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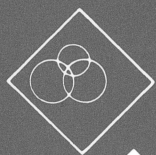
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# JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL WELFARE

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# Protecting Older Workers: The Failure of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967

JESSICA Z. ROTHENBERG

DANIEL S. GARDNER

New York University  
Silver School of Social Work

*A growing number of older adults are finding that retirement is no longer affordable and they must work well into their later years. Unfortunately, over 42 years after passage of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967, age discrimination in the workplace continues to present serious impediments to employment in later life. Using a critical gerontology perspective, this paper reviews the history of work-related age discrimination and analyzes the ADEA and its limited effectiveness at protecting the civil and economic rights of older workers. The authors discuss implications and suggest policy alternatives that would support the employment and enhance the economic well-being of older adults.*

*Key words: ADEA; older workers; age discrimination; ageism; retirement; critical gerontology*

For a growing number of older adults, retirement is no longer an affordable option. Older workers, low income and economically insecure elders in particular, are now working well into their “golden years” (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, 2008). According to an American

Association of Retired Persons (AARP, 2009) survey of 767 adults age 45 and over, 22% of respondents aged 45-54 and 27% aged 55-64 have postponed plans to retire. Given the current economic recession, depressed housing and credit markets, and declining home, pension, and investment values, the number of adults planning to work past "retirement age" will likely continue to increase in the coming years (Johnson, 2009).

Older workers and those who seek employment after the age of 65 have historically confronted intractable institutional and social barriers. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967 was part of an unprecedented turn in 1960s public policy toward advancing economic and social justice by protecting the rights of vulnerable populations. The Act was intended to "promote employment of older persons based on their ability rather than age; to prohibit arbitrary age discrimination in employment; [and] to help employers and workers find ways of meeting problems arising from the impact of age on employment" (ADEA, 1967, Section 2).

However, in many ways, the ADEA has been ineffective in supporting the civil and economic rights of older workers. Over 42 years since passage of the ADEA, ageism and age discrimination in the workplace remain serious impediments to employment and financial well-being in later life. The ADEA has never effectively reduced discrimination in hiring or protected the most vulnerable older adults—women, the poor and unemployed, and elders of color. Each year, an estimated 15 – 20,000 reports of age discrimination are filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, 2009), which currently enforces compliance with the ADEA. The number of complaints, widely held to underestimate the extent of actual incidents (International Longevity Center [ILC], 2006), has risen over the past ten years, reaching an all time high of over 24,500 reports in 2008 (EEOC, 2009). Negative societal stereotypes about older adults are still prevalent and most elders report experiencing or witnessing instances of age-based discrimination (ILC, 2006).

This paper provides a critical analysis of the ADEA, and argues it is an inherently flawed civil rights-era policy that has been largely ineffective in addressing age discrimination

among older workers. The Act was premised on invalid assumptions about the basis of age discrimination and was designed to enhance economic interests that do not always intersect with the interests of older workers. Using a critical gerontology perspective that emphasizes the interrelationships between social policy and struggles for economic, labor, and social justice, the authors review the history of age discrimination in the workplace and analyze the ADEA in terms of its design, enforcement, and effectiveness over the past four decades. Implications and policy alternatives are discussed that could further support employment rights and enhance the economic well-being of older adults.

### Age Discrimination in the Workplace

Ageism, defined as discriminatory beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding older adults (Butler, 1969), is pervasive in modern American society. A majority of older adults report experiencing one or more instances of age-based discrimination during their careers (Ory, Hoffman, Sanner, & Mockenhaupt, 2003). A meta-analysis by Kite and colleagues (Kite, Stockdale, Whitley Jr., & Johnson, 2005), comparing attitudes toward older and younger adults, documents significant age-bias regarding elders' competence, attractiveness, and behavioral intentions. Pernicious stereotypes of older workers as senile, slow, unproductive, frail, and unable to "learn new tricks" are widespread and intractable (Roscigno, Mong, Byron, & Tester, 2007; Weiss & Maurer, 2004). Lahey (2005) found that employers are hesitant to hire older workers because they believe them to be difficult to train, resistant to change, and less flexible and adaptable than younger workers.

A study of hiring practices comparing employer responses to two equally qualified resumes—one identified as 57 years old and the other as 32 years old—found that older workers received less favorable feedback 27% of the time (Bendick, Jackson, & Romero, 1996). A related study in which pairs of identical but age-disparate participants applied for vacant positions via phone, letters, and interviews found that the older applicant received less favorable responses 41% of the time (Bendick, Brown, & Wall, 1999). In an analysis of how women

aged 35, 45, 50, 55, and 62 fared in the labor markets of Boston, MA and St. Petersburg, FL between 2002 and 2003, Lahey (2005) found that younger applicants needed to respond to an average of 19 ads in order to earn an interview, while the older applicants needed to respond to 27. Younger workers were also 40% more likely to be called back for an interview than their older counterparts.

Disparities in hiring are particularly difficult for older adults who have been laid off or who seek employment after retirement. In 2008, unemployed workers age 45 and older spent an average of 22 weeks looking for work, compared to 16 weeks among workers aged 44 and younger (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). According to a U.S. Department of Labor (2006) survey of workers displaced between 2003 and 2005, 75% of workers aged 25-54 were reemployed by 2006, compared to 61% aged 55-64, and only 25% aged 65 and older. There is little rationale in today's service and information economy for denying elders the opportunity to work, or for compulsory retirement at the age of 65, a practice that was common throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Although Congress passed the Mandatory Retirement Act (an amendment to the ADEA) to limit such practices among most workers under the age of 70 in 1978 (and abolished mandatory retirement altogether in 1986), older adults are still more likely to be "forced" into retirement than younger workers (Chan & Stevens, 2004).

### Historical and Socio-political Contexts

It is enlightening to view the history of age-based discrimination and the ADEA from a critical gerontology perspective. Critical gerontologists study the role that structural inequalities (related to race/ethnicity, class, gender, age, and disability), age stratification, and social policy play in shaping the experience of aging and the lives of older adults (Minkler & Estes, 1999). Estes (1979) proposed a political economy of aging that views public policy as simultaneously reflecting and defining "the life chances, conditions and experience of elders in different locations of society" (Estes, 1999, p. 17). Over the past three decades, critical gerontology has enriched our theoretical understandings of the social constructions of dependency



(Townsend, 1981), retirement (Atchley, 1993; Phillipson, 1999), health and health care (Lynch, Estes, & Hernandez, 2005) in later life.

The percentage of older adults in the workforce (full-time, part-time, or actively seeking employment) has been increasing since the mid-1990s, following a century of steady decline (Mosisa & Hippie, 2006; Quinn, 1997). Between 1890 and 1960 the percentage of men aged 65 and over in the work force declined from 68% to 31% (United States Bureau of the Census [U.S. Census], 1975). While some of this trend is attributable to the passage of the Social Security Act of 1935 that provided a guaranteed income to workers who retired at the age of 65, it primarily reflects the nation's transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy (Ransom & Sutch, 1986). Farm work relied on small-scale production organized around family or community life, with each member of the unit playing an important function in maintaining economic self-sufficiency. In contrast, industrial workers were hired for a wage and employment was organized around maximizing profits for the company. Wage-labor at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was often grueling, with 53-hour workweeks on average, thousands of work-related deaths each year, and minimal safety regulations, employment benefits, or job security (Fisk, 2001). Ideal workers had strength and stamina, and were healthy enough to continue working despite poor conditions and long hours, traits largely attributed to youth (Segrave, 2001). Younger workers were also preferred because they could be paid lower wages, and because prior work experience was considered more of a hindrance than an asset in the new de-skilled factory jobs.

Over time, age discrimination became an integrated feature of the modern industrial economy, increasingly associated with the growth of American capitalism. The issue of age-based discrimination received some attention in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but was not recognized as a social problem until World War II (Segrave, 2001). Between 1940 and 1945, the wartime economy significantly increased the demand for labor, and as a result, the number of men aged 65 and older in the workforce jumped by 75% (U.S. Census, 1975). The increase, which mirrored the first widespread entry of women into the workplace, demonstrated that older adults were capable and

amenable to modern employment. After the war, employment rates for older adults reverted to nearly pre-war levels. However, studies conducted in 1942 and 1951 by the Bureau of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance found that only 5% of male benefit recipients had retired voluntarily; over half had been laid off, and roughly one-third stopped working for health-related reasons (Wentworth, 1945, 1955). At the same time, arbitrary age limits became increasingly common in hiring practices. A pivotal study conducted by the Department of Labor in 1965 found that over 60% of low-skilled industrial jobs had age cut-offs between 35 and 49 years of age, and over 13% of sales jobs were limited to workers under the age of 35 (Bessey & Ananda, 1991).

Policy-makers first grew concerned about the existence and extent of age-based workplace discrimination because of economic, political and social developments. The United States emerged from World War II with a strong and expanding economy, in contrast to parts of the world that were ravaged by years of war. The GDP more than doubled between 1940 and 1960, and new jobs were created in both manufacturing and the growing service sector (Yuskavage & Fahim-Nader, 2005). Continual development and modernization required a more efficient workforce with managers that base employment decisions on individual qualifications and merit as opposed to stereotypes and prejudices (Allen & Farley, 1986; Bell, 1962). This ideology directly challenged Jim Crow laws in the American South and socially-sanctioned racism in the North, and helped the Civil Rights Movement gain institutional support.

The first comprehensive federal workplace anti-discrimination legislation was Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited employment discrimination based on race, religion, sex or national origin. Policy-makers considered including age in the bill, but this was deemed too controversial and voted down (EEOC, 2009). Instead, under pressure from groups such as the newly developed American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), National Retired Teachers' Association (NRTA), and the Older Women's League, the Secretary of Labor was given the task of investigating the problem of age-based discrimination (Macnicol, 2006). In 1965, Secretary Wirtz presented his report to Congress, and over the next two years,

Congress held hearings and subsequently passed anti-discrimination measures for older adults.

### Age Discrimination in Employment Act

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA) is the principal legislation concerned with protecting individuals over the age of 40 from arbitrary age-based workplace discrimination. The Act was designed to ensure that, whenever possible, employers use ability instead of arbitrary age limits in workplace decisions. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces the Act by investigating all claims of age discrimination and resolving cases where evidence suggests that employers used age as a criterion for lay-offs, promotions, hiring, training opportunities, or any other personnel decisions (EEOC, 2009).

Initially, ADEA protections were limited to workers between the ages of 40 and 65 affected by age discrimination (the upper age limit was moved to 70 years in 1978 and then largely eliminated in 1986). Reflecting the liberal ideology of the time, Congress believed eliminating age discrimination against middle-aged workers would serve an economic function by increasing the supply of skilled labor and improving the productivity of the work force (Schuster & Miller, 1984). Based on a commonly held view that ageism stemmed from misinformed individual beliefs and prejudices about older workers (Achenbaum, 1991), the bill's sponsors assumed age discrimination could be eliminated from workplaces through educational campaigns designed to combat stereotypes about older workers (Biek, 1986). This policy focus failed to account for the institutional nature of age discrimination and its relationship to capitalist development and wage labor. Thus, the ADEA was designed to improve workforce productivity, and not to address the underlying causes and material basis for age-based discrimination and ageism.

#### *Implementation and Enforcement*

The ADEA was enforced by the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor until 1978, when it was transferred to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

The EEOC is required to conduct a 60-day investigation into every claim of age-based discrimination. The majority of cases are then closed either for administrative reasons or because they are found to have "no reasonable cause," meaning there is insufficient evidence to support the claim. For example, according to the EEOC (2009), of the 16,134 resolutions issued in ADEA cases in 2007, 10,002 (62%) were found to have "no reasonable cause" and 2,754 (17%) were closed for administrative reasons. Not including claims that were withdrawn or resolved without EEOC intervention, only 4% of resolutions were found to have reasonable claims of age-based discrimination and moved on to the conciliation phase, where only 1% of all resolutions were successfully mediated (i.e., the claimant was sufficiently compensated) by the EEOC. When conciliation is deemed unsuccessful the EEOC can bring a suit to federal court, but this rarely happens. In 2007, only 32 suits were filed under the ADEA, a mere .2% of all age discrimination cases resolved that year.

Potential claimants are required to file with the EEOC within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory action (the statute is extended to 300 days when a state anti-discrimination law is available). However, evidence of discrimination is not always immediately apparent. An individual might not suspect that age was a factor in a job termination until similar stories come to light or a pattern is established over time. Even when an individual believes he or she is the victim of age-based discrimination, there must be sufficient evidence to support a reasonable cause or the case will be closed following the initial investigation. The complainant then has only 90 days to file an independent lawsuit after the case is closed by the EEOC. For many, this is not enough time to weigh the costs and benefits of filing suit or to raise the necessary funds for legal representation.

The EEOC is coordinated by five commissioners and a General Counsel ("Chairman" in the original text), who are all appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate for terms of four or five years (EEOC, 2009). As such, EEOC priorities, decisions, enforcement practices, etc., have changed in relation to different administrations as well as broader political shifts. For example, when President Reagan appointed

Clarence Thomas to chair the EEOC in 1982, the agency shifted away from a focus on “broad, systemic employment practices that operated to discriminate against large classes of individuals” (EEOC, n.d.). The new Commission viewed its mandate as responding to and remedying individual claims of discrimination and civil rights infringements. During this period, groups such as AARP complained that charges were not being dealt with in an efficient manner, and that all equal employment acts were not being adequately enforced (Macnicol, 2006). Additionally, while the overall number of claims increased significantly during this time (partly because in 1978 the ADEA and Equal Pay Act were transferred to the EEOC), the number of staff members was scaled back from 3,390 in 1980 to 2,853 in 1990, a decline of nearly 16%. This reduction led to a backlog of over 100,000 pending charges. The EEOC staff has continued to decline, and in 2007 the EEOC employed a staff of only 2,158 individuals, 37% smaller than the 1980 workforce (EEOC, 2009).

#### *Protection of Vulnerable Populations*

The ADEA recognized that women, minorities, and the unemployed were particularly vulnerable to age-based employment discrimination. However, according to Miller, Kaspin, and Schuster (1990), the majority of successful ADEA cases are wrongful termination suits (75.9%) brought by men (82%) laid off from white-collar or managerial positions (79%). One stated goal of the ADEA is to encourage employment opportunities for older workers; however, this is where the legislation has been least successful (Adams, 2004). Prior to the passage of the ADEA, Miller (1966) found that as a result of explicit (and non-explicit) age discrimination, men 45 and older spent on average 50% longer looking for work than men under 45 (21 weeks versus 14 weeks). Forty years later, workers 45 and older spent on average 37% longer, or approximately 6 additional weeks, looking for work than younger workers. Further, studies continue to indicate that age discrimination in hiring is still prevalent throughout society (Bendick et al., 1996; Bendick et al., 1999; Lahey, 2008). However, unless explicit and willful (such as job advertisements with age limits) it is difficult to prove specific instances of discrimination, as job applicants



generally have no concrete evidence of the criteria by which they were or were not hired (Neumark, 2009). Individuals who face discrimination at the point of hiring are isolated from other applicants and workers, making it difficult to determine patterns of discrimination or organize other affected individuals.

Since the EEOC is under-staffed, under-funded, and flooded with thousands of reports every year, it can only pursue a limited number of cases, usually the ones with the best chance of winning and a complainant willing to dedicate the necessary time, money, and energy (Neumark, 2003). As a result, suits that are brought by relatively younger men who challenge termination from professional positions have significantly higher success rates and are awarded up to three times more money than other claims (Rutherglen, 1995).

#### *Legal Challenges and Legislative Amendments*

Only a small number of reported instances of age discrimination—usually cases with the strongest claims and the clearest evidence—go to trial, and only 26% of these judgments are awarded to the employee (Miller, Kaspin, & Schuster, 1990). Not only is it difficult to prove age-based discrimination, but the ADEA also allows for several exceptions that employers frequently cite in their defenses. The ADEA stipulates that age may be considered in employment decisions where it is a “bona fide occupational qualification” (BFOQ), meaning that an employee over a certain age would “not be capable of performing the job in a manner that is reasonably necessary to the normal operation of the particular business” (ADEA, 1967). This defense applies to occupations where public safety is a concern (e.g., airline pilots, fire fighters, and prison guards), but the clause allows employers to treat older adults as a homogeneous group, instead of evaluating each individual on his or her merits and abilities. According to Macnicol (2006), the Act is intended “to outlaw only ‘unreasonable’ or ‘arbitrary’ discrimination; federal courts have tended to take the view that age discrimination in employment is justified if there is any rational basis for it” (p. 244).

The BFOQ defense can only be used in specific cases, so the “reasonable factor other than age” (RFOA) defense is cited much more frequently (Bass & Roukis, 1999). Under RFOA,

the employer needs to show that factors other than age were used in making the decision in question. Unlike Title VII cases, where the defense needs to prove that the action was a “business necessity,” meaning that it could not be accomplished in any other way, in ADEA cases employers only need to demonstrate a business decision was “reasonable,” even if older workers were disproportionately affected (Bentley, 2007; Burke & Wilson, 2006). An economically sound business decision, such as laying off the most expensive workers who happen to have the most seniority and are disproportionately older, would qualify as an acceptable RFOA defense (Keller, 2006). For example, in *Hazen Paper Co. v. Biggins* (1993), the Supreme Court ruled that while seniority and age are correlated, they remain “analytically distinct,” meaning that an employer can make a workforce decision based on seniority without it being “age-based.”

### *Undermining the ADEA*

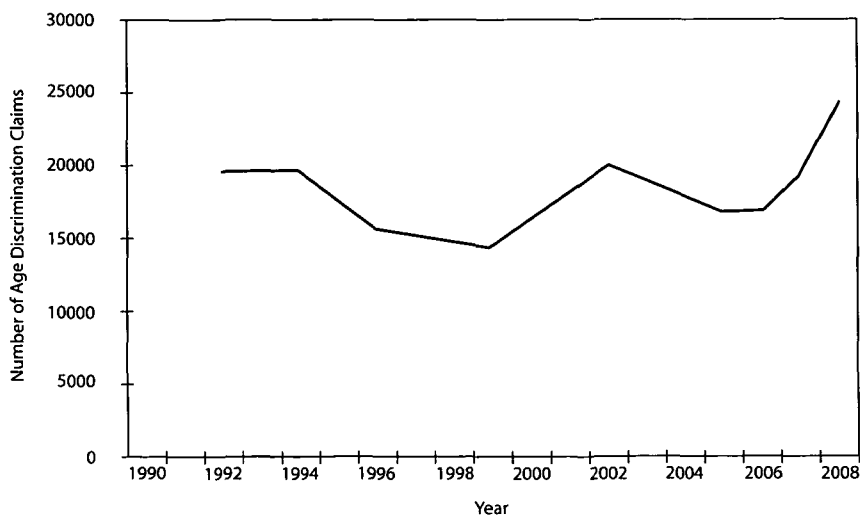
Over the past 42 years, the ADEA has been weakened to the point where, at best, it does not provide sufficient protection to “older workers as a group,” and at worst is seemingly used to rationalize discriminatory practices, as in BFOQ and RFOA arguments. This is, in part, attributable to shifts in the political consensus as the nation moved rightward and neo-liberal economics became the norm. In the 1980s, the American economy slowed, leading to massive restructuring, corporate mergers, and widespread layoffs (Smith, 2006). The manufacturing industry was hit particularly hard, as technological advancements and factory relocations displaced millions of workers (Horvath, 1987). Older workers were disproportionately affected since they made up a higher proportion of the manufacturing workforce, and had, on average, higher salaries and health benefits (Flaim & Sehgal, 1985; Horvath, 1987). The number of age-related complaints filed with the EEOC increased from approximately 10% of all EEOC cases in 1980 to 25% in 1991, indicating a significant increase in age-related dismissals (Macnicol, 2006).

In most cases, the courts have ruled in favor of the employer, finding that economic necessity and the free market were the motivating factors for layoffs—a legitimate RFOA

defense. At the same time, large firms developed retirement packages designed to entice workers into early retirement and waive ADEA rights (Wiencek, 1991), an alternate retirement system that provided a back-door way for employers to regulate the workforce (Hudson & Gonyea, 2007; Quadagno & Hardy, 1991). The 1990 Older Workers Benefit Protection Act (OWBPA) created guidelines to ensure that workers did not unknowingly give up their ADEA rights. While the OWBPA regulated the retirement packages, it also effectively codified a "questionable" practice (Harper, 1993). Since then, corporations have used OWBPA to circumvent the ADEA and "inoculate themselves against age complaints" (Grossman, 2003, pp. 44-45).

Court rulings over the last fifteen years have continued to reflect a commitment to neo-liberal economics and the needs of the free market at the expense of social justice. In *Marks v. Lorai Corp.* (1997), an ADEA case brought before The California Appellate Court in 1997, the judge ruled that, "cost-based layoffs often constitute perfectly rational business practices grounded in employers' concern for economic viability ... Congress never intended the age discrimination laws to inhibit the free market economy" (pp. 15-16). It was further noted that the ADEA called for "statutory prohibition against 'arbitrary age discrimination,' not against factors which indirectly work to the disadvantage of older workers" (p. 30).

Figure 1. Number of Age Discrimination Claims: 1990 - 2008

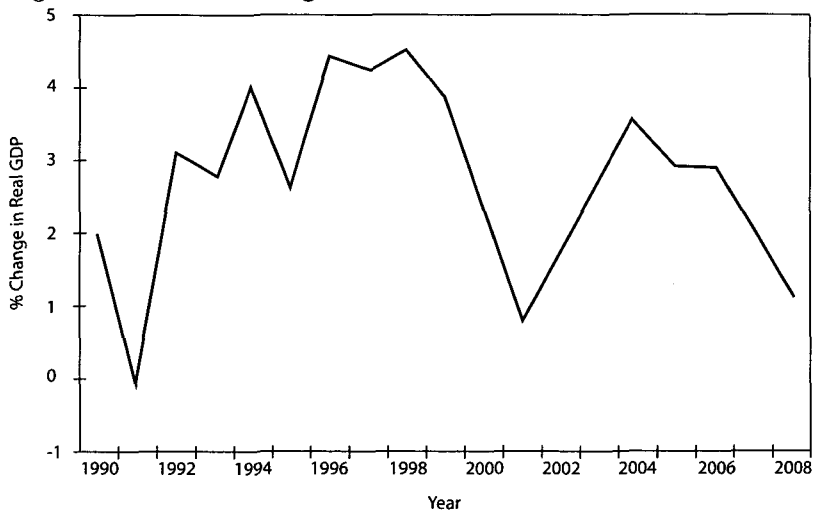


In *Smith v. City of Jackson, Mississippi* (2005), the Supreme Court ruled that “disparate impact” should be available under the ADEA, meaning that seemingly neutral decisions that disproportionately affect a protected group are illegal as long as the prosecution can prove that an alternate measure would have the same business outcome. Many legal analysts thought the ruling might lead to a dramatic increase in ADEA lawsuits and employer payouts (Burke & Wilson, 2006; Keller, 2006). However, the court immediately narrowed the scope of disparate impact cases by reinforcing the RFOA defense and concluding, “Unlike the business necessity test, which asks whether there are other ways for the employer to achieve its goals that do not result in disparate impact on a protected class, the reasonable inquiry [established in ADEA] included no such requirement” (Supreme Court of the United States, 2005, p. 14). According to Justice Stevens, who wrote the opinion, “certain employment criteria that are routinely used may be reasonable despite their adverse impact on older workers as a group” (p. 12).

### Economic and Labor Dynamics

The ADEA has been least effective at protecting older workers during periods of recession, downsizing, and economic restructuring (Minda, 1997). During the 2001 economic recession, for example, age discrimination claims filed with

Figure 2. Percent Change in Real GDP: 1990 - 2008



EEOC increased by 24%, peaking in 2002 with 19,921 reports (Hedge, Borman, & Lammlein, 2006). In 2007, when the U.S. economy again began to slow, the number of reports jumped 15% to 19,103. And in 2008, at the height of economic recession, age discrimination reports totaled 24,582—a 29% increase over the previous year. Between 1992 and 2008, the annual number of claims reflects a negative correlation with booms and busts of the economic cycle.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the number of age discrimination claims received by the EEOC rose to nearly 20,000 per year in the early 1990s, in 2002, 2003, and 2007, and then jumped to over 24,500 in 2008 (EEOC, 2009). Juxtaposed against changes in the American GDP over the past twenty years (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2009), it is clear that reports of age discrimination have risen following economic downturns, particularly over the last three major economic recessions (see Figure 2). According to Minda (1997), “age discrimination law has become infused with competitive economic rationales which have largely immunized downsizing from age discrimination regulation” (p. 515).

During the current economic recession, older workers have again been disproportionately affected. Between June 2008 and June 2009, the unemployment rate for adults 55 and over increased by 106% (from 3.4% to 7.0%) compared to a 70% increase for the population at large (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2009). In June 2009, unemployed adults aged 55 to 64 spent an average of 30 weeks looking for employment, compared to a national average of 22 weeks (BLS, 2009). This does not account for workers who became frustrated and stopped looking, were forced into early retirement, or had to settle for part-time work or lower pay. According to an AARP (2009) survey of 51 adults over 45 years old that lost a job in 2008, only 28% were reemployed by May 2009.

From a labor perspective, discrimination based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, or sexual preference only serves to weaken the ongoing campaign to advance social and economic justice. Crain (2006) notes that the 30-year offensive on workers’ rights has coincided with a dramatic decline in union membership, and attributes organized labor’s decline, in part, to its inability or unwillingness to take up issues of



discrimination as issues of “collective economic harm that affect all workers” (p. 160). One study in New Zealand found a positive relationship between unionization rates and employers’ willingness to comply with anti-discrimination legislation (Harcourt, Wood, & Harcourt, 2004). This analysis further suggests that age discrimination is inextricably linked to broader economic and labor forces.

### Policy Recommendations

Effectively challenging age discrimination in employment would require significant changes to the ADEA related to the funding, coverage, provisions, and enforcement of the Act. Inherent flaws in the philosophy and intent of the ADEA necessitate making major amendments to the existing legislation in lieu of creating new legislation to address age discrimination more directly. One such change would be eliminating the “reasonable factor other than age (RFOA)” exemption, which allows employers to use discriminatory practices so long as something else (usually profit related) is identified as the motivating factor. This would bring the Act into parity with the protections granted to women and minorities under Title VII and the Civil Rights Amendment of 1991, which allows for disparate impact claims and uses “business necessity” as the exemption test instead of the RFOA (Civil Rights Act, 1964).

In 1952, Abrams noted that “the main barrier to the employment of older workers is simply the lack of available jobs” (p. 65). The ADEA originally included provisions for re-education and training programs to help older workers acquire the skills needed to compete for employment; the programs, however, were never properly implemented or funded, and were eventually abandoned (Macnicol, 2006). Re-implementing such programs would give unemployed, underemployed, and unsatisfied older workers the option of training in a new field. In December 2008, the Department of Labor announced that approximately \$10 million had been allocated for Older Worker Demonstration Grants, and solicited proposals for programs focused on “providing training and related services for individuals age 55 and older that result in employment and advancement opportunities in high growth industries and

economic sectors" (Department of Labor, 2008). In addition, since educational and training programs would not address the underlying problem of limited job availability, effective age discrimination legislation might also include employment initiatives that create new jobs and help older adults secure employment. In order to meet the needs of older workers, educational and employment programs need to be adequately funded and staffed, and to be accessible to older adults in urban, suburban, and rural areas. This proposal might be difficult to promote in the current economic environment, when political leaders are faced with unprecedented federal deficits. Perhaps supportive employment programs would need to be incorporated into existing community and social service structures (e.g., senior centers, NORCs, etc.).

In its current form, filing a claim of age discrimination under the ADEA is difficult and time-consuming, and the law tends to favor the defendant/employer instead of the claimant. First, the time restrictions on filing suits should either be eliminated or changed to reflect when the discriminatory act is discovered, not when the act took place. Further, individuals need more than 90 days to file private suits after the EEOC cases close, so the time frame should either be significantly expanded or include extensions. An alternative approach would be to utilize organizations such as labor unions, professional associations, or non-profit groups such as AARP. When available, they could pick up cases that the EEOC is unable to pursue. This would give workers the opportunity to pursue legal action, whereas they might not have been able to afford it otherwise, hopefully chipping away at the up to 70% of cases closed after EEOC investigation. Crain (2006) suggests that taking up issues of discrimination would also strengthen the labor movement more generally, an argument that could be extended to other groups as well.

From a social justice perspective, employment legislation needs to protect the rights of older adults regardless of their relationship to the workforce (i.e., as active workers, retired, unemployed, etc). The EEOC needs to develop mechanisms to better monitor business employment practices, with a focus on detecting discrimination in hiring. Additionally, all adults over the age of 40 should be able to participate in ADEA educational and employment programs.

Finally, as the Anti-Ageism Task Force (ILC, 2006) points out, “in the absence of comprehensive national health insurance and pension systems, employers confront high costs that increase as workers grow older, discouraging employers from hiring and retaining older workers” (p. 3). A comprehensive single-payer health care system that de-linked insurance from employment would undermine the material basis for age-based discrimination and ageism in the workforce (Lahey, 2007).

## Conclusions

The ADEA, EEOC, and Title II programs emerged in the Civil Rights era, when Americans and the federal government sought to promote social justice and equality by addressing systematic patterns of discrimination through direct action, advocacy and progressive legislation. While discrimination based on race, gender, age and sexual orientation continue to be acknowledged social problems, the EEOC has limited itself to addressing these issues in the most narrow and individual way possible by focusing on receiving, investigating, and litigating complaints. As a result, the larger aims of challenging institutional discrimination and protecting older workers have been sidelined. Many policy analysts now view the ADEA as “a piece of well-intentioned legislation of the 1960s that has ultimately failed in its primary purpose, the reduction in long-term unemployment among older workers” (O’Meara, 1989, p. 48).

The pervasiveness of ageism, negative age-based stereotypes, and incidents of age-based workplace discrimination are more directly affected by economic conditions than by any amendment or piece of legislation. And given the current state of the economy, the defunding of programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, food stamps, transportation services, and the limited availability of employer-sponsored retirement benefits and pension plans, there is urgent need for reform. Ultimately, older adults—regardless of their labor status—need more than protection from arbitrary age-based workplace discrimination; they need protection from neo-liberal policies that support deregulation and the free market at the expense of the economic well-being of individuals.

Effective legislation for older workers must address the economic basis for all forms of age-discrimination and connect with broader struggles for social and economic justice. Anti-discrimination legislation that subordinates the rights of vulnerable groups to corporate interests and profitability will always be ineffective. Older and younger workers and their advocates (including social workers, labor unions, policy makers, activists and politicians) need to advance policies that protect the dignity and worth of human beings—policies that promote real equality and put the rights of people before the interests of the free market.

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# Attitudes, Behavior, and Social Practice

HARRIS CHAIKLIN

University of Maryland  
School of Social Work

*The relationship between attitudes and behavior is not symmetrical. A literature review is used to organize a summary of methodological and practical problems in this area. In turn, these findings are used to comment on how sociology and social work practice can take this into account.*

Key words: *attitudes, behavior, sociology*

"Sticks and stones can break my bones, but names will never hurt me." For generations this doggerel has been used by children to mitigate the hurts that come from cruel words. Translate this epigram into social science language and the focus of interest becomes behavior and attitudes and the possible relationship between them. This article is a selective review of the literature which examines their possible connection, especially as they relate to prejudice and discrimination. In turn the implications of this for social work education practice are discussed.

The concept "attitude" is one that has been frequently studied in social science. There is no universally accepted convention where definition and measurement are integrated. This article is not intended to resolve differences among competing definitions. It would not be possible to do this. A recent comprehensive examination of one aspect of this issue had more than 15,000 references (Schneider, 2004).

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The difference between psychological and sociological definitions will be used to further the analysis. A psychological definition of attitude identifies a verbal expression as behavior. Those who use a psychological definition of attitude attempt to reduce prejudice and discrimination by changing attitudes. A sociological definition of attitude looks at verbal expression as an intention to act. Common to sociological definitions is the view that an attitude is a "mental position with regard to a fact or state or a feeling or emotion toward a fact or state" (Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary). Those whose use a sociological definition of attitude attempt to reduce prejudice and discrimination by changing behavior. In considering the difference between the two approaches, a practical question concerns the order of change in working with people to handle what life brings them. Is it necessary to change attitudes before behavior can change, is it enough just to change behavior, or must one deal with both simultaneously? These questions reflect a fundamental methodological concern in trying to change prejudice and discrimination. C. Wright Mills (1959) held that the disparity between verbal and overt behavior is the central methodological problem in the social sciences.

### Attitudes are Behavior

Those who hold to a psychological definition of attitude recognize that social structure is important in creating and maintaining social order. But they claim that if behavior is to change, attitude change must come first (Dollard, 1949; Krech & Crutchfield, 1948; Kutner, Wilkins, & Yarrow, 1970; Lewin, 1999).

The studies that support this proposition are mainly social psychology laboratory experiments. Their results can't be replicated outside the laboratory. Hovland (1959) has suggested that what accounts for differences between the sociological survey's low correlations and the higher correlations obtained in psychological laboratory experiments are differences in methodology and differences in the way respondents are exposed to the stimulus. He made some methodological suggestions and a plea for reconciling the differences. Researchers continue to hope that this will prove fruitful despite the lack of positive findings (Acock & DeFleur, 1972). Psychologically

oriented social psychologists hold on to their belief that changing attitudes are a precursor to changing behavior even when there are counter indications. Gibbons, (1983) for example, while promoting "self-attention" as a way of increasing the attitude/behavior correlation, notes that it can also work against it. Wicker (1985, p. 1094) says the mind develops "conceptual ruts" and this "... human tendency to think recurring thoughts limits our theories and research."

Mills (1963) said that the abundance of laboratory experiments with attitudes made textbooks artificial because they depend mainly on data derived from supposedly volunteer students. In effect, one of the major sources of information about the nature of prejudice and discrimination comes from a selective population where the theoretical orientation of the researcher assumes that attitudes must change before behavior does.

Behaviorists introduce a variation by saying that changing attitudes may be a way to change behavior but it is more cost effective to influence behavior by changing the consequences (Geller, 1992). That is, they focus on behavior and eliminate consideration of attitudes altogether. The extreme empiricist stance is that one cannot directly discern mental states; therefore they are not relevant for study. The increasing importance of the cognitive view in psychology has tended to reduce the influence of the empiricist behaviorists.

While there is some support for being able to predict verbal attitudes, the correlations are not strong or consistent (Sjoberg, 1982). Wicker (1969) suggested that a "threshold" helps explain findings where a person may be willing to express negative attitudes on paper and not verbally. No evidence for this proposition has been found. In short, there is scant evidence for holding that attitudes are behavior and that changing attitudes must occur to change behavior.

### Attitudes are not Behavior

Studying attitudes did not begin in the social sciences until the 1920s. When sociology was becoming established, there was concern about the dominance of the University of Chicago Sociology Department and the differences between functionalists and operationists (Kuklick, 1973). Functionalists view

society as a set of social institutions designed to meet needs. The emphasis is on consensus and social order. Operationists think in terms of science and defining concepts with empirical referents.

The Hinkles (1954) characterize this as the case study–statistics debate and note that in the late 1920s Read Bain and Kimball Young were recommending attitude surveys as a middle ground that used both techniques. In a paper written in 1928, Thurstone (1970) said that “attitudes can be measured.” He defined an opinion as the expression of attitude and stated that the aim is not to predict behavior but to show that it is possible to measure attitudes. Verbal behavior is taken as an indicator of an underlying attitude. In 1988, Campbell (p. 32) put it this way when he said attitudes are “residues of experience or acquired behavioral dispositions.”

In other words, from the inception of the sociological study of attitudes the concern was measuring them and using them to predict behavior but not change them. This was the focus in LaPiere’s classic 1934 study which marked the start of modern survey research. A social attitude was defined as “a behavior pattern, anticipatory set or tendency, predisposition to specific adjustment or more simply, a conditioned response to social stimuli” (Dockery & Bedeian, 1989, p. 11). LaPiere had spent the previous two years touring the country with a Chinese couple. This was an era when anti-Asian feeling was high. In 251 attempted hotel registrations they were turned down once. In a follow-up mail survey, 92% of the respondents said they would not serve Orientals and most of the rest were uncertain. LaPiere concluded that questionnaires were not a good basis for predicting behavior.

Another classic study on the attitude/behavior difference played a major role in establishing sociology as a viable discipline. In 1944 Stouffer (Stouffer, Suchman, DeVinney, Star, & Williams, 1949) and his associates interviewed troops about their attitude toward integration of the army. Before integration, more than 80% were opposed. Six months after the army integrated only 7% were opposed.

Dockery and Bedeian (1989, p. 12) say that LaPiere “took the position that behavior is a direct attitude manifestation.” Thus, one can only know a person’s true attitude by the action

he or she takes. They also say that, "LaPiere's purpose in conducting the study was to highlight the danger of equating questionnaire-measured symbolic attitudes with real life responses to specific social situations" (p. 15). This is a warning consistently ignored by survey researchers (Parten, 1950). Although many specific attitudes have been operationalized, no one has found a way to relate any of them to the underlying predispositions that supposedly mark the true link between attitude and behavior conditions.

Sociologists, especially the Chicago School symbolic interactionists, have not only been skeptical about the ability of attitudes to predict behavior but they have questioned the utility of the concept "attitude." Blumer (1955) said that it was a concept that has not been operationalized and has not produced useful knowledge because there is nothing to tie together successive and different operational definitions of specific attitudes. His biggest objection is that it "presupposes a fallacious picture of human action." He points to the inability to track or control events that intervene between checking the attitude and the behavior it is presumed to relate to:

One will find in the literature well-chosen examples where prediction worked out well. Such examples do not represent the known universe of attitude studies or even the universe of the better studies and, hence, do not constitute proof. The matter is made worse by the ability to select impressive cases where prediction failed. Any fair appraisal of the known universe of attitude studies forces one to conclude that no high conformity has been established between asserted attitudes and subsequent action. (Blumer, 1955, p. 61)

This conclusion has been repeated many times. One which puts it in terms more familiar to a practitioner is:

What people do is one thing: how they feel about it is quite another. The low correlation between attitudes and behavior has been frequently reported in the literature, leading to a general conclusion that attitudes are not good predictors of behavior. (Maykovich, 1976, p. 693)

Despite this repeated conclusion, there have been continued attempts to improve the ability of attitudes to predict behavior by adding additional variables for which to control. In 1958 DeFleur and Westie suggested that the relationship between verbal attitudes and behavior is mediated by reference groups and opportunities for action. In 1963 they added a situational factor, noting that attitudes can vary according to circumstances. They also stress that while we can identify a specific attitude with a specific measure this does not help build knowledge about the underlying concept *attitude*. They urge further work and conclude "[t]he concept attitude is still in a surprisingly crude state of formulation considering its widespread use. At best it barely qualifies as a scientific concept" (DeFleur & Westie, 1963, p. 30). Weissberg (1965) strongly disputes this and argues for the utility of theorizing about the underlying concept.

Even when studies report positive associations between attitudes and behavior, the findings must be interpreted with caution. Mann (1959) found an overall positive association between prejudiced attitudes and behavior. On further analysis, the initial positive association only held for blacks, did not hold for whites, and whites who were high on verbal prejudice were low on discrimination. Mannino, Kisielewski, Kimbro, & Morgenstern (1968) experienced the same complexity and difficulty in interpreting their data when they examined the relationship between parental attitude and behavior.

Ehrlich (1964) reads the evidence on the relationship between attitudes and behavior positively. Nevertheless, he identifies a series of intervening social variables that might modify this relationship. He adds that there is a major problem because we generally obtain attitudes about a class of people and then try to predict what the behavior would be toward a specific individual. He says that, in the study of prejudice, forced choice questions exaggerate the degree of expressed prejudice, and he concludes that since these scores are only moderately correlated to other measures, it is probable that with more nuanced instruments, even these correlations would disappear.

It is possible, then, that many of the attitudes identified as necessary to change before behavioral change can occur are

spurious themselves. Given the variability of the findings in the literature, it is probable that many of them result from sampling variation. They are random.

Wicker (1969) came to a conclusion similar to that of DeFleur and Westie. He found no evidence for the existence of the underlying stable attitude that is supposed to influence verbal expression and behavior. Warner and Defleur (1969) added social constraint and social distance as factors that intervene in the connection between attitude and behavior. At about the same time, Tittle and Hill (1970) said that the results of attitude measurement are an artifact of the procedures used, and they wondered if it will ever be possible to predict behavior from attitudes. Figa-Talamanca (1972), in an excellent review, notes that the lack of support for linking attitudes and behavior is widespread and says that things won't improve, even when the attempt is made to change attitudes, until there is an examination of the situational constraints that prevent attitudes from being reflected in behavior. Liska (1974) attempted to deal with this issue with a comprehensive review of the factors associated with the attitude/behavior relationship. He concluded that measurement validity and conceptual complexity had to be dealt with, that just examining a single attitude didn't matter much. Also the extent of social support in a given context is a critical matter in improving the relationship's predictability.

Gross and Niman (1975) added additional variables to the factors that interfere in the direct relationship between attitude and behavior. Their review focused on personal, situational, and methodological factors. They left out considerations related to the need for achievement, self, and defenses. They specifically note that, "It does appear that changing behavior alters the attitude, while changing the attitude does not similarly affect behavior. This ... suggests complications for therapeutic interventions that rely on attitude changes to alter behavior (Gross & Niman, 1975, p. 363)." And changing behavior does not automatically enable changing attitudes or predicting them. Jacobson (1978) found that in the face of a legal ruling on desegregation it was possible to predict attitudes only where people's prior attitudes were extreme. For the majority, several factors intervened between the action and the attitude. The

attitude/behavior relationship may be a two way street, but there is no clear way to get from one side to the other.

To solve the methodological and conceptual problems associated with linking attitude and behavior, Gross and Niman (1975) recommend using repeated measures of attitude with repeated measures of behavior. While such studies are routine in medical research, they remain a utopian dream for social research.

By 1976, with increasing methodological and instrument sophistication, Schuman and Johnson could conclude that there was some evidence for a causal association, but that the correlations "... are rarely large enough to suggest that attitudinal responses can serve as mechanical substitutes for behavioral measures, but that assumption was naive to the extent that it was ever made" (Schuman & Johnson, 1976, p. 199). The area of strongest association in this review was on voting behavior. It leaned heavily on laboratory studies and surveys done with college students. They also added new methodological techniques that complicate the attitude/behavior relationship. In particular, they emphasized examining the causal direction in attitude studies. They state somewhat tentatively that it is possible that behavior has more to do with causing attitudes than attitudes have to do with causing behavior (Schuman & Johnson, 1976)

In 1981 Hill concluded that attitudes have "modest utility" in predicting behavior. He hedged this finding with so many qualifications that the last words of his piece are "... much remains to be accomplished before attitudes are well understood or even unambiguously defined" (Hill, 1981, p. 376). His review points to the variability of attitudes in relation to people, time, and place. The number of variables that affect the attitude/behavior relationship and that can intervene between words and behavior has continued to make progress difficult (Davis, 1985; Liska, 1984; Ritter, 1988).

Efforts to work out the relationship between attitudes and behavior persist, though at a reduced pace. More variables continue to be examined to see if they can help in the ability to predict attitudes from behavior. Schultz and Oskamp (1996), in a study that used undergraduate attitudes toward recycling, found those attitudes predicted behavior if a lot of effort was



required but not when this was not a factor. Despite the difficulties inherent in using student respondents, their conclusion that the attitude/behavior relationship will only become understandable through the addition of many more variables is supported by others (McBroom & Reed, 1992).

Holland, Verplanken, and Van Knippenberg (2002) looked at the strength of the attitude. In a laboratory experiment, people were asked both their attitude and the strength of the attitude toward Greenpeace. Later they were asked if they would contribute. Those who had the strongest positive attitudes were the most likely to contribute. Whether laboratory behavior will be the same outside the laboratory is another matter. Related to this is Liska's (1974) finding that attitudes about a specific behavior don't predict action. The prediction is improved when the social support for or against the action is considered. This research path has been extensively explored in recent years. Armitage and Christian (2003) have summed up this line of investigation. They note that there are variables which moderate the attitude/behavior relationship. These include having an attitude that is univalent, easily recalled, and being personally involved. They conclude that, "Both attitude strength and the way in which attitudes and behaviors are measured seem to affect the magnitude of the attitude/behavior relationship (Armitage & Christian, 2003, p. 189). They add this is a difficult area to study because there are many independent measures of attitude strength.

They promote behavioral intentions as a major mediating variable which influences the relationship. This creates a three variable argument—attitudes influence intentions and intentions influence behavior and lead to a complex theory of planned behavior. Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control result in behavioral intentions which, in turn, result in behavior. This can offer some hope for advancing knowledge about the attitude/behavior relationship, but it will be of little use in situations where people object to attitudes and want to change them.

Jonassen (1955) added an important and often overlooked argument, which is that the ability to predict behavior from attitudes is pretty high in non-problematical areas. He showed that people shopped where they intended to shop. He notes

that you can't do this in predicting a correspondence between racial attitudes and behavior.

A 1991 review of the literature by Pestello and Pestello conclude that "Despite the plethora of research, little has been settled about the attitude/behavior relationship. The studies we collected are contradictory on even the most basic points " (Pestello & Pestello, 1991, p. 348). They focused on the behavior variable and concluded that it was inadequately conceptualized, with many researchers using verbal intentions as a measure of behavior.

Zaller and Feldman (1992) say that on most issues people are conflicted so they answer questions in terms of what occurs to them at the moment. High rates of response instability and errors from measurement effects occur because people do not have the kind of attitude that survey researchers assume they have. People "... possess a series of autonomous and often inconsistent reactions to the questions asked by pollsters. Or, to put it another way, most opinions on most issues have both a central tendency and a variance" (Zaller & Feldman, 1992, p. 610). Until it is known to what extent a person's attitudes are consistent and vary from situation to situation, it will be difficult to take even the first steps to codifying what role attitudes play in predicting behavior.

A recent attempt to overcome the difficulties in attitude/behavior prediction has been made by Trafimow et al. (2004) who, while noting that attitudes are not behavior, distinguish between the thinking and feeling component of attitudes and say that they should be measured separately. They also distinguish between attitudes which stem from expectations about the consequences of behavior and subjective norms that relate to symbolic interaction which concern attitudes held with a consideration of others' expectations. They conclude that there has been progress in predicting behavior from attitudes but give no indication of how much.

In sum, each decade the same conclusion is reached by researchers using a sociological definition of attitude; verbal attitudes are not good predictors of behavior. How do we account for the persistence, especially in human relations programs, of the belief that before behavior can change, attitudes must be modified?

One factor is what Seeley (1967) called "The Americanization of the Unconscious." (Seeley's analysis is less stringent than the Marxist view of social psychology, which sees it as dominating all of sociology by substituting an individual psychological perspective on attitudes so as to divert attention from the objective conditions of workers who were exploited by those who controlled the society.) This work posits that a psychological perspective prevails in the social sciences. This view is best represented by Homans (1964), whose view of functionalism and exchange theory reduced sociology to psychology. He was more concerned with explaining than discovering and said that, "The general propositions of all the social sciences are psychological propositions about the behavior of men rather than about societies or other social groups as such" (Homans, 1967, p. 79). The emphasis is on normative behavior, and not how institutions function.

Parenthetically, most major sociological concepts have a different meaning in Europe, where the emphasis is on facts and behavior. This includes such well known ideas as anomie and alienation. The European meaning for these concepts relates to group membership and connection to work. In the United States, they are projected as attitudes and feelings. A second element lies in the investment that many have in methodology. An increased ability to create reliable scales has only resulted in social science fads and the production of thousands of scales that are seldom used more than once (Diesing, 1991).

A third reason for the continued emphasis on individual attitudes is that practitioners find it easier to work with the individual alone or in a randomly formed group rather than his role set (Brown & Turner, 1981; Cohen, 1973). Milner, in addressing prejudice, says that if it is conceived only as a matter of individual attitudes then one has to resort to "improbable equations" to make connections between individual and group behavior and one must "... go back to unoperationalizable assumptions about the underlying nature of attitudes" (Milner, 1981, pp. 140-141). The same is true for trying to link any attitude to group behavior.

## What Does it Mean to Say that Attitudes Must Change Before Behavior Can?

We hang on to approaches to research and programs that do not work. Our knowledge of social behavior has not increased. Some critics say that overdependence on attitude surveys contributes to the lack of development of cumulative knowledge in social science (Freese, 1972). Unless one knows how persistent an attitude is, using such data is like reading yesterday's paper to determine what will happen today. Wicker (1971, p. 18) said that, "The repeated failures to demonstrate a strong consistency between attitudes and behaviors have had little impact on most attitude researches." He says that this raises questions about the validity of attitude scales and about using findings based on this to attempt to solve social problems. Gans (1992) adds that sorting out the difference between changing and persistent attitudes does not happen because sociologists have "amnesia" for the past.

There are consequences to holding that one must change attitude before behavior will change. For example, both the 1944 *An American Dilemma* and what is popularly known as *The Kerner Report* conclude that racial prejudice and discrimination are due to a discontinuity between American values and practice (Kerner, 1968; Myrdal, 1962). Accordingly, they recommend that the road to improvement lies in changing attitudes. Merton (1948), in a sharp review of Myrdal's thesis, says that a proposition that aims to reduce racial tension only by changing values neglects the social structure's role. One example of this is a study of domestic violence by Dibble and Straus (1980) where they conclude, "... that a spouse's violence has much greater impact on the respondent's violence than the respondent's own attitudes about violence" (Dibble & Straus, 1980, p. 71). In other words, what counts is action and not words.

From Merton's perspective, when one switches from looking at people's "alleged hypocrisy" to changing discriminatory practices, progress is possible. This critique had great influence in American sociology. It has not had much effect on practice (Southern, 1987).

In a democracy, many forces influence what scientists should work on and what should be done with the results

(Hanna, 1991). Those who uncritically accept attitude data tend to reify it and use it as a basis for programs. Deutscher (1966) says this has led to disastrous consequences in social programming. He cites Merton's questioning of his own survey data when he wondered if Northerners did not treat African Americans worse than they said they did and Southerners did the reverse. In summing up his review of the attitude/behavior issue he says, "In effect, we have achieved over thirty years' worth of cumulative, consistent, and misleading information about prejudice (Deutscher, 1966, p. 250). Merton reinforces this when he says "The appeal to education as a cure-all for the most varied social problems is rooted deep in the mores of America. Yet it is nonetheless illusory for all that" (Merton, 1982, p. 253). Evidence, however, does not deter the true-believer from continuing to deny that the social structure is a greater determinant of behavior than attitude.

Seeman (1981) says that the attempt to find a correspondence between attitudes and behavior should be abandoned. Then what will happen is that "... the attention to attitudes is directed toward the discovery in all its subtlety of how people think and act (and coordinate the two) in realistic social settings" (Seeman, 1981, p. 401) The focus would not be on assessing attitudes and trying to change them but with understanding what leads people to behave as they do. Better theoretical models are needed.

In addition to the already identified factors which mitigate the power of attitudes to predict behavior, I would like to add another, which is that attitude surveys are almost always interpreted from the perspective of the scientists who collect the data. Very seldom are the implications of the attitudes explored for those who provide the data. Brown (1992) has examined the difference between lay persons' and scientific ways of knowing. He concludes that lay involvement has identified many poor scientific studies and pointed to weakness in the standards of proof in "normal" science.

Schneider (2004), in a recent and comprehensive review of the matter, is optimistic, but notes that attempts to change racial attitudes often fail. When they do succeed, they often have limited effects on only a part of the problem. Even where there is positive change, this is usually measured right after the

intervention and there is almost no information on long term effects. He also says:

One reason why I am not a fan of political correctness is that it often merely suppresses prejudice to a point where it cannot be confronted directly and changed (I would hope) more fundamentally. (Schneider, 2004, p. 415)

The major deficiency in assuming a deep-seated prejudice only on the basis of verbal attitudes is that when "... beliefs are based upon social cues rather than rigorous analysis, they are likely to be simplistic and distorted, i.e., myths that help us cope with widely shared anxieties, but typically fail to analyze problems adequately and rarely solve them" (Edelman, 1975, p. 14). In the late 1980s when there was an outbreak of racial incidents on college campuses, it was widely assumed that young whites were becoming more prejudiced. When this was examined, this was found not to be the case (Steeh & Schuman, 1992). As in most other studies, so many factors went into explaining racial attitudes that the study could not identify them all and it could not hook this behavior to attitude change which, in fact, had remained stable.

The knowledge that one must deal with more than attitudes has been available for a long time (Lewin, 1948). Chein put it this way, "... attitudes are as much a product of patterns of behavior as they are a cause, and that dilatoriness with respect to positive action teaches its own attitudinal lessons" (Chein, 1975, p. 222). He illustrates this point by noting that when the TV networks hired minority people, they just did it with no preparation and there was no reaction. But when the Supreme Court made its 1954 desegregation decision, its order did not call for integration "forthwith" but rather used the phrase "with-all-deliberate-speed." This latter phrase has no implementation boundaries and resulted in a generation of educational disruption.

Howard Zinn, a radical historian, is cited as saying that:

We now have enough actual experience of social change in the South to say confidently that you *first* change the way people behave by legal or extralegal pressures of

various kinds, in order to transform the environment which is the ultimate determinate of the way people think. (Joyce, 2003, p. 59)

These are the words of someone who was an active participant in the effort to end segregation and is one of the fiercest antagonists of anything that detracts from promoting equality for all in this society. He italicized "first" to indicate the primacy of changing behavior as the major means of achieving equality.

Those who promote "sensitivity" ignore the experience of Zinn and others who do not agree with them. They have a vested interest in the administrative structures, programs, and consultancies they create, for in many instances it is a good source of income.

Coerced attempts to change attitudes may reinforce the behavior they are trying to eliminate (Rooney, 1992). Given the demonstrated failure of this approach, those who use it express the latent function of punishing the client. Pelton (2001) has argued that "Equal respect for all individuals, conveyed in interaction as well as through nondiscrimination in policies, is based upon our commonality as human beings, not upon the presence or absence of group differences" (p. 435).

Whenever people are not seen as individuals they are judged in terms of their group characteristics. This means that stereotyping is occurring. Stereotypes can be positive or negative. The way to deal with negative stereotypes is through creating interaction situations and not attempting to change attitudes. Perhaps what needs to be examined most is the understanding of those who spend so much time telling others that they don't understand poverty and race. The problem is compounded because, in the name of diversity, affirmative action and multiculturalism, reasonable discussion of racial behavior has been practically suppressed within social work (Perlmutter, 2008).

There is an ambiguity of social work education and practice standards where there is more emphasis on changing attitudes than on changing behavior. Hartman (1991), in a *Social Work* editorial, articulated a postmodernist position that holds "speech is action." This leads her to question court decisions

overturning speech codes and to see social work education as having different goals than liberal arts education where freedom of speech is concerned. She says this is required by the Council on Social Work Education's accreditation standards. It is no wonder that not enough attention is given to the power of fairly enforced organizational rules in changing behavior, regardless of the attitudes that people verbalize. This goes so far as to ignore important countervailing claims. Rather, one should demand that others be stopped from verbalizing "improper" attitudes because they are presumed to lead to discrimination and oppression. In the name of furthering equality in many places, especially universities, speech codes, mandatory sensitivity training, review of course content for racial sensitivity, and at times sanctions such as expulsion, have been used (Campbell, 1988; Kissel, 2009). The purpose of all this activity is that it is presumed that the expression of negative attitudes will lead to discriminatory behavior and worse. It is assumed that the way to improve comes from creating positive attitudes so that people will not do negative things. The lack of evidence for this proposition deters no one.

These ideas are entombed in NASW's and the Council on Social Work Education's codes of ethics and there is little serious examination of their consistency. Longres and Scanlon (2001), in a study of research textbooks and teachers, note that while social work education has made a commitment to social justice the textbooks don't reflect this, that the teachers are only committed to theory in general and not to developing specific new contributions, and that there is a great diversity of opinion about what social justice is.

Practicing professions find it difficult to deal with prejudice and discrimination at the practice level. Bartoli and Pyati (2009) attempt to deal with expressions of prejudice by clients. They note that, "The scarcity of clear guidelines on how to address racial or prejudicial comments in psychotherapy is striking ..." (Bartoli & Pyati, 2009, p. 146). They also note the dilemma caused by contradictory standards in codes of ethics where the professional must work for social justice and the clients' right to say whatever they want, especially if their prejudiced statement is not related to the problem. What they do with this analysis is interesting. They are identified with social justice,



feminism and multiculturalism. They present two cases where the client was not only helped but also changed their prejudiced attitudes. It would have been equally helpful to present a case where the client improved and the prejudiced attitudes were unchanged.

That actions are more important than words in achieving social justice is a lesson that has a lot of support in sociology and other parts of society. Lichtenberg (2009, p. 16) notes that while the feeling part of offering charity is important also says, "Yet in thinking about the alleviation of poverty and suffering, it seems we are primarily concerned with actions and outcomes, rather than motives and dispositions." There is support for an action standpoint among important black opinion leaders. Whitney Young put it in familiar terms when he said that the Urban League was a change agent and that it was racial discrimination and not racial prejudice that had to be controlled.

The attitude is far less damaging than the act. For those who would assert that action flows from attitudes, it is relevant to point out that to an even greater extent the attitude results from the pattern of action to which individuals and groups have been accustomed. (1968b, pp. 38-39)

He practiced what he preached. In describing how he handled race with his children he said, "Then you begin to teach in your own home, by example and not through exhortation" (Young, 1968a, p. 151). Morgan Freeman, the distinguished actor, in commenting on the way parents of both races continue to perpetuate discriminatory practices said, "Children don't listen to what you say, they watch what you do. I'd use the analogy of a guy walking down the street with his daughter. He's holding her hand, and a dog approaches. He says, 'Don't be afraid,' but he squeezes her hand" (Kaplan, 2009, p. 4).

Martin Luther King Jr. expressed the same sentiments. "Morals cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. The law cannot make an employer love me, but it can keep him from refusing to hire me because of the color of my skin" (King, 1987, p. 27). President Obama, in his acceptance speech

for the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo said, "The promotion of human rights cannot be about exhortation alone" (Obama, 2009, para. 5).

If this lesson could be learned, perhaps social science and welfare academics and professional organizations could take their blinders off and deal with the anomaly that while there are laws against discrimination, there are major problems in education, housing, health, employment and other important areas of social life. Many of the gains from the civil rights movement are being lost. There is no broad-based movement which appeals across racial and class lines to redress this. How can there be, if so much attention is focused on attitude and not behavior. Implementation of existing laws, not more attention to attitudes, is the way to achieve progress in human rights.

## Conclusion

The answer to the questions which initiated this paper is that while attitudes are important, most attention must be paid to behavior if prejudice and discrimination are to be reduced, that is, to fair and enforceable rules and laws. For the most part these exist. What is lacking is the enforcement.

What stands out in this review on the state of knowledge about the ability of attitudes to predict behavior is that it is murky and not a great deal of progress has been made in clarifying the matter. The one thing that methodological advances have clarified is that attitudes have some utility in predicting behavior when it is not a problem to the person and there is social acceptance of its expression in action.

It is not necessary to change attitudes to change behavior. Those who insist on the reverse reflect the current infatuation with postmodernism that many social scientists and social workers have. One of its outstanding characteristics is to question whether truth can be established. This leaves a world filled with relative truths. They take the tendency for social science research to be cast in ways that support the current social order and build it into a conspiracy. Under the new rules, knowledge must now pass a political test.

Eighty years of research has done little to improve the ability to predict behavior from attitude. This has not prevented numerous universities, governmental agencies, and

businesses from developing programs whose aim is to create more positive attitudes. Unfortunately, those who focus on attitudes often create the attitudes they claim to be changing. In human relations training, the chief result is that people reinforce the attitudes they have when they went into training.

Too great an emphasis on trying to control or change attitudes threatens freedom. In our society, those who would sacrifice the first amendment in an attempt to coerce people into the proper attitudinal expression are also those who would take away our democracy. One of the things social workers should expect from sociologists is that they help them stay focused on the nature of these threats (Chaiklin, 1997). Some people may be so hurt by words that their lives are disrupted. That is to be regretted and they should have access to all the help they need to cope with the pressures. This includes legal redress. The same rights should also be available to the victims of coerced counseling and mandated sensitivity groups. We need to know when people will act on their words. While attitudes are important, there can be no real movement toward social justice unless major attention is given to behavior. This paper began with an epigram. It ends with another one. "Actions speak louder than words."

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# Should I Stay or Should I Go? Why Applicants Leave the Extended Welfare Application Process

MARCI YBARRA

University of Michigan  
National Poverty Center

*Since welfare reform of 1996, the use of extended application periods as a condition of welfare participation has become increasingly popular. Extended application periods include mandatory work activities and caseworker meetings for a period of time as a condition of and prerequisite to eligibility for welfare services. While much scholarly work has focused on welfare participants, we know comparatively less about those who apply for services but ultimately do not participate or receive benefits. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a random sample of twenty recent welfare applicants in the state of Wisconsin who did not complete the extended welfare application period. Beliefs about eligibility for a cash benefit, delayed welfare checks, and learning disabilities emerged as important factors that influence completion of extended welfare application periods.*

*Key words: welfare reform, welfare applications, learning disabilities, TANF*

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 transformed welfare from an entitlement program to a “work-first” model designed to compel employment by instituting time-limited benefits and mandatory compliance with work requirements. Since the enactment of PRWORA, extensive research has examined the dramatic decline of welfare caseloads and the increased employment among single low-income mothers who have left the rolls (Cancian, Haveman, Meyer, & Wolfe, 2002; Danziger, Heflin, Corcoran, Oltmans, & Wang, 2002; Moffit & Roff, 2000), although earning patterns are inconsistent (Wu, Cancian, & Meyer, 2008) and typically do not exceed the poverty threshold. Welfare applicants who apply for services but do not

enroll, or those who are diverted from welfare programs, are a group that has received far less attention. Diversion from welfare is intended to redirect applicants to employment prior to program enrollment to secure self-sufficiency and reduce dependency (Bane & Ellwood, 1994; Bruce, Barbour, & Thacker, 2004; Haskins, 2001; Holcomb, Pavetti, Ratcliffe, & Riedlinger, 1998; London, 2003) by aggressively promoting employment in lieu of cash welfare benefits. Critics argue, however, that diversion acts merely as a caseload restraint rather than an effective employment strategy (Meyers & Lurie, 2005; Ridzi & London, 2006).

Two common diversion strategies are lump-sum cash payments and extended welfare application periods. These two strategies are fundamentally different in that lump-sum payments forego substantial employment interventions altogether in favor of providing an immediate welfare check, equivalent to a corresponding number of months of cash welfare (London, 2003). In contrast, extended welfare application periods withhold cash welfare and rely on an extensive employment-seeking program as a condition of cash welfare eligibility (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services [USDHHS], 2004). There is a burgeoning scholarly literature on the impact of lump-sum payments on recipient outcomes which has found differences in characteristics related to employability and education between recipients and non-recipients. For example, lump-sum recipients have higher proportions of those with both high and low levels of education, with poor health, and those who are married (Moffit et al., 2003). A noteworthy proportion are diverted from welfare for only a short time period suggesting both those who are job-ready and those who are less prepared for the labor market are diverted through lump-sum payments (Gonzalez, Hudson, & Acker, 2007; Hetling, Ovwigho, & Born, 2007; London, 2003). We know comparatively less about extended welfare application periods, with most research coming from descriptive, federally-commissioned, evaluations (Arizona Department of Economic Security, 2005; USDHHS, 2000; USDHHS, 2002; USDHHS, 2004).

The dearth of scholarly literature on welfare's extended application period is a particular cause for concern given that participants do not access cash welfare during the application

process and must engage in mandatory work requirements for the duration of the period. We know relatively little about how participants view extended application periods or if the lack of cash welfare acts as a catalyst to diversion. Welfare leaver studies have consistently found low cash benefit levels to be associated with program exits, often with discouraging economic outcomes; examining an extended period where applicants go without cash welfare but must fulfill mandatory work requirements is warranted.

This paper adds to the literature on diversion by investigating applicant perspectives on a full range of extended welfare application period requirements, applicant preferences concerning welfare receipt, and alternative sources of support available to the applicant, during a 12-day extended welfare application period in the State of Wisconsin. I also explore the role of cash benefit levels in welfare program diversion and consider whether Wisconsin's unique non-cash welfare benefit causes applicants to leave the application period. I employ semi-structured interviews with a random sample of twenty recent welfare applicants who left an extended welfare application period in the state of Wisconsin.

### Framework

There are differing views about why applicants do not complete welfare application periods. Some scholars cite the demanding and complex requirements of welfare, or the "hassle factor," as barriers to assistance rather than employment gateways (Meyers & Lurie, 2005; Ridzi & London, 2006; Soss, 2001). Others suggest that applicants with a wider range of resources choose to rely on alternative sources of support or become employed rather than complete the welfare application period (Moffit et al., 2003). The "hassle factor" of the welfare application period is present in a broad scope of requirements. For instance, during the application period, welfare applicants may face difficulty in submitting necessary documentation or adhering to strict job-search requirements. The demands of the welfare application period also increase assessment of compliance with work requirements by agency caseworkers. This raises the cost of applying for applicants who have

difficulty completing mandatory work search requirements (Besharov & Germanis, 2007; Meyers & Lurie, 2005; Riccio & Hasenfeld, 1996). Moreover, previous research, though limited, has found that the likelihood of having services denied increases with each additional assessment by agency staff (Ridzi & London, 2006). Further, bureaucratic demands, such as submission of extensive documentation, create an increasingly complex application process (Besharov & Germanis, 2007; Meyers & Lurie, 2005) ultimately resulting in the diversion of welfare applicants irrespective of an applicant's labor market opportunities.

In contrast, other scholarship suggests individual preferences rather than a complex application period play a key role in whether applicants enter welfare programs. Applicants have been found to weigh the cost of applying to welfare programs relative to other sources of available support or employment opportunities (Besharov & Germanis, 2007; London, 2003). For example, applicants with recent employment have reported they would rather work than participate in welfare (Gonzales, Hudson, & Acker, 2007). Other research has found that some of those diverted choose to rely on informal sources of support, such as help from family and friends (Moffit et al., 2003). Past research, however, has largely neglected to cumulatively assess the multiple demands of the welfare application process and applicant experiences with diversion during welfare application periods.

## Background

### *Extended Welfare Application Periods*

While extended welfare application procedures vary by state, they all share several characteristics (USDHHS, 2004). For example, extended application periods are coupled with mandatory up front job search activities for those applicants who do not have a documented barrier to work, such as a physical disability. Activities typically include job search workshops, soft skills trainings, and a series of appointments with caseworkers during the application period to determine compliance with mandatory requirements (Holcomb et al., 1998). The duration of the application period varies, with a

45-day maximum, although most states use a 30-day maximum (USDHHS, 2005). All applicants are required to sign a personal responsibility contract, cooperate with child support enforcement, and submit documentation such as birth certificates and immunization records for the applicant's children as a condition of eligibility (Holcomb et al., 1998).

Studies on welfare application outcomes report two primary reasons for diversion: difficulty in navigating bureaucratic obstacles and the inability to complete mandatory requirements during the application period. For example, Ridzi & London (2006) conclude that the demands of the application process are the primary reason applicants exit. They found that issues such as mandatory compliance with efforts to obtain child support from non-custodial parents and the submission of birth and medical records discourage applicants from completing the application period. Further, they found that compliance assessment of work search by caseworkers was a major obstacle to completing the application period (Ridzi & London, 2006). Similarly, Meyers & Lurie (2005) compared the demands of past and current welfare application procedures and found a substantial expansion of welfare application requirements since reform. They point out that increased documentation to certify eligibility and the multiple meetings with caseworkers create an intricate and complex process that only the most advantaged applicants are able to complete.

Gonzales and associates (2007) report that a substantial proportion of applicants seek employment rather than participate in application requirements, foregoing welfare altogether. In a related study, Moffit and associates (2003) found some respondents reported foregoing welfare because application requirements were "too much hassle." At the same time, they also found that access to other supports, such as SSI, other employed household members, and living with a partner, influenced a respondent's decision to forego welfare. This suggests that other resources play an important role. Another study, utilizing the same data source, found mandatory application requirements were not significantly related to application period diversion once applicant characteristics were accounted for (Moffit, 2003).

*Treatment by Caseworkers*

Scholars have long examined the interactions between caseworkers and clients during welfare participation and found that negative treatment by staff plays an important role in welfare program experiences. Moreover, caseworkers have been described as doing little more than “people-processing”—dispensing required paper work and strictly adhering to the stringent rules, irrespective of individual circumstances (London & Ridzi, 2006; Meyers & Lurie, 2005). Overall, relationships with caseworkers have been found to be a “gateway” to welfare entry, access to important resources, and overall applicant satisfaction with welfare services (Kingfisher, 1998; Riccio & Hasenfeld, 1996; Soss, 1999). Some pre-reform research found evidence that caseworkers treated applicants with a lack of respect during welfare application encounters, which in turn affected their beliefs about the program and services (Soss, 1999). More recently, scholars have found that former welfare participants report past treatment by their caseworkers contributed to their reluctance to reapply for welfare services (Anderson, Halter, & Gryzlak, 2004). We still know relatively little about post-reform welfare applicants’ assessment of caseworkers’ roles in shaping their decision to divert. Given that agency staff is responsible for securing compliance with program policy, rules, and procedures, it is important to account for their role in diversion.

*Policy Context: Wisconsin’s Extended Welfare Application Period*

The state of Wisconsin requires a 12-day extended application period for all welfare applicants without documented barriers to work, such as a physical disability or an infant younger than three months. Other documented barriers to work that may result in a work-exemption during the application period include: mental health treatment, domestic violence, pregnancy, alcohol and other drug abuse treatment, family member with a disability, or an applicant 19 years or younger that is still in high school. Similar to other states that utilize an extended welfare application period, Wisconsin’s welfare program, Wisconsin Works (W-2), requires a series of mandatory agency activities and appointments as a condition of program eligibility (Ybarra & Kaplan, 2007), as reflected in Table 1.

Table 1: The Extended Welfare Application Period in Wisconsin

12-day Period	Mandatory Meeting	Purpose of Meeting
Day 1	Program Orientation	Group introduction to the W-2 program, rules, requirements, and application process
Day 1	Resource Specialist	Initial assessment, assigned activities, assignment of subsequent application appointments
Day 5	Caseworker Meeting	Initial intake meeting to assess compliance with application process
Day 12	Caseworker Meeting	Final intake and assessment, Program eligibility determined

Applicants generally participate in four mandatory meetings over the course of the 12-day application period in which they are introduced to the program and assigned application period requirements.

Applicants may discontinue their application for several reasons. First, an applicant may be denied services due to non-compliance with work requirements (as assessed by the caseworker); they may decline services offered to them at the end of the application period; or they may fail to attend a meeting and not return for services. For applicants who complete the application period and enter the W-2 program, cash placements are reserved for those who do not have barriers to work, but have limited or no prior work experience, participants with a documented barrier to work, such as a disability, and those with a newborn infant younger than three months. The monthly cash welfare benefit in Wisconsin ranges from \$628 to \$673. Wisconsin's non-cash welfare placement is reserved for applicants who have complied with application period requirements and have a recent and consistent work history that causes them to be assessed as "immediately employable" by an agency caseworker. Participation in the W-2 non-cash welfare placement requires continued compliance with agency appointments, and offers access to employment resources such

as job leads or employment workshops, but does not include a welfare check.

### Data and Method

To understand why applicants leave the welfare application period, semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty individual applicants who applied for welfare between April and May 2007 but left the application process. Interviews were conducted within six weeks of the applicant's decision to exit. Forty applicants were randomly selected using W-2 administrative data from Wisconsin's four largest (caseload) agencies. Twenty agreed to be interviewed, for an overall response rate of 50 percent. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview questionnaire (available upon request from the author). Respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions regarding their reason for applying for services, their experience with the W-2 application process, their decision to exit the application process, and other information on sources of income and general demographics.

All but two applicants were interviewed at a local restaurant and offered a meal before the interview. The remaining two applicants were interviewed in their homes at their request. Interviews lasted about forty-five minutes on average, and respondents received \$25 for their participation. All respondents agreed to allow the interview to be recorded. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were coded for primary themes reflected in the interview protocol. Original themes included: prior welfare experiences, mandatory agency requirements, treatment by caseworkers during the application period, and access to other resources. Comments and demographic characteristics were then cross-coded utilizing an analysis of response content described by Strauss & Corbin (1990), which organizes responses into thematic sections by recognizing response patterns among participants. Quotes were selected based on their overall representation of coded themes.



## Results

### *Interviews*

Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 46 years and had all left the application period within six weeks of the interview. Eighty-five percent of respondents were African American, which is similar to the racial composition at the four agencies from which sample members were selected (Ybarra & Noyes, 2008). Shared living arrangements were common; one-third reported they lived with a partner at the time of the interview while a few others lived with family or friends. Child support was an important resource for those who received it; a total of six respondents reported child support receipt in the year prior to the interview, although most was informal rather than formally paid through the family court system. Finally, one-quarter of interview respondents reported having a disability, with all but one reporting a learning or reading disability.

### *Overall Findings*

Respondents were asked if required work activities, caseworker meetings, treatment by caseworkers, or benefit levels shaped their decision to leave the application period. In general, respondents overwhelmingly reported leaving because they believed, or were informed by agency staff, they would be ineligible for a cash benefit because they were "immediately employable." Moreover, the impact of mandatory work requirements was overshadowed by their more immediate concerns about cash welfare eligibility. In other words, most respondents indicated a willingness to comply with application demands, including work requirements, if they would receive a welfare check during program participation.

Issues of child support enforcement and submission of other required documents were found to be of little importance to respondents during the application period. Moreover, in contrast to other research that has documented applicant dissatisfaction with agency caseworkers during application periods (USDHHS, 2002), most respondents reported neutral or positive interactions with their caseworkers, and all reported that treatment by staff did not play a role in their diversion from the application period. Of course, the application period

allows for only limited contact between caseworkers and applicants relative to the ongoing relationships forged during program participation. Thus, it may be that the likelihood of negative treatment is reduced, due to the shorter timeframe of the application period relative to interactions with caseworkers during ongoing program participation.

Respondent decision-making was, however, related to their perceived potential in the labor-market, views on welfare employment services, the availability of both formal and informal support, and individual characteristics. More specifically, younger respondents valued welfare employment services, older respondents reported more confidence in becoming employed without welfare, and respondents with greater access to resources more readily left the application period. Respondents with reported disabilities, specifically those with reading or learning disabilities, had more complicated lives and diverted due to inaccurate beliefs about the program and/or the difficulty of navigating mandatory requirements which often conflicted with personal circumstances.

#### *Respondent Circumstances*

Most who reported applying to welfare due to difficulty becoming employed applied after they had already applied for a number of jobs. A number of these respondents reported brief or seasonal employment that left them ineligible for unemployment benefits, hastening their decision to apply for welfare. By the time respondents applied, they had been unemployed for a while and reported being in need of immediate assistance at the time of their application.

Several respondents reported a break-up with an employed live-in partner as the catalyst to their welfare application. The loss of a partner who provided considerable financial support, coupled with difficulty finding a job, largely shaped their decision to apply for welfare. The impact on the respondent's immediate economic picture was quick and significant, as illustrated by a 22-year-old African American respondent whose boyfriend was incarcerated. She had attempted to find a job prior to her application for services, but had little work experience:

I had somebody that was like helpin' me but I'm not with him no more so I needed financial help. I was with him since I was like sixteen ... he was a truck driver and stuff and then he turned around and got caught up on a incident on his job where he had went to jail. It was like he was payin' all the bills ... everything ... takin' care of me, takin' care of my daughter ... and I didn't have to work cause he was doin' it. And then he was gone and I had to move with a family member. I wanted to help out and my daughter needed stuff and I couldn't find no job so I had to turn to W-2 to find another resource.

An applicant's need for immediate financial help was often frustrated by the long wait for a welfare check once in the W-2 program. In Wisconsin, welfare applicants are not eligible for cash welfare until they complete the 12-day application period. Most initial welfare checks are only a partial payment, due to an administrative system that issues checks once per month. Thus, most W-2 participants receive a partial welfare check four to six weeks after they enter welfare. A full cash-benefit check will not arrive until the second month after program entry for most newly entering participants. Thus, even those expecting to receive a cash welfare benefit weighed the cost of participating in the application period relative to the wait involved for their welfare check:

And then it's like, for I think they said, for the first check or somethin' you get like only, you only get like \$150 and that's like after two months?! I'm waitin' for two months for my \$150? No! So ... especially right now, I'm like in an emergency type, you know, situation where I need some assistance right now. And it's like, that not helpin'. You know, especially when you give me a check, you know, months later.

Another respondent who had been unemployed for eight months and recently broke-up with a live-in partner indicated that without an immediate welfare check she was better off seeking employment on her own:

You know I needed emergency assistance at that moment. So I just felt like it was a waste of my time. If they couldn't give me emergency assistance, it was no need for me to be there. I was job ready and I knew I was and I needed to just go back out there and do what I was doin' ... which was job search on my own.

Overall, applications were typically preceded by a job loss, split with partner, or both, followed by an unsuccessful independent job search, resulting in an application to welfare when resources were exhausted. Additional time spent in the extended application period without a welfare check and the wait for a check upon program entry were the most important reported factors in decisions to leave the application period. Finally, the decision to exit was most related to ineligibility for a cash welfare benefit, rather than difficulty navigating the application process, attending appointments, or caseworker treatment of applicants.

#### *The Timing of Leaving the Application Period*

To examine the role of agency requirements and appointments, participants were asked if agency demands influenced their decision to leave the application period. Surprisingly, most applicants did not report difficulty in keeping up with required appointments, job search activities, or the submission of documentation as their primary reasons for in leaving the application period. Rather, their departure was related to the moment they came to believe they would not receive a cash welfare benefit. In fact, many who left the application period at a later stage expressed frustration with being informed they would only be eligible for non-cash welfare so late in the application process. For example, a respondent who declined non-cash welfare services after participating in the application period for a week reported she would rather have been told right away:

Umm ... was declined for what I wanted to apply for (cash benefit) and had I known, you know, ... from the first step, I wouldn't have to go through an orientation or meet with that first lady (caseworker). I could've saved me some time.

Similarly, a respondent who was informed at the end of the application period that she would only receive non-cash services, declined them and reported her decision would have occurred sooner had she known she would not receive a welfare check “and that’s when I found out I wasn’t gonna get any cash (laughs) ... I wish I had known, I woulda left in the beginning.”

Even respondents who left after the first day of the application period reported their belief that they would be determined “immediately employable” and denied a welfare check. This led them to leave the application process: “The fact that I knew I was gonna be put in the placement of ‘job-ready’ (case management without a cash benefit), which I was (laughs).” When asked how she came to believe she would only receive non-cash case management services she reported it was the description of cash-benefit eligibility at the program orientation:

Umm ... because of the information that he (orientation facilitator) told us ... about ummm ... because of all the job experience I had and I wasn’t disabled. And so I knew that I would be put into that placement (case management only without a welfare check). He didn’t tell me but I just knew from the orientation that I was gonna be put in that placement...

### *The Role of Age*

Although most reported the lack of a welfare check as their reason for leaving, this was mitigated by what they thought of welfare employment services. Older applicants (twenty-five years and older) expressed little confidence in employment services provided by local welfare agencies and thus did not see the benefit of participating in them, particularly if they believed they would not receive cash welfare. Older applicants also viewed welfare application period job search requirements as a hassle to get through in order to participate in welfare, rather than as a pathway to employment as described by a 26-year-old respondent :

You know, I think, ... I think ... it’s somewhat reasonable (mandatory job search activities and agency appointments) but umm ... it’s like, okay, well if you

know that if ... if we need to be out, you know, lookin' for a job, why should we be sittin' up in your office? You know, why should we be sittin' up behind your computer? You know? When we should be out, you know, either fillin' out an application or seein' about an application or talkin' with someone about an application. Somethin' besides sittin' up in your office. So, it's okay, but I just can't see, you know, havin' to sit up there for no reason at all.

Another 28-year-old respondent, when asked if she thought the program could help her get a job, responded "they can't do it any better than I can. That's what I'm already doin' out here, applying for work. Why am I gonna keep goin' there with no money?"

In contrast to older applicants' views, younger respondents (those younger than 25 years of age) reported valuing the work-first philosophy of the program and viewed the program as a gateway to employment:

See, W-2 is like, basically helping you get a job. They help you get you a resume together, help you set up a e-mail account so you can, you know apply, for jobs online. Even if you get in the program and get cash, you still gotta do the job search until you get a job. (22-year-old respondent)

Younger applicants also expressed an appreciation for the soft skills training offered through agencies. Particularly employment workshops on resume development and interviewing techniques were valued, as evidenced by an 18-year-old respondents' description:

they help you out umm ... they show you how to go in, umm ... talk to a manager. I mean they show you how to do a interview. And I think that's a good thing cause some people don't know too many ... too much about a interview. They just go in and say whatever.

Younger applicants' positive views of welfare employment services overlapped with "buying in" to the overall work-first philosophy of welfare reform. For example, a 23-year-old

respondent described mandatory requirements and job search activities as a chance to demonstrate your commitment to employment rather than welfare reliance:

I like the fact that they make you work for your cash benefits now. Because before it was so easy. And now it's not and you have to work for the twelve days. You have to steady like ...you gotta show that you wanna work. And that's so much better because before it was just anybody can do it; anybody who needed it can do it. Not tryin' to show any effort that they wanted to work.

Another 22-year-old respondent reported that requirements worked together to compel employment for welfare applicants:

I think it's good because most people I know just want to collect the money. That's it. They don't wanna ... just be lazy ... don't wanna to go look for work ... just get the money. So I like how they did that. Because I know a lot of people who just ... just want the money. They don't want to go find no job or nothing...

Expectations of welfare cash-assistance and age are difficult to interpret, although other research has also documented younger welfare participants' endorsement of the work-first welfare philosophy (Lowe, 2008). Due to their young age and short work history, younger applicants may be more likely to receive a welfare check relative to older applicants in the W-2 program. In turn, this may influence their overall rate of diversion during the application period and their perspectives on the W-2 program in general. Further complicating matters, younger respondents were more likely to report having access to informal sources of support, particularly shared housing with family members. Thus, they were also less likely to report extreme financial hardship upon submission of an application for welfare. Overall, younger and older applicants sought welfare for different reasons, had divergent personal circumstances, and different expectations of the W-2 program overall, potentially impacting their reasons for exiting the application process and their likelihood of reapplying.

*Applicants with Disabilities*

Respondents with reported learning or reading disabilities differed from other applicants in several important ways. First, those with learning disabilities reported difficulty meeting the demands of the application period, especially mandatory job search requirements and appointments. Moreover, their circumstances were often the most complicated, with all experiencing recent housing problems, including homelessness. Part of their difficulty derived from their misunderstanding of W-2 rules and policies that applied to the application period. For most, incorrect application policy information led to their leaving the application period. Unlike their counterparts without reported disabilities, they were not actively weighing the costs of the program relative to benefit expectations, or labor market opportunities. Rather, they reported several attempts to apply for services from the time they submitted their original application to the time of our interview, suggesting a desire to participate in welfare, but an inability to successfully complete the application period.

An applicant with a reported learning disability informed us she declined non-cash services because she did not want to use any of her lifetime welfare eligibility limits if services did not include a welfare check: "you know I wanted to save that time for in case I get eligible for a cash-benefit. I didn't see why I should use up some time when I wasn't gonna get any financial benefit." According to W-2 policy, the 5-year federal lifetime benefit limit is only used when applicants receive a cash welfare benefit. When pressed further as to how this would affect her 5-year limits on welfare benefits, the respondent reported her caseworker had encouraged her to decline and "bank" her welfare eligibility for future use.

Similarly, another applicant with a reported learning disability also reported the overlapping impact of housing issues, and difficulty meeting agency requirements due to transportation and instability. She informed us that since she had to wait two weeks to reapply every time she missed a scheduled agency appointment during an application process, this extended the time she would have to wait to receive a cash payment.



Well you know since I applied that first time you're talkin' about (May 2007 application), I've applied like two other times. But you know I been stayin' with a friend, a nice friend, cause me and my kids ain't got nowhere else to go. I been lookin' for a place but I got to get W-2 and show some income and I got me an eviction from last year so it's like hard to get me a place right now. And then every time I miss an appointment I got to wait two weeks before I can go back and apply and then you know the time it takes to get the check ... it's makin' it real hard to get me a place.

According to W-2 policy, applicants may reapply the same day their initial application is denied or the application is closed for other reasons. When asked why she thought she had to wait two weeks between each application to W-2 the applicant responded "that's just the way it is when you applying for W-2, you gotta wait to get back in."

Finally, an 18-year-old applicant with a reported learning disability who was transitioning from her mother's W-2 case dropped out after using the full 30-day application period. This respondent's extension from a 12-day process to a 30-day process was related to issues of required documentation to transition to her own W-2 case at the County level office rather than the W-2 agency, suggesting that she experienced difficulty in navigating the bureaucratic requirements to open a new W-2 case.

I kept goin' back, tryin' to get it taken care of. I thought I had taken them what they wanted, but when I went back to the W-2 office my worker looked at the system and told me it hadn't been cleared up at the County. You know, she was tryin' to be nice, but she told me since I got through thirty days she couldn't do nothin' but deny me 'cause I hadn't cleared up things from my mother's case with the County. I'm back in applying again and got it cleared up so I think I'm gonna be okay this time.

These results suggest that applicants with learning disabilities have complicated lives, particularly related to housing, difficulty navigating the application process, and an impaired

ability to process policy information. Their disability status may play in a role in their inability to meet mandatory requirements, attend agency meetings, and ultimately complete the application process. Applicants with reported disabilities may be at a distinct disadvantage relative to other applicants in making it through the application process and ultimately participating in welfare programs.

### Discussion and Implications

Levels of human capital and the ability to access benefits immediately played key roles in diversion. Surprisingly, treatment by agency staff and bureaucratic demands were not reported as catalysts to diversion. Rather, respondent's continued participation in the extended welfare application period was related to how long it takes to receive a welfare check or if they would receive a cash benefit at all. In Wisconsin, monthly welfare checks are generous relative to other states (\$673 per month), but a participant will not receive a full-benefit check until about two months after program entry and only a partial benefit check in the month following program entry. Most respondents who reported the wait for a check as the reason they discontinued their application indicated they would have completed the process if they would receive a welfare check sooner.

In 2006, applicants who were assessed as "immediately employable" would be eligible for non-cash services, such as employment assistance, but not a welfare check. Not surprisingly, those who were assessed, or believed they would be assessed, as employable and not eligible for a cash benefit, did not see the purpose in completing the application or entering welfare without some financial assistance. While most reported becoming employed shortly after they left the application period, it was not uncommon for their jobs to be temporary or seasonal. Moreover, being assessed as employable was mitigated by age, with older applicants more likely to fall into this category due to the greater likelihood of having a work history. Further complicating matters for older applicants, they often felt that employment services offered through welfare would not assist them in finding a "good" job. Thus, participating

without a check and no perceived benefit from employment assistance may lead to older applicants foregoing welfare relative to their younger counterparts.

Administrative requirements, such as child support enforcement, the submission of mandatory documentation, and treatment by caseworkers, were not reported as primary factors in decisions to divert, as has been found in other studies (Anderson, 2001; Meyers & Lurie, 2005; Ridzi & London, 2006). Other research in this area has focused on welfare participation (Anderson, 2001; Meyers & Lurie, 2005; Ridzi & London, 2006; Soss, 1999). Welfare participants, relative to applicants, likely have greater exposure to bureaucratic and caseworker demands during ongoing program participation. It may be that once applicants discovered they would not receive an immediate check or would only be eligible for non-cash benefits, bureaucratic demands became less salient in their application experiences. Or, perhaps the limited meetings with caseworkers and short timeframe of the application period reduced the risk of having a negative experience. Nonetheless, results in this area should be interpreted with caution.

Applicants with learning disabilities reported inaccurate policy information that impacted their ability to complete the application period and enter welfare. Overall, this suggests that some target groups are unintentionally diverted due to complex rules and processes rather than better opportunities in the labor market. At the same time, it may be a specific group of welfare applicants—those with learning disabilities—who experience difficulty in completing application periods. While prior work has considered the role of learning disabilities on program participation and employment for welfare populations (Thompson, Holcomb, Loprest, & Brennan, 1998; Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, 1996), we have not yet accounted for learning disabilities in the ability to process or understand policy information at the “front door” of public programs. This warrants concern, given that research has found individuals with learning disabilities are overrepresented in the welfare population (Johnson & Meckstroth, 1998).

Accounting for the role of learning disabilities as a potential barrier to program entry and participation is particularly

important, as current recommendations to improve policy knowledge among those likely to utilize public programs suggests time and exposure to correct policy information may help to reduce gaps in knowledge (Meyer et al., 2007). Yet, we do not know if such tactics are appropriate among those with learning disabilities. Applicants with learning disabilities may need specialized case management practices and improved agency assessment tools to address their learning disabilities as not only a barrier to work but a potential barrier to TANF compliance due to deficient understanding of program rules and requirements.

Finally, the reported need for an immediate welfare check among most respondents is similar to a lump-sum cash payment. Indeed, lump-sum payments are intended for those who are able to seek employment on their own, which many respondents reportedly preferred. At the same time, evidence of those diverted by lump-sum cash payments suggest small gains in employment, use of the grant by unintended groups, such as those with short or non-existent work histories, and quick returns to welfare by recipients, but at lower rates than non-users (London, 2003). Nevertheless, the use of lump-sum cash payments, particularly with older welfare applicants with recent work histories may be preferable to applicants, and agency resources may be conserved.

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# U.S. Immigration Policy and Immigrant Children's Well-being: The Impact of Policy Shifts

DAVID K. ANDROFF

CECILIA AYÓN

Arizona State University  
School of Social Work

DAVID BECERRA

Colorado State University–Fort Collins  
School of Social Work

MARIA GURROLA

California State University–Long Beach  
Department of Social Work

LORRAINE SALAS

Unlimited Potential, Phoenix, AZ

JUDY KRYSIK

KAREN GERDES

ELIZABETH SEGAL

Arizona State University  
School of Social Work

*America is built upon a history of immigration; yet current immigration policy and anti-immigrant sentiment negatively affect the vulnerable population of immigrant families and children. Immigrant children face many problems, including economic insecurity, barriers to education, poor health outcomes, the arrest and deportation of family members, discrimination, and trauma and harm to their communities. These areas of immigrant children's economic*

*and material well-being are examined in light of restrictive and punitive immigration policies at the federal and local level. Implications for social policy reform, such as decriminalization, are discussed.*

Key words: *immigration policy, immigrants, children, families*

Engraved on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty is a poem written in 1883 by Emma Lazarus, a descendent of American colonial settlers. The final sentence of the poem, often quoted over the more than hundred years since its creation, states:

Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!  
(1888, p. 202).

These lines suggest that the United States is a refuge and haven for immigrant families and their children. In fact, the beginning of the poem captures the sentiment even more strongly. The poem holds the statue as a symbol of the "Mother of Exiles" and that "from her beacon-hand glows world-wide welcome." The message is unmistakable: all immigrants are welcome. However, the U.S. history of immigration policies and the current response to immigration are far different.

This paper examines the well-being of undocumented immigrant families and children, especially their economic and material welfare, in the light of recent public policy shifts. This paper primarily focuses upon the children of undocumented immigrants, the majority of whom are Latino, and especially of Mexican origin. For the purposes of this paper, the term "undocumented" is employed to refer to immigrants living in the U.S. without the status of citizenship or legal permanent residency. Conscious effort has been made to avoid the terms "illegal immigrant" or "alien" which reinforce a negative and criminalization frame.

Six areas of children's well-being are addressed, including economic insecurity, barriers to education, poor health outcomes, arrest and deportation of family members, discrimination, and trauma and harm to the community. Within the larger



context of shifting federal immigration policies, special attention is placed upon local and state policies in U.S. states along the Mexican border, as these laws may shed light on future policy reactions to increasing immigration pressures throughout the U.S.

### Immigration and Economic Well-being

Migration is a major social force in the world, especially in the U.S. For most immigrants, economics is a major impetus to leave their countries of origin. Pursuit of greater financial opportunities for immigrant families and their children has driven waves of immigration. In search of potential economic rewards, immigrants in the U.S. face numerous challenges and risks. Undocumented immigrants and their children, those who lack legal status, are especially vulnerable. Recently, U.S. immigration policy has shifted, with often deleterious economic and social consequences for undocumented immigrant families and children.

Immigrant children are already disadvantaged by poverty. While 13.5% of the general population was in poverty in 2006, 24% of non-U.S. citizens were in poverty, and 27% of non-U.S. citizens who entered the country since 2006 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). While declines in real median income were felt for all families from 2007 to 2008, the decline for foreign-born households was 50% greater than for native-born households (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2009). For children whose parents are undocumented, the economic situation is worse. A third of the children of undocumented immigrants live in poverty, and almost half lack any health insurance (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Immigrant children grow up in poorer homes. For example, median family income for foreign-born Mexican and Central American households was \$36,249 compared to the median for all households of \$48,201 in 2006. This difference in household income is even more significant because 43% of non-U.S. citizen households hold four or more people, compared to only 21% of native-born households (author calculations from U.S. Census Bureau 2008 data).

A recent report by the Southern Poverty Law Center (2009) described the findings from 500 interviews with low-income

Latinos living in the South. They found:

They [Latinos in the South] are routinely cheated out of their earnings and denied basic health and safety precautions. They are regularly subjected to racial profiling and harassment by law enforcement. They are victimized by criminals who know they are reluctant to report attacks. And they are frequently forced to prove themselves innocent of immigration violations, regardless of their legal status. (p. 4)

U.S. immigration policy has become more restrictive and punitive as government policies have expanded intervention at the federal and local levels. These changes have both contributed to a hostile anti-immigrant climate, and have placed undocumented immigrant children in an even more precarious economic situation.

### Historical Context of Immigration Policy

Federal U.S. immigration violations fall under civil law, not criminal law, and have historically been enforced in this way. As such, people who overstay a visa or are in the United States without documentation are legally entitled to better living conditions than convicted prisoners or pre-trial detainees (American Civil Liberties Union, 2007). Civil law covers issues such as property rights, child custody, divorce, contracts and agreements, which are not considered crimes. Therefore, under law, undocumented people are to be tried for a breach of contract, and not for committing a crime.

However, recent changes have led to a criminalization of federal immigration policy enforcement. Recent federal and state responses to immigration have focused on the ways that undocumented people have managed to stay in this country, such as through the use of false social security numbers and identifications. This new emphasis has had the effect of criminalizing the undocumented population without actually changing any federal laws (Bacon, 2008). Instead of continuing to treat undocumented immigration as a civil matter, law enforcement agencies have begun to enforce criminal sanctions against undocumented immigrants. When undocumented

immigrants use false or borrowed Social Security numbers for employment purposes, they can now be charged with identity theft. This is a felony-level criminal violation, and represents a marked shift from the earlier era where violations of immigration policy were primarily enforced as improper documentation requiring a reprocessing of documentation and status. If a criminal offense can be demonstrated, an immigration detainee can be held in prison along with criminal convicts.

The criminalization of immigration has occurred within the context of the federal response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which has also expanded the government's punitive stance toward undocumented immigrants. Accompanying this turn towards criminalizing undocumented immigrants in the U.S. at the federal level has been the harsh enforcement of criminal sanctions at the state level, particularly those states along the U.S.–Mexico border. Numerous border-state policies have sought to restrict education, public benefits, and social services to undocumented immigrants.

The current period of national anti-immigrant sentiment can be traced to two major pieces of national legislation in 1996—the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). These acts nationalized limits on Social Security coverage and social services for both legal and undocumented immigrants (Massey, Durand & Malone, 2003). States were permitted to limit or exclude entirely legal immigrants from both federal and state programs. These policies codified the belief that immigrants should not be entitled to services because they had not been here long enough to have earned them, and that immigrants should contribute to society, not draw out social services and cash assistance. In recent years, attention has focused on the “danger” that is posed by the surge in immigrants who either overstay their visas or permits to visit, or sneak over the border. Although the initial impetus was in response to the entry of the terrorists who attacked the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, focus has shifted primarily to Latino undocumented immigrants. Enforcement of immigration laws was minimal prior to 2000. From 1996 to 2000, less than 12,000 people had been deported and barred from re-entry; in 2006

alone, more than 13,000 people were barred from re-entering the United States for ten years (González, 2008a). The difference is not in the actual laws on the books, which have not been changed, but in the enforcement of those laws.

Almost a million foreign nationals were apprehended by the Department of Homeland Security in 2007, of whom 89 percent were natives of Mexico. Even more were apprehended the previous year. Two-thirds of those apprehended are released or willingly return to their native country. However, about a third of those apprehended were detained, resulting in the placement of undocumented people in prisons and requiring legal authorities' attention. Detentions have grown dramatically, particularly in the border states of California, Arizona, and Texas. The Department of Homeland Security detainee population was 311,169 in 2007, an increase of 21 percent over the previous year (Office of Immigration Statistics, 2008).

### Harm to Children from Immigration Policies and Enforcement Tactics

In general, children in immigrant families tend to experience greater economic, health and housing hardship (Child Trends, 2007). One in five children in the United States lives in an immigrant family: 80 percent of these children are born in this country and legally are entitled to the same support as all U.S. citizen children (Kids Count, 2007). Although entitled to resources, children in immigrant families are disproportionately poor, more likely to have parents without a high school diploma, and often live in linguistically isolated households. Most immigrant parents work, yet their positions are predominantly low-wage. Immigrant families with working parents are twice as likely as working native families to be low-income, experiencing higher rates of economic hardship and at the same time, lower rates of participation in public benefit programs. The negative outcomes of the challenges related to immigrant family status have been documented for years, yet recent public policies and actions have exacerbated these conditions for immigrant children and further compromised their health and well-being.

*Economic insecurity*

Most immigrants come to this country for economic opportunity. Regardless of their education and skill level, the demand for low-wage labor and lack of English language proficiency often forces many into work that is dirty, dangerous, difficult, and low-paying. This contributes to the perception that immigrants keep wages low. In most cases, however, such jobs are the only ones available, and because of necessity, immigrants who take those jobs are unable to demand higher wages. This pattern dates back to the immigrations of the 1800s. Over time, as ethnic groups became acclimated and new generations were born in this country, the economic status of earlier immigrant groups improved. This trend lends credence to the belief of new immigrants that the United States is the land of economic opportunity. In fact, research suggests that today immigrants assimilate faster into American culture than previous generations (Aizenman, 2008). However, this may be true mainly for those who can obtain legal status. Data on poverty reveal that poverty rates are lower among foreign-born people who become naturalized than among native-born people. For example, in 2005, the native-born poverty rate was 12.1%, the foreign-born naturalized citizen rate was 10.4%, and the foreign-born noncitizen rate was 20.4%. The economic advantage of nativity and citizenship can be seen in the disparity of these poverty rates. Among non-citizen immigrants, the poverty rate is more than twice that of the native-born population (Mishel, Bernstein & Allegretto, 2007). These researchers conclude that "naturalized citizens face certain economic advantages, such as in the job market, that give them a leg-up on noncitizens" (p. 292).

Economic insecurity affects immigrants in myriad ways. Unemployment and under-employment are primary sources of stress, as is the sheer fear of unemployment. The U.S. economic slowdown has had a disproportionate impact on foreign-born Latino workers. Negative changes in socio-economic status due to unemployment result in poor health outcomes (Lassetter & Callister, 2009). Undocumented workers have the additional stress of fear of being discovered, due to policies that force employers to establish the status of employees or risk sanctions, such as through the federal identity verification system known

as E-Verify. This fear exacerbates the poor health that economic stress already places on poor workers. The pressures of immigration, including the fear of employment loss, have been shown to impact the family structure of Mexican-American families. Parents have less time to spend with children, which in turn has been shown to result in increased loneliness, isolation, and risk-taking behavior among children (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). These pressures on family time and structure also result in lower levels of self-esteem for children (Love & Buriel, 2007).

### *Barriers to Education and Future Life Opportunities*

Public education is a right for all children, including undocumented children. By law, undocumented children are eligible for free public elementary and secondary education, however continuing their education is problematic. Children who came to this country at a young age and may have excelled in school do not have the opportunity for higher education that similarly educated and accomplished children with citizenship have. Federal law prohibits the hiring of undocumented workers; this renders unauthorized students ineligible for federal financial aid in the form of work-study. Federal legislation also discourages states from extending educational benefits such as in-state tuition rates (Congressional Research Service, 2008). In some states, such as Arizona, laws have been passed to explicitly bar undocumented students from qualifying for in-state tuition, regardless of how long they have actually lived in the state. These students are caught in a serious bind—if they apply for citizenship in order to receive federal aid, they will expose their undocumented status and risk immediate deportation, regardless of how well acclimated or outstanding their academic achievement. The irony of this situation has been highlighted through several publicized cases. In one such case, a group of exceptional young students, known as the Wilson 4, were penalized for their lack of legal status.

In 2002, four high school students from Arizona were part of a team from their charter school who competed in an international solar-powered boat competition in Buffalo, New York. The four students were brought to the United States from Mexico by their undocumented parents when they were

toddlers. They were excellent students through high school. While on the school trip, their group visited Niagara Falls and planned to cross over to the Canadian side. U.S. immigration officials questioned them for nine hours over their immigration status (Meléndez, 2005). Their case was thrown out by a federal immigration judge for racial profiling, citing that they were targeted by border officials because they were Hispanic (González, 2005). Congressional attempts were made to grant them amnesty, but failed. Their case brought to light the problem with undocumented children who are brought over at a young age, participate fully in American life, even excel as students, but are limited in opportunities and at risk for deportation.

Today, years after the Wilson 4 case drew publicity to the plight of undocumented students, the problem persists. In spite of a state law that was passed in Arizona prohibiting undocumented students from qualifying for in-state tuition or state or federal grants, young people do attend university. Typical of these cases is Guillermo, 22 years old, who was brought to the U.S. from Mexico when he was 4 years old. Although graduating with a 3.44 GPA from university, he works using an invented Social Security number in a low level job. He cannot pursue employment commensurate with his educational degree without risk of being discovered to be here without documentation (González, 2009). He may be one of thousands or more educated yet undocumented youth who are prevented from realizing their full potential due to penalizing immigration policies.

### *Arrest, Detention and Deportation of Undocumented Workers*

In recent years there has been a growing effort at worksite enforcement of immigration policies. This approach focuses less on the individual immigrant and more on the employers. Even though for 20 years it has been against the law for an employer to knowingly hire or continue to employ a person who is living without documentation in the United States, until recently little has been done to enforce the law. Now, the federal government and many state governments have increased scrutiny of employers.

In May of 2008, the federal government, under the Bush

administration, conducted the largest crackdown on undocumented workers. Three hundred eighty-nine immigrants were arrested at a meatpacking plant in Postville, Iowa. Authorities alleged that three fourths of the almost 1,000 employees had used false or suspect Social Security numbers (Hsu, 2008). On the day of the raid, 400 hundred people, mostly Mexican and Guatemalan women and children, fled to a nearby Catholic church in what was described by residents as a "disaster-relief response" (Rubiner, 2008). For this small community, the arrests incarcerated more than 10 percent of the town's population.

Many of the arrested workers were the parents of young children, some of whom had been born in the U.S. and were therefore citizens. When undocumented parents are arrested and detained for deportation, their children are left behind because many have citizenship status. Workplace raids leave hundreds of children without one or both of their parents within minutes, as undocumented workers are immediately detained. With tightened enforcement, people are no longer released pending deportation hearings, rather they are being held in prison the whole time prior to the hearing, leaving no opportunity to see their families or prepare for deportation. Although enforcement of the law is intended to punish the employer of undocumented immigrants, the immediate impact is felt by immigrant families, while the employers continue to operate and either avoid prosecution due to lack of legal evidence or deal with the allegations through years of litigation.

Research on the impact of these workplace raids on immigrant families shows significant stress and trauma for the children. Following raids in three different communities, researchers found that fear, lack of access to telephones, and being detained left significant numbers of children in the care of others without information on the whereabouts or conditions of their parents. Once arrested, many undocumented workers were afraid to disclose they had children, for fear that the children would be taken from them. Once remaining family members were aware of the situation, many of them went into hiding, avoiding authorities as well as social service and community representatives (Capps, Castañeda, Chaudry & Santos, 2007).

Even for those who have lived and worked in this country for years, the increased enforcement and deportation spread to



other facets of life. For example, 38-year-old Ismael Valeriano had worked in the United States for almost 20 years and was raising his three sons who were all born in the United States. He was arrested when he went to claim his impounded car, which was being held for driving without a valid license and insurance. He was immediately arrested because he was undocumented and was held for several months until a community group could raise the bail. In the meantime, his three children, ages 12, 15, and 16, were at home taking care of themselves until their grandmother could travel from out of state to care for them (González, 2008a). It is estimated that there are five million children with at least one undocumented parent (Capps et al., 2007), many of whom are U.S. citizens. Should deportation actions continue, these children will either be left to grow up in the U.S. without their parents, or will have to relocate to countries where many have never lived.

Detention in immigration facilities and deportation to Mexico results in significant family disruption. The disruption of undocumented families, when parents are separated from their children, results in increased symptoms of mental health problems among children (Pottinger, 2005). This disruption is so traumatic that the fear of deportation itself results in emotional stress. Fear of arrest and trauma from the workplace raids themselves have profound impacts on children. After the Iowa raid, half of the school system's students were absent from school, including 90 percent of the Hispanic children, because their parents were arrested or in hiding (Hsu, 2008).

Recent changes in the enforcement of immigration policy have put immigrants at increased risk of adverse interactions with law enforcement. Many immigrants, based on negative experiences with corruption in their country of origin, have a pre-existing fear of law enforcement officers. This is only exacerbated as law enforcement has increasingly harassed the immigrant population through racial profiling and crime sweeps. Racial profiling, anti-immigration sentiment, and the increased militarization of the U.S.–Mexico border further immigrants' experiences with racism and discrimination (Romero, 2008).

This criminal justice response to immigration is unfortunate, as immigration to a particular city has not been shown to lead to an increase in crime rates, and in fact, some aspects of immigration lessen crime (Reid, Weiss, Adelman, & Jaret, 2005;

Sampson, Morenoff, & Raudenbush, 2005). When low-income immigrants migrate to urban centers, they often move into the cheapest housing and tend to live together in groups of families or small communities. This can lead to immigrants moving into blighted neighborhoods in the inner city, long since abandoned by the middle class. Immigrant communities, closely connected by language and culture, can re-animate such areas with renewed economic life and vibrancy. The strong social bonds between immigrants and the ensuing economic development can benefit inner-cities and serve to prevent further urban decline.

### *Poor Health Outcomes*

In addition to economic stress, and as a consequence of lacking adequate employment and resources, children in immigrant families experience higher rates of poor health—more than twice the rate of native children (Capps & Fortuny, 2006). The stress upon immigrant parents can negatively affect their children's development, such as reduced cognitive functioning, and increased symptoms of depression (Ayón & Marcenko, 2008). Risks to healthy psychological and social development, reduced educational opportunities, and economic instability all threaten the future life outcomes of immigrant youth. Immigrants experience many fears and face many barriers to accessing health and social services (Hargrove, 2006). Cultural and language barriers represent significant obstacles blocking immigrants' access to health care services (Lassetter & Callister, 2009). In addition, immigrant families have less knowledge of systems of care and access to advocates, thus hindering their ability to access care or navigate systems (Ayón, 2009).

While immigrant families may be less inclined to use health care services, undocumented families are even more fearful of presenting themselves to authorities of any kind, including health care providers. Undocumented families report lower levels of access to services and resources that require identification, such as checking and saving accounts, credit, and driver's licenses. This deficiency in basic material supports and institutional resources has been associated with negative economic and psychological consequences for parents as well as lower levels of cognitive development among infants

(Yoshikawa, Godfrey & Rivera, 2008). In addition, undocumented immigrants are significantly less likely to report being victimized, indicating restricted access to the justice system. This is especially true for new generations of immigrant children (Peguerro, 2008).

The increased punitive enforcement of immigration policy has also restricted immigrants' access to health care. In the summer of 2008, Chinese immigrant Hiu Lui Ng, died at age 34 while detained by immigration officials. He had terminal cancer, and was denied access to decent medical treatment. Ng, who came to the U.S. as a teenager, was employed as a computer engineer, but his visa had expired. This case is representative of the substandard health care services available to the thousands of people detained in immigration facilities (Bernstein, 2008).

The situation is especially dire for women. Researchers have documented that detainees in Arizona experience inadequate prenatal and mental health care. In one case, a woman six months pregnant was denied prenatal care during the month she was in immigration custody. In another, a woman was diagnosed with cervical cancer prior to being detained. During her detention, she was unable to access medical help for a month, and when she did, she was given aspirin. Only after a medical emergency was she finally able to see an oncologist (Southwest Institute for Research on Women, 2009).

Due to welfare reform, immigrant children are more likely to be uninsured (Pati & Danagoulain, 2008). As a result of the 1996 laws, even legal immigrants were barred from Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program for five years following their entry to the U.S. This policy codified the exclusion of medically needy immigrants who were authorized to live in the U.S. The result was neglected medical care, and a greater utilization of emergency health services. With the election of President Obama, this policy was changed. In February of 2009, Congress passed and the president signed into law a new children's health insurance bill that authorizes immediate coverage of legal immigrant children (Pear, 2009). This policy change will allow previously excluded children to receive medical coverage. While this does not apply to undocumented children, it will provide needed health care for

legal immigrant children, and may help to shift the anti-immigrant sentiment that contributes to discouraging immigrant families from accessing services even when they are entitled to those services.

### *Discrimination*

As these changes in immigration policies have reinforced social prejudices, immigrants have been increasingly subjected to a climate of intolerance and hostility. Research has shown that immigrant children in the U.S. must struggle to cope with their experiences of racism, discrimination, and prejudice (Coll & Magnusson, 1997). Immigrant children who are exposed to discrimination suffer psychological consequences (Coll & Magnusson, 1997; Romero, Carvajal, Valle & Orduna, 2007; Slonim-Nevo, Mirsky, Rubinstein & Nauck, 2009). Experiences with racism leave immigrants particularly vulnerable to depression (Lassetter & Callister, 2009). This contributes to social marginalization, which can lead to damaging outcomes for immigrant adolescents (Mesch, Turjeman & Fishman, 2008). This is especially prevalent for Hispanic girls, who, due to stressors such as poverty, discrimination, immigration, and acculturation have been shown to experience lower levels of self esteem and to have disproportionately high school drop-out rates (Turner, Kaplan & Badger, 2006).

A climate of social intolerance is further reinforced by policies that enforce "English only" education. This may negatively impact immigrant children's educational performance. Research has shown that there is a significant educational outcome benefit for Hispanic immigrant children who retain strong Spanish language skills (Lutz & Crist, 2009). Second and third generation immigrant children are more likely to experience negative mental health symptoms such as suicide attempts, substance abuse, and depression (Pena et al., 2008) which may be the cumulative result of having experienced more racism and discrimination. Referred to as the "healthy immigrant hypothesis," research has revealed that health and mental health outcomes for immigrants worsen across generations; the more time spent in the U.S., the more likely they are to experience problems. One explanation for such a phenomenon is that increased time in American society leaves

immigrants with a greater exposure to racism and discrimination, and makes them more susceptible to the stress that racism inflicts upon victims.

### *Trauma and Harm to the Community*

Although the goal of tighter enforcement is to diminish the numbers of undocumented people entering and staying in the United States, the policies have an immediate negative impact on Latino communities. Latino immigrants are experiencing worse treatment by authorities and see their situation as deteriorating. From 2007 to 2008, pessimism among Latinos grew, with half of those surveyed by the Pew Hispanic Center saying that the situation of Latinos has worsened over the year. One out of ten native-born U.S. citizens and immigrants alike reported that police or other authorities had stopped them and asked about their immigration status over the past year (Lopez & Minushkin, 2008). Restrictions of policies and increased enforcement have contributed to worry about deportation, with almost 60% worried about deportation of themselves, a family member, or a close friend.

For example, following the implementation of the 2008 Employer Sanction law in Arizona, apartments were abandoned, as people broke their leases and disappeared. Restaurants that rely on immigrant laborers to fill many of their service positions are having trouble hiring staff. This hurts the local economic climate, as businesses are deterred from locating to a state that has such strict employer sanction laws (Hansen, 2008). Community social service providers noticed immediate declines in school attendance among children of immigrant families, most of whom were likely to be children related to undocumented adults. It is not clear whether the children and families leave for Mexico, or for other communities in the U.S. What is clear is that they hide in the shadows.

As further evidence of the underlying intent to intimidate undocumented workers, for almost two years following the implementation of the 2008 Employer Sanction law in Arizona, 26 business raids were conducted (Hensley & Kiefer, 2009a). The immediate result was the arrest of numerous undocumented workers. However, over the same two year period, only one business was punished under the law, but that

business had already folded and was no longer operating (Hensley & Kiefer, 2009b).

The fallout of heightened enforcement of immigration laws extends throughout the Latino community. On April 12, 2008, members of a Phoenix, Arizona church, Iglesia Cristiana Agape, were on a spiritual retreat to the mountains. When another camper complained about noise, the County sheriff's deputies arrived, questioned the church members about their immigration status, and called in immigration authorities. Nine church members were detained, and seven of them were later deported to Mexico (González, 2008b). Fear to even participate in community activities has spread, leaving undocumented people without social supports that previously had been available.

Border towns are especially hard hit by the increased enforcement. Law enforcement and criminal prosecutions cost border counties millions of dollars a year, draining resources that could be used for other community efforts. For the 24 counties in Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas that border Mexico, costs related to illegal immigration enforcement have more than doubled from 1999 to 2006, totaling almost \$200 million (Salant & Weeks, 2008).

### Conclusion and Policy Implications

Research has documented the stress on families and children that results from immigration. However, little research has documented how the economic distress of immigrant families has been exacerbated by recent policies and enforcement practices directed towards undocumented immigrants. The deleterious impact of these public efforts has been most profound on the welfare of immigrant children, many of whom may be U.S. citizens living with undocumented families. The impact of these enforcement policies has been to economically marginalize families, and to traumatize and discriminate against all immigrants, even those who legally live in this country. In addition, these policies negatively impact the larger social group, of which immigrants, and many descendants of immigrants, are members.

Immigration policy must be decriminalized. Immigration should return to being a civil matter instead of a criminal

matter. Immigration policy should be made less restrictive, enabling the millions of undocumented people in the U.S. to emerge from the shadows of society. In order to further this aim and the public debate, the discourse on immigration must be shifted from a criminalization frame. This reinforces law enforcement solutions to this social and economic problem. To combat the criminalization frame, it is necessary to avoid the term "illegal immigrant," as we have done in this paper. We recommend adoption of the term "undocumented" in effort to shift the discourse away from criminalization.

To this end, policies that support the children of undocumented immigrants should be supported. One such example is the DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act), introduced to several Congresses to allow undocumented students to be eligible for legal permanent resident status. There have been numerous variations of the DREAM Act, but the key provisions of the proposed bills include ways for young people who have been living in this country for at least five years, came here at an age younger than 16, have graduated high school, and have been admitted to college to have their immigration status adjusted to legal permanent resident status. Such legislation has been introduced and debated in the U.S. Congress, but voted down. Other legislation aimed at reforming immigration, including guest worker programs, amnesty, and pathways to citizenship, have all stumbled as the problem continues to grow.

The immigration debate is multi-faceted and complicated by social, economic, and political factors. But one thing stands out—the well-being of children is being compromised by these policies. In order to remedy this situation, there must be more just and humane policies that affirm the human dignity and promote the health and well-being of all people.

The contradiction between the promise of economic opportunity and the history of successive generations of immigrants on one hand, and the isolationist, xenophobic, punitive, anti-immigrant sentiment on the other is a conflict over the basic values and ideals of America. Those who would deem all immigrants criminals by virtue of their lack of documentation ignore history and deny the severe limitations of current immigration policy. The United States is a nation of immigrants, with the vast majority of U.S. citizens tracing their roots of origin

to other foreign countries. The current immigration system is broken at best, and malicious and racist at worst—punishing the poorest people for seeking a better life for themselves and their children. This is wrong and unjust. It violates not only professional values of social justice, but also American values of openness, independence, fairness, and opportunity, as well as universal human values of decency, dignity, and respect for life.

The law and order, anti-immigrant argument prescribes punishment of immigrants and their children to promote deterrence. But deterrence has not worked, especially not in the case of immigration; people migrate anyway. The factors that propel immigration outweigh the punishment, and many, once punished and deported, return. Decriminalization of immigration policy would certainly help. However, if immigration returned to being a civil rather than criminal violation, this may not influence anti-immigration advocates. For some, illegal means illegal. This illustrates the difficulty of debating immigration reform, where proposals lessening restrictions are labeled as weak and soft, and are derided for extending amnesty to criminals.

In the name of border security we are doing unspeakable damage to children. This corrupts America's promise and its future. No economic gains can justify betraying cherished ideals and distorting our dignity. No amount of comfort, ignorance, or false security can justify this. Through punitive and restrictive policies we are not protecting American economy, culture, and institutions. Instead we are damaging and threatening our future by risking and imperiling the dreams of the youth. We ought to invest in our future by investing in the health, education, and welfare of vulnerable immigrant families and children.

Social service professionals can and should play a vital role in this investment, and in protecting the rights and welfare of immigrants. This might not sway the debate, but it might help to inch the debate towards a more inclusive, humane reform. Our goal should be to expose the human costs of anti-immigration sentiment and restrictive immigration policies, particularly on behalf of children.



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# Analyzing the Poverty Reduction Effectiveness of the Canadian Provinces: Do Political Parties Matter?

ROBERT D. WEAVER

NAZIM HABIBOV

University of Windsor  
School of Social Work

LIDA FAN

Lakehead University

*The implementation of the Canada Health and Social Transfer in 1996 marked a new era for the Canadian welfare state, as greater discretion in the area of social welfare policy and programming was granted to the provinces. In this study, the authors analyzed nationally representative data to determine if the governing provincial parties, characterized by distinct ideological and party platform positions, differed in regards to their poverty reduction effectiveness during 1996-2005. The authors' analysis yielded no differences between the governing provincial parties in terms of their poverty reduction effectiveness. The study's implications for future research, including research on subnational variation in social welfare policy, are discussed.*

*Key words: devolution, poverty reduction effectiveness, political parties, provinces, subnational*

Canada is a nation whose political system is predicated upon federalism, as its Constitution provides the formal authorization for the existence of a centralized federal government and 10 provincial governments. While the authority for

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social welfare is shared between these two levels of government, primary jurisdiction lies with the provinces (Armitage, 2003).

In 1996, the marked influence of neo-liberalism within Canada was apparent as the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) replaced the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), thereby ushering in a major change in how the costs of various social programs were covered. Under CAP, the federal government and the provinces utilized an open-ended matching grant system by sharing on a 50–50 basis the costs to fund social programs, all of which were administered by the provinces. With the CHST, however, CAP was replaced by a block grant system in which the provinces were allocated a fixed amount of funding for delivering their social programs. This translated into a 15% decrease in federal transfers for health, postsecondary education, and social welfare programs (Gaszo & Krahn, 2008; Prentice, 1999; Weaver, 2000; Weaver, Habibov, & Fan, 2010).

Moreover, the devolutionary shift prompted by the CHST resulted in greater authority for the provinces within the realm of social welfare. Consequently, the provinces introduced a series of measures aimed at reducing the long-term costs of welfare programs. For example, in order to reduce welfare case-loads, provinces tightened their eligibility criteria surrounding the receipt of social assistance. There was a noticeable increase in case reviews and investigations into alleged welfare fraud, and life insurance policies and an increase in the value of a home while the owner received social assistance were factored in when computing the amount of benefits to which an applicant was entitled (Habibov & Fan, 2007; Hick, 2007; McMullin & Tomchick, 2004; Sceviour & Finnie, 2004).

Not surprisingly, this substantial change in the structure and nature of welfare programming prompted policy researchers to embark on scholarly investigations to determine how devolution and the concomitant increased emphasis on cost-cutting driven by neo-liberalism impacted the safety nets of Canadian provinces (Boychuk, 2006). For instance, Lightman, Herd, and Mitchell (2008), as well as Lemieux and Milligan (2007), focused on particular welfare reform strategies within specific provinces, while other researchers (Boychuk, 2006;

Habibov & Fan, 2010; Finnie, Irvine, & Sceviour, 2004a, 2004b; Roy, 2004) conducted interprovincial comparisons of welfare programs over time. While the above studies provide noteworthy contributions to the literature, they fail to address important areas that concern the policy community, including the ostensive reason for the existence of the programs, that is, their capacity to reduce poverty. Furthermore, they did not compare the influence governing political parties may have on the poverty reduction effectiveness of the specific provinces.

Even though the impact of governing political parties on the efficacy of states' social safety nets has been explored within an American context (Budge & Hofferbert, 1990; Dye, 1984; Lee, 2009), this area has been virtually ignored by Canadian policy scholars. Highlighting the gap in the current literature, Imbeau et al. (2000) report there is little "knowledge based on reliable quantitative measures of party influence in the Canadian provinces" (p. 789), including knowledge pertaining to the social welfare arena. Clearly, there is a need for interprovincial comparative research which could contribute "to the development of theories specific to subnational public policy" (p. 804).

It is this need that provided the rationale for this study. The research question this study addresses is as follows: Under the global neoliberal trend, did the poverty-reduction effectiveness of the Canadian provinces differ according to the political party that was in power within each province? In particular, the capacity of three major provincial social welfare programs to reduce poverty is assessed for each province across time. These programs are Social Assistance, Provincial Tax Credits, and Workers' Compensation. For all of these programs, each province established its own rules, including eligibility criteria and regulations for accessing and discontinuing the receipt of benefits (Habibov & Fan, 2007, 2008; Hick, 2007).

This study builds on our previous larger study, in which we detected noticeable differences in how the poverty reduction effectiveness of the provincial social welfare programs changed during 1996-2005 (Weaver, Habibov, & Fan, 2010). Consequently, this study, which also focuses on 1996-2005, seeks to determine if governing political parties accounted for this interprovincial difference in poverty reduction effectiveness.

## Literature Review

There have been a variety of studies, some of which are couched within an international context, that consider the effects of political parties on various dimensions of policy development and implementation, including welfare programs. Brady (2003) conducted a panel analysis of 16 economically advanced Western democracies from 1967 to 1997 in order to see if political institutions largely informed by leftist ideology actually reduced poverty. The extent to which political institutions were informed by leftist ideology was measured by indicators such as proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by members of leftist parties and the proportion of the labor force that was unionized. The author concludes that the "most important conclusion to emerge from this study is that left political institutions greatly reduce poverty ... despite controlling for economic and demographic factors" (p. 14). He found that leftist political institutions in Western Europe and Australia evinced a stronger association with poverty reduction than did the Democratic Party in the United States, which is more associated with providing social welfare measures to the low-income population than its counterpart, the Republican Party.

Blaise, Blake, and Dion (1993) examined 15 liberal democracies with developed economies from 1960 to 1987 with the main dependent variable being domestic spending (excluding defense spending) as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The authors found that majority governments controlled by left-wing political parties tended to spend more on social welfare measures than those controlled by right-wing parties. The authors pointed out, however, that the extent to which differences in social welfare spending can be attributed to the political orientation of the government is "a small one. That difference, moreover, is confined to majority governments and takes time to set in" (p. 57).

In a related study, Rice (1986) examined the determinants of growth in the size of the governments of 12 European nations from 1950 to 1980. Growth was measured as the ratio of government expenditures to GDP. The findings of the study suggest that "leftist strength in government may lead to government growth" (p. 248), but Rice adds that although "the data suggest



that political gains by conservatives may retard the rate of government ... it is doubtful such leadership changes can halt the growth" (p. 251).

In another cross-national study, Burstein and Linton (2002) conducted an analysis of 53 articles on determinants of policy changes from the three most prestigious sociology journals and three most prestigious political science journals from 1990 to 2000. Their findings indicate that although the platforms of political parties were associated with policy changes, political parties were no more influential upon public policy than were other political organizations such as interest groups and social movement organizations. Moreover, they found that the likelihood of a political organization directly affecting policy is only around 50%.

In studies pertaining to the transformative welfare reform efforts in America following the promulgation of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996, both Lieberman and Shaw (2000) and Lee (2009) found that Republican governorships were associated with states adopting strict welfare policies that led to a reduction in benefits. Lieberman and Shaw (2000) note this relationship was particularly robust when the President was a Democrat, prompting them to opine that this "may reflect nothing more than the growing preponderance of Republican governors, especially in large states, during the 1990s, but it may reflect the increasing willingness of Republicans to challenge traditional social policies to which Democrats remained committed for longer" (p. 230).

There is a conspicuous absence of such studies within the Canadian context. Pétry (1995) and Erickson & Laycock (2002) detected the influence of the New Democrat Party (NDP) in terms of welfare state expansion at the federal level in its capacity as an opposition government (the NDP has never been in power at the federal level), a phenomenon described as "contagion from the left" (Pétry, 1995, p. 84). These findings, however, cannot be generalized to provincial politics.

Gazso and Krahm (2008) report that Alberta was the first of the Canadian provinces to severely tighten eligibility requirements and reduce its level of welfare benefits during the 1990s. One noteworthy aspect of the authors' analysis was that

Alberta was headed by the Progressive Conservative Party during this time, as its cutbacks to Social Assistance were in accord with the party's reputation as endorsing right-wing policy stances.

In a study pertaining to the province of Ontario, Canada's most populous province (Statistics Canada, 2009), Klassen and Buchannan (2006) examined the role of political party influence on the province's welfare policy between 1985 and 2000—a time frame in which three political parties, that is, the Liberals, NDP, and Progressive Conservatives, respectively ruled in Ontario, each for a five-year period. The authors observed factors such as expansive versus restrictive eligibility requirements as well as the rates themselves. The authors concluded that “ideology of parties does matter” (p. 208) but that economic climate is a strong determinant of the comprehensiveness of welfare benefits. For instance, during times of economic growth the Liberals adopted expansionary welfare policies while the Conservatives were more restrictive. During a downturn in the economy, however, the ideologies apparently informing the respective parties played much less of a role, as the NDP initiated restrictive policies regarding welfare benefits and eligibility that were later endorsed by the Progressive Conservative Party.

In summary, the studies outlined above suggest that political parties can influence the dynamics inherent to the policy process, including welfare policy, albeit in a modest manner. This study provides an important contribution to the literature, however, as it is far from conclusive to what extent, if any, political parties influenced the poverty reduction effectiveness of the social welfare programs delivered by Canadian provinces following the promulgation of the CHST. It is the dearth of knowledge in this important area that amplifies the relevance of this study.

## Methods

### *Canadian Political Parties*

There were four main political parties that dominated the provincial political landscape during the period investigated in this study. These parties were the Progressive Conservative

Party, the Liberal Party, the NDP and the Parti Québécois (PQ), which is based exclusively in the province of Quebec.

The Progressive Conservative Party is the primary center-right political party in the bulk of the Canadian provinces. This party promotes a relatively low level of state intervention within a market economy and emphasizes the role of individuals, families, and volunteer organizations in providing social welfare services (Archer & Whitehorn, 1990; Ball, Dagger, Christian, & Campbell, 2009; Graham, Swift, & Delaney, 2009; Kneebone & Mckenzie, 2001).

The Liberal Party is a centrist party that is prominent at both the federal and provincial levels. It falls to the left of the Progressive Conservative Party, as its leaders often emphasize a type of welfare liberalism that proposes a conspicuous level of government regulation, so as to promote equality of opportunity as well as a moderately generous social safety net (Archer & Whitehorn, 1990; Ball et al., 2009; Graham et al., 2009).

The origins of the NDP, a left-of-center political party, lie within social democracy, as it is renowned for stressing a collectivist and egalitarian policy stance. Its supporters are generally less resistant than Progressive Conservatives and Liberals to high levels of taxation as long as a comprehensive safety net characterized by universal programs is offered (Archer & Whitehorn, 1990; Klassen & Buchannan, 2006; Kneebone & Mckenzie, 2001).

The PQ is also a left-wing party. Like the NDP, it often receives support from trade unions and promotes policies that strongly emphasize a redistributive role for the state and relatively generous social programs (Graham et al., 2009).

### *Provincial Social Welfare Programs*

Three major social welfare programs administered by the Canadian provinces are Social Assistance, Provincial Tax Credits and Workers' Compensation (Habibov & Fan, 2008). Social Assistance, often referred to as "welfare," is an income source of last resort for those who lack labor market earnings and are not eligible for social insurance schemes that target unemployed, disabled, and elderly persons. Program recipients, all of whom must undergo a rigorous needs test, include single men and women without dependents, but single mothers

constitute the largest proportion of beneficiaries (Jörgen, Loftstrom, & Zhang, 2006).

Provincial Tax Credits are poverty reduction measures that assist individuals and families in their overall cost of living expenses. These benefits are considered tax expenditures as they are delivered through the tax system. Consequently, they are administratively inexpensive, with an application process that is much less intrusive than Social Assistance. Moreover, these measures are much less stigmatizing than welfare (Cost of Social Security, n.d.; Habibov & Fan, 2007; Lightman, 2003).

The other provincial-based program considered in this study, Workers' Compensation, is funded by employers and provides funds to employees who face job loss due to a work-related accident and/or disease. There are gaps in coverage, however, as the self-employed are not covered under this scheme, nor are workers who engage in activities at work that fall outside their usual course of duties, such as the office clerk who assists in moving heavy equipment (Armitage, 2003; Habibov & Fan, 2007; Hick, 2007).

#### *Data source*

The source of data in this study was the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID), which has been a primary source of data for Statistics Canada—the nation's leading statistical authority since 1996 (Chen, 2008; Habibov & Fan, 2008). The data collected by SLID are representative of the population in each Canadian province, including age and gender groups, as well as family sizes. SLID data are collected on an annual basis with a response rate of 80-85% and cross-sectional weights are adjusted by Statistics Canada for non-responses. In this study we used SLID micro-data files dating from 1996, the first year SLID was conducted, until 2005, which is the most recent year that SLID micro-data are publicly available.

#### *Analytical Strategy*

There were two key steps we completed prior to our testing to see if the political party in power appeared to influence the poverty reduction effectiveness of the provinces' social welfare programs. The first step was to estimate the poverty reduction effectiveness of specific social welfare programs in the

individual provinces by computing the extent to which these programs lowered each province's poverty rate and poverty gap ratio. The second step was to determine the political party in power in each province for every year from 1996 to 2005.

In terms of the first step, before computing the poverty rate and gap we established a poverty line of 60 percent of the family median equivalized disposable income. There were two reasons for choosing this as the poverty line. First, it was used in other studies that focused on measuring the poverty reduction effectiveness of income security programs in Canada (Habibov & Fan, 2007, 2008). Second, this same poverty line is used by countries within the European Union (Eurostat, 2000).

As noted above, the poverty line we employed was based on family income. As a means of adjusting for family size, we utilized a square root equivalence scale that was computed by dividing the total family income by the square root of the number of people in a family (Habibov & Fan, 2008).

Subsequently, we repeatedly applied the poverty line to all ten Canadian provinces for the years of 1996 to 2005, after which we computed the poverty rate for all ten provinces during the same time frame. These computations were based on the adjusted, after-tax total disposable income following the receipt of all cash transfers.

In addition to calculating the poverty rate, we calculated the poverty gap ratio, which indicates how far, on average, the poor fall below the poverty line. Not unlike our computation of the poverty rate, we calculated the poverty gap ratio in all ten Canadian provinces from 1996 to 2005. This calculation was based on the adjusted, after-tax total disposable income following the provinces' receipt of all cash transfer payments.

We then re-estimated the poverty rate and the poverty gap with the assumption that the provinces were not delivering any provincial social welfare programs. Thus, we estimated the counterfactual by subtracting the monetary amount of the provincial social welfare programs outlined above, that is Social Assistance, Provincial Tax Credits, and Workers' Compensation, from the adjusted total disposable income. This procedure allowed us to determine what the provincial poverty rates and gaps would be if these programs did not exist. Consequently, we determined the poverty rates and

poverty gap ratios before and after receipt of the benefits emanating from the provincial social welfare programs described above. It should be noted that these rates and gap ratios were obtained for all ten Canadian provinces for each year from 1996 to 2005.

Next, we estimated the poverty reduction effectiveness of the provincial social welfare programs by employing the following formula (Habibov & Fan, 2007):

$$PRE = \frac{(PI_{before} - PI_{after})}{PI_{before}} \times 100$$

where *PRE* is poverty reduction effectiveness of provincial social welfare programs; and  $PI_{before}$  are the poverty indices (poverty rate or poverty gap ratio) before receipt of provincial social welfare benefits; and  $PI_{after}$  are the poverty indices (poverty rate or poverty gap ratio) after receipt of provincial social welfare benefits. As a result of employing the above formula, we determined the extent to which the provincial social welfare programs of Social Assistance, Provincial Tax Credits, and Workers Compensation reduced the poverty rate and poverty gap for each Canadian province during the time period from 1996 to 2005.

In order to execute the second step discussed above, we conducted internet searches to find out which political party was in power in each province for the years 1996 to 2005. In the case of two different parties in power within the same year, the party which was in power for the longest duration during that year was identified. In the case of Quebec, the PQ was merged with the NDP since both parties, as discussed above, embrace a left-leaning policy platform.

The effectiveness of poverty rate reduction and the political party in power in each province between 1996 and 2005 is reported in Table 1. The effectiveness of poverty gap ratio reduction and the political party in power in each province between 1996 and 2005 is reported in Table 2.

Following the completion of the procedures described above, two one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted to test for differences between the provincially-based political parties in regards to the poverty reduction

effectiveness of the social welfare programs they delivered during the years they governed. One ANOVA was conducted to test for differences in regards to reducing the poverty rate and another ANOVA was conducted to test for differences in regards to reducing the poverty gap ratio. Both were measured in percentage points.

Table 1. Effectiveness of Poverty Rate Reduction and Political Parties in Power by Province 1996-2005

Province	Year (%)									
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Newfoundland and Labrador	6.58	9.20	7.98	11.01	8.57	8.66	7.56	5.38	7.02	7.48
Prince Edward Island	11.69	9.17	7.50	3.93	3.19	4.61	7.06	4.42	5.13	3.06
Nova Scotia	7.72	8.60	8.21	6.56	6.55	3.73	4.26	4.53	4.01	4.53
New Brunswick	7.19	6.62	9.83	5.22	7.35	5.76	6.57	4.05	4.73	3.51
Quebec	6.64	11.27	11.50	11.89	8.94	8.88	11.21	9.49	9.39	9.07
Ontario	18.64	22.48	19.24	16.02	14.77	12.79	9.80	9.18	9.61	2.92
Manitoba	10.69	12.27	13.39	8.36	7.49	9.20	7.65	9.33	10.12	7.21
Saskatchewan	5.33	7.72	6.62	6.33	4.25	4.73	5.15	4.95	3.87	5.15
Alberta	11.55	10.68	11.08	11.66	15.14	15.22	15.57	14.59	14.84	16.63
British Columbia	6.11	7.96	7.40	6.90	7.37	5.17	5.72	7.86	4.98	5.49

Note: Shaded areas denote years when Progressive Conservative governments were in power in the province. Italicized figures denote years when Liberal governments were in power in the province. The rest of the figures denote years when the NDP (or the PQ in the case of Quebec) governed the province. Source: SLID 1996-2005.

## Results

In terms of poverty rate reduction, the results of the ANOVA yielded no differences between the political parties, as  $F(2, 97) = 2.67$ ,  $p = .07$ . There were also no significant differences detected in another ANOVA when poverty gap ratio reduction was the dependent variable, as  $F(2, 97) = 2.69$ ,  $p = .07$ . The complete results of both one-way ANOVA tests, including descriptive statistics, are reported in Table 3.

Table 2. Effectiveness of Poverty Gap Ratio Reduction and Political Parties in Power by Province 1996-2005 (%)

Province	Year (%)									
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Newfoundland and Labrador	35.23	38.77	37.65	36.38	34.97	33.17	28.89	29.17	28.61	31.15
Prince Edward Island	25.88	25.39	27.94	24.53	21.32	23.07	20.62	18.72	17.64	24.24
Nova Scotia	29.06	32.10	27.94	22.29	21.89	19.60	21.08	18.78	17.38	16.29
New Brunswick	34.71	36.05	35.73	27.94	24.28	24.80	24.34	24.77	24.02	23.95
Quebec	40.01	41.06	41.55	37.19	35.30	33.28	32.69	30.43	30.24	27.82
Ontario	45.36	43.16	43.30	35.42	33.72	33.34	30.10	32.61	30.54	27.16
Manitoba	31.44	34.00	13.39	30.78	30.97	22.13	21.01	22.75	21.12	19.76
Saskatchewan	26.90	31.37	30.87	24.79	21.92	22.51	25.37	24.82	20.54	15.27
Alberta	25.49	23.78	21.00	23.16	26.70	24.98	22.37	18.10	17.19	21.96
British Columbia	32.06	31.00	28.89	26.56	22.49	21.71	24.62	21.46	18.93	15.37

Note: Shaded areas denote years when Progressive Conservative governments were in power in the province. Italicized figures denote years when Liberal governments were in power in the province. The rest of figures denote years when the NDP (or the PQ in the case of Quebec) governed the province. Source: SLID 1996-2005.

Table 3. ANOVA Results

Variable	Political party	N	M	SD	NDP/PQ	LIB
Poverty rate reduction effectiveness (%)	NDP/PQ	28	7.54	2.27	—	NS
	LIB	26	7.73	2.02		—
	PRO CON	46	9.39	5.07	NS	NS
Poverty gap ratio reduction effectiveness (%)	NDP/PQ	28	28.01	6.97	—	NS
	LIB	26	29.47	6.10		—
	PRO CON	46	25.73	7.08	NS	NS

Note: NS = non-significant differences between group means.



## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to test if the governing provincial political parties in Canada had any influence on the poverty reduction effectiveness of three provincial social welfare programs—Social Assistance, Provincial Tax Credits, and Workers' Compensation—both in terms of reducing poverty rates as well as poverty gap ratios. The results of our analysis suggest that political parties, regardless of their distinct party platforms, did not have an influence during the investigated time period from 1996 to 2005. Consequently, there are two important implications emanating from this study.

First, any potential differences between the governing political parties in regards to the poverty reduction effectiveness of provincial social welfare programs may very well have been overridden by economic restructuring heavily influenced by the tenets of neo-liberalism. As discussed above, the shift from CAP to the CHST was characterized by substantial funding cutbacks. Due to this reduction in federal funding, it is not surprising that the poverty reduction effectiveness of the provinces' social welfare programs reported above decreased between 1996 and 2005, particularly in the area of poverty gap ratio reduction (Weaver, Habibov, & Fan, 2010).

The declining poverty reduction effectiveness of the provincial programs was not completely uniform, but it was a noticeable trend. Consequently, the findings in our analysis, in combination with this overall trend of declining poverty reduction effectiveness of provincial social welfare programs, suggest that the influence of a market-driven, neo-liberal approach was adopted by all of Canada's governing provincial parties. While previous authors have noted the shift of the NDP toward the political right in several provinces following the promulgation of the CHST (Erickson & Laycock, 2002; Klassen & Buchannan, 2006; Mullaly, 2007) this study is unique in that all of Canada's leading provincial parties were compared in their influence on the poverty reduction effectiveness of provincial social welfare programs over a 10-year period.

Another possible reason for the lack of influence of political parties on provincial social welfare programs was the new paradigm that emerged in Canada in the mid-1990s and

markedly influenced the nation's policy landscape. This new paradigm emphasized human capital investments over income transfer payments as a means of reducing poverty. According to this new paradigm, which drew support by key thinkers such as Anthony Giddens and Third Way political leaders like Bill Clinton in the United States and Tony Blair in the United Kingdom, education is a more effective tool for poverty reduction than income transfer payments. It is believed that highly trained and educated workers are more likely to secure stable employment and enjoy steadily increasing incomes than are their lesser trained counterparts (Banting, 2006; Mullaly, 2007; Pawlick & Stroick, 2004).

This new paradigm was endorsed by provincial political leaders across Canada, regardless of where their respective parties were apparently located on the political spectrum. The professed reasons for their endorsement did vary, ranging from the need to end welfare dependency to the promotion of social inclusion for all members of society (Jenson, 2004). Boychuk (2004) reports the introduction of the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) in 1996 was indicative of this new paradigm discussed above. Administered through the tax system, the CCTB targets working families with children and explicitly aims to increase incentives for labor market participation. Families on Social Assistance who also receive CCTB benefits are subjected to clawbacks in their welfare payments. The money saved as a result of these clawbacks is reinvested by the provinces into services, which constitutes a form of human capital investment.

It should also be noted that our study focused on a specific outcome associated with the governing political parties, that is, the poverty reduction effectiveness of their provincial social welfare programs, whereas the bulk of the previous studies discussed above tested for an association between political parties and social welfare expenditures. It is particularly noteworthy there were no differences between the governing political parties in their influence on the selected programs' capacity to reduce both the poverty level and the poverty gap ratio. The fact that there were no differences in these two indicators provides more evidence for the lack of influence generated by governing political parties in the tested area than if only one

indicator was employed.

Second, the time frame considered in this study (1996-2005) allows for another important contribution to the literature. As outlined above, a strong majority of studies regarding party influence on welfare expenditures and outcomes considered the time frame of the 1950s to 1990s. In virtually all of the industrialized nations, the 1950s to 1970s era is considered the so-called "golden age" of the welfare state, as Keynesianism was the dominant approach to developing and implementing social policy (Broad & Antony, 1999; Brodie, 1999; Browne, 1999; Guest, 1997). As noted above, however, the post-World War II Keynesian consensus slowly but surely unraveled, and by the mid-1990s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the New Economy, characterized by substantial levels of financial and labor market deregulation, was in full force in Canada and throughout the industrialized world (Broad & Antony, 2006). Hence, this study provides valuable insights into the association between political parties and poverty reduction effectiveness in a social and economic policy era, which is a substantially different focus from previous studies.

Despite our finding that variation in governing political parties did not account for differences in the poverty reduction effectiveness of the selected social welfare programs, there were, as noted above in our reference to our previous study, noticeable differences in how the poverty reduction effectiveness of social welfare programs changed amongst the provinces from 1996 to 2005. For instance, in terms of poverty rate reduction, five provinces exhibited a noticeable decline in their effectiveness over this time frame, while three experienced increases in this area. The province which experienced the largest increase in its effectiveness to reduce its poverty rate was Alberta, which was governed by the Progressive Conservatives from 1996 to 2005. As for effectiveness in reducing the poverty gap ratio, all of the provinces exhibited a decrease over the time frame noted above, though the provinces did vary in terms of their rates and magnitude of decrease (Weaver, Habibov, & Fan, 2010).

The fact that variation in governing political parties did not account for differences in the dependent variable considered in this study prompts the question: If not political parties,

then what does explain differences between the provinces in regards to the poverty reduction effectiveness of their social welfare programs? Given that a variety of factors influence the development and implementation of social policy (Tang, 1996), it is highly unlikely this variation can be attributed to one determinant. That being said, there may be several factors that shed light on this issue.

One factor may be differences between the financial capabilities of the provinces to finance social welfare programs due to inequality in their wealth and budget revenues. In their analysis of differences between the states in terms of welfare benefits, Whitaker and Time (2001) determined that states with relatively high per capita incomes had relatively higher welfare benefit rates than states with relatively low per capita incomes. While it would be erroneous to generalize the findings of this American-based study to the Canadian provinces, the findings do warrant consideration, particularly when one considers the structural similarities between the two nations' social welfare systems (Weaver, Habibov, & Fan, 2010).

Another factor could be the administrative professionalism of the government employees of the various provinces. Evidence for this was gathered by Rodgers, Beamer, & Payne (2008), who conducted regression analyses to ascertain factors that explained variance in what they refer to as states' "welfare and income support regimes" (p. 236). This was a composite measure of a state's poverty reduction efforts that included the generosity of welfare benefits as well as the extent to which benefits are made available to those in need. Rodgers et al. (2008) found that the administrative professionalism of specific states, which included the mean compensation per capita of state employees, partially explained the variance between the states' respective welfare and income support regimes.

Furthermore, the current era of devolution within social welfare programming is characterized by greater discretion of program personnel, including agency and case managers, in how welfare programs are carried out (Fording, Soss, & Schram, 2007). Consequently, this greater discretion could potentially contribute to variations between the provinces regarding the poverty reduction effectiveness of their social welfare programs.

Finally, in a European-based study, Hölsch and Kraus (2006) determined that variation in forms of targeting (e.g., the extent to which the social safety net applies for the entire population of a region equally as well as the duration for which benefits are granted) influences how much social assistance programs reduce inequality. Even though this study focused on inequality reduction, the findings gleaned by the authors suggest that targeting could also be considered when seeking to explain why provincial social welfare programs in Canada were found to vary in their poverty reduction effectiveness.

Clearly, there is a need for further research to determine if these suggested factors account for variation between the provinces in the extent to which their social safety nets reduce poverty rates and gap ratios. We propose that the fulfillment of this need will help fill the above-described theoretical void regarding determinants of subnational variation in social policy, including poverty reduction policy (Imbeau et al., 2000).

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# The Differentiated Impact of Bridging and Bonding Social Capital on Economic Well-Being: An Individual Level Perspective

SAIJUN ZHANG

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
School of Social Work

STEVEN. G. ANDERSON

Arizona State University  
School of Social Work

MIN ZHAN

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
School of Social Work

*Social capital refers to trust, norms, and social networks. One of the most important features of social capital is its claimed capacity of promoting economic well-being. Theorists have assumed that any such effects vary according to the nature of different types of social capital. Using longitudinal data from a nationally representative dataset, this study investigates the differentiated effects of individual bonding and bridging social capital on subsequent personal income and income-to-needs ratios. The analyses demonstrate that bridging capital, indicated by involvement in various voluntary organizations, has small but significant effects on future economic well-being. However, bonding capital, indicated by connections with kin and friends as reflected through social activities, various help interactions, and perceived emergency supports, does not show such an impact. These findings lend support to the theoretical assumption*

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*that bridging capital is more effective than bonding capital in helping people advance economically. The findings have useful implications for community practice and the design of social programs.*

*Key words: social capital, bonding and bridging, individual level, economic well-being*

Social capital refers to trust, norms, and social networks (Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1993). Researchers have found that social capital contributes a broad range of benefits to society, with one of the most important of these its capacity to improve economic well-being (Bordieu, 1986; Burt, 2000; Coleman, 1988; Hutchinson et al., 2004; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Lin, 1999a, 1999b; Putnam, 1995; Woolcock, 1998). Because social capital is viewed as more accessible than other capital forms for low-income people, it has aroused strong interest as an approach for alleviating poverty (e.g., Fox & Gershman, 2000; Gittel & Vidal, 1998; Knack & Keefer, 1997).

There are two main approaches in social capital research. One is to view social capital as an individual sense of belonging, while the other treats it as a collective entity of a community, or even a nation. In the development of social capital research, scholars also have noticed that social capital varies in its nature and functions. One major distinction in this respect is to divide social capital into bonding and bridging capital. Bonding capital, which generally refers to ties between family members and friends, has been hypothesized to be most effective in helping people get by in their current situations. In contrast, bridging capital is deemed to be associated with more heterogeneous but weaker ties, and is argued to be more important for economic advancement (Beugelsdijk & Smulders, 2003; Briggs, 1998; Putnam, 2002).

Despite the general consensus of such distinctions between bonding and bridging capital in social capital research, few studies have examined the differential impacts of these two forms of social capital at an individual level. This study addresses this knowledge gap. Based on a nationally representative sample of 3,198 adults from the National Survey of Families and Households, we use a longitudinal design and regression analyses to determine how both of these social capital forms are related to subsequent individual and household income

levels. The implications of the findings for policy and program development then are discussed.

## Review of Literature

### *Theoretical Perspectives on Social Capital*

Numerous definitions of social capital and its hypothesized effects have been presented in the literature. Putnam, who has been especially influential both in theorizing about and studying social capital, refers to it as “features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1993, p. 35). Among the three elements, networks are usually viewed as fundamental in generating trust and norms (e.g., Bordieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2007). For example, Putnam (2007) also has interpreted social capital as “social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness” (p. 137).

These social ties are argued to lead to both collective and individual benefits. For example, Putnam views social capital as a powerful tool to motivate community civic engagement, to promote democracy and efficient governance, and consequently to facilitate economic growth. However, other social capital definitions have emphasized its value on individual well-being (Bordieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 1999a).

Theorists also have agreed that social capital varies in its nature and functions. In particular, there has been an increasing emphasis on differentiating bonding and bridging capital as two primary forms. One primary approach of categorizing this pair of concepts is based on the variation in the extent of people’s social and economic backgrounds in a network (Gittel & Vidal, 1998; Putnam, 2002). Consequently, social networks consisting of kin and friends often are considered as bonding capital, which is argued to provide people in the group with emotional and material supports for getting by in their daily lives. However, because of the homogeneous characteristics of group members, members in such networks are less likely to communicate new information that may be valuable for their economic advancement, such as job search or career development (Briggs, 1998).

In contrast, bridging capital typically refers to memberships of various voluntary organizations. These organizations are more likely to include people from different social and economic backgrounds, which consequently may serve as a bridging function across race, gender, profession, income, belief, and other barriers (Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Putnam, 2002). This feature of bridging capital makes it more likely to expose people to fresh information and resources, which is hypothesized to be more useful in helping people get ahead (Briggs, 1998; Putnam, 2002).

One other important conceptual distinction concerns the level at which social capital is considered, which in turn affects the unit of analysis used in empirical studies. Putnam and his colleagues (1993) initiated the contemporary application of aggregate social capital by viewing it as a collective good in a community. It is seen as comprising part of the social context for all people living in a community or nation, regardless of individual variances in social capital accumulation. Individual social capital perspectives, on the other hand, view social capital as a personal belonging, so that social capital and its impacts are measured at the individual level (Glaeser, Laibson, & Sacerdote, 2002; Portes, 1998).

Regardless of these definitional differences, social capital is widely viewed as an important factor contributing to economic well-being (Bordieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 2005; Putnam et al., 1993), and is regarded as a comparatively accessible capital form for the poor (Boisjoly, Duncan, & Hofferth, 1995; Light, 2004). Social capital theorists (e.g., Granovetter, 2005; Lin, 1999a) argue that social networks, the key elements of social capital, have impacts on economic well-being in three principle respects. First, they help to deliver trustworthy and easily accessible information. Second, they help maintain good market order through reward and punishment mechanisms such as group exclusion or reputation recognition. Finally, they foster trust, which reduces transaction costs and facilitates economic actions. Trust and norms are also often used as indicators of social capital independently when examining their impacts on economic well-being (e.g., Knack & Keefer, 1997; Whiteley, 2000).

Many empirical studies have used trust, norms, and social

networks through volunteer group memberships to represent social capital, and have found that social capital is positively associated with economic well-being at community or national levels. However, such studies generally have not distinguished between the effects of bonding and bridging capital. For example, Putnam et al.'s (1993) study in Italy and a series of studies by other researchers using data from the World Values Surveys (Knack & Keefer, 1997; Whiteley, 2000; Zak & Knack, 2001) found that regional or national level social capital was positively associated with GDP growth or investment rates. Narayan and Pritchett's (1999) study in rural Tanzania found that community social capital had a significant impact on family incomes, with a one standard deviation increase in village level social capital, corresponding to 20 to 30 percent income increases for residents. Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales (2004) found that regional social capital in Italy was positively associated with individual financial management activities, such as the likelihood of using checks, access to institutional credit, and investments in stocks.

At the individual level, many studies have found that social capital contributes to improved job search and career development outcomes. For example, Reingold (1999) examined job search channels of people aged 18-47 years living in poor Chicago communities, and found that low-income black males heavily relied on personal networks to find a job. Using a 20-year longitudinal dataset of a group of children of teenage mothers in Baltimore, Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) found that children's individual social capital, as measured by various inside family relationships and outside family connections, had significant impacts on their educational achievement and employment status.

### *Distinguishing Between Bonding Capital and Bridging Capital Effects*

Among the few studies distinguishing between bonding and bridging capital, only Briggs (1998) was found to examine the differentiated effects of bonding capital and bridging capital on individual economic well-being. In his study of residents of a New York public housing program, Briggs termed bonding capital as "social support" capital and bridging

capital as “social leverage” capital. The study found that black adolescents with higher levels of social leverage capital, such as networks including white people, had more perceived job information. Unfortunately, a high proportion of these black adolescents lacked such leverage capital.

Beugelsdijk and Smulders’ (2003) study distinguished between the economic impacts of bonding and bridging social capital at the aggregate level. Using 54 European regions as analysis units, this study measured bridging social capital by memberships of various voluntary organizations, and bonding capital by various ties with family, friends, and acquaintances. The results indicated that bridging capital, but not bonding capital, was positively associated with regional economic growth.

Despite differing conceptual definitions, some studies nonetheless have employed measures similar to those used in the Briggs (1998) and Beugelsdijk and Smulders’ (2003) studies. For example, using data from the Italian National Institute of Statistics and some other sources, Sabatini’s (2008) study examined the impact of four types of aggregate level social capital (strong family ties, networks with kin and friends, voluntary group affiliations and activities engagement, and political participation) on human development and other well-being. The index of human development used included items of per capital income, life expectancy, and high school attendance. The study found that regional levels of voluntary organizational affiliations and engagement in activities exhibited a positive impact on human development. In contrast, strong family ties and networks with kin and friends actually showed negative effects on human development, although they did improve life quality by reducing worker’s precariousness.

Using data from the Women’s Employment Survey, Henly, Danziger, and Offer (2005) examined the impact of perceived social supports on the economic well-being of single mothers with TANF experience. The social supports investigated in this study, such as engaging relatives and friends in helping with errands, childcare, emotional support, and money borrowing, fit the concept of bonding capital well. The findings suggested that although social supports did not show a significant impact on monthly income or job quality, they reduced the likelihood of living in poverty and experiencing hardships in housing,

food, or medical care among study participants. Lombe and Ssewamala's (2007) study investigated the impact of informal social networks on micro-savings outcomes. The study defined three types of informal social capital: community involvement, indicated by activities such as election participation; help giving to kin and friends; and help received from kin and friends. The results showed that community involvement and help receiving did not affect respondent's saving activities, but help giving was negatively associated with saving activities.

Despite widespread interest concerning the impact of social capital on economic well-being, the existing empirical literature is limited in several respects. First, most studies have focused on the impact of aggregate social capital on economic well-being, without adequate attention to the effects of individual social capital (Glaeser et al., 2002). Second, most of the existing studies examining the relationships between social capital and economic well-being at an individual level have used small or local samples, which limits the generalization of research findings. Finally, there is no study that has used nationally representative data to examine the differential effects of individual bonding capital and bridging capital on economic well-being. The current study is designed to address these limitations. By employing nationally representative, individual-level data, the study examines whether bonding capital and bridging capital affected individual economic well-being differently.

### Data and Methods of Analysis

The data for this study are from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) wave 1 (1987-1988) and wave 2 (1992-1994), which is a longitudinal panel study. At wave one, 13,017 noninstitutionalized adults aged 19 and over were randomly selected for interviews, and 10,007 of them were followed up with wave two interviews.

Two major features of the NSFH make it appropriate for the purposes of this study. First, respondents were asked about their participation in various voluntary organizations, as well as about a broad range of supports from and to kin and friends. Second, the NSFH panel design allows tracing changes in economic status among individuals over time.

Only non-student primary respondents who were interviewed at both waves and were aged 19-59 at wave 2 are included for the analyses. Such restrictions allow more meaningful comparisons in terms of social capital impacts on economic well-being. A total of 3,248 respondents met these criteria without missing values on variables for intended analyses. However, 50 of these respondents that reported zero family incomes additionally were excluded due to reporting errors. The final sample therefore consists of 3,198 subjects.

*Dependent Variables.* Two variables are used as dependent variables to represent individual economic well-being. The first is respondent's personal income, which includes income from wages, self-employment, social security, other pensions, public assistance, government programs, child subsidies, interest and dividends, and other sources. The second measure is income-to-needs ratios, which are calculated through dividing family income by the poverty threshold for the relevant family size. The personal income and family income used to construct these two variables are adjusted to 1990 constant dollar values, and natural logarithms are applied to handle the skewness of these two variables. Because respondents with zero incomes would result in missing values in the construction of logarithms, \$1 income values were substituted for persons reporting zero incomes.

*Independent Variables.* The independent variables include one measure of bridging capital and four measures of bonding capital. Based on existing studies (e.g., Beugelsdijk & Smulders, 2003; Briggs, 1998; Putnam, 2002), group activity participation is used to represent bridging capital, while social activities, giving help to kin and friends, receiving help from kin and friends, and perceived availability of emergency support are used to represent bonding capital.

### *Bridging Capital*

At wave 1, respondents were asked the following questions: "Here is a list of various kinds of organizations. How often if at all, do you participate in each type of organization?" The listed organizations included: fraternal groups; service clubs; veterans' groups; political groups; labor unions; sports groups; youth groups; school related groups; hobby or garden



clubs; school fraternities or sororities; nationality groups; farm organizations; literary, art, study or discussion groups; professional or academic societies; and church-affiliated groups. The frequencies of these activities ranged from never to several times a week, with 0 indicating never and 4 indicating several times a week. The authors constructed a scale by summing responses across questions for each respondent, with larger numbers indicating more intense group activity participation. The standardized Cronbach alpha is .68 for this constructed variable.

### *Bonding Capital*

*Social activities.* In NSFH, respondents were asked how often they spent a social evening with 4 types of persons: (a) relatives; (b) a neighbor; (c) people they work with; and (d) friends who lived outside their neighborhoods. The frequencies of these activities ranged from never to several times a week, with 0 indicating never and 4 indicating several times a week. For each respondent, a scale was constructed by summing responses across the questions for the four types of persons, with larger numbers indicating higher frequencies. The standardized Cronbach alpha is .47 for this constructed variable.

*Giving help to kin and friends.* Respondents were asked if they had given help to the following kin and friends not living in their households during the last month: friends, neighbors or co-workers; adult sons or daughters; parents; brothers/sisters; and other relatives. The content of help included: (a) babysitting or child care; (b) transportation; (c) other kinds of work around the house; and (d) advice, encouragement, and moral or emotional support. The matrix of help receivers and help types forms 20 questions (i.e., five types of kin/friends  $\times$  four types of help). For each question, dummy coding was applied with 0 indicating not giving help and 1 indicating helping. For each respondent, a scale then was constructed by summing responses across these questions, with larger numbers indicating more help given to relatives and friends. The standardized Cronbach alpha is .69 for this constructed variable.

*Receiving help from kin and friends.* The questions for this variable were similar to those for the variable of giving help described above, but they instead asked if respondents received

these types of help from kin and friends. In the constructed scales for each individual, larger numbers indicate more help received from kin and friends. The standardized Cronbach alpha is .58 for this constructed variable.

*Perceived emergency supports.* Respondents were asked the following three questions: (a) "Suppose that you had an emergency in the middle of the night and needed help. Who would you call?" (b) "What if you had to borrow \$200.00 for a few weeks because of an emergency? Who would you ask?" and (c) "Suppose you had a problem, and you were feeling depressed or confused about what to do. Who would you ask for help or advice?" For each question, respondents who answered "no one" were assigned a value of 0, respondents who had one type of kin or friend for help were assigned a value of 1, and respondents who had more than one source were assigned a value of 2. For each respondent, a scale then was constructed by summing responses across these questions, with larger numbers indicating more perceived supports. The standardized Cronbach alpha is .49 for this constructed variable.

*Control variables.* Based on existing literature on individual's economic well-being, the OLS models control for a series of variables that may impact individual incomes and income-to-needs ratios over time. These control variables are drawn mainly from wave 1 variables, as well as several variables indicating important changes between wave 1 and wave 2.

Economically-related control variables include income, employment status, and family history of public assistance receipt. Wave 1 personal income and spouse or partner income are adjusted to 1990 constant dollars, and natural logarithms are used (zero income is replaced by \$1 to avoid missing values). Whether the respondent was currently working for pay is dummy coded, with 1 indicating working. Respondents who reported that their family had ever received public assistance before they were 16 are dummy coded as 1.

The control variables also include demographic and social features. Age is represented in four groups: 19-24, 25-34, 35-44, and 45-59. Race is categorized as white, black, and other races. Education is categorized into three levels: less than high school; high school; and some college or above. Respondents

were also asked to rate their health status compared to people of the same age. Those who rated their health status as excellent or very good are coded as 1, and those rated as fair, poor, and very poor are coded as 0. Marital status includes never married, married, and divorced, widowed, and separated. The number of children under 18 at home includes four categories: 0, 1, 2, and 3 or more. Finally, respondents were classified as living in the Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) or not, and codes for the Northeast, Northcentral, West, and South regions of the country also were included.

In order to measure some important changes between the two waves that may affect an individual's economic well-being, three additional variables are controlled. Two of these used wave 2 measures. The first determined whether respondents had received a degree between the two waves, while the second measured whether respondents had changed their address between the two waves. Both variables are dummy coded with 1 indicating yes. Respondent's marital status change between wave 1 and wave 2 used information from both waves. It includes three categories: no change, changed from non-married status to married status, and changed from married status to non-married status.

We will present descriptive analysis about the characteristics of the sample. Next, in the multivariate analysis, Ordinal Least Square (OLS) regression models will be used to examine the impact of various types of individual social capital on respondent's income and income-to-needs ratios.

### *Sample Characteristics*

Table 1 presents the weighed demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the sample (N=3,198). The table first shows the dependent variable values of personal income and income to needs ratio at wave 2. The mean and median personal income for respondents were \$30,179 and \$24,250 respectively (logged mean values of 9.26 and median values of 10.1). The mean and median income-to-needs ratios were 4.76 and 3.9 respectively (logged values of 1.23 and 1.36).

In terms of respondent social capital at wave 1, the mean bridging capital (group activity) was 4.62 in a range of 0 - 43.

This average value corresponds to a respondent attending five types of voluntary organization activities several times a year (5 groups  $\times$  a code of 1 for frequency of participation), or alternatively having been involved more intensively with a smaller number organizations. Among the four types of bonding capital, the mean value of social activities was 6.00 in a range from 0 - 16. For example, this average level of bonding capital equates to a respondent going out for a social evening with two types of relatives or friends about once a week (2 types of relatives/friends  $\times$  a code of 3 for frequency of contact).

Table 1a: Sample Characteristics: Weighted Means and Proportions (N=3,198)

Variables	Mean/Percent	Std Dev
W2 Personal Income (ln)	9.26	2.76
W2 Personal Income (\$)	30,179	36,638
W2 Income to Needs Ratio (ln)	1.23	1.12
W2 Income to Needs Ratio	4.76	4.10
Bridging capital (Group activities)	4.62	4.42
<i>Bonding capital</i>		
Social activities	6.00	2.74
Giving help	4.24	2.86
Receiving help	2.97	2.44
Emergency support	2.85	0.60
W1 personal income (ln)	8.68	3.26
W1 personal income (\$)	23,961	27,132
W1 Spouse/partner income (ln)	7.69	4.35
W1 Spouse/partner income (\$)	28,169	51,352

Note: W1 represents wave 1, W2 represents wave 2.

## Results

The other variables representing bonding capital are giving and receiving help from kin and friends, and perceived emergency supports. The mean values for help given to kin and friends was 4.24 in a range from 0 - 23, which roughly corresponds to a respondent giving one type of help to four types of kin/friends in the last month or more intensive help to a

Table 1b: Sample Characteristics: Weighted Means and Proportions (N=3,198)

Variables	Mean/Percent
Working currently	83%
<i>Age</i>	
19 to 24	10%
25 to 34	40%
35 to 44	34%
45 to 59	17%
<i>Race</i>	
Non-Hispanic white	88%
Black	7%
Other races	5%
<i>Gender</i> Male	42%
<i>Education</i>	
Less than high school	4%
High school	41%
Some college or above	55%
Received degree between W1 & W2	7%
Excellent or good health	87%
<i>Marital Status</i>	
Never married	9%
Married	81%
Divorced, separated, widowed	10%
<i>Marital status change between waves</i>	
No change	85%
Non-married to married	10%
Married to non-married	5%
Number of children at home	
0	32%
1	24%
2	29%
3+	16%
Families ever received public assistance	7%
Address change	21%
Metropolitan statistical areas	74%
<i>Region</i>	
South	31%
Northeast	18%
Northcentral	31%
West	19%

Note: W1 represents wave 1, W2 represents wave 2.

smaller number of kin and friends. Help received from kin and friends ranged from 0 – 19 with a mean value of 2.97, with the interpretation similar to that above for help received. The mean perceived emergency support was 2.85 in a range of 0 – 6. An example of this level of perceived support would be a respondent believing she could ask a family member or friend for night emergency help, to borrow \$200, and to obtain advice for a problem (i.e., 3 types of support  $\times$  1 source = 3).

Among the economically related control variables measured at wave 1, the mean value of respondent personal income was \$23,961, with the associated logged value of 8.68.

### *Results of Multivariate Analyses*

*Personal income.* Table 2 presents the outcomes of two OLS regressions predicting wave 2 economic well-being: one with personal income as the dependent variable and the other with income-to-needs ratio as the dependent variable. The model predicting wave 2 personal income (ln) is significant ( $F = 37.74$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .26, indicating that 26% of the variance in wave 2 personal income (ln) can be explained by the model.

When controlling for other factors, wave 1 bridging capital had a small but significant impact on wave 2 personal income (ln) ( $b = .02$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, none of the bonding capital variables, including social activities, help given to kin and friends, help received from kin and friends, and perceived emergency support, was significantly associated with wave 2 personal income (ln).

Many control variables measured at wave 1 were significantly related to wave 2 personal income (ln). Among the economic-related variables, respondent personal income (ln), work status, and spouse or partner income (ln) all were statistically significant. Each unit increase in respondent personal wave 1 income (ln) resulted in a .24 unit increase in their wave 2 personal income (ln) ( $p < .0001$ ). Similarly, respondents who were working for pay at wave 1 had a much higher wave 2 personal income (ln) ( $b = 1.01$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). In contrast, wave 1 spouse or partner income (ln) had a small but negative impact on wave 2 personal income (ln) ( $b = -.03$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Education and several demographic variables also were significantly related to wave 2 personal income. As would be expected, compared with those with less than a high school

**Table 2: OLS Regression Outcomes of Social Capital on Economic Well-Being**

Variables)	W2 personal income			W2 income-to-needs ratio		
	Coeff.	S.E.	Pr >  t	Coeff.	S.E.	Pr >  t
Intercept	4.92	0.37	<.0001 ***	-0.88	0.16	<.0001 ***
Bridging capital	0.02	0.01	0.045 *	0.01	0.00	0.008 **
Bonding capital						
Social activities	0.00	0.02	0.754	0.00	0.01	0.657
Giving help	-0.01	0.02	0.609	0.00	0.01	0.884
Receiving help	0.03	0.02	0.305	0.00	0.01	0.762
Emergency support	-0.01	0.07	0.896	0.03	0.03	0.347
Personal income	0.24	0.02	<.0001 ***	0.03	0.01	<.0001 ***
Spouse/partner income	-0.03	0.01	0.029 *	0.04	0.01	<.0001 ***
Working currently	1.01	0.13	<.0001 ***	0.24	0.05	<.0001 ***
Age (19-24)						
25 - 34	0.05	0.14	0.708	0.08	0.06	0.160
35 - 44	0.25	0.15	0.107	0.35	0.07	<.0001 ***
45 - 59	0.08	0.18	0.653	0.38	0.08	<.0001 ***
Race (White)						
Black	-0.02	0.14	0.909	-0.38	0.06	<.0001 ***
Other races	-0.25	0.17	0.143	-0.39	0.08	<.0001 ***
Male	1.08	0.09	<.0001 ***	-0.01	0.04	0.886
Education (Less than high school)						
High school	1.05	0.20	<.0001 ***	0.65	0.09	<.0001 ***
Some college or above	1.08	0.21	<.0001 ***	0.88	0.09	<.0001 ***
R received degree between W1 & W2	0.55	0.16	0.000 ***	0.12	0.07	0.086
Good or excellent health status	-0.08	0.12	0.481	0.13	0.05	0.013 *
Marital status (Never married)						
Married	-0.59	0.20	0.003 **	0.23	0.09	0.007 **
Divorced, separated, and widowed	-0.09	0.17	0.606	-0.01	0.07	0.937
Marital status change between waves (No change)						
Non-married to married	-0.23	0.16	0.135	0.46	0.07	<.0001 ***
Married to non-married	1.23	0.19	<.0001 ***	-0.29	0.08	0.000 ***
Number of children at home (0)						
1	0.14	0.12	0.224	-0.18	0.05	0.000 ***
2	0.30	0.12	0.013 *	-0.22	0.05	<.0001 ***
3+	0.28	0.14	0.051	-0.49	0.06	<.0001 ***
Good or excellent health status	-0.08	0.12	0.481	0.13	0.05	0.013 *
Families ever received public assistance	-0.04	0.14	0.778	-0.11	0.06	0.072
Address change between waves	0.08	0.10	0.401	0.00	0.04	0.998
Metropolitan statistical areas	0.21	0.10	0.034 *	0.15	0.04	0.000 ***
Region (South)						
Northeast	0.14	0.12	0.239	0.15	0.05	0.005 **
Northcentral	0.05	0.10	0.613	0.04	0.04	0.402
West	0.00	0.12	0.997	0.02	0.05	0.680
R <sup>2</sup>	0.27			0.24		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.26			0.24		
F-value	37.74		<.0001 ***	33.10	<.0001	***
DF	31			31		

Notes: \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\* p<.001. Categories in parentheses are used as reference groups. W1 represents wave 1, W2 represents wave 2.

education, respondents with a high school education ( $b = 1.05$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) and some college or above education ( $b = 1.08$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) had significantly higher average wave 2 personal income ( $\ln$ ). Similarly, respondents who acquired a degree between wave 1 and wave 2 ( $b = .55$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) had higher average wave 2 personal income ( $\ln$ ). Being male also was associated with higher average wave 2 personal income ( $\ln$ ) ( $b = 1.08$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

Several household and family composition variables were related to wave 2 personal income. Married respondents tended to have a lower average wave 2 personal income ( $\ln$ ) than never married respondents ( $b = -.59$ ,  $P < .01$ ), but they were not significantly different from those who were divorced, widowed, or separated. Compared with those who maintained their marital status between the two waves, respondents who changed from married status to non-married status increased their average wave 2 personal income ( $\ln$ ) ( $b = 1.23$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). Compared with those without a child under 18 at home, respondents with two children ( $b = .30$ ,  $P < .05$ ) were more likely to have a higher average wave 2 personal income ( $\ln$ ), and respondents with three and more children ( $b = .28$ ,  $p = .051$ ) also showed a positive impact at a nearly significant level. Those living in a Metropolitan Statistical Area likewise had higher average wave 2 personal income ( $b = .21$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

*Income-to-needs ratio.* The model predicting wave 2 income-to-needs ratios ( $\ln$ ) also is significant ( $F = 33.10$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .24. When controlling for other factors, wave 1 bridging capital had a small but significant impact on wave 2 income-to-needs ratios ( $\ln$ ) ( $b = .01$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As with the personal income model, however, none of the bonding capital measures even approached significance.

Both wave 1 personal income ( $\ln$ ) ( $b = .03$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) and spouse or partner income ( $\ln$ ) ( $b = .04$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) were positively associated with wave 2 income-to-needs ratios ( $\ln$ ). Respondents who were working for pay at wave 1 likewise had higher average income-to-needs ratios at wave 2 ( $b = .24$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). Education also had important effects; compared with those with less than a high school education, those with a high school degree ( $b = .65$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) and some college and above education ( $b = .88$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) had dramatically higher average wave 2 income-to-needs ratios.



Among the demographic variables, respondents aged 35-44 ( $b = .35, p < .0001$ ) and 45-59 ( $b = .38, p < .0001$ ) had higher average wave 2 income-to-needs ratios than respondents aged 19-24. In addition, blacks ( $b = -.38, p < .0001$ ) and other races ( $b = -.39, p < .0001$ ) had lower average wave 2 income-to-needs ratios ( $\ln$ ) when compared with whites.

Household composition variables also had significant effects. When compared with those never married, married respondents had a higher average wave 2 income-to-needs ratio ( $\ln$ ) ( $b = .23, p < .01$ ). Marital status changes between wave 1 and wave 2 significantly affected wave 2 income-to-needs ratio ( $\ln$ ) in predictable ways. When compared with those who did not change their marital status between the two waves, respondents who changed from non-married status to married status had a sizably higher average wave 2 income-to-needs ratio ( $\ln$ ) ( $b = .46, p < .0001$ ). In contrast, those who changed from married status to non-married status had sizably lower average wave 2 income-to-needs ratios ( $\ln$ ) ( $b = -.29, p < .001$ ). The number of children at wave 1 was negatively associated with wave 2 income-to-needs ratios. Compared with those without a child under 18 at home, those with one child ( $b = -.18, p < .001$ ), two children ( $b = -.22, p < .0001$ ), and three and more children ( $b = -.49, p < .0001$ ) had significantly lower average wave 2 income-to-needs ratios ( $\ln$ ). In addition, residing in Metropolitan Statistics Areas ( $b = .15, p < .001$ ) and the Northeast ( $b = .05, p < .01$ ) resulted in an increase in average wave 2 income-to-needs ratios ( $\ln$ ).

### Discussion and Study Limitations

The findings show that bridging capital, as indicated by the frequency of participation in the activities of various voluntary organizations, has small but statistically significant impacts on respondent future economic well-being. However, bonding capital, as represented by social activities with kin and friends, help giving to and receiving from kin and friends, and perceived support in emergency situations, does not show such effects. The findings corroborate theoretical hypotheses that bridging capital but not bonding capital help people advance economically (Briggs, 1998). The findings are also

generally consistent with previous studies which examine the economic impacts of one or both of these two types of social capital (Beugelsdijk & Smulders, 2003; Briggs, 1998; Lombe & Ssewamala, 2007; Sabatini, 2008).

The effect sizes of the bridging capital on income and income-to-needs ratio are small, but that should not suggest that this type of social capital is unimportant. Using similar measures, previous studies have shown that bridging capital has substantial impacts on economic well-being at the aggregate level (Beugelsdijk & Smulders, 2003; Guiso et al., 2004; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Narayan & Pritchett, 1999; Putnam et al., 1993; Whiteley, 2000; Zak & Knack, 2001). It is possible that this type of bridging capital has more powerful impacts on economic well-being at the aggregate level, because it can improve local governance and trust levels critical to aggregate economic achievement. Future studies that could simultaneously measure both individual level and aggregate level effects would be particularly interesting. For example, it would be useful to determine if individual social capital effects are more profound in community environments that have higher levels of aggregate social capital.

The findings suggest substantial advantages of bridging capital on future economic achievement over bonding capital, given the fact that under some circumstances bonding capital can also promote individual economic well-being. The bridging capital effect sizes also may be constrained somewhat due to limitations in more detailed employment measurements of the dataset. For example, micro-enterprise is effective for people's economic improvement, and it often gains support from kin and friends (Schreiner, 1999). In addition, others not engaged in microenterprises may work in the businesses of relatives or close friends. The dataset unfortunately does not allow us to determine the extent of such employment situations in this sample. Yet, the fact that bonding capital shows no significant effects, despite these possibilities, is telling.

Among control factors used in this study, respondents' wave 1 personal income, employment status, and having a higher educational level were all positively associated with both wave 2 respondent personal income and income-to-needs ratio. These results are consistent with expectations and with the general consensus of existing research. They represent the

obvious importance of previous financial capital and employment positions, as well as human capital investments, to subsequent economic outcomes.

Some factors differed in their effects on wave 2 personal income versus income-to-needs ratio. For example, wave 1 spouse or partner income had a small but positive impact on wave 2 income-to-needs ratio, but a negative impact on wave 2 respondent income. The positive impact of spouse or partner income on income-to-needs ratio is consistent with the previously mentioned impact of initial income on subsequent income. In contrast, the negative impact on wave 2 respondent income likely results because marriage often has disincentive effects on dual-worker family labor force participation. That is, as income for the primary wage earner increases, a spouse may have the choice of substituting other family functions for work. Current tax policies such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) reduce tax credits to a family as incomes increase beyond threshold levels, which can cause secondary workers in the family to reduce their work hours without substantially affecting overall family incomes (Eissa & Hoynes, 2004).

When compared with those without children at wave 1, respondents with two and more children at wave 1 had higher wave 2 personal incomes at wave 2, but lower wave 2 income-to-needs ratio. This may indicate that parents with more children are pressured to earn more to support the family. Yet, the increased earnings often are insufficient to fully offset increased income needs resulting from larger family sizes, which accounts for declining income-to-needs ratios (Cancian, Haveman, Meyer, & Wolfe, 2002).

Being married at wave 1 or changing from non-married status at wave 1 to married status at wave 2 were associated with increased income-to-needs ratio, while changing from married status at wave 1 to non-married status at wave 2 was associated with declining income-to-needs ratio. These results are consistent with the general consensus that marriage is beneficial for family economic status (Cancian, et al., 2002). However, being married at wave 1 was negatively associated with personal income at wave 2. This again is likely due to the previously mentioned substitution of other family functions for work in some married couples, as well as disincentive effects of EITC on dual-worker family earnings (Eissa &

Hoynes, 2004). In contrast, when married respondents at wave 1 were divorced by wave 2, they tended to have higher personal income at wave 2, and lower wave 2 income-to-needs ratio. Further analysis with gender breakdowns found that these changes only occurred with females. This is consistent with previous research which suggested that divorce would increase females' labor force participation, but would nonetheless harm their family economic status (Kitson & Morgan, 1990).

Several data limitations in this study should be noted. First, bridging capital was measured solely by respondents' voluntary group affiliations. It would be more desirable to consider additional bridging capital measures, especially those that could be viewed as most closely linked to employment opportunities. Second, similar to previous empirical studies (e.g., Beugelsdijk & Smulders, 2003; Putnam, 1995), the NSFH does not contain the necessary information to allow the construction of both bonding and bridging capital to reflect the variances of the items used to create the indicators. For example, bridging capital in this study was indicated by a scale summing the frequency of attending various voluntary organizational activities, with each of these organizational activities being treated as having the same bridging capacity. If the dataset contained more detailed information regarding these organizations and relevant activities, such as the size and demographic characteristics of the members, more precise measures of bridging capital could be constructed. Finally, the data used in this study are from two waves of interviews conducted five years apart. This longitudinal data has the advantage of showing the impacts of social capital on economic well-being over time. However, such a wide time span also increases the likelihood that unobserved changes during the period of the two surveys may confound outcomes at wave 2 in the models.

### Implications

The findings from this study have useful implications for social policy and community program development. Social capital has been a key concern in government policy development in the United Kingdom and some other European countries (Edwards, 2004). In addition, the World Bank has

implemented various social capital related projects to assist poor persons around the world, with a particular focus on establishing bridging ties that connect and engage participants with broad information and resources (Fox & Gershman, 2000). There also is growing interest in social capital implementation in the United States (Brisson & Usher, 2005; Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Hutchinson, et al., 2004), as evidenced by increasing attention to social networks within and outside communities in community development projects (Saegert, 2006). For example, The Annie E. Casey Foundation launched a decade-long "Making Connections" project in 10 U.S. cities in 1999 to improve child well-being in disadvantaged communities. One primary strategy of this initiative is to strengthen connections within and outside communities for families to reach job opportunities, develop financial knowledge and skills, and enhance community social support (Brisson & Usher, 2005). The findings from these studies confirm the importance of focusing on bridging ties in poverty reduction centered programs.

The findings from this study can also contribute to the design of community-based service programs with traditionally narrow targets. That is, many community programs focus exclusively on the poor, which results in limited access within programs to people with diverse social and economic backgrounds. The availability of bridging capital opportunities in such programs often is very limited, so adding program elements that actively establish bridging ties may be useful. In community educational or training programs, instructors or guest speakers are among the important sources of bridging capital. In this sense, the selection of instructors or guest speakers should be based not only on who can accurately provide relevant knowledge, but also on who may offer potential bridging capital for the participants. For example, community-based asset building programs that provide low-income people with financial product knowledge (Anderson, Zhan, & Scott, 2004; Lombe & Ssewamala, 2007) can invite bankers or other economically successful community residents to serve as guest speakers. The interactions of these guest speakers with program participants can establish a kind of bridging capital, which offers either channels to targeted financial activities or concrete models to enhance incentives for sustainable asset-building behaviors among program participants. However, the

exclusive usage of bankers or other highly successful persons could discourage low-income people's incentive for such movement if they view the achievements or status of these people as being unobtainable. Therefore, it may be useful to experiment with using more moderately successful residents with more similar backgrounds to the participants as lecturers or mentors. Similarly, in training programs for jobless persons, volunteer lectures from various employers or job hunter organizations would be preferred, because they are people who have high potential of providing bridging capital for the participants (Lockhart, 2005).

Finally, it should be mentioned that emphasis on the importance of bridging capital on economic well-being is not meant to diminish the importance of bonding capital in other important domains of well-being. While bonding capital is not related to economic well-being in this study, it has been shown to be critical for access to emotional support and supporting assistance with day-to-day functioning, which can help individuals to get by in difficult times such as food shortages, losing a home, or suffering from depression (Briggs, 1998; Henly et al., 2005). Under certain circumstances, such as the development of micro-enterprises, bonding capital may be critical for individuals' economic achievement (Schreiner, 1999). More clearly understanding the differential benefits of these two types of social capital is an important task for future research, which carries the potential to better inform community planners and service agents about the most effective strategies for infusing social capital ideas into programs for the disadvantaged.

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# Inabel Burns Lindsay: Social Work Pioneer Contributor to Practice and Education through a Socio-cultural Perspective

ANNIE WOODLEY BROWN

RUBY MORTON GOURDINE

SANDRA EDMONDS CREWE

Howard University  
School of Social Work

*Dr. Inabel Burns Lindsay (1900-1983), founding dean of the Howard University School of Social Work, was an early proponent for the consideration of race and culture in social work education and practice with racial and ethnic minorities. Using primary and secondary data sources, the authors trace the evolution of Dr. Lindsay's thinking on the role of race, class, gender and ethnicity in the helping process and finally her development of a socio-cultural perspective. Particular attention is given to her persistent efforts to disseminate this information and incorporate it into the curriculum of the Howard University School of Social Work decades before the ideas were embraced by the profession as a whole. As a pioneer in the struggle for social justice, Dr. Lindsay's philosophy on social work education and practice with racial and ethnic minorities informs contemporary social work practice approaches.*

*Key words: socio-cultural, cultural competence, race, culture, social work education*

Dr. Inabel Burns Lindsay (1900-1983), designated a social work pioneer by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), was the founding dean of the Howard University Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, March 2011, Volume XXXVIII, Number 1

School of Social Work (HUSSW) and was recognized for her leadership in its becoming the second accredited school of social work serving predominantly Black students (NASW Foundation, 2004). "She was one of the first African American women to serve as an academic dean during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s and the only female academic dean of a co-educational college in the Washington, DC area during those decades" (Crewe, Brown & Gourdine, 2008, p. 1; NASW Foundation, 2004). These authors and others have highlighted Dr. Lindsay's commitment to social justice (Crewe, Brown & Gourdine (2008); Reisch & Andrews, 1999), and her leadership in building a school of social work (Gourdine, Crewe, & Brown, 2008; Hawkins & Daniels, 1985; Matthews, 1976). The research by the authors for their publications on Dr. Lindsay revealed not only an important career in social work practice in public welfare, a leadership role in social work education, but also her early voice in the discourse on the role of race and culture in social work practice and education. Unfortunately, Dr. Lindsay's work and philosophy are unknown to most contemporary social work practitioners and educators.

Social work graduates of Howard University who were students during her deanship speak with great admiration for Dr. Lindsay and her commitment to cultural awareness in the provision of social services. For them, this article acknowledges the importance of her contributions and introduces her to the broader social work community. The authors document the accomplishments of this unsung social work educator and practitioner who from the beginning of her social work career brought a cultural perspective to the helping process. Using her writings, speeches and oral history, this article: (1) explores her seminal contribution to the interaction of race and culture in social work practice and education; (2) presents the evolution of Dr. Lindsay's thinking from race and gender to socio-cultural constructs as precursors to the concepts of diversity and multiculturalism; and (3) expands the contemporary discussion of cultural competence and multiculturalism by providing a broad historic and conceptual context. Fox (1983) noted that between the end of the Progressive Era and the 1960s, "not much appears to have been done" (p. 70) relating to culturally sensitive practice. However, in the case of Dr. Lindsay and

others (Frazier, 1939; Sandi, 1947; Washington, 1935), there was work in this area. This examination of Dr. Lindsay's practice and education career helps us to document her contributions and closes this gap in the social work literature.

## Background

Dr. Lindsay exemplifies the life course perspective (Elder, 1994; Shanahan & Portelli, 2002) as she documents her life experiences as influencing her world view and commitment to social justice. Elder states that the distinctive themes of life course "include the relation between human lives and a changing society, the time of lives, linked or interdependent lives, and human agency" (p. 4). The social location of individuals and groups in a society shape their knowledge and worldview, because it is in that location that they experience life, and it is in that location that their values are formed. Inabel Burns Lindsay was born in 1900, in the post-Reconstruction era in the United States when African Americans faced racial discrimination and oppression, Jim Crow segregation, and the terror of the lynch mob. During her childhood she was exposed to some of the leading Black thinkers of the day—e.g. Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Dubois—who stayed at her sister's house in St. Josephs, Missouri, because rigid segregation denied them access to public accommodations. The following quotation captures the depth of her family's involvement in social activism: "Our whole family had been socially conscious and supportive of the movements and programs in our home town" (Grayson, 1980, p. 31). This exposure to such historical figures combined with her family's race consciousness, likely contributed to her early sense of race pride.

As a student at Howard University 1916-1920, Inabel Burns reinforced her talents and leadership skills, and broadened her perspective of social causes to include the women's movement. Platt (1991) in his biography of E. Franklin Frazier, described the period when Inabel Burns was an undergraduate student at Howard as a time when "students were not simply vicarious participants in movements for social change who reacted and responded to the world around them, but also a critical part of these movements, direct participants who helped to shape

their vision and militancy" (p. 24). Further, Platt notes from his research that "the feminist movement at Howard was sufficiently strong to be able to send the only college delegation to march in a huge suffrage parade in Washington, DC " (p. 24). As the student founder of the Howard University chapter of the Women's Suffrage League (Hawkins & Daniels, 1985), Inabel Burns began her public career of advocacy. Her experiences in her family, community, school and higher education all combined to give Dr. Lindsay a life perspective that was inclusive and respectful of equal rights that extended to all, regardless of race or gender.

Dr. Lindsay's career as a social work practitioner and educator roughly paralleled the growth of the social work profession. She began her social work education in 1920, at the New York School of Social Work, six years after Alexander Flexner gave his seminal assessment of social work as not meeting the criteria for being a profession (Trattner, 1999). Understanding Dr. Lindsay's contributions requires an examination of the evolution of her thought from the Progressive Era through the Civil Rights Era (1920s - 1960s) (see Crewe, Brown & Gourdine, 2008, p. 2).

### The Parallel Course of Social Work Education and Dr. Lindsay's Philosophy of Inclusiveness

Cultural competence has become an intrinsic component of social work education and practice. Today social work educators routinely incorporate content on cultural competence, diversity, and multiculturalism in their curricula. Weaver (2005) noted that: "The importance of cultural competence has been recognized by the largest, most prominent social work organizations in the United States including the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)" (p. 2). The institutionalization of cultural competence in social work practice and education is evidenced by its specific inclusion in the NASW Code of Ethics (NASW, 2008) and a set of articulated standards for cultural competence in social work practice (NASW, 2007). Consequently, practitioners are routinely trained for culturally competent practice in social work in areas such as child welfare (English

& Brown, 1997; Morisey & Robertson, 1997; Wilson & Green, 1983), social work practice (Spencer, Lewis, & Gutierrez, 2000), mental health (Day, 1985), and gerontology (Crewe, 2004). Additionally, a few scholars have built substantial academic reputations and careers studying the relevance of cultural competence and ethnic sensitivity to social work practice (Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs, 1989; Devore & Schlesinger, 1999; Green, 1999; Lum, 1986, 1999; Schiele, 1994, 1997a, 1997b, 2007). Their advocacy for the primacy of culturally competent content has contributed to the widespread acceptance of its importance and value in social work practice. Some of the above mentioned scholars have contributed to the ongoing cultural discourse of the important considerations of culture in social work practice and education well before it was mandated by the (CSWE) in 1968. Dr. Lindsay can be situated among the earliest voices advocating a cultural perspective in social work. Gourdine, Crewe & Brown's (2008) review of her work reveals the evolution of her socio-cultural perspective through forums related to practice, education and professional organizations and her publications in support of this perspective.

Inclusion of cultural awareness in social work education and practice or in other professions was not always common practice. In fact, in a preface to Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture*, the famed anthropologist, Margaret Mead, wrote: "When Ruth Benedict began her work in anthropology in 1921, the term 'culture' as we use it today for the systematic body of learned behavior which is transmitted from parents to children, was part of the vocabulary of a small and technical group of professional anthropologists" (Mead, as cited in Benedict, 1959, p. v). However, there were professionals in disciplines (specifically social work) who were concerned about culture and its role in the helping process for the provision of services to clients of different racial and ethnic groups. One very early example was Helen Tucker, who is described as early as 1909 to be "the first social worker to propose that social work education include specific experiences with black people to enable social work students to develop skill in helping blacks" (Fox, 1983, p. 70).

## Contemporary Framework of Cultural Competence

Lum (2005) traces the cultural competence movement to the work of Terry L. Cross, and notes that Cross's work eventually evolved into a text entitled *Towards a Culturally Competent System of Care* (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989). Scholars Fong & Furuto (2001) identified social work as "one of the first of the helping professions to begin to address the needs for culturally relevant programs, policies, and services" (p. xi). In their work they found that: "Over thirty years ago social workers of color questioned the dominant practice paradigm that encouraged us to be culture-free and universal" (p. xi). Spencer, Lewis and Guttierrez (2000) noted the same time frame further specifying: "This shift has moved from a view that encourages practice that is culture free and universal to one that seriously considers the role that gender, culture, sexual orientation, race, and other social identities play in the experiences, problems, and solutions of the communities with which we work" (p. 131). Morisey and Robertson (1997) acknowledge a longer time frame of forty to fifty years. However, no mention is made by name of the pioneers who, more than 60 years ago, recognized the importance of racial and cultural sensitivity in the delivery of social services to individuals, families, and communities.

Curran (2003) is one of the few scholars to discuss a broader timeframe in her article, "The Culture of Race, Class, and Poverty: The Emergence of a Cultural Discourse in Early Cold War Social Work (1946-1963)," noting that "cultural narratives gained new ground in the early cold war years or the period spanning from the close of World War II in 1946 until the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963" (p. 15). Curran referenced Dr. Lindsay's 1947 article, "Race as a Factor in the Caseworker's Role," as an example of social work literature promoting a cultural perspective for social work practice and education. Gallegos, in Barbara White's (1984) seminal work, *Color in a White Society*, noted that in the early years "minorities had to struggle merely to have information on their history and identity incorporated into the social work curricula" (p. 2).

The 1970s are usually referenced as the time of a major effort on the part of minority scholars (Chestang, 1976; Council

on Social Work Education, 1974; Francis, 1973; Gary, 1974; Norton, 1978; Scott, 1970) to include cultural and ethnic minority content in social work curricula. Dr. Lindsay anticipated this cultural discourse as indicated by her early efforts in graduate school to merge the cultural and psychological perspectives, and in her early practice experiences. As conceptualizations of cultural competence, diversity, and multiculturalism evolve, it is important to explore the historical knowledge base of these perspectives.

### Evolution of the Socio-cultural Perspective

After graduating from Howard University in 1920, Inabel Burns attended the New York School of Social Work on a scholarship from the Urban League. She referred to her time there as a time of trying out some of her ideas (Martin & Martin, 1995). This was her first conscious effort to include a cultural perspective in the helping process which she described in the following quote.

Well, I think the main themes, the emphasis in those days [New York School of Social Work] was of course all based in Freudian psychology—the disciplined use of self, the therapeutic uses of relationship ... I developed out of the Freudian approach the understanding of behavior through the developmental stages and how one unconsciously projects onto something outside oneself. And I think that is where I got the notion to do this analysis of the relationship based on race, how race affected—particularly where one's race is different to that of the person being served. And certainly the need to be aware of the projection onto factors outside oneself such as race, sex, disability ... (Grayson, 1980, pp. 54-55).

This was 1921, and as a student at the New York School of Social Work, Dr. Lindsay began to incorporate the idea of race as a factor in developing self-awareness in accurately assessing clients. She was sensitive to the role of race and culture in the helping process for both the worker and the client. From an oral history (Schlesinger Library, 1977), further evidence of Dr.

Lindsay's thinking on the consideration of race and culture in social work practice can be traced back to 1929, when she was a young professional worker in Public Welfare. In the summer of 1929, she was chosen from workers in Public Welfare in St. Louis to attend a month-long summer institute in New York sponsored by the Family Welfare Association to provide education and training for workers from 25 of the largest family agencies in the United States. Dr. Lindsay described herself in a situation where she was the least experienced in a group of participants that had chosen the same popular novel, *Mamba's Daughter*, to analyze for a family assessment. She provided leadership for the group for considering cultural factors relevant to the Black family in making the assessment. Her vivid recollection was that an esteemed social worker from Boston, having chosen the same novel, refused to meet with the group and at the general presentation gave her own analysis that included a great many stereotypes about Blacks that Lindsay stated she "felt compelled to challenge" (Schlesinger Library, 1977). Despite the presence of a seasoned professional, Inabel Burns Lindsay, 29 years old, used her developing ideas of a cultural framework for an analysis of the family that challenged the assumptions of the more experienced and well known social worker.

After a career in Public Welfare in St. Louis, Inabel Burns Lindsay returned to school to complete her master's degree in social work at the University of Chicago in 1937. It was after completion of this degree that Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, noted sociologist and her former classmate at the New York School of Social Work, recruited her to come to Howard University and assist with the development of a social work program. Dr. Frazier began his career as a social worker and played a pivotal role in developing a social work program at Atlanta University (now the Whitney M. Young School of Social Work at Clark-Atlanta University), the first school of social work for Blacks, and later contributed to the development of social work at Howard University. Martin and Martin (1995) identified Dr. Frazier as: "the first among early black professional social workers to believe that social workers would never fully grasp the situation of black migrants until these social workers had some basic understanding of black culture" (p. 49). Dr.



Lindsay and Dr. Frazier shared the cultural perspective she incorporated into the curriculum of HUSSW.

In April, 1939, the Board of Trustees at Howard voted to create a Division of Social Work in the graduate school, separate from the Department of Sociology. Inabel Burns Lindsay was appointed acting Director of the new division (HUSSW, 1987; Matthews, 1976) and from the beginning expressed concern that the influence of factors such as race and social status on human behavior be considered in assessing individual capacity for change.

It is hoped that the Graduate Division of social work at Howard will provide studies of the influence of the factor of race, since little research has been done in that area. Likewise, there must be particularization of information relative to the status and problems of the Negro in the emerging social situation in the United States. This need is especially emphasized in consideration of the new governmental programs of insurance and assistance, since the majority of Negroes are employed in occupations which are excluded from benefits under insurance systems and some state laws establishing assistance programs include differentials which in practice are discriminatory to the Negro. (Lindsay, 1939 as cited by Matthews, 1976, p. 3)

The program was granted independent status in 1940 under the leadership of Dr. Lindsay. Her vision for the School included a curriculum that reflected understanding of the impact of racial, social, and cultural factors on human beings and their importance in shaping human behavior and developed the needs of all people, but especially Black people (HUSSW, 1987). "Achieving these goals would require the pursuit of the highest standards of scholarship and skill" (HUSSW, 1987, p. 9). Through developing a curriculum grounded in cultural consciousness, she challenged the profession to understand the impact of racial oppression on African Americans in the United States. She embraced the belief that programs designed to assist African Americans must be understood by workers both from the perspectives of society and program recipients. She designed a program to educate social workers beyond the

mono-cultural perspective prevalent in social work education at the time.

In her first annual report in 1944, Dr. Lindsay stated: "In addition to the basic areas required by the Association of Social Work, the Howard School considers essential an orientation to cultural factors in American life and offers courses to supply this (HUSSW, 1987, p. 4)." The two courses offered were "The Negro in America" (taught in the sociology department headed by Dr. E. Franklin Frazier) and "Culture, Behavior and Personality" (taught in the School of Social Work). Dr. Lindsay was aware that social workers (for all their training and commitment to help all people) were conditioned by their pasts, their attitudes, and expectations shaped by that upbringing. Her understanding of this phenomenon was evidenced later in her writings, in which she cautioned white caseworkers against holding on to their parents' prejudices and notions of power or rank, or defining minority clients first and foremost by race. She also warned of Black social workers facing biases ranging from defensive over-identification to resentment against clients who reinforce negative racial stereotypes (Lindsay, 1947).

At this time Dr. Lindsay was building the foundation for her academic career. The same outspokenness she exhibited as a young practitioner regarding race and culture manifested itself in her scholarly presentations. In August, 1946, Dr. Lindsay participated on a radio panel discussion with Margaret Mead and other faculty from the Wellesley School of Community Affairs. She was chosen by the workshop participants to represent them on the panel because of her unequivocal stance on racial and cultural issues during the workshop (Matthews, 1976).

### Building an Intellectual Foundation for the Socio-cultural Perspective

In 1955, Dr. Lindsay took a sabbatical leave from HUSSW to pursue her doctorate degree at the University of Pittsburgh. Her dissertation was entitled, "The Participation of Negroes in the Establishment of Welfare Services, 1885-1900, with Special Reference to the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia." The dissertation itself provides evidence of her focus on

acknowledging cultural contributions by African Americans in social welfare that were often overlooked or undervalued. While she was studying for her doctorate she described a doctoral seminar where the students led a unit of instruction, "that gave me a good opportunity to utilize my ideas about social and cultural factors" (Grayson, 1980, p. 224). In that same period, she took courses at Catholic University and American University (Washington, DC) with the aim of advancing a socio-cultural perspective in social work education. She described her intentions in the following excerpt:

I took anthropology at Catholic University, relating this to my course [at Howard] in race and culture. And I took an advanced course in history at American [University] to bring out some of the contributions and developments of Negroes who were contributing to social welfare developments, and they had never heard of any of it. And the instructor, the professor in anthropology at Catholic couldn't relate her conceptual treatment of anthropology to what I was doing and would always turn to me, "now how would you use that?" ... So I really spent my summers both learning and teaching those courses. (Grayson, 1980, p. 219)

These accounts offer evidence that Dr. Lindsay embraced the need for "cultural sensitivity" in social work education and practice, and included the ideas in the curriculum of the School she helped to develop, as well as in her writings and speeches.

In 1946, in an address delivered at the Tenth annual Conference of the Middle Atlantic Conference of Social Work on "Problems among Negroes," Dr. Lindsay presented a well developed conceptualization of cultural intra-group competence in practice.

The Negro social worker is an important link between the Negro community and the larger community. ... It is of vital importance how we perform this task, important that we achieve a sophisticated awareness of the task and our function in it. First, we must ourselves be armed with sound knowledge of our culture and its

effects upon our lives and characters. Secondly, we can help by disseminating this knowledge through group and individual contacts to broaden the understanding and appreciation of others, especially interested persons of the majority group. To be able to interpret the use of religion as self-applied therapy; to understand (and pass such understanding on to others) interclass hostilities and aggression as perhaps expressions of protest against the rigid caste of restrictions—to mention only a few of the frequently observed phenomena, is a valuable contribution to all concerned. (Lindsay, 1946)

An unpublished Lindsay paper in 1963, "Influence of Socio-cultural Factors in the American Family Today" which was the subject of several professional presentations (Gourdine, Brown, & Crewe, 2008), further refines ideas presented in a 1946 speech, captures Dr. Lindsay's conceptualization of the socio-cultural perspective, and demonstrates the intellectual maturity and evolution of her thinking. In this paper she makes the following observation:

Understanding of the socio-cultural component in social change is essential if social workers are to cope with it most effectively. When we speak of culture we are referring to the total life way of a people. It includes walking, talking, eating and dressing, as well as attitudes, standards, values, and beliefs. Culture is sometimes explained as the structures and processes designed by a society to meet and solve its problems. (p. 3)

Dr. Lindsay recognized that working with individuals would not bring about change without change in the mezzo and macro systems in society. Her ecological approach differed somewhat from those social work educators and practitioners who addressed culture but did not link their understanding of culture directly with socioeconomic power differentials, class, or institutional racism. In this way her socio-cultural perspective anticipated the development of the Black Perspective, the guiding philosophy around which the curriculum of Howard University School of Social Work was built in the 1970s and which continues to the present (Crewe, 2007). The Black

Perspective, consistent with the ideology of Dr. Lindsay, is an inclusionary framework that embraces all underserved and oppressed populations.

The socio-cultural perspective in social work as articulated by Dr. Lindsay evolves from the recognition of the need for practice to be informed by the elements that influence human behavior. Practice guided by the socio-cultural perspective has the potential to produce more positive outcomes because: (1) it is grounded in social work education; (2) informed by the culture of the target client; (3) situated in the context of the environment; and (4) advocates for systemic change that incorporates a cultural perspective in the service delivery system. This conceptualization addresses forthrightly the profession's person-in-the-environment framework. Dr. Lindsay (1963) described the social worker's skill and effectiveness as "enhanced if his knowledge of the psychodynamics of human behavior is enriched and supplemented by knowledge of the client's cultural orientation and appreciation of points of cultural difference between client and worker (p. 21). An important dimension of the socio-cultural perspective is its regenerative qualities that continue to inform social work education so that specific evidence related to the benefits of culturally specific interventions can again be integrated into education and practice.

Through her leadership in the profession, her publications and presentations, Dr. Lindsay took advantage of opportunities to disseminate her ideas regarding the influence of culture on practice and education. What started in the 1920s as a young social work student trying out ideas on the importance of understanding race in the helping process, had evolved by the time she retired in 1967 to a cultural perspective for working with Blacks and others in undervalued cultures. Dr. Lindsay had a clear vision of what was to be valued in the education of social workers, all social workers, for she was not just interested in educating African American social workers. She thought all social workers should be sensitive to issues of race, class, gender, and oppression in the lives of the people with whom they worked. She wanted to produce a cadre of African American social workers to meet the needs of the Black community, and bring needed diversity into the thinking and shaping of social work practice.

## Conclusion

Dr. Lindsay was not the first or only social worker concerned about the inclusion of race and culture in practice. However, it is evident from her writings and presentations that she made a constant and persistent effort to include cultural content on race, ethnicity, and class throughout her social work practice and education career. For 30 years she nurtured the Howard University School of Social Work and built a philosophical base for the curriculum that evolved from her commitment to the principles of social justice and equality. In the process, she built a foundation that has survived and evolved with the times through the incorporation into the curriculum knowledge of racial, social and cultural factors and their impact on human behavior. Also, the majority of faculty scholarship specifically addresses cultural competence. Dr. Lindsay's work can be viewed through the prism of contemporary conceptualizations of anti-oppressive social work practice (Sakamoto & Pitner, 2005), which promotes the idea that problems of behavior are as much an outcome of social and economic inequities as of emotional dysfunction (Crewe, Brown & Gourdine, 2008; HUSSW, 1987).

Dr. Lindsay formulated her ideas at a time when "minority" content in social work curricula was the exception, not mandated by any accrediting body. Her efforts to promote the integration of theory and practice provided the impetus for her to build an institution reflective of her ideas. The cultural awareness expressed by Dr. Lindsay anticipated the conceptualization of "critical consciousness" discussed in social psychology literature as necessary for developing cultural competence. From that discipline, Pitner & Sakamoto (2005) describe critical consciousness as beginning with the service provider critically examining his or her own cultural background. They noted that: "Scholars agree that this process facilitates an understanding of and appreciation for cultural diversity" (p. 648). We find congruency between that idea and Dr. Lindsay's articulation of the socio-cultural perspective:

These variations, relating to sub-cultural backgrounds, emphasize the need for social workers (as well

as practitioners in other helping professions) to understand and to utilize knowledge of the culture to which the client has been oriented. But these differences also emphasize the necessity for workers to become consciously aware of their own cultural orientation. (Lindsay, 1963, p. 6)

Initially, Dr. Lindsay's thinking from a cultural perspective centered on her work with Black clients, but by the time she retired in 1967 her cultural discourse had evolved to include ethnic minorities, women, older persons, as well as persons with disabilities. Always sensitive to the unique position of African Americans in U.S. society, much later in her career she identified the oppressive nature of age and race for older African Americans as one of "double jeopardy" (Lindsay, 1971). The course of her life, the evolution of her thought and the demographics of the country moved her to an increasingly inclusive conceptualization of diversity. She expressed broader concern for the increasing diversity in the United States with the following observation:

Other minority groups are also set apart from the mainstream of American life, primarily by the factor of skin color. Although the Negro minority constitutes about 92 percent of those reported by the U.S. Census as nonwhite, the needs of other nonwhite minorities in the United States are of increasing significance and concern as the nation strives to achieve its ideal of democracy. (Lindsay, 1969, p. 20 )

This article documents the early leadership of Dr. Lindsay in the dialogue about diversity in that today, NASW (2007) recognizes that although primarily associated with race, cultural diversity, "is taking on a broader meaning to include socio-cultural experiences of people of different genders, social classes, religious and spiritual beliefs, sexual orientations, ages, physical and mental abilities" (p. 8).

For Dr. Lindsay, the socio-cultural approach to practice appeared to emanate from her experience as a member of an oppressed group and her exposure to the intellectual ferment of the Black community in the early and mid-1900s as it struggled

for acceptance in the mainstream of American society. Using her race, education, personal experience and her own personal agency, she built a career incorporating a socio-cultural perspective from which she challenged conventional norms, and sought changes in her profession. Dr. Lindsay's work around socio-cultural considerations in social work education and practice provides a vantage point from which we can systematically examine the expanded knowledge base of practice perspectives for work with racial and ethnic minorities, as well as other oppressed groups. Through documenting the developmental stages of her socio-cultural perspective, we gain an appreciation for the length of time it took these ideas to gain currency in the mainstream of social work practice and education. Equally important, this research adds Dr. Inabel Burns Lindsay to the body of significant contributors to culturally competent social work practice.

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# Surviving the Early Years of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act

JOYCE BIALIK

City University of New York

*A system that increasingly stigmatized its recipients only became more stigmatizing with the enactment in 1996 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) program. This program has been so successful in deterring cash-needy people from applying for assistance that the decline in participation from the start of the program continues—even in times of economic downturn. The study reported here follows 150 impoverished families during the first three years of PRWORA, when the economy was booming. The data were derived from the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project of 1996-2001. Through this secondary analysis a construct was developed that measured the men's identity as fathers. In keeping with PRWORA's use of the labor market as the source for economic well-being, the research studied the relationship between the construct for the fathers' identity and the fathers' long-term employment, and found the construct to positively affect the fathers' employment.*

*Key words: Poverty, welfare policy, parenting, Early Head Start, stigma, families, strength perspective*

In the liberal 1960s Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965) distinguished between residual and institutional social welfare, and added that the country was heading in the institutional direction. An institutional system, in which public welfare is considered a normal first line source of assistance, is consistent with reducing the stigma of being dependent on social services. This is particularly important for those who are financially needy, since poverty in this country, like dependency, is itself a source of stigma (Goffman, 1963; Merton, 1967).

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Starting in only a decade, however, a shift to the ideological right gradually turned the welfare state in the residual direction, in which public assistance is not the first line of assistance for those who are financially needy. Individuals were expected to turn first to the labor market and to family instead of to government. On issues of relieving poverty, moreover, this country's values historically have favored hard work over dependence, even when help is provided by one's family. Consistent with such trends and values, the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), replacing Jobs Opportunity and Basic Skills, made the source of cash welfare for all needy able-bodied men and women the labor market, and turned what was an entitlement program into a block grant (Caputo, 1996). Cash grants for families under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are limited to a lifetime of five years, and restrictions are placed on participation in occupational training and education programs in favor of work programs and services that help people secure immediate jobs (Administration for Children & Families, 2006; Schiller, 2008). The guiding principle of the new program, "work first," is that work in any job, even the lowest-paying job, is the most effective route to economic self-sufficiency and personal well-being. Moreover, any able-bodied individual is assumed to be capable of obtaining work if he or she only tries, regardless of the economy, and whether the individual has prior work experience, skills, education, and/or English-speaking ability.

Looking back from the beginning of PRWORA we see an early trend of increased employment, particularly among the women who had a history of poverty and receipt of public assistance (DeParle, 2004). This increased employment is consistent with the economic boom of the mid- to late 1990s and was supported by the "make-work-pay" provisions of PRWORA, which included monies for child care (Parrott & Sherman, 2006). At the same time, PRWORA includes provisions which focus on the men's role as economic providers and responsible fathers. For example, the child support program, which addresses biological fathers living apart from mother and child, was strengthened. Most commentators cite the success of this program for promoting family responsibility (Roberts &

Greenberg, 2005). Others present another side of child support enforcement in which support requirements exceed both the fathers' low-income capabilities and their knowledge about policies and procedures that can ease their economic burden (Mincy & Sorenson, 1998; Roy, 1999). In addition, Pate's (2002) findings emphasize the impoverished fathers' lament over a law that ignores the value of their in-kind support. Roy and Pate's young fathers are African American men, who have among the highest rates of unemployment of any demographic group (Holzer & Offner, 2004).

If family support programs represent particular stress and stigma for those very poor fathers who are unable to fulfill support obligations, other programs under PRWORA targeted at family responsibility likely are stigmatizing for impoverished fathers (and mothers) more generally. These programs, by virtue of their titles—building strong families and promoting healthy marriages—suggest a biased view of men and women in poverty, specifically that weak families and unhealthy marriages are responsible for the families' economic distress. But at least one study funded with a Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant suggests that poverty thwarts healthy family development more than couple relationships (Roehlkepartain, Mannes, Scales, Lewis, & Bolstrom, 2004).

Since the rise in employment from the 1990s to 2000, the declining economy starting in 2001 has seen a decrease in the employment of single mothers and an increase in child poverty (Parrott & Sherman, 2006). At the same time, local governments report a continued decline in the use of TANF and other cash welfare programs, proving the success of PRWORA in reducing the use of public assistance (DeParle, 2009).

### Current Study

This study is a secondary analysis of data from the Early Head Start (EHS) Research and Evaluation Study of 1996 to 2001, the first years of PRWORA (Administration for Children and Families, 2011). The data cover a national sample of households with very young children who were found financially eligible for Early Head Start; in other words, they were below the poverty line. In focusing on the first years of the

new program, the study permits a view of poor and near-poor working families under the booming economic conditions of the mid- to late 1990s. The current study explored the factors that predict whether the fathers would be continuously employed. The hypothesis was that after controlling for certain financial, human capital, and demographic factors, the men who participated more actively as fathers were more likely to be continuously employed. The study uses continuous employment as a goal for these fathers, in keeping with today's residual social welfare approach that relies on the labor market as a front line source for economic well-being.

In preparation for testing this hypothesis, the author developed a social psychology construct called *procreativity* for measuring the men's involvement as fathers, and examined how the procreativity construct related to the mother's perception of the men as involved fathers. The study also explored the effect on the fathers' continuous employment of a construct known as *parenting alliance*. While other studies have explored employment and poverty in relation to demographic and human capital variables, this research is unique in its inclusion of the variables "procreativity" and "parenting alliance." A focus on these social psychology variables is based on a recognition of the importance of personal strengths enhanced by supportive relationships to compensate for the negative effects of stress and stigma experienced by the poor and marginally poor.

### Social Psychology Constructs

Procreativity is a construct identified by Erik Erikson (1963), which considers the possibility that when adults successfully struggle to resolve the tension between being generative and being self-absorbed, their psychological well-being is enhanced. Generativity, the seventh of eight stages of human development in Erikson's life stage model, is represented by the acts of caring for, guiding, and being committed to people, things and ideas. Generativity, then, is not only the behaviors and attitudes of adults towards the next generation, which Erikson calls the procreative component, but also those of adults in the economic and political spheres (1963), which are relevant to the productive and creative components of generativity. Whether generativity is expressed with the



next generation (as procreativity) or in the economic or political spheres may depend on one's gender. Particularly in the early 1960s when Erikson developed his theory, women were more likely to be generative with children, and men with politics and the world of work. This study, however, focuses on procreativity in men, and posits that procreativity could play a central part in the lives of those men who are impoverished. When there are difficulties finding fulfillment in the labor market, working may lose its centrality and become the means to provide for one's family.

Procreativity as a developmental force has been supported by recent studies, but the idea of its potency being most pronounced in adulthood, and declining in importance in later stages of life, has been questioned (Kotre, 1984; McAdams, St. Aubin, & Logan, 1993). More pertinent to the aim of this study, Hawkins, in McKeering and Packerham (2000) "emphasized the reciprocal nature of generativity, in that the presence of the child, and the nurturing and child care involved, serve as potent developmental forces for the adult, just as the presence of the adult serves to develop the child" (p. 461).

Cohen and Weissman (1984) used the term *parenting alliance* to represent the process of development between parents. Since parenting involves issues of self-esteem, the mother's and father's feelings of competence, effectiveness and well-being are highly vulnerable to positive and negative criticism. "The alliance consists of the capacity of a spouse to acknowledge, respect and value the parenting roles and tasks of the partner" (Cohen & Weissman, 1984, p. 35), and presents the opportunity for one parent to support the other and to promote his or her psychic equilibrium and development. Based on Abidin and Konold's (1999) parenting alliance scale, the definition of the construct entails a father: (a) acknowledging, respecting, and valuing the parenting roles and tasks of his partner; (b) having good communication with her; and (c) agreeing with her about how to raise the child. Until the current study, the construct had been developed and used primarily with White racial ethnic groups.

## Methods

The population for this study consists of 1,500 biological fathers from across the nation, who were identified by the mother as the primary father figure of the very young child. Members of each family were interviewed three times, over three consecutive years. Interviewers included Spanish as well as English speakers. In the second-year interview, 285 fathers from these families responded to non-structured interview questions designed to capture their experiences and attitudes related to fathering. The sampling frame for the current study was created by dividing the 285 men into three racial ethnic categories, African American, Latino, and White, and randomly selecting 50 men from each category, to produce a sample size of 150.

The data for the current study included the fathers' and mothers' responses to structured questions, which were analyzed with SPSS. The non-structured data were analyzed with the software AtlasTi, and focused on the men's experiences of fatherhood and their parenting relationship with the mother. The qualitative analysis followed Neuendorf's criteria in which the coding is: (a) exhaustive, in other words having a code for each unit coded within a variable; and (b) mutually exclusive, so that there is only one appropriate code for each unit coded for the variable (2002). The researcher began her coding with pre-designated categories, based on Erikson's writings on procreativity, and created new codes as she proceeded. To help insure the reliability of interpretations of these data, the researcher compared her codes with those of additional raters who coded the same data, and clarified the coding rules when necessary.

### *Population and Sample*

The sample for the current study is 150 men equally divided among African Americans, Latinos, and Whites. Compared to the EHS study population, the fathers in this sample are comprised of a somewhat greater share of African Americans and Latinos. The families in the sample consisted of the mother, the child applying for Early Head Start and the child's biological father, 78 percent of whom were living with mother and child.

Some families included additional children. Relative to the full EHS study group, the sample for this study had a smaller share of female-headed families, a higher poverty rate, and a slightly lower rate of food stamp use.

Each of the 150 families in the sample applied for Early Head Start, and was determined to be eligible. Eight out of ten were living below the poverty line, and each of the families was receiving Medicaid. In the study's first year, slightly more than one in five families was earning as low as one-third of the poverty level. In 2001, the amount represented by one-third of the poverty line for a family of four was \$5,883. Table 1 below shows that in the first year of the study almost three in ten families in the sample were receiving TANF or AFDC, while close to four in ten families were receiving food stamps. By the second year of the study almost two thirds of the families in the sample were still below the poverty line, although four out of five of the fathers and slightly more than one out of two of the mothers were employed.

Table 1: Demographics of Sample in Percentages

Received AFDC/TANF @ 1 yr	Received Food Stamps @ 1 yr	Household Income < Poverty @ 2 yrs	Fathers working @ 2 yrs	Mothers working @ 2 yrs
27.3%	38.7%	62.0%	81.6%	53.8%
N=128	N=150	N=124	N=147	N=130
Fathers < 12 yrs Education	Fathers Limited English	Fathers < Age 25	Fathers Reside with Mother & Child @ 2 yrs	Fathers Married to Mother @ 2 yrs
31.6%	18.4%	49.2%	78.0%	56.0%
N=133	N=138	N=138	N=150	N=150

The data do not include a variable for whether the family received the Earned Income Tax Credit in any of the study years. The low rate of TANF reciprocity relative to the poverty rate in the sample is consistent with the low rate of TANF use nationwide (DeParle, 2009).

Having less human capital, such as education, is associated with poverty (Schiller, 2008), and the table shows that almost one-third of the fathers had less than a high school education. Also, close to one in five of the fathers, all Latinos, were limited English speakers. More than 90 percent of the Latinos in this sample were Mexicans or Mexican Americans. Being a female headed household, also associated with poverty (Schiller, 2008), describes slightly more than one in five of the current study's sample.

### Surviving Poverty

The men's descriptions of how they survived poverty while trying to be fathers enhances the meaning of these poverty figures. Taken from the fathers' narratives, the first examples given below show the stress of not having enough money for basic needs.

R: It's kind of tight right now. I had the electricity shut off the other day, but I am working on getting it turned back on. I called them and they said I could make arrangements to pay so much.

I: Is it surprising to find out how expensive it is to be a parent and how much work—

R: No, I kind of figured it would be expensive. What's expensive is having an apartment, just trying to keep up with the bills; that's the hard part. The way the system is set up with the state is if you actually get a job making decent money, you lose all your benefits so you can't afford stuff, so you can't afford stuff cause you actually aren't making enough money to get by. We're losing all our Food Stamps because we're getting a car that costs over \$5,000.00.

I: What gets in your way of being the kind of father you'd like to be?

R: I would say the financial burden.

I: How does that get in your way?

R: When you are thinking about your finances and bills, it kind of affects you mentally sometimes. And the things you would like to do with your son, like take him places and spend time with him, if your head ain't right, it affects you.

Sometimes a father expressed fear when talking about poverty.

R: The biggest problem right now is financial. Right now I only have one job, but a lot of times I'm working two jobs and I don't get to spend as much time here [with mother and child] as I want to. And when I'm here I'm tired, so I'm not as nice as I should be; I get grouchy and stuff. And that's not fair to the kids that I'm that way. So I just wish we had a job that made enough money, I don't have to be rich or anything, but just take the pressure off; we don't have to have the financial worries and stuff.

I: How does it make you want to do trouble?

R: It's like sometimes they need this and they need that, and like most jobs aren't paying enough or good enough. Like me, I have four kids, and it is so hard to do the things you want to do for them and the thing that keeps me from doing things is knowing that if something bad happens I won't be able to see them. I don't want to stop them from being able to see me or have me in their life.

To compensate for the stress and stigma associated with poverty, the researcher posited that the social psychology constructs of procreativity and parenting alliances would strengthen the fathers' survival skills and enable them to remain in the labor market.

### *Describing Fatherhood*

In Erikson's life stage model, procreativity is represented by the acts of caring for, guiding, and being committed to the well-being of members of the next generation. Some fathers (90) talked about providing physical care for their child.

[My child] needs to be changed so I need to hurry.

I give her baths, I change her diapers all the time, I feed her, and I wipe her butt when she goes to the potty.

Other fathers (116) described the guidance they provided to their children.

I: ... so it sounds like what really makes you feel like you're being a good father is not so much what you do, but your examples are of how he develops, that seems to be where your focus is.

R: Yeah. Because his development at this stage in life is based upon, I believe, a whole lot on his observation of other people's interactions, and new things we introduce him to.

I: What new stuff do you introduce him to? How are you involved in introducing him?

R: Right now it's taking him places, stopping at museums and things, cruising around, gawking at dinosaurs. Last time we were there, there was a big fossilized turtle, and he goes "Turtle! Turtle!"

Many statements reflected a committed father. Here the researcher looked for evidence of sacrificing something for the sake of the child's well-being to distinguish *commitment* from other similar attributes. One hundred twenty-one (121) men made statements exemplifying this idea.

I: What can't you do now?

R: What can't I do? Shoot! I can't spend the money like I used to. Can't waste the money like I used to. Can't hang out like I used to. Can't do a lot, which is not bad that you can't. I say you can't but you just don't do it as much ... The money issue is the main can't—no wastin' it. You gotta always give them what they (kids) want even if (they're not being very good).

Additional statements reflected Erikson's theory that psychological development occurs as a result of the individual's successful resolution of conflicting issues in each stage of life (Erikson, 1963). In the adult stage the issues were self-absorption vs. generativity or in the case of this study, procreativity. Procreativity is the side of the conflict that for Erikson represents development or the *syntonic* side. The other side is *dys-tonic*. The outcome of the struggle ideally would be a creative tension between the alternatives with an emphasis on the syntonic (Bradley, 1997). For purposes of this study we see a dys-tonic resolution when the father's relationship to the child is

based on satisfying the man's needs, including the need to be needed.

R: As I build myself to be a better person at least she can be there to see how I'm growing to be a better person.

Syntonic procreativity, on the other hand, is evident in fathers who seem to love the child for him or herself and/or accept the child's separateness and individuality. Examples of syntonic procreativity were identified in the statements of 100 men.

I: If you could only teach her one thing what would it be?

R: I'd teach her to be the best person she can be. Teach her to be herself and not to be a phony for anybody (Inaudible)—just be herself. That's all she can ever learn how to be is herself and nobody else.

If the same father described his child in a way that reflected both syntonic and dystonic procreativity, the study labeled the statement balanced procreativity. This occurred for 50 men.

I: How does being an important man in (child's name) life have an impact on you?

R: It makes me feel all-important (dystonic) and that he's worth something, and that his life is important, that his parents love him, and he deserves a good mate just like his mama (syntonic).

While many fathers talked about providing physical care for the child, some fathers (29 in all) described protective care. In viewing the examples of the men's protective thoughts, it is logical to assume that they are particularly the concerns of poor people living in unsafe urban neighborhoods. One such example appears below.

There is lots of danger out there. That is what at times worries me. I start to see that my sons are getting older and I say to myself, right now, I don't have a problem; the problems will start when they are grown up.

The idea of *caring for* also is consistent with the construct *emotional care*, which psychologists are increasingly recognizing for its importance in two-person relationships, such as that between parent and child (Bell & Richard, 2000; Berscheid & Collins, 2000; Itziar, et al., 2006; Noller & Feeney, 2000; Shaver & Fraley, 2000).

I: What does being a good father mean to you?

R: Well, a lot.

I: Tell me a little more what you mean by that.

R: To love my son a lot.

I: What surprised you most about being a father?

R: I don't know ... just learning to love your kids. I didn't think I could love somebody like that.

Fifty-four (54) men made statements such as those above that were labeled "emotional care" and were distinguished from the statements of 32 fathers labeled "happiness over child."

R: Ah, all that he says when we're eating and he starts doing his ... he makes me laugh a lot. He starts being silly and to sing and he makes me laugh and of course I'm proud because he is growing and learning and talking and I feel good about him.

#### *From Coding to Construct*

All in all, the men's statements about being fathers, described above, were categorized into nine attributes. The study measured the internal consistency reliability of these attributes to determine which combination of them could represent a single construct called, in this case, procreativity. The criteria for internal consistency reliability are: (a) an alpha score of .70 or higher; and (b) a corrected item-total correlation for each individual item of .3 or higher (Field, 2005). The result of the reliability tests was an alpha of .63 for eight of the attributes, excluding dystonic procreativity. The decision was to use the eight for the construct because they reasonably adhered to the statistical criteria and were a good fit with theory.

However, the idea that describing a greater variety of procreative attributes meant that the man was a more involved



father was not supported by the mothers' statements about the fathers. Put another way, the mothers' assessment of involved fathers did not correlate with the fathers' statements about themselves. One possible reason for this discrepancy is that describing oneself as a procreative father makes the man more socially acceptable to the interviewer. African American fathers in particular were thought to be so motivated because as fathers they are the most stigmatized of the study's racial ethnic groups (Townsend, 2002). However, in comparisons between the mothers' and fathers' statements for each racial ethnic group, the only significantly positive correlation was for African Americans. The coding of men as syntonic fathers correlated with the mothers' view of them as involved fathers ( $r = .35$ ),  $p$  (one tailed)  $< .01$ . In the end, the meaning of the procreative construct was understood to be primarily an internalized idea, in which the men identify as procreative fathers even if their behavior may not reflect procreativity.

In addition to procreativity, the current research also constructed a variable for "parenting alliance" using the same three attributes as in Abidin and Konold's scale (communicating, agreeing with the partner about child rearing, and recognizing the parenting of the partner). The researcher found examples of these items in the fathers' statements. Together, these examples were shown to represent a single construct; the test for internal consistency reliability yielded an alpha score of .62. A negative correlation with the mothers' reports of conflict in the family that was significant at the .01 level was understood as some support for there being a mutually recognized alliance between mother and father.

The creation of constructs from the content analyses resulted in quantifiable variables that could be analyzed together with other quantitative variables. The value of each constructed measure equaled the sum of the items for the construct that was mentioned by the father. At times, parenting alliance was used with just two values, 0 and 1, with 1 representing the presence of an alliance. The data for each measure was added to an SPSS file containing data from the structured interviews with the EHS mothers and fathers in this study in order for the relationship between the two social psychology variables and employment to be studied.

*Analyzing the Constructs' Effects on Employment*

As a first step, this study used cross tabulations to focus on the relationship between parenting alliance and the fathers' continuous employment over three years. In Table 3, the variable "parenting alliance" has just the values 0 and 1. The table suggests a small (but not statistically significant) advantage (5 percentage points) in employment rate for fathers in a parenting alliance. The men's continuous employment rate with a parenting alliance was 56.2 percent as compared to 51.4 percent for those without an alliance. When the analysis controls for residing with mother and child, this small advantage is no longer evident. The continuous employment rate for resident fathers is essentially the same (60 and 58 percent) regardless of whether there is a parenting alliance, while the employment rate is higher for those without a parenting alliance among the non-resident men, although the numbers here are very small.

Table 2: Percent Continuously Employed by Whether Parenting Alliance Controlling for Residential and Marital Status

Parenting Alliance	Total	Fathers Not Residing with Mother & Child	Fathers Residing With Mother & Child	Fathers Not Married to Mother	Fathers Married to Mother
Yes	56.2% (N=73)	25% (N=8)	60% (N=65)	50% (N=26)	60% (N=47)
No	51.4% (N=72)	36.4% (N=22)	58% (N=50)	50% (N=36)	52.8% (N=36)
Total	53.8% (N=145)	33% (N=30)	59% (N=115)	50% (N=62)	57% (N=83)

When marriage is the controlling variable, parenting alliance makes no difference for non-married fathers, but shows its biggest advantage for married fathers (60% vs. 52.8%), although the effect is not significant. The one variable in Table 2 showing a statistically significant effect ( $p < .01$ ) on the fathers' continuous employment is their residential status, where the difference is 59 percent for fathers in residence as compared to 33 percent for the others.

Table 3: Logistic Regression Models for Continuous Employment, Models 1, 2, 3 (N=111)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B/ (SE)	Odds ratio	B/ (SE)	Odds ratio	B/ (SE)	Odds ratio
Constant	.30 (.34)		.23 (.47)		.58 (.64)	
Above poverty @ 2 years	1.13* (.46)	3.09	1.12* (.46)	3.06	1.03* (.48)	2.80
Food Stamps @ 1 year	-.84* (-.43)	.43	-.84 (.43)	.43	-.92* (.47)	.40
Participation in EHS			-.37 (.42)	.69	-.36 (.42)	.70
Completed high school			.36 (.44)	1.44	.21 (.48)	1.23
African American					-.12 (.53)	.88
Latino					-.49 (.58)	.61
Living w/Mother & Child						
Parenting Alliance						
Procreativity Construct						
	R <sup>2</sup> =.17, p=.001		R <sup>2</sup> =.18, p>.05		R <sup>2</sup> =.19, p>.05	

Note: R<sup>2</sup> is Nagelkurke R<sup>2</sup>.

\*Significant at  $\leq .05$ , based on the Wald Statistics

In findings from a logistic regression (Table 4), neither the variables "father residing with mother" nor "father being in a parenting alliance" were statistically significant predictors of their continuous employment. Residing with mother lost its significance with the addition of controlling variables. What the regression findings do demonstrate is that after controlling for economic, human capital, and demographic variables as well as the mens' residence and alliance with mother, the fathers' procreativity was significantly and positively related to whether they were continuously employed (odds ratio = 1.21,  $p = .04$ ). The hypothesis regarding procreativity is supported.

The odds ratio of 1.21 for the fathers' procreativity means that these men are 20 percent more likely to be continuously employed than men who do not describe themselves as procreative. Besides the fathers' procreativity, the only statistically significant predictors were the two economic variables,

households being above the poverty line at two years (odds ratio = 2.88,  $p = .01$ ) and receiving food stamps at one year (odds ratio = .32,  $p = .01$ ). Earning more was associated with increased employment, while receiving food stamps was associated with less employment. Although living with mother and child and parenting alliance did not have a statistically significant effect on the fathers' continuous employment, being in a parenting alliance significantly promoted the fathers' procreativity. This suggests a chain of effects in which parenting alliance furthers the fathers' procreativity, which in turn furthers the probability they will be continuously employed.

Table 4: Logistic Regression Models for Continuous Employment, Models 4, 5, 6 (N=111)

	Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	B/ (SE)	Odds ratio	B/ (SE)	Odds ratio	B/ (SE)	Odds ratio
Constant	.04 (.76)		.05 (.76)		-.82 (.89)	
Above poverty @ 2 years	.91 (.48)	2.5	.99* (.50)	2.70	1.06* (.51)	2.88
Food Stamps @ 1 year	-.97 (.47)	.38	-.96* (.48)	.38	-1.15* (.49)	.32
Participation in EHS	-.37 (.43)	.69	-.36 (.43)	.70	-.24 (.44)	.78
Completed high school	1.17 (.48)	1.19	.24 (.50)	1.28	.11 (.51)	1.12
African American	.05 (.55)	1.05	.06 (.55)	1.06	.05 (.56)	1.05
Latino	.60 (.59)	.55	-.66 (.59)	.52	-.48 (.60)	.62
Living w/Mother & Child	.74 (.57)	2.1	.83 (.59)	2.29	.82 (.60)	2.27
Parenting Alliance			.17 (.23)	.84	-.23 (.24)	.79
Procreativity Construct					.19* (.09)	1.21
	R <sup>2</sup> =.21, P<.01		R <sup>2</sup> =.22, p>.05		R <sup>2</sup> =.26, p<.05	

Note: R<sup>2</sup> is Nagelkurke R<sup>2</sup>.

\*Significant at  $\leq .05$ , based on the Wald Statistics

## Discussion

Based on Early Head Start data collected from poor mothers and fathers during the first years of PRWORA, the research

for the current secondary analysis focused on a sample of 150 fathers and their families. Demographically the families displayed characteristics associated with poverty, including lack of academic credentials, limited English, and unemployment. At the same time, the extent to which they turned to public assistance for economic support was insufficient to compensate for the poverty, a finding consistent with national studies on this issue (DeParle, 2009; Parrot & Sherman, 2006). The residual philosophy that guided TANF requires that families look to the labor market for their economic well-being. This study, that focuses on impoverished families, many of which include adults who are employed, shows that the outcome is economic survival more than well-being. The men who were interviewed talked to us about the challenges of dealing with fatherhood and poverty, including the temptations of utilizing illegal means of support.

This study turned to Erik Erikson's concept of procreativity and Cohen and Weissman's (1984) concept of parenting alliance to explore possible social psychological explanations for the families' survival. The study found that the men's procreativity increased the likelihood that they would be continuously employed; being in a parenting alliance did not. On the other hand, a parenting alliance had an indirect influence on the fathers' working status in that men who described a parenting alliance were more likely to describe themselves as procreative. Besides the fathers' procreativity, the only other variables tested that were significantly related to the fathers' longer-term employment were the economic factors, being above poverty in the second year and the family receiving food stamps, the latter being negatively related to continuous employment.

### Limitations and Implications of Findings

The small sample size and lack of certain data elements affected the scope of the analysis and the significance of the findings. Some of the relationships tested might have shown significance if the sample size were larger. In addition, the percent of variance in continuous employment that the models predicted could have been higher if the data were collected during low as well as high periods of demand for low-skilled

labor. Obviously, demand for labor is an important consideration in the length of time one is employed.

Perhaps the most important limitation of the current study is that the sample does not represent the universe of very poor fathers and their families in the United States. Rather, the biological fathers in the study are men sufficiently involved with their families to be identified by the mothers as the children's primary father figure. In addition, the men and women represent parents who are knowledgeable and concerned enough about their children's well-being to apply for Early Head Start.

At the same time, the limitations of the study with respect to the nature of the sample point to certain policy and programmatic measures for enhancing the well-being of impoverished families. Specifically, we see evidence of the beneficial effect of one's attachments to family members in the context of a program for children and families, namely Early Head Start. Can we consider this study to be preliminary evidence for supporting the expansion of Early Head Start and parents programs? Should we ensure that such programs include services for parents that are designed to further the development of parenting alliances, fathers' identification as proactive, and their presence in the lives of their children? We return to the fact that the study was conducted in the context of Early Head Start and children. Are programs that focus on families effective when offered through PRWORA? This is now possible under the marriage and family promotion components of PRWORA. The author of this article posits that child and family programs under PRWORA would be less effective than those under Head Start, given the stigma associated with the current welfare program, and the fact that its objective is deterrence more than service.

One other consideration in this study is the imperfect nature of the outcome that the study measured, namely the fathers' continuous employment, and the fact that just being employed does not represent economic well-being. Although the EHS data did not include the families' total income, it did provide an item constructed to show how their income level measured against the poverty line. Not surprisingly, the study found a positive relationship between longer-term employment and the families' being above the poverty line; however,

this poverty measure is based on outdated assumptions. The result is that the income that defines the poverty line falls considerably short of family need (Boushey et al. in Pimpare, 2009).

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## Book Reviews

### The Uses of Pessimism: A Review Essay

Scruton, R. (2010). *The Uses of Pessimism and the Danger of False Hope*. New York: Oxford University Press, \$29.95 (hardcover).

Roger Scruton is an eloquent proponent of local tradition and culture, empowerment of families and communities, curbing the tendency of bureaucratic-professional agencies to undermine and substitute for natural helping systems—the capacity of families and communities to care for and control their own members. Put like this, his position seems not dissimilar to that associated with restorative justice, family group conferencing, community-centered social work on the British patch model, McKnight's (1996) critique of the bureaucratic-professional "careless society," and other approaches to empowerment or partnership practice.

Scruton, however, is Britain's leading conservative intellectual, author of more than thirty books, on subjects ranging from technical and introductory philosophy, fox-hunting (a spirited defense) and animal rights, music, wine, and autobiography, to cultural critique and defense of English tradition and country life. His very achievements are not ones likely to endear him to most readers of this journal, I suspect, but I want to suggest that his work merits serious consideration by those involved in social welfare.

#### *Unscrupulous Optimism*

In his recent meditation on the uses of pessimism, Scruton's concern is with the dangers of false hope (his subtitle) and the particular fallacies that make such "unscrupulous optimism" so powerful and impervious to reason. Among the fallacies he considers are the Best Case (i.e., failure to consider worst-case scenarios), Planning, Utopian, and Zero-Sum (I fail because

you succeed) Fallacies.

In the abstract, these are useful cautions that no one sensibly could dismiss out of hand. But Scruton aims to show how these fallacies are endemic to a larger social and political vision that has been ascendant since the Enlightenment and especially the deadly triumph of "Reason" in the French Revolution. That vision of Reason rests on an unscrupulous optimism that sweeps away the collective problem-solving of generations codified through customs, traditions, and laws built from the bottom up, like English and American common law or Swiss political arrangements. It replaces that common, inherited wisdom with the will of the radical and enlightened few. The utopian or planning elites sweep aside all previous traditions and practices, along with the wishes of ordinary people, who have to be led to a higher level of wisdom by the progressive, forward-looking vanguard.

The force of Scruton's argument lies in the detail and concreteness with which he specifies these dangers in every aspect of life, not only in totalitarian regimes like Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union, but also as destructive forces in the democratic West. He points to the violence and destructiveness of French and Russian revolutionaries, to how the first act of such revolutionary elites is to destroy all the institutions of the old society and especially the rule of law that might hold them accountable.

But he also describes the bizarre grip of the EU bureaucracy today on the once democratic and sovereign nations within its orbit. He shows how hundreds of thousands of regulations are issued at an accelerating rate by an unaccountable bureaucracy whose many mistakes cannot be rectified through democratic processes. Once adopted, those measures cannot be repealed by the nations involved. Scruton shows how brutally the bureaucrats sweep away the customs and traditions of centuries, in the process destroying, for example, family farming and the countryside of Romania. He describes how a European directive requiring the presence of a qualified veterinarian at every abattoir led to the closing of most local abattoirs in England, requiring that cattle be taken much greater distances to be slaughtered, so that when disease did break out it spread across the country instead of being localized.

Another twist to Scruton's anti-utopian argument is that the self-image of the progressive elite as more advanced than the masses whose lives they want to manage, is itself illusory. An important aspect of the book is the effort to explain these fallacies' resistance to reason or evidence. They are, he argues, residues of an earlier stage of human development, one that still holds value in emergencies, but is destructive at other times. There is an implied analogy here to the fight-flight response—once essential for daily survival, but now dysfunctional as a pattern of intensified arousal in conditions that do not require it.

Scruton appeals, in contrast to the kinds of thought-experiments of Rawls or Locke on which social contract theory is built, to the nature of tribes or hunter-gatherer bands as they actually existed. This was the long prehistory before conditions existed for the emergence of societies of unrelated strangers who found ways to live side by side through negotiation and compromise in consensual communities ... or cities. In a band of hunters and gatherers that was in constant danger, pursuing and holding on to territory in the face of human and other threats from the outside, survival depends on the collective 'I'—submission of all to the goals and strategy of a leader. There is no place for worst case scenarios or competing approaches when the band must unite behind its leader or die. The same is true in wartime—which is perhaps why utopias like Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* or Plato's *Republic* are deeply undemocratic and organized top down along more or less military lines.

The *tabula rasa* vision of the human being—found in notions of constructing a new "socialist man" or a new human type or, in its weirdest manifestation yet, in a trans-human type that is seen as replacing humans with cyborgs or a new genetically engineered post-human species—casts aside those compromises and constraints that previously shaped us. Such indeed was the spirit of the Sixties, with concepts of freedom that wrecked—at least for the poor—the institutions of marriage and fatherhood, social patterns of sexual restraint and responsibility, and many other institutions and traditions that reflected the collective wisdom of generations.

In Scruton's view, then, the fallacies he describes are rooted

in the material needs of hunter-gatherer bands, where everything depends on the will of the chieftain—the leader's collective 'I' is at the same time the 'we' of the community. One reason that the fallacies are so impervious to refutation is that they are "not new additions to the repertoire of human madness but the residues of our forefathers' honest attempts to get things right ... thought processes that were selected in the life and death struggles from which settled societies eventually emerged" (p. 203). Liberal, optimistic, progressive thinking is not, from this perspective, an advance on the ways and customs of the unenlightened masses, but a regression to more primitive ways of thinking. Scruton's purpose is to defend the world of compromise and half measures, love, friendship, irony, and forgiveness from the Pleistocene mindset of the enlightened that would sweep them all away.

### *Empowerment in the Bureaucratic-Professional State*

Some of Scruton's most effective rhetorical shafts are aimed at experts and professionals who, basing themselves on a stock of knowledge and expertise that is largely bogus, usurp the role of families and communities and undermine their capacity to resolve their own problems. In this respect his critique is congruent with that of other critics of the bureaucratic and professionalized social services. For example, in *The Careless Society*, McKnight (1996) shows how competent communities have been invaded and colonized by professionalized services—often with devastating results.

In this area, Scruton has a brief and provocative, though less than nuanced, discussion of a typical child protection scandal in the U.K. known as the Baby P. case, where a child died who was already known to the authorities. The inquiry that followed called for retraining social workers, more expertise, and more funding of services.

For Scruton the area of child welfare is one where the claimed expertise of the professionals is phony. Citing Baskerville's (2007) critique, *Taken Into Custody*, he says: "Examine their expertise, however, and whence it derives, and you will discover a mish-mash of amateur sociology, left-wing dogma and routinized anti-family rhetoric" (p. 174). The inquiry's recommendations reflect the diversionary tactic of shifting the blame

to whatever can be readily blamed, to whatever responds to blame. (He explains much anti-Americanism, within and outside the United States, on this convenient displacement strategy of transferred blame.)

His argument is that this kind of inquiry and recommendation ignores the real forces that created the modern problem of child abuse. It is much easier to retrain social workers or change their practices than to restore the institution of the family. So what is needed, the experts averred, was "more of us, more planning, more supervision, more ways of preventing this society-wide disorder through the intervention of a benevolent state" (p. 173).

Citing figures from research in the U.K. to the effect that children are vastly more likely to be abused fatally in the homes of mothers with a live-in boyfriend or stepfather than in an intact family, Scruton says, "Actually what Baby P. needed was a father, and the smallest dose of pessimism would have pointed this out" (p. 173). To think in this way, however, is to run up against "one of the fundamental prejudices of the time: the prejudice that the new forms of domestic life brought about by easy divorce and the sexual revolution are unalterable and unquestionable. Child abuse is not a universal social disorder, for which the state bureaucracy and its experts are the cure. It is the direct result of the delegitimization of the family, often carried out by those very experts. Meanwhile, the state has connived in the dissolution of the marriage tie, and has routinely subsidized, through the welfare system, the arrangements (including live-in boyfriends) that expose children to danger" (pp. 173-174).

*But what is the point?*

Scruton's prose is witty, clear, and eloquent, always a pleasure to read even when one disagrees with him. His curmudgeonly tone comes from the bitter experience of a brilliant scholar whose academic career in England was blighted for most of its span because his colleagues found his views—those of a Burkean conservative—unacceptable and too far beyond the liberal-radical consensus of the academy (outside the sciences, anyway). The fury with which progressive thinkers respond when the fallacies in their thinking are pointed out

has been visited on Scruton's head in print and in the harshest tones.

It is natural in these circumstances that he would conclude that "the argument of this book is entirely futile. You may enjoy it and agree with it, but it will have no influence whatsoever on those whom it calls to account" (p. 3). How could he conclude otherwise after a lifetime of collegial abuse? (This is not to deny the compelling case Scruton makes that the fallacies he examines are indeed resistant to correction, without regard to the author's personal experience.)

That perception of futility, however, as well as the large scope of the argument compared with the modest size of the book, creates its own limitations. Scholarly rigor, careful documentation of the examples and fair consideration of objections and alternative arguments must seem hardly worth the trouble since, in any case, those who comprehensively disagree with the author will not themselves be open to argument.

So Scruton's dismissal of multiculturalism, progressive education, postmodern gobbledygook, and the like are witty and a delight to read but do not seriously engage the advocates of those follies. His account of how utopian notions of "education for equality" in the U.K. succeeded only in destroying opportunity for gifted working-class children and ensuring as nearly as possible that students did not learn anything, is fun to read. His view of education experts with their "agenda that was uniformly egalitarian, child-centered and knowledge-averse" (p. 172) and their disastrous effects on education is scathing and witty, but probably not compelling to an educationist.

Most seriously, Scruton pays little or no attention to the most obvious questions his critique raises. Are tradition and custom so benign? What about slavery or female genital mutilation or suttee? These are the standard questions raised about multiculturalism and a cultural/moral relativism that regards all cultures as equal (or equally deserving of respect). Since Scruton has no time for such postmodern or politically correct tendencies, it is surprising that he does not take greater care to explain how his valuing of tradition addresses such questions. It is not that they cannot be addressed. English conservatives like Burke or Samuel Johnson supported the American Revolution and opposed slavery without difficulty or inconsistency. But Scruton does not take the trouble to anticipate such

objections or explain his position to skeptical readers.

But the curmudgeon stance makes it too easy for critics to dismiss the book as a partisan rant. That is a shame. Scruton is a brilliant author—philosopher of ethics and aesthetics, critic of music, art, and architecture, commentator and polemicist—of extraordinary depth and range. His work challenges received wisdom in the social sciences and humanities. His critiques, even when lacking the full apparatus of German scholarship, are serious attempts to offer a coherent and comprehensive alternative to the dominant thinking in the academy, arts, and media.

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Paul Adams is at the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work, University of Hawai'i. Adams is a former book review editor of this journal and blogs at (<http://ethicsculture.blogspot.com>).

James Midgley & Amy Conley (Eds.), *Social Work and Social Development: Theories and Skills for Developmental Social Work*. New York: Oxford University Press (2010). \$45.00 (hardcover).

This book is a timely and important addition to the field of social work. Edited by James Midgley (one of the great minds in the field) and Amy Conley, the book offers a distinctive approach to the professional social work which is informed by an interdisciplinary perspective—developmental social work. Like many scholars in the field, Midgley and Conley acknowledge the complexity of the paradigm and lack of a global definition. The book argues for the relevance of the paradigm in social work practice. The central idea presented is that developmental social work has positive implications for the profession of social work and the clients it's mandated to serve. The

authors remind us of the profession's mandate to enhance the welfare of vulnerable individuals and groups. They point to the relevance of developmental social work in positively affecting the welfare of a broad range of client groups served by social work both in countries of the global south as well as advanced-market economy countries. Drawing attention to "client autonomy," the book emphasizes participation, human rights and social justice. It challenges social work to appreciate the function of context specific initiatives in ameliorating social problems. The role of community-based resources in promoting the welfare of vulnerable individuals and households is also underscored.

The authors skillfully locate developmental social work within the context of mainstream social work practice and trace its roots to the profession's formative years. The book draws attention to social investment strategies and their role in enhancing the capabilities of vulnerable individuals and groups, promoting social functioning and inclusion. A number of approaches to social investment—ranging from job training, micro-enterprise, and asset building—are reviewed.

The book is divided into three main parts covering 10 chapters. The first part, which also consists of an introductory chapter, presents an overview of developmental social work, its historical evolution, theoretical underpinnings, principles and practice approaches. Using examples from multiple fields, Midgley addresses the confusion between the concept of social development and developmental social work. Part II is comprised of eight chapters. The main focus of these chapters is to provide examples of current social work approaches that are associated with the developmental social work paradigm and to demonstrate how the paradigm, its ideas and interventions, can inform mainstream social work practice. The authors skillfully demonstrate the benefits of developmental approaches through examples drawn from several countries. Subject areas addressed range from children and families to various client groups with whom social work is engaged. Part III, which is in fact the last chapter of the book, is a brilliant interplay of challenges and remedies. Midgley and Conley are candid in their presentation of shortcomings inherent in the developmental social work approach and its potential to inform social work practice. Among the challenges discussed is the issue



of limited expertise and resources. Potential responses to the identified shortcomings are also reviewed.

Perhaps the book's only weakness is its failure to clearly articulate rights-based approaches in developmental social work. Also, chapter contributors could have addressed challenges of using the developmental approach in their respective field of practice. Nevertheless, the book is well developed and comprehensive, offering a unique perspective to social work. Each of the subject areas addressed are well researched and thoughtfully positioned. With the current push for internalization in social work education, the book fills a void in the field and is likely to be of interest to students and scholars in a number of fields, including international social work, organizing, and community development. It is a wonderful resource for graduate as well as upper-level undergraduate students. Practitioners in the global social welfare field, policy makers and anyone who is concerned about inequality, social justice, and social exclusion will find the book useful.

*Margaret Lombe, Graduate School of Social Work,  
Boston College*

David Stoesz, Howard Jacob Karger, and Terry Carrilio, *A Dream Deferred: How Social Work Lost its Way and What Can Be Done* (2010), New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers. \$39.95 (hardcover).

The authors of this book, a self-described "critical examination of social work education," draw inspiration from Specht and Courtney's *Unfaithful Angels* (1994) in the themes they emphasize and in their provocative style. They argue that a combination of factors—particularly the absence of scholarly credentials among social work leaders, the over-expansion of social work programs at all levels, the declining quality of students, and the embrace of an "anti-empirical orientation to social reality"—have undermined the profession's credibility and influence, provided ammunition to conservative critics, and weakened the potential it possessed during the Progressive Era to promote a more socially just society. The book is most effective when the authors—who clearly favor a positivist, empirical basis for scholarship—base their

assertions on the extensive data they collected. It is weakest when they shift from analysis to speculation and depart from their thoughtful critique to take on phantom enemies. When this occurs, their analysis degenerates into self-serving polemic.

The book begins by tracing the historical development of social work education from its emergence in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and locating the sources of the profession's contemporary weakness. These include the abandonment of empirical research in favor of a reliance on practice wisdom and moral pronouncements, the focus on individual functioning rather than the social context, the failure to resolve persistent identity crises and develop internal coherence, and "the expansion of accredited social work programs far beyond the requisites for professional education" (p. 38).

In succeeding chapters, the authors present a pointed critique of the intellectual and administrative deficiencies of social work journals; the paucity of scholarship among deans and directors, journal editors, and CSWE board members; the lack of sufficient faculty and well-qualified students to fill the ever-expanding number of accredited programs; and the high debt and poor job prospects of today's graduates. The most compelling sections of the book are those that address two closely related issues: the mismatch between unimpeded program growth and labor market realities, and the decline in social work salaries coupled with students' soaring debts. Although the chapters which decry the deficiencies of social work leadership and the influence of anti-empirical approaches to scholarship raise important issues, the authors' arguments are less effective on these points for several reasons.

First, they equate effective educational leadership with scholarship of a particular nature. Although scholarly credibility is a necessary quality in a dean, it is just one of a variety of traits that effective educational leaders possess. Many excellent scholars make terrible deans, particularly in an era when their intellectual role has been superseded by the demands of resource development and external relations.

Second, they vastly overstate the influence of postmodernism and inaccurately blame it for the profession's emphasis on identity-based concerns. These antedated the emergence

of postmodernism in social work by two decades. Third, the authors' argumentation is sometimes seriously flawed. They occasionally cherry-pick statistics and posit dubious cause/effect relationships between discrete phenomena, such as the lack of scholarships among deans and the predominance of a "social agency model" in schools of social work.

Finally, in virtually every chapter they insert gratuitous and often speculative asides—which, ironically, have little or no foundation in data. This detracts from the book's worthy points and gives the impression the authors are more interested in settling personal and professional scores than presenting a serious critique. Space limitations preclude citing the numerous examples of such excesses.

The book concludes with a series of "radical reforms" to save social work education. Some are eminently sensible, others quixotic, nearly all have uncertain consequences. They include the deregulation of CSWE; imposing restrictions on program growth and reducing the number of low quality Ph.D. programs; raising admission standards, primarily through standardized tests; instituting "performance-based accreditation" (although specific criteria are not suggested); recognizing the Ph.D. as the terminal degree; and enhancing the profession's leaders, primarily by asserting the primacy of scholarly productivity in selecting them. Although many social work educators will take umbrage at its tone and substance, *A Dream Deferred* may stimulate a conversation the profession has ignored for too long. That alone would be a worthy outcome.

*Michael Reisch, School of Social Work, University of Maryland*

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow in the Age of Colorblindness* (2010). New York & London: The New Press. \$27.95 (hardcover).

Two-thirds of the way through her powerful analysis of the criminal "justice" system, Alexander asks: "If someone were to visit the United States from another country (or another planet) and ask: Is the U.S. criminal justice system some kind of tool of racial control?" In the same paragraph, she answers her question:

Because mass incarceration is officially colorblind, it seems inconceivable that the system could function much like a racial caste system. The widespread and mistaken belief that racial animus is necessary for the creation and maintenance of racialized systems of social control is the most important reason that we, as a nation, have remained in deep denial (p. 178).

Alexander, who holds joint appointments at the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity and Ohio State's Moritz College of Law, has scrutinized every aspect of the criminal justice system to conclude that, since the 1980s, it has become a vehicle for the suppression of African American males that renders at least one third of African American men virtually stateless.

Building on recent scholarship that has tracked the dramatic rise in the U.S. prison population—up from 300,000 in the early 1980s to 2.3 million at last count—Alexander convincingly shows that the War on Drugs, initiated most aggressively by Ronald Reagan in 1982 (but with antecedents in Nixon's presidential bid), was used as a tool to gain political advantage by appealing to whites' prejudices and as a way to counter the successes of the Civil Rights Movement. She notes that the "war" was announced when fewer than 2% of Americans stated that drug use was the most important problem facing the country, yet during the Reagan administration, the drug enforcement apparatus received huge budget increases while funding for research and treatment declined dramatically (p. 49).

Alexander is sensitive to the structural changes—principally deindustrialization and its consequent dramatic loss of employment opportunities for urban Blacks—that occurred simultaneously with the spread of drug use. But her focus is primarily on the legal and social consequences of the War on Drugs that have treated non-violent crack cocaine users, who are primarily African Americans, much more harshly than the equal or greater numbers of whites who use powder cocaine. She cites research that demonstrates how African Americans are convicted of and imprisoned for drug offenses at rates that vary by state but are as high as 57% greater than those for whites (p. 96). Changes in state and federal sentencing laws and practices dating from the 1970s, especially "three strikes" laws

that result in a life sentence for a third conviction no matter how minor the crime, and mandatory minimum sentences have contributed to the explosion of the prison population.

Where Alexander's analysis excels is in its unveiling of the evisceration of presumed Constitutional protections that have occurred as a consequence of the drug war defendants' powerlessness in the face of aggressive and discretionary police practices, an insufficient and inadequate criminal defense bar, and court decisions that allow racial profiling to continue, although race is legally a suspect (protected) category. Thus, despite the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment, police routinely stop and frisk young male suspects; in New York City in 2006, there were nearly 1400 of these every day (p. 132). Though indigent criminal defendants are technically entitled to a lawyer, the public defender system is so under-staffed that most defendants take, or are encouraged to take, a plea bargain—a mis-step that can lead to a long imprisonment, especially for repeat offenders.

What Alexander labels "collateral consequences" of having a prison record contributes to her conclusion that millions are relegated to a second-class or caste assignment. In many states, former felons cannot vote. Criminal background checks and denial of some licenses prevent many if not most from employment. Many federally supported benefits—food stamps, public housing, section 8 housing vouchers, education assistance—are denied to ex-offenders. These prohibitions make it almost impossible for ex-offenders to survive outside of prison and render them stigmatized and socially excluded. This form of social stratification, the author states, is "a form of branding by the government" (p. 148).

The topics discussed above are brief summaries of some of the major areas covered in this book that should be of interest to anyone concerned about the direction of contemporary social and legal policies as well as social stratification. Too often, social welfare academics ignore the far reach of the American "justice" system. *The New Jim Crow* provides compelling reasons for why they need to pay attention.

Marguerite G. Rosenthal, Emerita, School of Social Work,  
Salem State University

Martin King Whyte, *Myth of the Social Volcano: Perceptions of Inequality and Distributive Injustice in Contemporary China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, (2010). \$27.95 (paperback).

Martin Whyte directly challenges the common perception that inequality in China is so extreme and unjust that China is sitting on a 'social volcano' of unrest. Whyte's data and conclusions are based on sophisticated survey research in 2004 (and make no claims for the subsequent period). His conclusions are startling. Whyte argues that most Chinese accept the present inequalities as individually earned, rather than the result of an unfair economic structure. Thus social justice is not a major issue. Moreover, most Chinese are optimistic about their future economic prospects. Farmers, who are not among the major winners in the reforms are, surprisingly, the most optimistic (although also the most supportive of an egalitarian distribution system). Where there are critical views, they cannot be predicted by economic or social status. Rather, they are linked to individual experiences that occur across class, geographic, gender and Party membership lines. Since they are spread so widely, the likelihood of a single dissatisfied group's mobilizing against the state is small. What most Chinese desire is a market economy with a welfare state supporting those in need.

In explaining why Chinese may hold these views, Whyte argues that: (1) Where the equality of the Mao period (largely within rather than across work units) was frequently unjust, now people see inequality as largely resulting from individual efforts and thus largely just; (2) Where farmers under Mao were virtually bound to the land through the household registration system in a nearly feudal fashion, now they are free to leave the countryside and seek employment elsewhere; and (3) Chinese economic growth has been so massive that it is a non-zero sum game in which there was, at least initially, 'reform without losers,' and rural poverty has been reduced by some 90%. This all contributes to the fact that Chinese are more accepting of inequalities and more optimistic not only than those in the post-socialist Eastern Europe countries but also, in numerous cases, than people in Western Europe and Japan.

There are, however, serious questions about Whyte's underlying framework. Whyte shows that the vast majority of Chinese (71.7%) think national income gaps are too big. Since this is lower than the 85-95% in Eastern European countries undergoing shock therapy in the 1990's and is basically in line with the 65-78% in the U.S. (1991), U.K. (1991), Japan (2006) and W. Germany (1991) (p. 71), and these countries have been stable, Whyte implies that this undermines claims China is sitting on a social volcano. In so doing, he leaves aside any acknowledgement of the mechanisms that create and preserve such inequality and resulting resentment in China and elsewhere—issues that are certainly relevant for social work.

Whyte argues that for centuries in Pre-Liberation China, Chinese peasants were not bound to the land (as in feudal Europe), so there were few social obstacles to social and geographical mobility for them, especially in a context in which "a strong government that will monitor and maintain the fairness of economic competition" (pp. 14, 195) This oversimplifies and exaggerates both the degree of social mobility and the role of government in assuring fairness.

Where he argues that many Chinese are dissatisfied with unfair institutional preferences in China, i.e., the absence of a level playing field, the tendency for inequalities to continue because they benefit the rich etc., he implies that such inequalities are temporary weakness of China's market system. But these are not temporary weaknesses. In fact they become more exaggerated when capital is concentrated, as evidenced in "actually existing" capitalist societies.

Whyte's framework leads him to claim that where anger and/or resentment exists, it is more frequently about procedural than distributive injustice. But if economic inequalities influence political power and process, e.g. the Party's support of the newly wealthy for village leadership positions, then this is not simply an issue of fair process. He does not acknowledge that the market can be and is manipulated by the powerful. When powerful interests acquire a farmer's land "without proper consultant or compensation," he attributes resentment to problems of process rather than the underlying inequality (p. 196).

In short, White's book is extremely provocative, challenging the "common sense" of most Western scholars and much

of the Chinese leadership. While the data must be taken extremely seriously, the conclusions the author draws from his data about the lack of social volatility are based in large part on oversimplifications and assumptions which merit more extensive consideration before the conclusions should be accepted.

*Richard Levy, Department of Political Science,  
Salem State University*

Philip McMichael (Ed.). *Contesting Development: Critical Struggles for Social Change*, (2009). Routledge. 274 pages. \$39.00 (paperback).

As with all of Philip McMichael's work, this thoughtfully edited collection forces a reconsideration of simplistic narratives of social change and development that identifies a long march to neo-liberal democratic hegemony. Building on a tradition of work including Wolfgang Sachs's *The Development Dictionary*, Arturo Escobar's *Encountering Development* and, recently, James Scott's *Seeing Like a State*, this work—through focusing on those at the limits or boundaries of the development project—suggests that development is anything but linear and comprehensive in its scope.

The collection contains case studies of organizations and groups who have been excluded from the development project and have contested their exclusion—and more broadly development itself. Ranging from studies of *Abahlali baseMjondolo* (those who live voluntarily in shack settlements [shanty towns]) in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, through to Brazilian soy bean farmers, to the established Brazilian *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST, Landless Rural Workers Movement), this collection provides a fascinating overview of current struggles for social justice. Raj Patel's chapter on *Abahlali baseMjondolo* describes a movement of shack dwellers who, through contesting housing policies and decision-making structures of the state, have sought to recreate an active and engaged form of citizenship that the African National Congress (ANC), since coming to power in 1994, has increasingly attempted to silence. The paradox of the ANC—that the party of liberation now plays a role in silencing



contesting views, through attempts to relocate the shack dwellers from their current location to 'formal' housing out of the city limits—is central to the chapter and remains a defining feature of South African politics today. Emelie Kay Peine outlines another paradox in her study of protests by soy bean farmers in Brazil. She elegantly demonstrates how soy bean farmers wrongly target the Brazilian state as their livelihoods are challenged, rather than the agribusinesses that control the market. In so doing, her study demonstrates how protest can serve to reinforce rather than challenge existing social relationships. In her chapter on *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*, Hannah Wittman describes a movement that has been successful in redrawing the relationship between landownership and political power while working to mobilize landless workers politically.

Two strong narratives stand out throughout this book. The first—the idea that agrarian livelihoods are slowly going to erode through market encroachment and urbanization (the death of the peasantry)—is simply not the case. Rather, the book provides numerous examples of how agrarian citizenships are being recreated in ways that create new subjectivities and identities to reorder the relationships that they are embedded in, often in highly progressive ways.

The second narrative is the role of participation as a force for contesting dominant understandings of development and a potential for the realization of self and other forms of politics. Despite the hesitation by many to use the concept of participation for fear it has lost its underlying political meaning, this book helps reclaim the concept in its full political sense as a point of departure for effecting social change at the individual and collective levels, while still pointing to the ambiguity of the concept, including how it justifies existing social relationships.

The one minor criticism of the book is that the majority of case studies emanated from Central and Latin America. While all case studies are thoughtful, wider coverage of struggles both from Africa and those excluded from the development project in the global North might have provided a contrasting and illuminating perspective.

This collection is important, drawing on a strong theoretical and political positioning to understand social movements in

ways that outline their complexities, while providing deep and vivid portraits of their activities. Separated into three sections, including short summaries and a comprehensive introduction and conclusion that situate this work within the broader field, this book is useful for academics, students and others who seek to understand social change in its complexity. Providing such theoretically informed and thoughtful books is critical to demonstrating the rich subtleties and nuances of everyday life and struggle at the edges of the development project, rather than simply relegating these issues to overly simplistic understandings of social change.

*Andrew Gibbs, Health Economics & HIV/AIDS Research  
Division, University of KwaZulu-Natal*

Alejandro Portes, *Economic Sociology: A Systematic Inquiry*, Princeton University Press, (2010). \$27.95 (paperback).

In *Economic Sociology* Alejandro Portes elucidates the core assumptions and explanatory concepts of economic sociology. He begins with a discussion of socially-oriented actors, unintended consequences, and power—what he views as the building blocks of economic sociology's explanatory concepts. The concepts themselves consist of: (1) social capital; (2) social class; and (3) social institutions. Portes puts these explanatory concepts into action by examining the socioeconomic activity in the informal economy, ethnic enclaves, and transnational communities—areas he calls the “strategic sites of research” for economic sociology.

Portes' discussion of social capital is grounded in the original sociological conception: the advantages that accrue to actors due to their social relations. Readers will find Portes' sensitivity to the ideological misuse of the social capital concept to be refreshing. Portes argues that scholars outside of sociology have failed to use social capital as an explanatory concept of individual advantage, but instead these scholars use social capital as a community value. This ideologized meaning is far different from the original explanatory concept of social capital. Portes also discusses the negative and perverse consequences of social capital. For example, white ethnics' social capital of

strong network ties is the negative outcome from the perspective of the social exclusion of minority groups. An example of a perverse use of social capital would be a mafia leader who uses his social capital to better organize a criminal gang. To be sure, Portes regards social capital as a useful explanatory concept for economic sociology, but it is carefully used and understood as an analytical rather than ideological concept.

Portes' makes the case that an economic sociology that does not take account of social class is bound to make what he calls the "classless fallacy," which mistakenly envisions economic action as taking place on a level playing field. Portes develops the concept of a social institution and relates institutions to social class and politics in an interesting analysis of globalization.

Portes uses the explanatory concepts to give plausible sociological accounts of such important socioeconomic topics as globalization, income inequality, politics, illegal markets and the informal economy, socioeconomic ethnic relations, and government regulation. Portes' discussion of these topics should be of great use to researchers and practitioners trying to understand and improve the conditions faced by many people in today's world.

Although the book provides an excellent overview of economic sociology, readers looking for a discussion of social welfare related policies and issues will not explicitly find that kind of discussion here. Readers looking to get a grasp of economic sociology's vast literature using a few core assumptions and explanatory concepts will find the book to be very helpful. Educators looking for a text outlining the core ideas that give sociologists a unique perspective of the economy and its processes and outcomes will find the book to be a valued pedagogical source.

The organization of the book around these basic assumptions—socially oriented actors, unintended consequences, and power—and explanatory concepts—social capital, social class and social institutions—makes Portes' book different from other books that claim to present the field. Portes has written a fine book that presents a good case for the sociological perspective of economic processes and outcomes.

*Eric Cheney, Sociology Department, Central Washington University*

## Corresponding Authors

Daniel S. Gardner,  
New York University  
Silver School of Social Work  
1 Washington Square North,  
Room 407  
New York, NY 10003  
daniel.gardner@nyu.edu

Harris Chaiklin  
Professor, emeritus  
University of Maryland  
School of Social Work  
5173 Phantom Ct.  
Columbia, MD 21044  
hchaikli@comcast.net

David K. Androff  
Arizona State University  
School of Social Work  
411 N. Central Ave. Ste. 800  
Mail Code 3920  
Phoenix, AZ 85504-0689  
david.androff@asu.edu

Robert D. Weaver  
School of Social Work  
University of Windsor  
401 Sunset Ave.  
Windsor, Ontario  
N9B 3P4 Canada  
rdweaver@uwindsor.ca

Marci Ybarra  
National Poverty Center  
Suite 5110  
4300 Weill Hall  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-3091  
ybarram@umich.edu

Saijun Zhang  
Children & Family Research Center  
School of Social Work  
University of Illinois at  
Urbana-Champaign  
1010 West Nevada  
Urbana, IL 61801  
szhang11@illinois.edu

Annie Woodley Brown  
Howard University  
School of Social Work  
601 Howard Place NW  
Washington, DC 20059  
abrown@howard.edu

Joyce Bialik  
Hunter College School of Social  
Work  
129 East 79 St.  
New York, NY 10075  
jbialik@hunter.cuny.edu

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MacDonald. Ph.D., Managing Editor. Journal of Sociology  
and Social Welfare, School of Social Work, Western Michigan  
University, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5354  
USA. e-mail: [swrk-jssw@wmich.edu](mailto:swrk-jssw@wmich.edu). Tel: 269-387-3205 Fax:  
269-387-3217.

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