Roosevelt's brain trust produced a blistering array of legislative proposals in the first 100 days called the First New Deal.

For the first time in the nation's history, the federal government initiated a broad range of relief legislation for its citizens. The legislative goal was to insure the social security of every working American by way of relief, recovery and reform. Broad



public support came early for the First New Deal (1933-34), but by 1935 political resistance emerged, raising questions about future legislative approval. A long-term strategy thus became critical to persuade reluctant decision-makers of the necessity of government action to advance social well-being. In other words, the use of propaganda was raised in and around 1935 as the appropriate means to persuade a reluctant Congress. Carlebach (1988) argues that propaganda was "the original dissemination of information and ideas for the purpose of influencing attitudes and behaviors vital to the proper functioning of democracy" (p. 11). In this sense, the New Deal photographers were, in the best sense of the word, propagandists for the government.

Despite the legislative success of FDR's first 100 days, as early as 1934, heated resistance challenged the new legislation. Critics were both for and against the New Deal legislation. Some questioned the constitutional legitimacy of the New Deal, asking whether government had the authority to reduce unemployment and induce economic recovery. Others, like the Workers Alliance of America, felt FDR's government did not go far enough and demanded even bolder and more dynamic government action. The most organized opposition to the New Deal was the American Liberty League. A bipartisan group, it sought "to combat radicalism, preserve property rights, [and] uphold and preserve the Constitution" (McElvaine, 2000, p. 59). Although very vocal and politically powerful, in the end, the opposition could not block FDR from initiating a second New Deal in the spring of 1935. FDR well understood the political risks he was taking and sought to galvanize public support. He believed an informed public was advantageous and necessary to support further government action. His strategy to gain broad support involved employing the social sciences, i.e., documentary photography, to bear witness to America's hidden inequalities. "In order to convince the American people and the Congress of the need for reform, especially in the agricultural sector, still photographs that describe the deplorable conditions in the countryside were produced and disseminated" (Carlebach, 1988, p. 8). Credible visual evidence was deemed strategic to persuade a reluctant Congress.

FDR's first 100 days demonstrated the power of

social legislation to combat poverty. Institutionalizing government relief would be his next social welfare policy challenge. One weapon FDR devised was establishment of the Resettlement Administration (RA). Organized in May 1935 in the Department of Agriculture, FDR appointed Rexford W. Tugwell as its first leader. Tugwell was an original member of FDR's brain trust culled from Columbia University's economics department. Tugwell had convinced FDR to view government in an instrumentalist way, that is, to use government to actualize Progressive social ideals. For example, a central part of Tugwell's plan was for the government to relocate poor families into planned communities. Tugwell believed the function of government was to care for its citizens when the invisible hand of the economy could no longer meet basic human needs. To insure public support of this view of government, Tugwell created an Information Division (ID) for public relations purposes. He deemed it important to control the gathering and dissemination of information to sustain New Deal initiatives. An Historical Section was thus created as a subdivision within ID and Roy E. Stryker was hired as its director. Stryker was a former student and collaborator of Tugwell's at Columbia University. At Columbia, they had worked well together on several projects using photography to illustrate economic conditions. Tugwell's goal was to forestall criticism through a robust public relations strategy. Stryker's goal was to produce irrefutable "photographic and sociological documentation of the work of the RA" (Walker Evans Project, 2006, ¶3). He wanted nothing less than "to inform, persuade, and act as catalyst to reform" (Carlebach, 1988, p. 8).

Despite FDR's support, the RA drew intense political fire for allegedly being too utopian and unrealistically socialistic. Reacting to the political backlash and fallout, Tugwell reluctantly resigned in early 1937. FDR responded to the embattled agency by transforming it into the Farm Security Administration (FSA). Congress officially sanctioned the FSA in 1937, although it had actually been operating under executive order since 1935. Ever mindful of public opinion, the administration "wasted no time in launching an ambitious public information program designed to propagate the faith of the new agency and its prophet" (Baldwin, 1968, p. 117). Under

the capable leadership of Will W. Alexander, the FSA refocused its energies to alleviating rural poverty.

Anxious to demonstrate the importance of FSA, Stryker immediately organized a cadre of accomplished photographers to document the social impact of the Great Depression. Between 1935 and 1943, a dozen or so government-hired photographers fanned out across America to photograph reality in the service of social legislation. Stryker instructed his photographers to document the human spirit, despite the travails of the Great Depression. Cognizant of the cultural shift unfolding from a reading-oriented society towards visual literacy, Stryker set out to take advantage of the pictorial magazines *Life* and *Look* to communicate the federal response to poverty. In addition, the social work journals *Survey* and *Survey Graphic* became instrumental in educating the public about New Deal projects. For example, the 1940 issue of *Survey Graphic* extolled the virtues of the New Deal, particularly its use of documentary photographs by including an essay by Hartly Howe entitled "You Have Seen Their Pictures," on the FSA photographs (Finnegan, 2003, ¶24).

A major benefit of the FSA photographs was how they challenged the public's perception of America's social well-being. Photographs of rural poverty entered the American consciousness to positively alter social and political misperceptions of New Deal initiatives. When the FSA documentary project finally ended, an unprecedented 270,000 photographs had been taken of rural poverty. The start of World War II diverted the nation's attention away from domestic problems and onto world affairs. The priority of war compelled FDR in 1943 to replace the FSA project with the Office of War Information, forcing Stryker to disband his cadre of documentary photographers.

### The Documentary Approach: Propaganda or Persuasion?

Is the documentary approach propaganda or persuasion? The answer to this question is significant to appreciate photography's role in American social welfare history. Tucker (1984) argues that photographers self-consciously attempt "to reveal operative social forces, but to also suggest ways

to deal with them. They were, quite frankly and forthrightly, propagandists" (p. 42). Is it true that Hine, Kellogg and Stryker were propagandists, or were they agents of persuasion? The conclusion drawn here is that the documentary approach was both propaganda and persuasion. To pre-judge propaganda as inherently immoral fails to appreciate its positive value to gather and disseminate credible information. Although it was certainly the case that fascist regimes had corrupted the democratic benefit of propaganda by misusing information during the 1930s, not all information rises to the level of propaganda. Carlebach (1988) argues that "Propaganda becomes intrinsically suspect only when it is, by law, the only information permitted, and when its purpose is to deceive rather than to educate" (p. 11). Perhaps Edward Steichen says it best: "Pictures in themselves are very rarely propaganda. It is the use that is made of pictures that makes them propaganda" (p. 24). Hine and Kellogg certainly distanced themselves from the disreputable connotation associated with propaganda. Their work with non-governmental agencies was vital in persuading the American public to acknowledge the country's hidden social problems. Their role was strategically used to persuade the government of the existence of problems it somehow could not see on its own.

Social welfare historian Robert Bremner (1956) believes documentary photography in the 1920s and 1930s played a positive role in shaping American social welfare. The public's yearning for visual evidence led many to develop an implicit trust in documentary photography. Public trust was necessary for documentary photography to inform and persuade:

As the images began to make their way into the public domain via the wire services, magazine articles, traveling exhibitions, and government brochures and handouts, the public began to respond favorably to the photographs and, more importantly, to express their support for at least some of the RA's programs. 'The pictures were working.' (Carlebach, 1988, p. 19)

In conclusion, the challenge for social workers using the documentary approach today is to discern how best to control the social meaning of an image. William Stott (1984) observed

that "the heart of documentary is not style or medium, but always content" (p. 30). Implicit in Stott's view is the notion that propaganda was an act of revolution and photography merely personal expression. Documentary work is unavoidably personal and inextricably expresses an aesthetic perspective. Underscoring the subjective and activist role of documentary photography, Sekula (1989) asserts photographs are not value neutral, but how they are displayed informs their social meaning. Curtis (1989) supports this perspective and goes on to suggest that "a photograph has no inherent or intrinsic meaning—only an assigned meaning" (p. ix). Hine understood well this challenge of advocacy in the pursuit of social justice, "If I could tell the story in words, I wouldn't need to lug a camera" (Walker Evans Project, 2006).

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# Using Social Construction Theory as a Foundation for Macro-Level Interventions in Communities Impacted by HIV and Addictions

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*Many professionals working with people living with HIV and alcohol and other drug addictions rely heavily on micro and mezzo-level interventions. The authors argue that although these approaches are effective for helping people living with some social problems they are too narrow for working effectively with HIV-positive and alcohol and other drug-addicted individuals. The authors use social construction theory to analyze the social problems of HIV/AIDS and addictions and make recommendations for macro-level interventions that may help curtail the dual problems of HIV and addictions.*

*Key words: HIV/AIDS, Alcohol and Other Drug Addictions, Social Construction Theory, Macro Practice*

The HIV epidemic continues to be a major health and social problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2002) the incidence of HIV increased in the United States throughout the 1980s, declined during the

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mid-1990s, then increased again in 2002. The CDC (2002) estimated that there are 385,000 people in the United States living with HIV of whom many have long histories of alcohol and other drug (AOD) use (Rosenberg et al., 1999).

Of the HIV-infected males in North America, most are between the ages of 18 and 44 and contracted the virus by way of same-sex sexual encounters (Catania et al., 2001); however, most of the HIV-positive African Americans and Hispanics contracted the virus through injection drug use (IDU) [CDC, 2002; Karon et al., 2001]. Other reports have indicated the number of HIV cases acquired through heterosexual contact has increased to the point that heterosexually transmitted HIV cases now equal the number of cases attributed to IDU. Additional reports have shown that the transmission of HIV through same-sex sexual encounters, which had formerly been attributed to IDU, may in fact account for a much larger number of cases than had previously been assumed, particularly in the African American community (Lane et al., 2004).

Most of the research on the primary cause of HIV transmission has focused on individual-level risk factors. However, additional research has concluded that individual-level risk factors account for only a small percentage of HIV transmission and that community, or macro-level, risk factors must be considered (Adimora & Newman, 2002; Lane et al., 2004). Moreover, most of the research has been atheoretical and has not advanced any one theory to explain the spread of HIV and AOD addiction, nor has existing research focused on how many Americans view people living with HIV and AOD addictions.

The purpose of this article is to begin filling the gap in the research on the use of Social Construction Theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959; Schneider & Ingram, 1993) with HIV-positive and AOD-addicted individuals; to explain how people living with HIV and with AOD addictions are discriminated against by various members of American society and how policy makers discriminate against people living with HIV and AOD addictions in determining the distribution of funds for health and social services; to describe the growth of HIV and AOD as social problems; and to clarify how social workers can use social construction theory as a theory base for macro-level interventions in their work

with HIV-positive and AOD-addicted individuals.

### Social Construction Theory

Social construction theory is concerned with the processes by which people describe, explain, or account for the world in which they live (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959, 1963; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). The theory postulates that a person's beliefs are created within the social context in which he or she lives and as such his or her knowledge, as a social phenomenon, develops within social interaction (Cheung, 1997).

Berger and Luckmann (1966) viewed social construction as comprised of three stages: externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Externalization is described as the process by which people construct a cultural product or outcome (e.g., becoming HIV positive could be caused by being gay). Objectivation occurs when cultural products take on an objective reality of their own, separate from the people who create them, resulting in being viewed as part of objective reality (e.g., because a person is gay he or she will become HIV positive). Internalization occurs by way of socialization when people in a society learn the "objective facts" of a culture and make these facts part of their everyday, or "internal," consciousness (e.g., taking for granted that becoming HIV positive is directly caused by being gay). Consequently, social realities are continuously being constructed and reconstructed in a dialectic process between individuals interacting with each other and with their social world.

### Discrimination Against People Living with HIV and AOD Addictions

Social constructions also influence policy formation by the ways in which groups in power define particular social problems. Donovan (1993) reported that identifiable groups in a society are infused with culturally constructed positive or negative images that pressure lawmakers to target policies toward, or away from, a given group. The influence of socially constructed images on policy options are positively correlated

with the political power of an identified group. Thus groups with political power benefit by the development and subsequent passing of social policies that provide health and social services which advance their mission.

Groups that are viewed negatively within their society, such as people living with HIV and addictions, are mainly considered deviant, thereby being a burden to the larger group. Perhaps the only advantaged group associated with HIV and addiction is the biomedical research establishment (Donovan, 1993), which benefits from federal funding to advance society's wish that effective treatments, vaccines, and cures be found to deal with HIV and addictions. Social construction theory therefore provides a vehicle to explain how powerful groups develop public policy that promotes the unequal distribution of benefits to themselves and burdens to groups without power (Hoffman, 1990).

Schneider and Ingram (1993) argued that the convergence of political power and social construction creates four types of target populations: advantaged, contenders, dependents, and deviants. Advantaged populations (e.g., the biomedical establishment) are positively constructed and politically powerful, resulting in the likelihood of receiving policy benefits. Contenders (e.g., people living with HIV and AOD addictions who are mobilized, such as gay men's groups including ACT-UP) are target populations that have some political power, but are negatively constructed by large numbers of people. Dependent target populations (e.g., spouses and young children born to parents with HIV and AOD addictions) enjoy a positive social construction (e.g., being viewed as "the innocent victims") yet lack political power. Although policy makers are sympathetic to the dependent group, due to the latter's positive social construction, directing resources toward them is difficult. Deviants (e.g., HIV-positive and AOD-addicted individuals who are not mobilized) are both politically powerless and negatively constructed and are thus the least likely to receive benefits from policy makers (Schneider & Ingram, 1993).

### HIV and Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse

Rosenberger et al. (1993) approximated that 75% of

HIV-infected individuals have abused alcohol and other drugs. Gorman et al. (2004) reported the dramatic increase of “club drug” use such as methamphetamines, Ecstasy, and GHB in tandem with unsafe sex practices as a major concern in the increased incidence of HIV. Meyerhoff (2001) further reported that 29% to 60% of HIV-infected patients develop an AOD addiction at some point during their lives—a rate roughly three times as high as in the general U.S. population. In addition, Petry (1999) concluded that the prevalence of addiction among HIV-infected individuals is nearly 12%—approximately twice the rate of the general population. Others (Windle, 1997; Metzger, Navaline, & Woody, 1998) reported high IDU rates among alcoholics in treatment, which correlate with increased drug-related risk behaviors, such as needle sharing and unprotected sex (Stein et al., 2000). Moreover, others (Boscarino, Avins, & Woods, 1995; Malow, Devieux, & Jennings, 2001; Windle, 1997) concluded that there is a positive correlation between a history of heavy AOD use and a lifetime of high-risk sexual behaviors such as unprotected intercourse, sex with high-risk partners (e.g., IDUs and prostitutes), and the exchange of sex for money or drugs.

Medication compliance is a major concern for HIV-infected AOD-addicted individuals. Researchers (Wagner et al., 2001; Lucas et al., 2002) have found an association between heavy alcohol use, decreased medication compliance, and poorer response to HIV therapy. Lucas et al. (2002) concluded that HIV-related therapy outcomes improved significantly among AOD-dependent persons who stopped using alcohol and other drugs. Consequently, people who are HIV-infected and AOD-addicted often do not adhere to their prescribed medication regimens and are more likely to have unprotected sex unless their alcohol and drug-use problems are addressed.

### *The effects of HIV and AOD on the body*

Medical researchers have long understood the effects of HIV on the body. However, understanding the influence of AOD use on HIV-infected people has only recently been addressed. HIV primarily targets CD4+ cells. CD4+ cells are found in the blood and perform important regulatory immune functions. HIV-infected CD4+ cells replicate the virus and kill

healthy CD4+ cells resulting in a slow decline in the infected person's healthy CD4+ cells, thus leaving the infected person increasingly vulnerable to infections that were formerly controlled by the once healthy immune system (Meyerhoff, 2001).

Other researchers (Bagasra et al., 1993) isolated CD4+ cells from HIV-negative subjects before and after the subject ingested 3 to 9 alcoholic beverages over a two-day period. Isolated HIV-infected cells were found to multiply faster after alcohol consumption, suggesting that alcohol increases the susceptibility of human cells to HIV infection and to damage of the peripheral immune system. It is thus logical that both HIV infection and chronic heavy alcohol consumption have similar and profound effects on the immune system, thus increasing one's susceptibility to some infections associated with HIV, such as tuberculosis, pneumonia, and hepatitis C, which are leading causes of death among HIV-positive people in the United States (Cook, 1998; Fauci & Lane, 2001).

A major concern for people living in low-income neighborhoods who have limited access to health services is that once the HIV virus enters the system and begins to infect CD4+ cells the newly infected HIV individual is highly infective. By having to wait several days for health services at a neighborhood clinic the same individual who also has an AOD addiction may still engage in high-risk sexual behavior, thus possibly infecting others.

### Using Social Construction Theory to Understand Macro-level Interventions in Working with People Living with HIV/AIDS and AOD Addictions

The way that a problem is socially constructed affects how people respond to it. Although HIV is a viral disease like hepatitis B, it was categorized as a sexually transmitted disease like syphilis or gonorrhea (Gilman, 1988). The disease designation is significant because society's commonly understood values continue to define any type of venereal disease and addiction as being morally deviant (Brandt, 1985; Donovan, 1993). The terms that were used in 1990 during the development of the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resource Emergency Act

placed people living with HIV into two groups: those who are "non-deserving" of health care resources (e.g., people living with HIV/AIDS and AOD addictions) and those who are "deserving" (e.g., their wives and children). For example, the Ryan White Act targeted "women with AIDS" and "children with AIDS" as groups deserving health care resources even though children made up only 1.5% and women 10.9% of people living with AIDS, while gay men accounted for 60.7% and ethnic minorities accounted for 71.7% (Donovan, 1993). Donovan (1993) reported the deserving target population (i.e., women and children) brought forth a shift in public consciousness and allowed policy makers the opportunity to provide benefits for that specific group (i.e., the "deserving group"). These discussions eventually became part of our everyday dialogue that led to the decision of who gets needed medical care and who does not.

Because medical care and social services are largely dependent on public policies, social workers who work with people living with HIV and AOD addictions must pay particular attention to which policies legislative bodies pass. Because groups that are viewed by society as non-deserving receive few public funds, they become the groups that often require more intense social work intervention compared to their "deserving" group counterparts. Moreover, because there are fewer services available for the non-deserving populations, social workers must often use macro-level interventions to effect change inasmuch as micro-level interventions do not reach a large enough group of individuals to have a positive impact on their well-being.

Likewise, much of the research on HIV and AOD addictions flowed from the policies that benefited the biomedical establishment, which in turn conducted much of the research. Research that focuses on individual-risk variables is comprised largely of subjects from the deserving groups and is thus more sensitive to the deserving groups' needs. However, the individual-risk variables largely ignore the institutional disadvantages that constrain healthy behavior among non-deserving groups, including people of different races and ethnicities (Link & Phelan, 2002). This is not to say that individual-level risk variables do not play a role in the transmission of HIV, just that they explain only a small percentage of the variance

in HIV transmission among the groups that are viewed as non-deserving of medical care and social services (Adler & Newman, 2002; Lane et al., 2004; Pincus et al. 1998).

*Social construction theory and macro-level intervention*

By explaining which macro-level factors seem to impact both HIV/AIDS and AOD addiction, one must consider the variables known to impact the groups viewed as non-deserving such as people from racial and ethnic minorities who are among the populations most often newly diagnosed with HIV and AOD addictions. Among the most common macro-level variables impacting these groups which require social work intervention are: disproportionate incarceration rates, residential segregation and gang turf, sex ratios that favor men over women, social norms stigmatizing homosexuality, and constraints in access to STD clinic services (Lane et al., 2004).

*Incarceration.* The disparate rates of incarceration are among the more pressing issues for racial and ethnic minorities (Lane et al. 2004). Complicating this problem is that HIV has become the second leading cause of death in U.S. prisons (Berkman, 1995). Maruschak (2001) reported that the inmate population is at least five times more likely to be infected with HIV than the general population. Hammett, Harmon, and Rhodes (2002) estimated that 20% to 26% of all people living with HIV in 1997 spent time as inmates that year. Brewer et al. (1988) calculated a rate of 4.15 HIV infections per 1,000 person years in prison whereas Polonsky et al. (1994) concluded that in Illinois the rate was 25 per 1000 person years in prison.

Roughly 25% of all inmates entering U.S. prisons have injected drugs, which put them at risk for HIV as well as hepatitis B and C (Hammett & Maruschak, 1999). Some of these inmates continue to inject drugs while in prison and share syringes and drugs purchased on the underground prison market (Reingold, Lurie, & Bower, 1993), thus compounding the dual problem of HIV and AOD addictions. Many other inmates across studies report being raped while incarcerated. Robertson (2003) concluded that prisoners are raped an average of nine times during their incarceration. Moreover, prisoners have been found to trade sex for drugs or other items, or to engage in consensual or companionship sexual behavior, which is more often than not unprotected (Hammett, Harmon, & Maruschak,

1999). Wohl et al. (2000) estimated that 90% of the sex in correctional facilities occurs without the use of condoms and that 20% of the males with HIV and 9% of the males without HIV claimed to have had anal sex while incarcerated.

*Residential segregation.* Like incarceration, residential segregation can result in the maintenance of elevated rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Socially isolated individuals choose partners from within their social context and thus transmit infections among fellow members (Friedman & Aral, 2001; Rosenberg, Moseley, & Kissinger, 1999; Youm & Laumann, 2002). Racial prejudice severely limits upward mobility, thus promoting residential segregation, which in turn limits mate selection. Moreover, the prevalence of gangs, which threaten harm to people who enter a turf in which they do not reside, further limits the ability of people to initiate relationships outside of a few narrowly defined neighborhoods (Lane et al., 2004).

*Sex ratios.* Sex ratios have been shown to impact the prevalence and incidence of HIV. Laumann et al. (2004) found that there are fewer males than females among African Americans in Chicago, and Lane et al. (2004) found the same in Syracuse. The uneven sex ratios were associated with males maintaining sexual partnerships with two or more females. Guttentag and Secord (1983) argued that the low male-to-female sex ratio robs women of their bargaining power in relationships. As the number of available men becomes scarcer, each relationship becomes more difficult to secure. Consequently, a woman in such a macro-level context may accept conditions she would not agree to if her bargaining power were greater. In fact, Adimora et al. (2002) found that among over 10,000 women nationally, 21% of African Americans, 11% of Whites, 8% of Hispanics, and 6% of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders were in partnerships in which one of the partners was concurrently in another partnership.

Sex ratio issues within a community could also relate back to the disproportionate incarceration of African American men, as men are more likely to be incarcerated than women, thus skewing the sex ratio. A low male-to-female sex ratio leads to a smaller pool of potential partners from whom to choose and has been found to be associated with the presence of



concurrent partnerships (White & Burton, 1988). There are often significantly more African American women than men of marrying age in many urban areas (Lane et al., 2004). Consequently, that pool consists of a larger number of potentially HIV-infected individuals.

*Homophobic social norms.* Additionally, hidden same-sex encounters (referred to as *Down Low*, *DL*, or *sneaking*) are often found among men of color. These men may not self-identify as gay, homosexual, or bi-sexual and therefore miss being reached by safer sex messages (Lane et al., 2004). Lehner and Chiasson (1998) found that 87% of the men who have sex with men (MSM) also report having sex with women. Due to the twin discriminations of homophobia and racism, African American MSMs in Chicago and Atlanta reported that they feel marginalized by both the African American and the gay white communities (Kraft, Beker, & Stokes, 2000). Churches in the African American and Latino communities, a great source of support for many people, may lead some men to sexual secrecy because of the disapproval these men perceive from clergy and other congregants (Woodyard, Peterson, & Stokes, 2000).

*Constraints in STD clinic services.* Limited STD clinic service hours also serve to increase the rates of HIV in communities. Lane et al. (2004) reported that limited STD clinic hours were associated with long wait periods between the time an individual makes an appointment at an STD clinic and the time he or she is seen at the clinic for services. Because the viral load in the blood of a person recently infected with HIV or another STD is higher immediately post infection, the wait period between making an appointment, being seen at the clinic, and then obtaining appropriate medication puts individuals within the community at greater risk of infection than individuals living in areas with adequate STD clinic services.

## Recommendations and Conclusions

To be effective in their work with people living with HIV and AOD addictions, social workers would be wise to consider macro-level interventions that address problems

known to impact populations at risk of contracting HIV and developing AOD addictions. Among these pressing problems that have not been a focus of macro-level intervention are the disproportionate rates of incarceration, in which African Americans are sentenced to prison more than whites, residential segregation and gang turf that limit upward mobility and permeability of community boundaries, sex ratios that promote concurrent partnerships, social norms that stigmatize homosexuality creating down low activity, and inadequate STD clinic services and hours of operation in various cities.

Social construction theory offers a broad lens through which HIV and AOD addictions can be viewed. By focusing on the variables impacting groups that are viewed as non-deserving, various recommendations for sociologists and social work researchers and practitioners can be made. First, the health care in U.S. prisons has been described as poor (Berkman, 1995). It is therefore important to examine services that could help to curtail the spread of HIV in prisons. One method would be to allow condom distribution. Currently, only six prisons nationwide allow prisoners to have access to condoms. Condom distribution would provide inmates with greater protection from sexually transmitted diseases. Another recommendation would be to allow staff from health care agencies, including STD clinics, access to inmates so as to provide education on sexually transmitted disease prevention and to screen for HIV.

Second, racial segregation has been an ongoing problem in the United States for decades and must continue to be addressed. Proposals for how to eliminate racial segregation have been made by others (see Goetz, 2000). The urban renewal efforts of the 1960s served to isolate many urban neighborhoods, which in turn creates gangs which inhibit the flow of people between and among neighborhoods. Offering decentralized or mobile STD and free clinic services will help to address the problem of neighborhood permeability and its affects on health care access, while allowing residents to address many of the health-related concerns within urban areas.

Third, lawmakers must deal with the criminal adjudication process if the disproportionate rates of incarceration between whites and people of color are to be addressed. All too

frequently racial and ethnic minority groups receive tougher prison sentences than do whites for the same crimes (Rosenthal, 2001). Reducing the disproportionate rates of incarceration will likewise help to reduce the disproportion in sex ratios and increase women's bargaining power in relationships.

Fourth, social norms that perpetuate the negative stereotypes of homosexuality in racial minority communities need to be addressed so as to reduce the down low problem. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and other religious and civic centers are macro-level support systems that can be called upon to encourage their members to use services and to be more cognizant of their healthcare needs (Rosen et al., 2004; Okwumabua, Glover, & Bolden, 2001).

Finally, the lack of access to STD services disproportionately affects disadvantaged groups because many individuals within these groups do not have adequate health insurance or health care providers whom they see for ongoing care (Link & Phelan, 2002; Fleming & Wasserheit, 1999). Decentralized public health clinics and mobile screening teams may increase access to care for people in low-income, high-risk neighborhoods where limited transportation and the presence of gangs are problems.

Individual-level risk factors explain only a small percentage of the incidence in HIV and AOD-addictions. By focusing on macro-level interventions that address neighborhood characteristics such as residential segregation and gang turf, the disproportionate rates of incarceration, norms that stigmatize homosexuality, and the limited access to STD clinic services, social workers will help to reduce the incidence of HIV and AOD addictions, thus removing the stigma associated with non-deserving group status. Sociologists and social work researchers can then evaluate the impact of these interventions and societal views of people affected by HIV and AOD addictions.

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# Risk and Protective Factors of Micronesian Youth in Hawai'i: An Exploratory Study

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*This exploratory, qualitative study examined the risk and protective factors of Micronesian middle and high school students in Hawai'i. Forty one Micronesian youth participated in 9 focus groups that explored their experiences within their schools, families, and communities. The findings describe youths' experiences of ecological stress beginning with their migration to Hawai'i, and the potential outcomes of this stress (e.g., fighting, gangs, and drug use). Cultural buffers, such as traditional practices and culturally specific prevention programs, were described as aspects that prevented adverse outcomes. Implications for prevention practice are discussed.*

Key words: Micronesian, youth, risk, protection, culture



## An Exploratory Study

Youth in many Pacific Island societies suffer from disproportionately high rates of adverse social and behavioral outcomes, such as suicide (Hezel, 1987), drug use (Storr, Arria, Workman, & Anthony, 2004; Wong, Klinge, & Price, 2004), and delinquency (Mayeda, Okamoto, & Mark, 2005). One approach to understanding these phenomena is to examine the individual and environmental factors of Pacific Islander youth that might account for these findings. The purpose of this study was to examine the operative risk and protective factors influencing adverse social and behavioral outcomes of Micronesian youth in Hawai'i. Because these youth have migrated to Hawai'i more recently compared to other Pacific Island groups (e.g., Samoans, Tongans), this study examined the impact of psychosocial and environmental factors at an earlier developmental stage compared to other Pacific Island groups in Hawai'i. Utilizing qualitative methods, this study focused on the impact of cultural context on social and behavioral outcomes among Micronesian youth as reflected through their narratives.

## Literature Review

### *Sociohistorical Context of Micronesia*

Micronesia is comprised of a number of states and countries. The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) consists of four states—Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap. The Marshall Islands, Palau, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are also independent countries within Micronesia. Until recently, most of Micronesia had been under the colonial administration of four countries: Spain from 1885-1898, Germany from 1899-1914, Japan from 1914-1945, and, after World War II, the United States from 1945-1986 (Alkire, 1977). The effect of these multiple administrations was extremely destructive to Micronesia. Many Micronesians suffered from brutal treatment by the occupying Japanese forces, and all were under continual bombardment from American forces, which at the same time imposed blockades that cut islanders off from needed food, supplies and outside contact

(Poyer, Falgout & Carucci, 2004). While the Japanese occupation of Micronesia had been characterized by economic as well as strategic interests, the U.S. initially only had strategic and military interests in mind and did not do much in the way of rebuilding a viable economy. As a consequence, in the eyes of some of those who experienced both Japanese and American administrations, the standard of living under the U.S. from the end of the war to the present has not equaled the economic success made possible under the Japanese (Poyer et al., 2004). These effects linger on today.

In 1986, the Federated States of Micronesia entered into a Compact of Free Association (COFA) with the United States, ending over a hundred years of colonial rule (FSM Division of Statistics, 2002). A provision of COFA is that persons from the FSM, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau (ROP) can enter, live and work in the United States without needing either a visa or a green card (Heine, 2002). Since COFA went into effect in 1986, Micronesian emigration from FSM to Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI), and later, Hawai'i, has increased dramatically, mainly due to economic reasons (e.g., the unavailability of work at home). Most Micronesians who move outside of their home island are those who are under-educated. Educated Micronesians tend to return home and get the best jobs, leaving nothing at home for those with less education (Hezel, 2001). Moreover, over the last ten years or so, the economic situations in FSM and RMI have regressed, necessitating the need to find work elsewhere (Heine, 2002). Other reasons given for migration are better education for children, for medical purposes, and the need to experience progress one might not otherwise get at home (Hezel, 2001).

### *Micronesian Cultural Norms and Context*

Similar to many non-Western cultures, Micronesians tend to value collectivism and interdependence. Micronesians work towards establishing social patterns of interdependence, cooperation, and harmony (Sadao, 2000). Because cooperation and group consensus are valued, community acceptance is an integral characteristic of the Micronesian culture (Sadao, 2000). Confrontation, disagreements, and competition tend

to be avoided. Conflict is associated with negativity, therefore controversial issues are minimized and not openly discussed. For youth, romantic relationships are forbidden by parents because they are viewed as a distraction from school. With romantic interests, youth either obey parents and do not date or disobey parents and date in secret for as long as the relationship remains undiscovered.

A hierarchy of roles exists in each family. Status correlates with one's age, gender, and family name. For example, the eldest male in the household expects to receive the highest respect from all others in the family. These roles are defined culturally and passed down from one generation to the next through integration and participation. Families face life changes upon migrating to Hawai'i. It is common for families to send one or two members at a time over to stay with relatives while parents or grandparents remain in the homeland for various reasons.

Family ties are an important aspect of a collectivist society. Responsibilities are shared through mutual assistance and care for members of society that are less likely to care for themselves. Extended family and community orientation allows children, elderly, and persons with physical and mental disabilities to be cared for by the collective (Sadao, 2000).

### *Micronesian Youth in Hawai'i*

Micronesian youth migrating to Hawai'i face cultural conflict with the Western belief in individualism. Sadao (2000) states that "promoting the inalienable rights of the individual is in direct contrast with the collectivist group orientation found in Micronesian culture" (pp. 23-24). One of the reasons why families migrate to Hawai'i is the desire for the best education and future for their children. Parents move with the assumption that the American way is the most acceptable option for developing individual potential and providing services to children who were segregated and left out of the mainstream of society (Sadao, 2000). Families sacrifice for each other by leaving their home country to pursue the American dream.

Initially, Micronesian students encounter challenges such as language barriers upon migrating to Hawai'i. With their primary language being Chuukese or Marshallese, students

endure years of 'catching up' to learn proper English. As described by Kawakami (1994), language barriers place these youth at risk for substance abuse and dropout in Hawai'i, and they may be at more risk for abuse and neglect.

### *Micronesian Risk and Protective Factors*

This study applies an ecological risk and protective factors model to Micronesian youth. Matsen and Coatsworth (1998) identify two categories of risk factors: (1) challenging life circumstances (e.g., parental drug use, financial stress in the family), and (2) trauma (e.g., death of a parent, family or community violence). Conversely, protective factors are individual or environmental characteristics that enhance a youth's ability to resist stressful life events and promote adaptation and competence (Bogenschneider, 1996). Individual protective factors include problem solving skills, high intelligence, and a strong positive ethnic identity, while environmental protective factors include a sense of community and supportive friends or neighbors (Waller, 2001). The present study utilized focus groups to examine the influence of these factors on Micronesian youth in Hawai'i.

## Method

### *Participants and Procedures*

Nine different focus groups were held, consisting of 41 youth (13 boys and 28 girls). Two of these groups were comprised of only female participants, one was comprised of only male participants, and six of the groups were comprised of both boys and girls. The average group size across schools was 4.6 participants. Smaller focus groups were conducted for several reasons. First, the availability of students during the times of data collection was not consistent or predictable (e.g., after school). Second, based on similar focus group research focused on risk and protection (Waller, Okamoto, Miles, & Hurdle, 2002), smaller focus groups appeared to be more appropriate for the sensitive nature of the research. Finally, smaller groups were more consistent with the cultural norms against individualistic assertion within group settings. Youth participants in the study were sampled from two middle schools (5 groups,

$n=17$ ) and two high schools (4 groups,  $n=24$ ) on the island of Oahu. These schools were located in urban, low income areas. In the 2005-2006 school year, the percentage of students receiving free or reduced cost lunch in the sampled schools ranged from 43.6 to 75.1, while the percentage of students with limited English proficiency ranged from 11.5 to 22.7 (State of Hawai'i Department of Education, 2006). The majority of the youth participating in the study were Chuukese ( $n=24$ ), followed by Marshallese ( $n=15$ ), and Pohnpeian ( $n=2$ ). All groups were of mixed Micronesian ethnicity, except for one group which consisted of only Chuukese students.

This study used a focus group methodology guided by a semi-structured interview schedule. Questions focused on three major areas (school, family, and culture) and two minor areas (violence and substance use). Sample questions in each of these areas are outlined in Table 1. Focus groups were selected, as they are thought to promote a safe environment in which respondents can share ideas, beliefs, and attitudes in the company of peers from the same socioeconomic, ethnic, and gender backgrounds (Madriz, 2000). In each of the schools, a designated school staff member, such as a school counselor or resource teacher, assisted the research staff in recruiting participants and obtaining active parental permission for youth participation in the study. Prior to beginning data collection, the researchers provided an orientation session within each school in order to (1) establish rapport with the participants, (2) explain the purpose of the study and confidentiality procedures, and (3) respond to questions and concerns from the participants. Focus groups occurred during class or after school, and ranged from 60-120 minutes in length. Group facilitators were university-affiliated researchers who were of Asian, Samoan, and Micronesian descent. Participating youth received an incentive of school supplies, which included a 3-ring binder, note pads, and pens. All research procedures were approved by the Committee on Human Studies, University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

### *Analysis*

All focus groups were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. In order to increase rigor, the Principal Investigator (D.M.),

Table 1. Selected Focus Group Questions

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<i>School</i>	
1.	What do you like least/best about school?
2.	Is it easy for you or other Micronesian students to get help in school, if needed?
<i>Family</i>	
1.	Do you (or other Micronesian youth) feel comfortable talking with your parents about your personal issues? Why or why not?
2.	Do Micronesian families move residences a lot? How does this affect youth?
<i>Culture</i>	
1.	Are you able to practice your cultural values?
2.	Are Micronesian youth proud of being Micronesian? Why or why not?
<i>Violence</i>	
1.	Are youth gangs becoming an issue in Micronesian communities? If so, why are youth joining gangs and how do they affect the community?
2.	Do Micronesian youth from different backgrounds get into fights with each other?
<i>Substance Use</i>	
1.	Is drug/alcohol use a big issue among Micronesian youth? If so, why?

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Co-Principal Investigator (S.O.), and an MSW-level graduate research assistant (M.U.) individually coded the data using the guidelines described by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Then, common themes were combined, redundant themes were reduced, and interrelationships between codes were proposed. These interrelationships between codes were then compared with existing theories relevant to culture, risk, and protection.

## Results

### *Migration*

The participants in the study indicated that they recently migrated to Hawai'i predominantly from Chuuk or the Marshall Islands, and a few participants had moved to Hawai'i from Pohnpei. The primary reason that they had for migrating to Hawai'i was for a better education. One Chuukese

participant described the educational system in Chuuk, "The private schools are kind of like good education (sic), but the public schools...they're not good. The students, they don't learn as well."

In other focus groups, participants reiterated that the primary reason for moving to Hawai'i was to attain a better education. However, a number of participants also expressed that their family moved to Hawai'i to attain better health care. This was stated most frequently by Marshallese students, and occasionally by Chuukese students.

D.R.: So first we're just [going to] go over some background stuff. Some of you already said when you came here but do you know why you came here?

Marshallese Female (MF): Better education.

Chuukese Female (CF): Well, I had to come 'cause my brother was sick, right?

D.R.: Okay, so you came for medical reasons?

CF: And then we stayed. So yeah.

Participants also recognized that the Micronesian population in Hawai'i was growing as families moved from different parts of Micronesia for better education, employment, and health care.

MF: The population is increasing every year.

O.O.: Any particular reason?

Marshallese Male (MM): Overcrowded.

MF: I think it's to get better jobs, better lives and...like health.

MF: There's a lot more in the states I never knew. But now finding out that there's a lot more Marshallese around, I'm like "whoah."

Another participant explained that even entry-level jobs in Hawai'i could appear attractive to families in different parts of Micronesia due to imbalances in minimum wage:

MF: 'Cause back home families like—even if you're a doctor you get paid minimum wage. My uncle he's a police officer and he gets 2 dollars an hour. I told him

you can come over here and work at McDonalds for 7 dollars.

The participants' length of stay in Hawai'i ranged from 4 months to 9 years. However, one participant was born in California and had spent time in other parts of the Continental United States and Chuuk before settling in Hawai'i, and another student was born in Oregon, but then moved to the Marshall Islands before moving to Hawai'i. All of them had families that lived in various countries of Micronesia (particularly Chuuk or the Marshall Islands), and some of them were living apart from their parents. Participants who lived apart from their parents lived with extended family members, such as aunties, uncles, or cousins.

### *Ecological Stressors*

*Housing Conditions.* Almost every participant interviewed lived in a low-income housing community and lived in crowded conditions. For example, one participant indicated that she lived with 7 people in an apartment, while another indicated that she lived with "twelve or thirteen" relatives in her apartment. Living with a large number of relatives in small apartments was an extremely common condition among focus group participants. Despite these conditions, participants generally indicated that they enjoyed living with many family members. Several participants even stated they had "fun" living with so many family members.

D.M.: So how you guys like that, living—like for you guys there are eleven people in your house, some of you have twelve. Is that okay or is that normal for you or...

CF: It's okay. It's kind of fun cause we have...plenty people to play with and all that.

However, some participants expressed that living in such conditions was difficult because it was "squishy," and that they lacked privacy.

After moving to Hawai'i, some participants described moving frequently to different communities. One participant described how she moved three times in the course of six years



in Hawai'i, in one case because the housing conditions in which she lived were unacceptable.

D.R.: Three times? Do you know why you moved, or for a better school, or...

CF: Like, I don't know my—the owner's like—they just told us we have to move 'cause they had to rebuild the holes, 'cause it's kind of old, so they had to rebuild it.

Other students stated that moving between different low-income housing communities in Hawai'i came as a result of over-crowding. The apartments in which their families were living were too small for those who were staying there.

Chuukese Male (CM): I lived at KPT (KPT stands for Kuhio Park Terrace, which is a low-income community on the island of Oahu).

D.M.: How come you guys moved to Palolo?

CM: 'Cause the houses over there was small.

D.M.: The houses were too small. How about you? How come you moved from KPT?

MM: We had to move 'cause there was too many people in the house.

D.M.: Too many people in the house?

MM: My aunty and the husband, her kids and—plus us—my mom, and we had to move here.

Some students said moving within Hawai'i was exciting when they were moving to more spacious conditions. However, other students mentioned that moving was sad because they lost friends. Another participant expressed being sad because moving residences within Hawai'i meant moving away from family members. Thus, moving residences within Hawai'i resulted in both positive and negative outcomes for participants. However, more students who changed Hawai'i residences stated that moving was a stressful experience.

*Community Conditions.* Not only did participants talk about moving and living in crowded, sometimes run-down apartments, they also talked more broadly about the neighborhoods in which they lived. As mentioned previously, virtually every participant stated that he or she lived in a low-income housing

community. In describing these communities, participants expressed a wide range of concerns, some of which will be described more extensively in other sections (e.g., fighting and substance use).

Many youth noted that their neighborhoods were dirty, littered with trash, and smelled bad. A number of Chuukese participants expressed these sentiments.

CM: It's kind of messed up on the outside but when you go inside...

CF: There's garbage, my God.

CF: Yeah, there's garbage all around.

CF: It stinks.

CF: Yeah, it stinks too. When you walk on the road, oh my God.

D.R.: What is it?

CF: The garbage.

D.R.: What does it stink of?

CF: The garbage. Yeah they put it on the road, that's why.

Other participants stated that it was common for dirty baby diapers to be on the road, and that trash pick-up was far too infrequent given the amount of trash that was cluttering the community.

Some participants were aware that the amount of trash littering their community was indicative of the fact that some residents lacked respect for the community. In turn, some participants also noted how common it was for young children in the community to act in ways that reflected this lack of community respect. One Chuukese female participant made the following comment: "The little kids, they cuss a lot. I think it's scary. Like, they don't have respect." Many youth also stated that graffiti was very common in their communities.

*Racism.* In some focus group sessions, Micronesian participants had a great deal to say about the racism they dealt with, especially in school. Youth said that students from other ethnic backgrounds made fun of them simply because they were Micronesian. The following exchange between focus group participants exemplifies some of the ways non-Micronesian youth discriminate against Micronesian youth by way of race:

CF: Oh yeah, they tease. Some people they tease Micronesians.

CF: Yeah, especially Samoans.

D.M.: Okay, so what are some things that people say?

CF: They say "microscope."

CF: Or they go, "Microsoft."

CF: Yeah, you know how irritating that is.

Respondents claimed that much of the racism directed toward Micronesian students was the result of cultural differences, such as mannerisms, language, and appearance.

D.R.: What else do they do to tease you guys or put you down?

CM: The way we talk, as Micronesians.

D.R.: Hm?

CF: Yeah. The way we talk.

D.R.: And you said racist? Can you expand on that? Like how, I know you said something earlier but—with the other students...

CF: It's just the way that students react to us. Look at Micronesians.

MF: They look down on us.

D.R.: How do they do that?

MF: Say I see something and I pronounce it wrong and they still tease Micronesians for it. Whatever.

MF: Or by the way we dress.

MF: I can be so "Micro."

MM: Yeah, and when we try to talk to each other people just come around and [say] "Hey, speak English. Speak properly."

Respondents also described how teachers' expectations of Micronesian students were also influenced by racist stereotypes, and how these expectations affected their treatment of these students.

CF: Like, when [teachers] ask you a question, you have to answer it, you cannot say you do not know.

S.O.: Really?

CF: They say it's third grade English.

With this description, she suggests that some teachers embarrass their Micronesian students by pointing out the simplicity of the class material (e.g., third grade level English) if these students are uncomfortable participating in class. When asked why some teachers treat them so poorly, one student stated "maybe it's because they don't know how to deal with us. They don't know what we do and stuff like that."

### *Fighting*

Participants described the prevalence of fighting not only among themselves, but between other ethnic groups in their schools. For example, two Chuukese students (one male and one female) described fighting between Micronesian and Samoan youth in their school.

D.M.: What kind of things do Micronesian [youth] need help with sometimes?

CM: Students fight a lot.

D.M.: Like, who are the fights between?

CM: Micronesians and Samoans.

D.M.: Why is that? How come?

CF: 'Cause people tease their background.

D.M.: How do they tease their background? What do people say?

CM: Like they hate the Micronesians [because they] talk badly, and that [Micronesians] hate the Samoans, and [Samoans] argue and fight.

Within a different school, participants described similar incidents between Micronesian and Samoan youth.

S.O.: What else do you like least about this school?

MF: Fighting.

S.O.: Tell me about the fighting.

MF: There's a lot, it's seriously bad fighting.

S.O.: Who's doing the fighting?

MF: Mostly the Polynesians.

S.O.: Specifically...

MF: Samoans.

S.O.: Do the Samoan kids pick on the Micronesian kids?

MF: Not all. Only like some, they tease us and stuff.

Some of the participants in the study claimed that they “felt bad” or were “embarrassed” by the fighting, and one participant suggested that “learning more about Micronesian culture” might decrease fighting for these youth.

Participants also mentioned that clashes between Chuukese and Marshallese youth against Samoan youth were somewhat common outside of school. Moreover, it was stated that fighting frequently transpired when youth who had resided in Hawai'i for a longer time period would pick on youth who had just immigrated here. Thus, fighting was not only based on ethnic conflicts, but it could also be based on immigration or acculturation status. Participants also indicated that gangs were a problem for some Micronesian youth. These gangs were either multiracial, having to do more with a claimed affiliation, or comprised solely of Micronesian youth.

D.M.: What about gangs?

CM: [We] have these gangs in the valley. [They're] called TBK, PVB, ASB, get all kinds.

D.M.: Do you know that those stand for?

CM: Yeah. TBK is True Born Kriminals, that the one walking around smoking weed. PVB [stands for] Palolo Valley Boys, ASB [stands for] A Street Boys, [and] LMC [stands for] Little Micronesians Crew.

D.M.: Little Micronesians Crew?

CM: That's the one.

### *Substance Use*

Participants described the prevalence of drugs within their communities. They claimed that alcohol use was fairly prevalent among Micronesian youth. Participants commonly stated that Micronesian students in middle school who drank alcohol did so because they were emulating older teens and hoping that their consumption of alcohol (or other gateway drugs) would lead to being accepted by the other adolescents.

D.M.: Do your parents talk to you guys about things like drugs and gangs?

CM: Yeah. They told us not to take drugs, but some of the Chuukese people [use them].

D.R.: Do you see a lot of that in [your] neighborhood?

CM: Yeah.

D.R.: What do you see?

CM: Like, people walking around...

CF: Drinking.

CM: Drinking [and] smoking.

D.M.: Like, [at] what age?

CM: Like my age and up. Sixth grade and up.

Respondents also described how Micronesian youth in Hawai'i are at risk for experimentation with a variety of different drugs at an early age.

CF: For Chuukese, I think it's drinking.

CF: And tobacco.

D.R.: Smoking cigarettes and weed. What else?

CF: Copenhagen.

D.R.: Chewing tobacco.

CF: Yeah.

D.M.: Is it mostly adults or mostly...

CF: Even young kids. Mostly young.

D.R.: Like how old are they?

CF: Intermediate.

CF: Between thirteen and...

CF: Even, I think in elementary yeah, sixth grade.

D.M.: Why are they doing drugs that early?

CF: They think it's cool.

CF: They're getting it from their cousins.

Youth participants went on to say that substance use affected their community in very negative ways.

D.R.: So how does that [alcohol] affect your community? Where you live, is that a big problem? You know, alcohol?

CF: It is to my parents. My parents get scared but I don't 'cause I know the people.

MF: In my neighborhood, one time we were sleeping, and they just like, throw rocks at our windows. My dad he was not scared so he was ready to—he was gonna start something. My mom was like "oh just leave it, call the police." And I was watching TV and I was sleeping in the living room, and that's where they threw the

rocks. I was screaming! That's why I don't like that neighborhood.

When asked about what should be done about drug use with these youth, participants did not seem to have many clear or feasible recommendations. One Chuukese male stated that his community needed "to keep the drug people away" but did not know how to go about doing this. Many youth expressed the desire for greater police enforcement. However, youth had difficulty coming up with suggestions for prevention.

### *Cultural Buffers*

*Traditional Practices.* Participants described how they continued to engage in traditional Micronesian cultural activities while in Hawai'i. These activities functioned to provide a sense of community and cultural pride for Micronesian youth. Participants in one school described how these activities occurred during holidays and special events.

S.O.: So let's talk about Micronesian culture. Do you still practice Micronesian culture here in Hawai'i?

MF: Yes. [At] Christmas we do this...I don't know what they call it in English, but you get into a group of people and you do this dancing. Some kind of dancing.

S.O.: Is that what the rest of you guys do too?

CM: Yeah.

S.O.: What else do you do here that is traditionally Micronesian?

CF: Chuukese funeral. And New Years.

S.O.: So it sounds like holidays and special events are basically times when your culture comes out. Are these things important [to you]?

CF: Yes.

Members within other groups discussed attending church services and singing religious songs as ways of celebrating Micronesian culture. Another group of students described how they celebrated events occurring in Micronesia while living in Hawai'i.

D.M.: Do you guys have gatherings where you do cultural stuff?

CF: Yeah.

CM: Yeah.

D.M.: When does that happen?

CF: When you have [a] new...

CM: When [we] get a new government.

CF: Yeah, in Chuuk.

CM: So, we go celebrate in KPT.

D.M.: So, you celebrate in KPT? Oh, so when something happens back in Chuuk, you celebrate it here?

CM: Yeah.

*Culturally Specific Prevention Programs.* One of the high schools in our study attempted to build upon the social networks of Micronesian students by providing them with an after school drug and violence primary prevention program. The program provided a setting in which these students could get together and share experiences, meet one another and formulate friendships. One student stated that “[the club] really helps us” by teaching communication and socialization skills. The program was a way to bring familiar customs, traditions, language and culture to one another while being away from their home, and provided opportunities for older Micronesian students to mentor younger ones within the school setting. Regarding mentorship, one Chuukese female participant indicated that the program should utilize older, more acculturated Micronesian students to provide assistance, such as language translation or expectations related to acculturation, to newly migrated or younger Micronesian students. She suggested that this would help to facilitate their successful transition to school.

## Discussion

This study used a focus group methodology to examine the unique risk and protective factors of Micronesian youth in Hawai‘i. Using Micronesian youth as experts, we sought their perspectives related to the challenges and issues that they face in their families, schools, and communities. Based on our findings, much of the risk appeared to originate from their recent migration status to Hawai‘i. This event placed ecological stress on Micronesian families, as they dealt with issues such as



language barriers and poverty. These familial stresses placed Micronesian youth at risk of adverse health consequences, such as school violence and alcohol and drug use. Facing these risks, Micronesian youth indicated that their knowledge and practice of their culture, and participation in programs intended to promote this knowledge, is one way to prevent adverse health outcomes.

### Implications for Prevention

The findings from this study suggest several approaches to prevention practice. Since their recent migration status is proposed as the origin of their adverse health outcomes, social agencies and schools should attempt to identify recently migrated Micronesian families and front-load services to these families in order to prevent future family and youth issues. Some of these services might include financial assistance, vocational training, job placement for parents, and culturally specific, school-based drug and violence prevention programs for youth. Regarding the latter programs, they should focus on ethnic pride and cultural practices of Micronesian youth, in order to make them relevant to their beliefs and values. School-based prevention efforts such as those described by the respondents are examples of ways in which Hawai'i public schools have attempted to meet the unique needs of Micronesian youth, rather than merely expecting these youth to conform to the social norms of their non-Micronesian peers. These programs function as an important transitioning agent for these youth as they adjust to the norms and expectations of Hawai'i public schools.

Addressing issues like poverty and community disorganization is a major systemic task that requires greater state and even federal commitment. Micronesian families living in low-income housing communities and acculturating to local norms (and often times coping with severe health problems) cannot be expected to take the lead on community mobilizing efforts. Leaders within Micronesian communities should be sought out by public officials and local, more established community leaders in order to make these low-income communities more acceptable places for youth to grow and mature.

Finally, schools and community based agencies may need to provide education to teachers, students, and the broader community as to why so many Micronesian youth are now migrating to Hawai'i. Many Micronesian families are moving to Hawai'i for the same reasons that other ethnic groups have settled here—improved education and better employment opportunities. But Micronesian families are also moving here because they need advanced health care that can better assist them in coping with the long-term ramifications of American nuclear testing during the post-World War II era. Our data suggest that students in general are in need of interventions that subdue racial stereotyping so that the burden of dealing with such racism is not placed solely on Micronesian youth.

### Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in its generalizability to the Micronesian youth population and language barriers during data collection. This study was comprised primarily of youth from Chuuk and the Marshall Islands (and a few students from Pohnpei), and because of this, its findings may not be generalizable to youth from other states in the Federated States of Micronesia, or Palau. Poyer et al. (2001) describe the diversity in Micronesian experiences, including the sociocultural, linguistic, and historical diversity of these island groups. Further, respondents in the study described the variability within each island cluster (e.g., Chuuk). These differences contribute to the cultural complexity of the region, and subsequent variability of experiences of the youth who have migrated to Hawai'i. Language barriers between interviewers and participants were also a limitation of this study. Several participants had limited comprehension of the English language, and therefore needed to rely on other group members to translate their responses. This process may have affected the validity of some of the findings.

### Conclusions

This study illustrates the modern day effects of historical colonization, and the sacrifices and struggles of a newly

migrated population in the Pacific. Micronesian youth in this study described how their families envisioned a better educational and health care system in Hawai'i, but did not anticipate many of the ecological stressors associated with their migration. Culturally specific prevention programs focused on fostering a sense of community among Micronesian youth may function as buffers toward antisocial behaviors, promoting effective acculturation to Western norms and values for these youth. Community education about the Micronesian population in Hawai'i may also be a way of addressing racism at a societal level, and may also promote awareness of the unique social needs of this population.

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## Book Reviews

Kimberly J. Morgan. *Working Mothers and the Welfare State: Religion and the Politics of Working-Family Policies in Western Europe and the United States*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006. \$22.95 papercover.

The seeds of American democracy, as well as the social welfare system, were sown in the religious ethos of the early settlers. Many of us are aware of the role of the Pilgrims and Puritans in laying the groundwork for a harsh criminal justice system. What we might be less aware of is the fact that religious forces also played a role in shaping the dimensions of the welfare state in European nations as well. Whether or not mothers of small children should be encouraged by the state to work outside the home is the key question with which this book wrestles. Comparing the policies of four countries—France, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States—political scientist Kimberly Morgan shows that the differences derive from differences in cultural value orientations.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the politics of women's employment and argues for a temporal perspective on the welfare state. This perspective enables us to understand the political actions that affect social policies and how they evolved out of the political cleavages of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. We learn that in France and Sweden, religious authorities were subordinated to secular ones while in the Netherlands and the United States, social conservatives gained influence over politics and developed policies consistent with the espousing of the traditional gender roles. In the former two countries, secular state authorities held full sway. Approval was greatest for wage-earning mothers to thrive through the acceptance of

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an activist role of the state in providing the resources such as high quality child care to enhance active work roles for mothers of small children. On the other hand, in the Netherlands and the United States, religious influence favored the male-breadwinner and female-caregiver ideals. The Netherlands favors a system in which the women in question work part time but, like all Dutch workers, are provided with wages and benefits comparable to that of full-time workers.

Chapter 2 analyzes politics and policies historically, tracing the origins of policies to the role of religion in the society. In the nineteenth century, public provision of social welfare was minimal. To the extent that help for mothers was espoused, the focus was on enabling the woman to stay home. The expansion of mass education, which occurred at this time, aroused opposition from the churches. The way this conflict was resolved had significant impact on the early structures of the welfare state. In France, the conflict between the Catholic clergy and secular forces was resolved in favor of the secular with the result that family policy became oriented most strongly around the needs of the child. Generous maternity leave benefits and family allowances were provided. In Sweden, in contrast, there was no such conflict: the Lutheran Church simply became an extension of the state apparatus with clergy becoming mere civil servants of this apparatus. Later the strong role of the government was duplicated in the areas of social welfare. When Sweden's birthrate became too low to be sustainable in the 1930s, a wide variety of family supports was developed.

Unlike Sweden, Dutch society was divided into Protestant and Catholic constituencies. Schools were often administered by religious organizations. The impact on social welfare was that privately funded services became the norm for other social services as well. Religious divisions in the American colonies had a unique outcome: church and state were separated back in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Public schools were placed under local control. An effort to prevent single motherhood led to the stigmatizing of welfare programs and to little state assistance for most poor families.

Chapter 3 takes us into the 1960s and 1970s, a time of rapidly growing social awareness and expression of discontent. We learn from this chapter that a shift from the

male-breadwinner model was evidenced as labor shortages, rising rates of women seeking higher education, and value changes began to propel more women in all of these countries into the work force. While the U.S. pursued its own path toward privatization, Sweden moved toward a universal breadwinner model. France, meanwhile, favored support for women's employment and mothers at home. Dutch society was slow to change until the 1990s.

The focus of the fourth chapter is on child care in Sweden and France. As Morgan reports, a major policy development came in 1989 in Sweden with an expansion of parental leave to 15 months at 90% pay for 12 months. Parents of young children were then allowed to work a six-hour day. Swedish men were included in the parental leave policies. In contrast, the focus in France was on mothers, not fathers.

Chapter 5 discusses developments in the United States such as unpaid family leaves while chapter 6 describes the system of child care that evolved in the Netherlands.

Child care in the U.S. is mostly provided through the private sector. The influence of the evangelical religious groups and a market-based approach to work and family are key defining characteristics. The focus is on forcing mothers on welfare to work. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, instead of developing an extensive child care program, the government passed measures to encourage mothers of young children to engage in part-time work, mostly to stay at home.

Morgan summarizes her main arguments in the conclusion of the book. She states that it contributes to providing a cross-cultural perspective on the welfare state and in showing how religion has shaped the foundation of this state. These are the strengths of the book. The value of her contribution is chiefly as a reference book for scholars pursuing an investigation of this topic. References are up to date and wide-ranging. Although exhaustively researched and written, the book, in my opinion, is too narrowly focused to serve as a textbook or for supplemental readings in a college course. Its major findings, in fact, could be summarized in far fewer pages. Moreover, the fact that the religious history only goes back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be considered a major shortcoming, inasmuch as the attitudes that differentiate the U.S. from Europe probably have



their origins in the Reformation. The contemporary material will probably be of considerable interest to the reader. One suggestion that might have made the reading more enjoyable is for the author to have interjected the description of national policies with personal narratives and interviews, newspaper clippings, and the like. Women who had lived in more than one system—Americans who moved to France, for example, or Swedes who moved with their young children to the United States, could relate their experiences; such accounts would have livened up the content and made it more relevant and meaningful for the reader.

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Delbert S. Elliot, Scott Menard, Bruce Rankin, Amanda Elliot, William Julius Wilson and David Huizinga. *Good Kids from Bad Neighborhoods: Successful Development in Social Context*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. \$80.00 hardcover, \$30.99 papercover.

Although youth development is a highly investigated topic, research into youth in poor neighborhoods has often focused on relative disadvantage and negative outcomes. There has been substantial work outlining the difficulties youth from these neighborhoods face as they transition through adolescence and into adulthood. Low educational attainment and high rates of problem behavior have become common characteristics associated with youth from low income neighborhoods. Researchers have focused on how contextual factors related to neighborhoods, family, school, and peer group contribute to these outcomes; however, seldom has anyone examined these contextual influences in tandem.

In this important work, Delbert Elliot and his colleagues attempt to understand the multiple contextual influences on youth development. They address how youth manage to succeed given the difficult circumstances of their disadvantaged neighborhoods. The book extensively describes the results of a multi-site study examining youth development in neighborhoods in Denver and Chicago. The initial chapter

provides a brief introduction to the topic and to the study, though the authors could have expanded their discussion of past research. The second chapter continues laying the framework for the book as it outlines the study, including data sources, sampling, and measures. There is a detailed and impressive description and definition of neighborhoods. Chapter three finishes the introduction, as it defines neighborhood effects and the conditions of good and bad neighborhoods.

After providing this foundation, the book launches into a discussion of findings in chapters 4-8, building the explanatory model and adding contextual effects, including neighborhood, family, school, and peer group. Each chapter outlines the existing research on the context and then presents neighborhood-level and individual-level effects on development. Chapter 9 presents the full model, incorporating the multiple contexts previously described, neighborhood, family, school, and peer. Chapter 10 provides conclusions and suggests implications for programs and policy. An appendix provides detailed analysis tables for the interested reader.

The conclusion of the book suggests that neighborhood influence on outcomes at the individual level is modest; most individual level variation occurs within neighborhoods rather than between neighborhoods. The study suggests a range of variation in parenting, school, and peer context within neighborhoods, rather than supporting the notion that positive contexts are only found within certain types of neighborhoods. Additionally, the combined effect of these multiple contexts has an even stronger impact on youth development than individual context. Further, there appears to be a stronger effect of positive parent, school, and peer contexts within disadvantaged neighborhoods than in advantaged neighborhoods. Social class was not strongly associated with who was and who was not successful within disadvantaged neighborhoods; though race, particularly for Hispanic and African American youth, does put youth at risk for poor developmental outcomes. Finally, it is important to note that the vast majority of youth in the study, including those from disadvantaged neighborhoods, appear to be doing well on measures of positive youth development. These findings have enormous implications for sociology and social welfare, as it challenges the

notion that adolescents in disadvantaged neighborhoods are condemned to poor outcomes.

Although the authors provide a strong and compelling study, the book's primary weakness stems from the relatively short outline of the book and the minimal discussion of placing this study within the current research context. The authors do not do an adequate job preparing the reader for what's to come and suggesting how this study pushes our thinking on youth development beyond the current literature. The study itself could have been strengthened through the use of longitudinal data, additional sample sites, and additional variables that capture characteristics of social capital in neighborhoods.

However, the book's strengths lie in its attempts to grapple with the complex contextual issues affecting the lives of adolescents. The authors go beyond the one-dimensional approach as their work articulates and tests a framework for understanding the impact of multiple contexts on youth development. Additionally, the authors address not just whether neighborhood influences youth development, but what the contextual mechanisms are through which this occurs. As they provide this important study in helping us understand youth development, they also push the field of social inquiry to consider the influence of multiple contexts on all aspects of life.

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Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal.  
*Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches.*  
Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006. \$35.00  
hardcover, \$18.00 papercover.

*Polarized America* is a political science book that joins the burgeoning list of academic and popular writing about the growth of economic inequality in the United States. This

volume, however, has a slightly different twist. Instead of merely describing income inequality, the authors seek to correlate it with the evidence of political polarization in Congress. Using a sophisticated quantitative procedure that enables them to track congressional voting records over time, they contend that rising income inequality and a Congress of ideological extremes has replaced the declining inequality and political consensus of post-World War II America. Although the correlation they note is indisputable, much of their broader argument is misguided. At this point in U.S. politics, a return to the 'moderates' they yearn for—Sam Rayburn, John Heinz, Dan Rostenkowski, and Sam Nunn—would further exacerbate the trend toward the greater income inequality they so decry.

By now, however, virtually everyone except the far right has come to accept the evidence of growing income inequality. In 1967, the ninety-fifth percentile of the income distribution earned six times what the twenty-fifth percentile did; by 2003, this differential had expanded to 8.6. Meanwhile, median family income increased from \$31,400 in 1967 to \$42,200 in 2000. This latter statistic actually understates the trend to income inequality, because the authors chose 1967, and not 1973, the high point of American equalitarianism, as the baseline year. Moreover, even if median income did increase, it is the widespread entry of women into the workforce as well as the spurt at the top that drove the median upward. Indeed, other studies have noted that in 2004, the bottom 60 percent of all Americans received 95 percent of what they earned in 1979. Statistics like these cast doubt on one of the authors' core assumptions that even while income disparity soared, workers rejected redistributive policies because many benefited from "a period of increasing prosperity."

No comparable soft spots mar the authors' analysis of polarization in the U.S. Congress. For them, the quintessential political vignette is what happened to a single Pennsylvania Senate seat. In 1991, after a plane crash killed three-term Republican moderate John Heinz, the seat was occupied first by Harris Wofford, a liberal who ran on platform of national health insurance, and then in 1994, by Rick Santorum, one of the most conservative members of the House of Representatives. Even if the 2006 election of moderate Democrat Bob Casey, Jr. partly

spoils the tidiness of this vignette, their evidence of political polarization is compelling. In their detailed analysis of voting patterns, for example, the authors find some overlap between the members of the Republican and Democratic parties during the 1960s. But over the next forty years, the parties diverge, so that by the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress (2003-2004), no Democrat voted to the right of any Republican, and no Republican voted to the left of any Democrat.

It is the loss of this center in American politics that most concerns the authors. Their concern is revealing, but if their purpose is actually to redistribute income, the reestablishment of a bipartisan center is not the way to do it. After all, with the shift of both parties to the right, this center would merely perpetuate the same neoliberal, market-driven policies that have already spurred the growth of income inequality. The authors may desire to go back to the future, but the American political economy has changed, and a return to the relatively stable post World War II capitalism that raised everyone's income is not likely.

This point highlights the fundamental problem with the authors' perspective. In essence, their entire book consists of two mutually interrelated variables—income inequality and political polarization. The big mistake they make is thinking that these two variables cause one another, when, in fact, each flows from a prior cause—broadly speaking, changes in the American political economy that have given rise to them both. In passing, the authors do acknowledge the existence of alternative explanations about income inequality: factors such as trade liberalization, immigration and the establishment of a global labor market, declining rates of unionization, and losses in the value of minimum wage. Nevertheless, they quickly discard these “exogenous” explanations in order to focus on “the public policies produced in the American political system.” Even if it is not completely wrong to say that politics produces more politics, something is clearly missing.

Until the rise of “political science” departments in the 1920s, political economy was an established university course. Political science courses separated politics from economics and turned politics into a subject with observable laws. Although *Polarized America* does contain some valuable insights, it is still

most memorable for its illustration of the intellectual damage that this separation continues to inflict.

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Lorraine T. Midanik. *Biomedicalization of Alcohol Studies: Ideological Shifts and Institutional Challenges*. New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction, 2006. \$ 39.95 hardcover.

From the first pages of Lorraine Midanik's thoughtful and thought provoking book, one senses a commitment to coming to terms with some of the major policy and practice and educational challenges of our times, having to do with the role of science, the role of government and the role of money in understanding addiction generally, and the social context and the social construction of social problems, especially as they relate to alcohol studies. Underlying the thesis is a larger concern about the current state of social science research, not only in alcohol studies, but more generally the health sciences. At the outset Midanik tells the reader that the purpose of the book is "to describe, assess and critique biomedicalization and its influence as a larger social trend on the health field." The book is divided into seven chapters, five of which are concerned with various facets of biomedicalization, as she sees it: its definition; history; its relation to public health; and the carefully documented paradigm shift under the rubric of alcohol studies. Midanik, a scholar of repute in the alcohol studies arena, and a public health scientist at the University of California's School of Social Welfare, brings to the table considerable acumen with respect to her arguments. The remaining two chapters address two related topics. Chapter six offers a case study of alcohol related research in Sweden where Midanik undertook a Fulbright in 2004. Chapter seven is an essay reflecting the dilemma facing the social sciences more generally in terms of biomedicalization.

So what is *biomedicalization* and why is it problematic?

To begin with, Midanik tells the reader that biomedicalization is neither inherently good nor bad but is without question a major social trend in such fields as psychiatry, medicine, aging, women's health, and mental health, as well as alcohol and drug studies, broadly defined. She then argues that central to biomedicalization is an "increased reliance on new technology and medications," accompanied by a shift from taking into consideration social factors as significant components of health or disease to a more narrowly focused, individualized conception. The salient domains—technology, medicalization, control, individuation at the expense of a more ecological or environmental context of understanding health, in addition to the role of market forces—represent recurrent themes throughout the book which the author develops and elaborates. In short, while biomedicalization, per se, may be neither inherently good nor bad, the devil is in the details, and she warns us 'beware.' The book elaborates these themes and argues at the end of the day that biomedicalization, in fact, may not necessarily be a value neutral concept after all, particularly given the way it has become engaged and used by a convergence of political, social and economic interests who have much to gain by its hegemony. Midanik accompanies this story with many notable historical vignettes and scholarly references to the sociology of health and deviance.

In sum, the book is a good read and one that clearly merits attention from those concerned not only about alcohol or drug studies, public health, or social science, but from anyone in policy, education or a practice arena concerned about trends and the processes and dynamics which inform those trends. In addition, the book is replete with interesting and, at times, fascinating historical notes, such as the reference to the Washingtonian Movement of the 1840s as a precursor to the 12 Step Movement of a century later, among others. The chapter on alcohol research in Sweden was likewise very interesting and this reviewer would have liked to have seen a bit more detail with respect to epidemiology of alcohol use and abuse in that country and a bit more discussion of the Nordic model in cultural context. One cannot help but wonder about current changes, and whether they are being brought about not only by entrance to the European Union alone, but also

demographic and cultural changes, as Sweden in particular becomes less culturally homogeneous?

In conclusion, Midanik is to be commended for her effort; she has undertaken a daunting challenge here—one that she brings off with a considerable degree of success. The book is clearly written, well considered and well documented in addition to being timely and of great currency.

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Peter Schrag. *California: America's High Stakes Experiment*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006. \$24.95 hardcover, \$16.95 papercover.

The story of California is often related as the signal expression of post-World War II American optimism. Writers have depicted California as the bellwether that previews the American future. Peter Schrag tells us in *California: America's High Stakes Experiment*, that it is very difficult to predict California's future because it presently faces an array of profound difficulties in the context of a rapidly diversifying and disunited population and a dysfunctional political system. Moreover, Californians have saddled themselves with political and fiscal constraints that make the solution of large-scale problems seem nearly impossible.

Some time in 1999, just around the anniversary of the Gold Rush, California became the first State with a majority/minority population. By 2001 more than half of the babies born in California were Latino. It is projected that by 2010 Latinos will become the largest single ethnic group in the State. There is also growing and diverse population of Asians including Chinese, Indian, Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodians and other groups.

The national fight over immigration arguably began in California, where some leaders contend that the presence of low-skilled, mostly undocumented migrants benefits the economy by providing a workforce willing to engage in menial



labor and contribute tax revenue, particularly to social security. This workforce is also unable to claim benefits, and it keeps prices low for the rest of us. Others assert that young Latino families utilize more services than they pay for in taxes and that the presence of this population substantially hurts low-skilled Americans, who would take the jobs that "Americans do not want," if this work paid a living wage.

As a young immigrant population begins to dominate the State's labor pool, levels of academic preparation are falling. The question arises as to whether the future workforce of the State will be sufficiently productive to support services for the enormous Baby Boom population as it retires. The reasons for this decline in achievement may be largely attributed to a marked decline in the quality of education offered to the children of the new immigrants.

California, once one of the highest spending States for education, has fallen into the bottom tier. This situation, in turn, stems from the current political reality in which the largest group of voters in the State is older whites who are unwilling to support increased taxes to enhance education and other services for young non-whites. In effect, Schrag argues, Californians are divided, and the result is political stalemate and a failure to invest in the future.

Schrag documents how a conservative reaction to the growth-oriented policies of the 60s culminated in the 70s with the passage of Proposition 13, which froze real estate taxes, resulting in massive cuts in services and education. Proposition 13 was part of a new trend in California of government by plebiscite, whereby citizens groups increasingly made end runs around the State legislature, turning to the people through the initiative process. A series of propositions passed in the last 30 years included provisions increasing prison sentences, reducing class sizes, guaranteeing school budgets, limiting services to immigrants and limiting legislative terms. Many of these propositions had unanticipated budgetary and political impacts.

Perhaps the most stunning example of direct rule by the voters was the 2003 recall of Governor Gray Davis and the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger. However, when the movie star Governor attempted to use the initiative to reverse a leftward

trend in California politics and provide a conservative policy framework he was soundly defeated. Schrag asserts that the current balance of political forces in the State seem to prevent movement in any direction.

Conservative policies are defeated by the power of unions and the left-leaning cities. Liberal ideas cannot advance because of the requirement of a two-thirds majority to pass the State budget and most tax increases. Any attempt to reverse or modify popular propositions like 13 and three strikes through the initiative process faces inevitable defeat, and often political retribution for sponsors.

The book provides a clear and detailed overview of the political and social environment of California today. The tone is journalistic, which makes the book quite readable, although sometimes the level of detail seems to distract from the central themes. While the book succeeds as political history, Schrag is unable to point toward a way forward through the current quagmire. He suggests that a new narrative is needed to unite the disparate population of the State, but he fails to reveal the shape of that narrative or the process by which it could emerge.

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John Gerring. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. \$70.00 hardcover, \$24.99 papercover.

John Gerring, an Associate Professor of political science at Boston University, has written a thoughtful monograph on the case study method in social research. This is not a "how to" guide, but rather an exploration of the scientific merits of case study research and how it is situated within the tradition of causal inference and generalization. The book presents categorizations and typologies of case study types and techniques (both quantitative and qualitative) that are firmly rooted in previous research, yet the organization of the material is quite

innovative.

The first chapter sets the stage by questioning the distinction between observational and experimental research designs, as a foil to the typical criticism that case study research is “merely” observational, a perfect storm of weak design and subjective conclusions. Taking a cue from John Stuart Mill (quoted later in the book) that “...there is, in short, no difference in kind, no real logical distinction, between the two processes of investigation,” Gerring sets out to integrate this dichotomy, evaluating various approaches to the case study with a foot on both sides of the line—the evidentiary criteria of experimental design, along with the convincing knowledge that can be gained only from careful observation.

The remaining six chapters are organized under two parts: Thinking about Case Studies (Chapters 2 and 3) and Doing Case Studies (Chapters 4-7). Chapter 2 explores the definition of a case study, no small task given the various uses of the term in research, the business literature, and in near-synonyms such as single subject design. In this book, “case” refers to “a spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time or over some period of time.” “Case study” entails the study of a single case or multiple cases, but few enough in number to allow intensive study. A larger number would constitute cross-case research, what we usually think of as quantitative research with statistical hypothesis testing. Since the author views a single case as representative of a larger population (even if only implied) and often consisting of large N “within-case” observations, cross-case analysis strategies also have a role to play in many of the analytic strategies of the book. Whereas other advocates of case study research prefer a sharper distinction, Gerring views experimental design and large N research as logical extensions of the case study.

After a preliminary introduction to Part II, chapters 5 and 6 constitute the heart of the monograph. Chapter 5, “Techniques for Choosing Cases,” describes a typology of case-selection techniques, a major contribution of the book. I use the word *typology* since the labels and descriptions of the nine techniques also double as descriptors of specific types of cases. The techniques address how to choose a case (sample) among the population of alternatives. The nine techniques—case types are:

typical, diverse, extreme, deviant, influential, crucial, pathway, most-similar, and most-different. In the most-similar technique, for example, two or more cases are similar in various ways but differ, surprisingly, in an outcome measure. Examples of each are given, along with an assessment of the techniques' strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter 6 shows how to construct a case study design that addresses causal or correlational relationships among the variables of interest. The template refers to a very useful two-by-two matrix showing the extent to which the research question implies temporal (longitudinal) variation vs. spatial variation (comparison of two or more cases). The four cells of the matrix contain the research designs labeled dynamic comparison (both temporal and spatial variation), longitudinal comparison (temporal but not spatial variation), spatial comparison (spatial but not temporal variation), and counterfactual comparison (neither temporal nor spatial, mainly a "what if" scenario, quite common when there are no feasible comparison cases or when there is insufficient time to have observed the effects of events over time).

The final chapter covers the "detective work" of research—uncovering the underlying mechanisms or pathways from factors to outcomes. This chapter is reminiscent of program evaluation methods espoused by Peter Rossi and Huey-Tsyh Chen, linking process and outcome measures theoretically with the use of logic models. Explaining a single outcome is the subject of an "Epilogue: Single-Outcome Studies." Gerring likens this process to an unfortunately outdated (1939) definition of social case work—analyzing the data to arrive at a diagnostic formulation "with little or no regard for comparison, classification, and scientific generalization." Examples of single outcome research questions: "Why does the U.S. have a relatively small welfare state?" "What led to the terrorist attacks of 9/11?" The book ends with a short glossary covering case study research terminology.

Social work researchers patient enough with some unfamiliar political science terminology in the examples (social welfare examples could easily be substituted) will find this book rewarding in its systematic approach. Selected chapters of the book would be useful in advanced courses on mixed

methods, policy evaluation, program evaluation, or case study research, however not for a general introduction to quantitative or qualitative research methods. For case study enthusiasts, Gerring's work would be a worthwhile adjunct to other texts on the subject.

Edward Cohen

University of California, Berkeley

Robert D. Leighninger. *Long Range Public Investment: The Forgotten Legacy of the New Deal*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007. \$ 24.95 papercover.

The belief that governments have a major role to play in steering the economy and promoting the well-being of their citizens enjoyed widespread support during the middle decades of the last century. For many social historians, the New Deal of the 1930s exemplified the welfare statist ideal. Earlier campaigns by progressives to extend the role of government in economic and social affairs were resisted, but the mass unemployment, deflation and widespread bankruptcies caused by the Great Depression provided the impetus for radical change and the massive expansion of government intervention.

Now sixty years later, the core principles of the New Deal have been widely challenged and the proponents of state intervention have been put on the defensive. However, there are signs of a growing disillusionment with the market liberal gospel of laissez-faire. The retrenchments that have characterized social policy since the 1980s have not brought about the social improvements that were promised. Indeed, many believe that the changes that have taken place have exacerbated social problems. Another concern is the way the power and resources of the state have been appropriated to serve corporate interests. Despite the rhetoric of limited state involvement, a small but already privileged section of the population has benefited enormously from state intervention. There is also growing support for the idea that instead of adopting a hands-off approach, governments should actively promote economic

and social investments. Faced with a crumbling national infrastructure, it is more widely recognized today that these investments are essential for economic and social progress.

Leighninger's important book focuses on this issue and makes a major contribution to the contention that governments can play a vital role in promoting investment. Although he does not specifically invoke current social investment debates, his masterful historical account of the role of government during the New Deal lends support to the proponents of this approach. He demonstrates that the Roosevelt government's spending on the construction of bridges, roads, airports, dams, buildings, environmental projects and many other infrastructural improvements brought significant benefits to many communities. In addition, the job creation and other programs introduced at the time reshaped the nation's economic, social and political terrain.

The book consists of thirteen chapters divided into two parts. Part one discusses the major programs established under the New Deal while part two discusses the number of issues arising out of its interventionist approach.

Many students are confused by the acronyms that were used at the time (such as the CCC, FERA, the WPA and the CWA) to connote the major programs established by the Roosevelt administration. Leighninger devotes a chapter to each of the many programs established by the Roosevelt administration, such as the CCC, FERA, the WPA and the CWA and describes, and clarifies, their history and major functions. Although their functions often overlapped, they all contributed to the massive public investments that are still meeting the transportation, civic, housing and infrastructural needs of many communities around the country today. These chapters are richly illustrated with photographs, many of which were taken by the author himself. He shows that many familiar landmarks which had a major and lasting impact on the physical, economic and social landscape of many communities, were established during the New Deal.

Part two of the book discusses four issues arising out of the New Deal experience. These are first, the question of whether the New Deal served as a counter inflationary economic stimulus that helped economic recovery; second, the

role of public employment in economic development; third, the consolidation of federalism and finally the problem of pork barrel politics. These chapters make for interesting reading and the author presents a fair and thoughtful analysis of the different points of view that continue to be expressed around these issues today. Leighninger's overall assessment of the impact of the New Deal is largely positive and he concludes that its various programs effectively addressed the most pressing challenges of the Depression era. They also made a significant contribution to the country's economic and social well-being and left a legacy which demonstrates how the resources of government can be used to promote the public good. The book makes a major contribution to current debates about the role of the state in social investment and deserves to be widely read. Hopefully, it will also rekindle interest in the New Deal's forgotten legacy.

James Midgley

University of California, Berkeley

Melvin Delgado. *Social Work with Latinos: A Cultural Assets Paradigm*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. \$35.00 hardcover.

Professor Delgado has provided an essential scholarly achievement that will continue to provide direction and guidance to scholars, advocates, practitioners and policy makers engaged in serving and understanding the Latino community in the United States. The book is a timely and thoughtful volume that provides a different assessment and a calming voice to an increasingly heated and difficult national debate on immigration reform. Given the particular focus of the debate on the rapidly growing and visible Latino population in the U.S., our media has created a singular perspective on immigration that is almost overwhelmingly seen as a Latino issue. Thus, Delgado contributes not only to understanding social policy and social work practice with Latinos but to understanding family cultural assets and community formation and

practices during a time when family well-being and community-friendly government policies are being eroded.

*Social Work with Latinos: A Cultural Assets Paradigm* is one of those rare multi-discipline books that is both path-breaking and inter- and intra-disciplinary in two major formats: theory and practice. For those working in social sciences such as sociology, psychology, political science, welfare and poverty policy and professional health and public policy, this is a new paradigm and theoretical shift in how the Latino community is investigated and takes us to task with pre-suppositions about a multi-dimensional community under an umbrella label of Latino or Hispanic. The book reminds us that within the Latino community a variety of cultural assets and practices are on display for the discerning scholar who recognizes cultural variety and nuance. For those scholars intent on lumping the entire Latino community into one voice, the book serves as a reminder that history and immigrant experiences are markedly different resulting in different family and community practices. For those in the field of social work, the book has an intra-disciplinary message: theory and practice need to be recast in direct practice areas such as, health and case management as well as in the 'macro' practice community-administrative-policy field.

Each chapter provides a context for this innovative approach to research and practice with Latino communities in the United States. Chapter One introduces the audience to the goals of the subject, who are Latinos in the United States, what is culture and defines the concept of 'cultural assets' as the foundational anchor for the book. Perhaps one of the most compelling issues addressed throughout the book is the deconstruction of the belief that marginalized and left-behind communities are void of strengths and assets. Delgado reminds us that all communities contribute to the general welfare of the country and seeks to map these under-researched and overlooked factors in Latino communities.

Chapter Two presents a current snapshot of the demographic and socio-economic trends present in the Latino community in the United States. The most illuminating portion of this chapter is the recognition that Latinos in the United States remain in contact with extended family abroad over time and



form part of a 'giving' community that has not been recognized by academic researchers. The remittance phenomena (sending dollars to family members abroad out of wages earned in the United States) are a form of 'patient capital' investments and operate as a safety net for extended families residing in the country of origin. This form of connection between communities reminds us that in a global marketplace and in the twenty-first century, distance does not pose the barrier to maintenance of family cohesion and communication that it once did. This particular portrait of Latino families is essential for social workers, academic researchers and policymakers to grasp precisely because it debunks many media images and stereotypes perpetuated by television and print reporters.

Chapter Three offers an overview of pressing health concerns among the Latino population in the United States. The health community has suspected (especially among scholars of color who have raised this issue before) that racism and oppression which are encountered daily create and manifest symptoms that lead to health and mental health concerns. Delgado addresses this, along with other major health issues that appear to remain persistent among the Latino population: cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, obesity, asthma, cardiovascular disease, hepatitis and tuberculosis (the usual suspects in chronic illnesses), as well as substance abuse. What is not addressed in this chapter but appears indirectly in Chapter Six is the belief in and use of alternative healing practices. Belief in and use of alternative healing practices are neither surprising nor unexpected in isolated and underserved communities. Often, healing practices and mental health remedies are tied to cultural folk healing (*curanderismo*, *Santeria* and *spiritualismo*).

Chapters Four and Five are central to the provision of social services, working with Latino families and communities and serve as an important guide for scholars and researchers unfamiliar with Latino families and communities. The Latino (or Hispanic) population in the United States has often been categorized, labeled and defined in a static, unchanging manner. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 provide evidence and instruction on how to work with 'culturally dynamic' communities where acculturation and navigating mainstream institutions are not a linear, one-stop process. Researchers intent on

understanding communities with large immigrant populations have continued to employ outmoded and outdated assimilation and acculturation models and their corresponding indicators that simply do not reflect the lived reality of communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Delgado reminds us of the dynamism of the adaptation and adoption process and gives us a firmer understanding of working with Latino communities in Chapter 8 as he focuses on field work experiences, applications and approaches. Ultimately, what Delgado has shared with us in his book is the 'new prototype' of what meaningful research on under-served and under-researched Latino communities in the United States can be and I, for one, am grateful.

Barbara J. Robles  
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## Book Notes

Maureen Baker. *Restructuring Family Policies: Convergences and Divergences*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006. \$65.00 hardcover, \$29.95 papercover.

If *convergence* describes two different things coming together and *divergence* describes similar things moving apart, then Maureen Baker's book on the restructuring of family policy is right on target. It is written at a unique time in history when the social construction of the family and resulting policy response takes simultaneously convergent and divergent forms, such as policies that support gay marriage and competing policies that reward heterosexual marriage.

Maureen Baker describes and analyzes how family policies are changing in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, which include Western European Countries, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. This choice was made based on the availability of data and well-developed family policies in these nations. Admittedly, this is a formidable task, as the countries vary considerably not only in how family is defined, but in the existence, coverage, extent and future of family policies. Despite this challenge, Baker asserts that there are common influences affecting the trajectory of family policy, and that complex internal national pressures affect these influences. Changing demographics, categorization in a liberal or conservative welfare state, and growing internationalization are evident and are compounded by religious, cultural, civil rights, lobbying and other pressures internal to the country. Part of the central thesis is that, despite the country, there are differences between discourse and actual policy change, specifically that policy makers are often more influenced by cultural values than by actual demographic data. This results in both the

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strengthening and erosion of the same family policies in different countries. Baker attributes demographic changes in the family to concrete economic and political processes, such as the market's effect on families. Under this lens, trends in issues such as reproductive health, the relationship between work, gender and parenthood, child welfare, housing and income maintenance, divorce and international migration are analyzed.

The book has a clearly articulated thesis coupled with solid definitions of concepts that tend to be taken for granted in policy literature, such as family, family policy, and globalization. Baker's cogent writing style provides the reader with a clear roadmap woven seamlessly and consistently through each chapter. It is a refreshing approach to such an intricate subject. Baker herself cautions that the book runs the risk of overgeneralizing when discussing trends in family policy, and she is correct. Because the variation between countries is sometimes so vast, it is difficult to clearly track patterns and relationships. For example, when addressing work and family issues, paid maternity leave ranges from fifty weeks in Canada to none in the U.S. or Australia. *Restructuring Family Policies* tackles a complex topic without getting tangled up in detail and provides a guide for examining the newest incarnations of family policy from a multi-country perspective.

*Mary Ager, University of California, Berkeley*

Roberta Rehner Iverson and Annie Laurie Armstrong. *Jobs Aren't Enough: Towards a New Economic Mobility for Low-Income Families*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2006. \$74.50 hardcover, \$26.95 papercover.

As is widely known, the numbers of families receiving income support under the AFDC program has fallen dramatically since the new TANF program was introduced in 1996. Although it is frequently claimed that former welfare clients are now "off welfare" and working and living the American dream, numerous studies have shown that this is not the

case and that most continue to struggle to make ends meet. Other studies also reveal that many hard-working American families who have never been on welfare are also struggling to make ends meet. As wages for lower and middle income families stagnate, the prospect of experiencing upward mobility becomes increasingly dim.

Iversen and Armstrong have produced an in-depth ethnographic study of low-income families living in major American cities over a period of five years that confirm these findings. Although they draw on wider statistical data to demonstrate the difficulties facing working families, the study is not intended to test hypotheses about wage stagnation and mobility, but primarily to provide insights into the way working families cope and utilize educational and job-training programs to improve their situations. Almost two thirds of the families were previously in receipt of welfare benefits and most have utilized these job-training programs. Despite the fact that they are in regular employment and have access to programs intended to provide work support, the study demonstrates that they face enormous challenges in trying to get ahead. It also shows that popular beliefs about the benefits of hard work, ambition and motivation are not substantiated by their experiences. Although they work hard, are motivated and have ambitions for their children, many continue to work in low-paying jobs and face major impediments to mobility.

Perhaps the most depressing finding of the study is that regular employment, job-training programs and educational opportunities for children offer limited prospects for mobility for low-income families. The authors point out that current employment practices do not, in fact, facilitate rapid movement up the career ladder for those with limited skills, and that job-training programs do not provide quantifications that facilitate mobility. Similarly, schools often provide a low-quality education and generational opportunities for upward mobility are inadequate. The authors contend that a new paradigm that can facilitate mobility is needed. This requires greater stress on programs that enhance human as well as cultural and social capital, a more expansive set of policies that target low-income families and greater public support for these programs. Ultimately, new attitudes about how opportunities in America

can be enhanced are needed.

Although the book's findings will be disputed by those who believe that current educational, job-training and work support programs do in fact facilitate mobility, the authors have amassed a great deal of evidence that question prevailing beliefs about work, education and opportunity. The detailed accounts of the challenges faced by the families in the study provide ample evidence that much more needs to be done to address these challenges. The book is an important addition to the literature and should be widely consulted.

*James Midgley, University of California, Berkeley*

Ram A. Cnaan with Stephanie C. Boddie, Charlene C. McGrew and Jennifer Kang. *The Other Philadelphia Story: How Local Congregations Support Quality of Life in Urban America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006. \$69.95 hardcover.

Since the enactment of Charitable Choice legislation by the U.S. federal government in 1996, there has been a substantial interest in the role of religious institutions in the delivery of social welfare services. In response to the lack of serious academic discussion regarding the links between the faith-based community and social service provisions, Cnaan and associates present a detailed picture of congregations in the city of Philadelphia. Utilizing tenets from social capital theory, the authors seek to ascertain whether congregations are 'saving civil society' and are adept at the production of social capital; the intent is to dissect the role that congregations serve as extended family and informal-formal care providers and to investigate how societal norms, values, and trust are formulated and perpetuated.

The main obstacles of the investigation are outlined in the first two chapters. Due to the ever changing and dynamic formations of congregations and the lack of any single agency to document their existence, identifying the target sample presented the first challenge. Next, the development of an operational definition of congregation was surmounted, which led

to the gathering of data; utilizing a sample comprised of two-thirds of the identified congregations, in-person interviews and structured questionnaires were conducted with clergy and lay leaders. The result was the creation of the PCC database (Philadelphia Census of Congregation).

Most of the book disseminates the data collected, with the intent to provide not only a context, but a broad and accurate picture of religious life in Philadelphia. Beginning with an overview of key characteristics, the authors move to address the role that congregations play in the delivery of both informal and formal services. In contrast to other studies, 92% of the sampled congregations provided at least one formal social service program. The authors conclude that congregations operate more akin to community centers, fostering a variety of social interests and at the community level, 'congregations are the foundational blocks for social care' (p. 279).

In addition to disseminating data by service type, several chapters are devoted to the exploration of special congregations and subgroups that have been previously overlooked within the literature. The focus populations included are African Americans, Latinos, and women, and the discussion is centered on the unique role that each group contributes to social care. Remaining chapters are devoted to organizations that enhance congregational service capacity and include an investigation of collaborative unions that serve to assist a broader population within the realm of social welfare.

The authors conclude that all of the controversy regarding Charitable Choice is somewhat moot—religious congregations have been delivering social services all along. Recommendations for strengthening their role include sufficient funding to increase the partnership between faith-based institutions and the federal government. While the authors successfully provide a detailed investigation as to the many services and functions that congregations provide, a discussion as to the efficacy of programs is not established nor adequately addressed. Now that the extent of services has been descriptively documented, further research is needed to link quantity with quality.

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Kenneth J. Neubeck, *When Welfare Disappears: The Case for Economic Human Rights*. New York: Routledge, 2006. \$90.00 hardcover, \$29.95 papercover.

A great deal of scholarly attention has been focused on the changes that have taken place in social assistance to poor families in the United States over the last ten years. The enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 and the introduction of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program heralded a major and historic shift in social welfare policy and it is not surprising that academic interest into these changes should have peaked. However, while it is generally agreed that the changes introduced by the legislation had a major impact, there are disagreements about whether the impact has been positive or negative. Although politicians have generally concluded that welfare reform has propelled many former recipients into regular work and created new opportunities to achieve the American dream, some scholars have challenged this conclusion.

Kenneth Neubeck is one of them and, in this engaging book, he examines the outcomes of the changes in considerable depth. While it is incontrovertible that the numbers of poor families receiving welfare benefits has fallen by as much as 60% since 1996, he challenges the belief that caseload reduction has resulted in these families working in regular well-paid jobs which provide a pathway to economic success. Although supporters of welfare reform contend that the doomsday predictions of the opponents of the new program have not materialized, he shows that poverty rates have in fact increased and that many more low-income and single parent families are living on the margin. He concludes that welfare reform has in fact amounted to little more than the abrogation of collective responsibility for caring for children and the reversal of previous commitments to address the poverty problem.

In discussing these changes, Neubeck invokes the discourse of human rights to show that the United States stands alone among the Western nations in its rejection of the fundamental human right commitment to ensure a decent standard of living for all. His approach transcends conventional debates about welfare reform and places them squarely in the

international arena, linking them to normative standards established by the international community in 1948. Although the United States played a leading role in promoting human rights, successive governments have focused on civil and political rather than social and economic rights. In an interesting chapter, he compares the United States with other Western countries and concludes that despite the American government's rhetoric about human rights, its performance in the area of social and economic rights has been dismal.

This is a lively and interesting book which addresses social policy debates from a novel perspective. Although the concept of social rights, which was introduced by T. H. Marshall in the 1950s, is well known in social policy circles in the United States, the wider discourse of human rights is seldom invoked. By examining a major social policy innovation in the United States in the context of international human rights discourse, the author has made a major contribution which will hopefully stimulate a great deal of further discussion.

*James Midgley, University of California, Berkeley*

Jonah D. Levy, Editor. *The State after Statism: New State Activities in the Age of Liberalization*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006. \$55.00 hardcover, \$24.95 papercover.

Widely held assumptions about the positive and benevolent role of the state in social welfare, which prevailed for most of the 20th century, have been seriously challenged over the last two decades. With the ascendancy of market liberal ideas during this time, it is no longer generally accepted that governments should maintain extensive social welfare programs designed to meet social needs and promote the well-being of citizens. Collective notions have been replaced with a far greater emphasis on personal responsibility, the utilization of market provision and more reliance on the family, informal support networks and the voluntary sector.

Although these trends suggest that governments now exercise limited influence over economic and social policy, this

intriguing book suggests that rumors about the demise of the state are premature. Contrary to widely held beliefs, it contends that the governments of the Western countries have not shrunk in size or become passive and indifferent, but that they continue to exert a powerful influence on both economic and social affairs. However, there has been a significant change in the way governments intervene. For most of the 20th century, Western governments employed Keynesian economic ideas or resorted to corporatist agreements to regulate and direct the market economy. This approach, which sought to control the market, has since been replaced by an approach that seeks to foster and support market activities. As the editor points out in an interesting introductory and concluding analysis, the state in Western society is now actively engaged in promoting marketization. However, it does so in different ways in different societies. In countries with strong corporatist and statist traditions, increased marketization has been accompanied by policies that maintain social welfare programs and promote employment. Although this commitment is not as strong in liberal societies, even here social programs have not been abandoned but reshaped to support marketization largely through promoting work.

The central theme of this book is explored in several case studies of state activism in the Western countries. These focus on the changes that have taken place in Britain, the Netherlands, France, Japan, Germany and the United States over recent decades. Although somewhat uneven, these chapters provide useful insights into the way governments today are managing their economies and supporting marketization to expand competition both domestically and internationally and to make labor regulation and social programs more employment friendly. The chapters on corporatist adjustment in the Netherlands in Germany, state policy in France and Japan and the promotion of women's employment in the Western countries are particularly insightful and important. The book makes a major contribution to current debates about the role of the state in social welfare and deserves to be widely consulted.

*James Midgley, University of California, Berkeley*

Emily Barman. *Contesting Communities: The Transformation of Workplace Charity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006. \$53.00 hardcover, \$20.95 papercover.

What does *community* mean in the United States? In recent decades, the concept of community has received significant attention from social scientists. Some have decried the decline in neighboring and drop in participation in local community organizations among Americans today. Others have analyzed the rise of identity politics, rooted in the civil rights, women's liberation, disability rights, and other social movements, resulting in the emergence of new communities based on gender, ethnicity, and other specific shared identities. Globalization and the widespread use of the internet have created further opportunities and pressures to redefine community in new ways.

In *Contesting Communities: The Transformation of Workplace Charity*, Emily Barman adds to the debate on defining "community" by investigating how conceptions of community manifest themselves in an arena little researched by social scientists, namely: charitable donation campaigns in the workplace. Barman outlines two distinct conceptions of community, the traditional "community of place," determined by geography, and the more recently conceptualized "community of purpose," centered on shared identities or interests without regard to physical proximity. She traced the recent history of workplace charity, and focuses specifically on the shifting roles, power, and approaches of the United Way versus "alternative funds." These are competing confederated charitable fundraisers such as the Black United Fund and EarthShare. She then argues that the concept of "community of place" embodied in the United Way has been increasingly challenged by the "communities of purpose" represented by these Alternative Funds. Through case studies of the contrasting workplace charity environments in Chicago and San Francisco, Barman identifies factors and pathways that influence the relative dominance of these alternative definitions of community in a given locality.

The author offers a detailed and thorough history of the United Way and alternative funds, with rich and insightful case studies of charitable donation environments in

workplaces in Chicago and San Francisco. Furthermore, her core premise is persuasive—the decline of the United Way and rise of alternative funds reflects the increasing importance of new, non-place-based conceptions of community. However, in the drive to support her thesis, Barman glosses over the complexity of some of the issues she raises. For example, the book touches on other factors besides cultural conceptualizations of community that have contributed to the decline of the United Way, such as financial management scandals and donors' demands for individual control over the use of their contributions. Such issues suggest that the landscape of workplace charity has been shaped by multiple complex factors, beyond just changing definitions of community, but Barman does not explore these other factors in depth. Overall, though, the book makes a valuable contribution to the understanding of both the evolving meaning of community and the field of workplace charity in the United States.

*Sara E. Kimberlin, University of California, Berkeley*

Michael Wessells, *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006. \$45.00 hardcover.

The UN estimates that 300,000 children around the world are exploited as combatants in armed conflicts. Although the plight of child soldiers remains an under-researched field, children have become increasingly drawn into the violent chaos of war. The development of lightweight weaponry, children's psychological and physical vulnerability, and their innate desire to please adults all conspire against their welfare. International law struggles to address this severe problem, which is linked to other major issues of child labor, ethnic violence, political instability, and poverty. Attempts to free children from armed conflict are frequently undermined by the re-recruitment of children back into their former fighting groups.

These issues and more are effectively addressed in Michael Wessells's *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection*. Drawing upon over 400 field interviews with child soldiers, Wessells

uses examples from Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America to describe the pathways in and out of being a young combatant, from recruitment to reintegration back into their communities. An introductory chapter provides an overview of the definition and prevalence of child soldiers. Chapters 2 and 3 confront the complexity of children's coercion and agency in their recruitment, and document adaptation to life as a child soldier. Chapter 4 explores the unique dilemmas of girl soldiers, including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. Chapters 5 and 6 cover the health and psychological consequences of child soldiering. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and rehabilitation programs, linking the success of these programs to social development and peace building, with case studies illustrating approaches and lessons learned. Chapter 9 juxtaposes the demand for justice with the need to reintegrate child perpetrators into post-conflict communities. A final chapter on prevention discusses international law's role in ending impunity for adults that exploit children in war, addresses the structural factors related to child soldiers, and outlines regional and global prevention strategies.

Given the recent bestselling memoir of a child soldier, Wessells's empirically driven book is a timely contribution of psychological insight that debunks gloomy notions of child soldiers as damaged goods beyond repair. Wessells's optimism is buoyed with accounts of former child soldiers successfully reintegrated into civilian life. He links the need to protect children in conflict to the foundation of peaceful societies. Wessells debates the merits of retributive and restorative justice approaches to meeting community demands to hold child perpetrators accountable for their role in violence. The discussion on the difficulty of separating victims from perpetrators underlines Wessel's main point that children soldiers are the result of adult exploitation of children. Restorative justice interventions promoting dialogue and cooperation are highlighted as being well-suited to fit local conditions and cultures. This is an important book for students of all levels interested in children's rights and post-conflict reconstruction, and serves as a guide to practitioners working in this area.

*David K. Androff, University of California, Berkeley*

Ronald C. Kessler and Paul E. Stang (Eds.), *Health and Work Productivity: Making the Business Case for Quality Health Care*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006. \$35.00 hardcover.

It has long been assumed that the provision of health, social and other employee benefits are desirable on humanitarian grounds but costly in terms of their impact on the profitability of commercial firms. Although some managers are persuaded by human relations theory that employee health and social programs enhance worker satisfaction and thus contribute to productivity, the investment implications of these programs have often been ignored. Today many firms have either abolished or retrenched health care and pension programs. It has been widely reported in the media that the competitiveness of leading automobile corporations has been affected by health and pension costs, and several leading airlines have abrogated their pension responsibilities on the ground that these programs are unaffordable.

This book provides important evidence to show that the retrenchment of these programs is shortsighted and that investment in the health of employees makes an important contribution to work productivity. As the editors point out, there is a sound business case for providing quality health care to employees. They also point out that the costs of ill-health are considerable. Absenteeism, under-performance and other problems associated with ill-health reduce productivity and ultimately have a negative impact on the nation's overall economic development effort. Accordingly, the national interest is served when workers are provided with high quality health care.

This book is the result of a conference which examined the relationship between health-care investments and work productivity. A major issue at the conference was how the link between health and productivity could be operationalized and accurately measured. If employers are to be persuaded that health care investments contribute to competitiveness, sound empirical evidence demonstrating a direct association between health and productivity will be required. In addition to devoting several chapters of the book to measurement issues, the

editors brought academics and employers together to debate these issues. As the editors point out, academic research into this topic has not been widely disseminated or discussed.

There is much in this book that will be of interest to social policy scholars. If health care investments contribute to the productivity of commercial firms and to the nation's economic development efforts, a strong case for wider public investments in health and social programs can be made. However there is little in the book that addresses these wider issues directly and most of the chapters are focused on the needs of commercial firms and on measurement issues. Nevertheless, social policy scholars interested in measurement issues will find these chapters to be particularly useful. One interesting chapter examines the link between health investments and human capital development in the Global South. Hopefully, future research will focus attention on the benefits that will accrue to the wider society from decisive health and social investments.

Jerry Mander and Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Editors. *Paradigm Wars: Indigenous Peoples' Resistance to Globalization*. Berkeley, CA: Sierra Club Books, 2006. \$19.95 papercover.

Although historians have extensively documented the way European imperialists and colonialists invaded and subjugated people in many lands in Africa, Asia and Central and South America, stories of the oppression and resistance struggles of Indigenous people over the centuries are not given much prominence in the official histories. It is often assumed that most Indigenous people have been assimilated into the new nations that emerged from the nationalist independent struggles of the 19th and 20th centuries and that the interests of those who retain a distinctive identity are, in any case, best represented by their national governments.

These assumptions are vigorously challenged in this important book which shows that despite the oppression they have experienced, Indigenous people in many parts of the world not only retain their identity but are organizing and



resisting continued exploitation by local commercial interests, multinational firms and the efforts of international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization to spread global capitalism. In many cases, national governments have signed international agreements that ignore the rights of Indigenous peoples, exploit their resources, and undermine their identity, cultural heritage and human rights. Although Indigenous people face enormous challenges, the book shows how they are organizing to challenge global capitalism.

The book consists of 27 chapters organized into five parts. These chapters deal with many different aspects of the effects of global capitalism on Indigenous peoples around the world. Others report on their efforts to assert their human, economic and cultural rights. Although many are brief, these chapters show how the cultures, economies and livelihoods of Indigenous people around the world have been undermined. While they make for depressing reading, it is important that these realities be more widely reported and that the public around the world be educated. On a more optimistic note, the book contains important information about the achievements of Indigenous people in their struggles against exploitation and oppression. Their successes in establishing international organizations, securing recognition from international organizations such as the United Nations and participating effectively in demonstrations against the activities of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization deserve to be more widely recognized. The election of sympathetic governments in Latin America with strong support from Indigenous communities is another positive sign of the growing effectiveness of their struggles.

This book should be read by anyone involved in social development today. Unfortunately, the social development literature has not paid adequate attention to the challenges facing Indigenous peoples or to their efforts to assert their identity and human rights. The book provides a wealth of information that will not only inform social development scholars and practitioners but will inspire them to join with Indigenous peoples and support their struggles for human rights and social justice.

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## Call for Papers

### Special Issue on People with Disabilities & Social Welfare

According to the U. S. Census (2000), there are over 33 million children and adults with disabilities. These impairments are physical, cognitive, psychological, and substance abuse-related, and can adversely impact an individual's psychosocial and vocational functioning. We as a nation are about to enter a unique era in which our returning veterans from Iraq will need extensive rehabilitation due to injuries sustained during combat. These veterans have unique needs and contribute to an increase in the numbers of individuals with disabilities who seek to fully participate in society but are restricted by political, economic, environmental and attitudinal barriers. We seek topics relating to changes in the processes, products, or performances of social welfare policies and programs in relation to disabilities.

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- o Psychosocial impact of disability
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- o Person-centered planning
- o Children and disability
- o Impact of disability on the family
- o Disability-specific issues (i.e. cancer, amputations, blindness, learning disabilities, mental illness, neuromuscular diseases, etc.)
- o Special populations and disability (i.e. veterans, low-income individuals)
- o Sexuality and disability
- o Vocational impact of disability
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