

2011

Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare Vol. 38, No. 3 (September 2011)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>



Part of the Social Work Commons, and the Sociology Commons

Recommended Citation

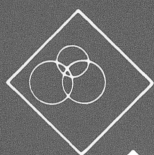
(2011) "Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare Vol. 38, No. 3 (September 2011)," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 38: Iss. 3, Article 1.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.3608>

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol38/iss3/1>

This Complete Issue is brought to you by the Western Michigan University School of Social Work. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.





Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

VOLUME XXXVIII
NUMBER 3
September, 2011

The JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE is edited and published by the SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5354.

JSSW is sponsored jointly by Western Michigan University, the College of Health and Human Services, and School of Social Work. The substantial support of Arizona State University in the publication of the journal is gratefully acknowledged.

Editor: Robert D. Leighninger, Jr.

Managing Editor: Frederick MacDonald
E-Mail: frederick.macdonald@wmich.edu

Associate Editor: Robert Moroney *International Editor:* Jason L. Powell

Editorial Board

Mimi Abramowitz	Edward Gumz	John Murphy
Bruce Arrigo	Lorraine M. Gutiérrez	Robert Newby
Pallassana Balgopal	Charles Guzzetta	Wilma Peebles-
Katherine Briar-	Robert Hawkins	Wilkins
Lawson	John Herrick	Dennis Peck
William Buffum	Alice K. Johnson	Jason L. Powell
Iris Carlton-LaNeŷ	Jill Jones	Sonjia Parker
Richard Caputo	Terry Jones	Redmond
Harris Chaiklin	Nancy Jurik	Susan Robbins
Pranab Chatterjee	Nancy Kleniewski	Steven R. Rose
Mary Jo Deegan	Beverly Koerin	Marguerite Rosenthal
Luisa S. Deprez	Robert Kronick	Eunice Shatz
Paula L. Dressel	Timothy Lause	Fei Sun
Robert Fisher	Leslie Leighninger	John Tropman
Sondra Fogel	Taryn Lindhorst	Charmaine C. Williams
Rich Furman	Patricia Martin	John Williamson
Alejandro Garcia	Nick Mazza	James Wolk
Andrew Golub	Peter Meiksins	Miu Chung Yan
Richard M. Grinnell, Jr.	James Midgley	

Assistant Editor
Melinda McCormick

Book Review Editors

Marguerite Rosenthal, Emerita, Salem State University, and Jennifer Zelnick. Please mail books for review to: Jennifer Zelnick, Touro College School of Social Work, 43 West 23 Street, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10010.

The Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare is published quarterly. Prior to photocopying items for educational classroom use, please contact the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA, 01923, or Current Contents/Social & Behavioral Sciences (CC/S&BS), Institute for Scientific Information, 3501 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19104. The Journal is abstracted and indexed in: Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts, Elsevier Bibliographic Databases, Psychological Abstracts, Social Work Research & Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts.

The Journal has added digital access!

This year, you can decide to receive print copies of the Journal with complimentary online access, or you can choose to subscribe to the Journal in digital format only.

If you'd like to receive the Journal in online format only, the price is \$40 for an individual and \$80 for an institution.

Individuals will get online access by password and institutions can access the Journal online through ip authentication.

E-mail swrk-jssw@wmich.edu with ip authentication information or to request a password.

JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL WELFARE

Volume XXXVIII September, 2011 Number 3

NET WORTH ACCUMULATION BY DIFFERENT INCOME QUINTILES OF OLDER ADULTS APPROACHING RETIREMENT AGE AND 10 YEARS LATER <i>Martha N. Ozawa and Yeong H. Yeo</i>	9
FOSTER CARE WORKERS' EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO THEIR WORK <i>Alissa Schwartz</i>	31
SOCIAL WORK AND CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFERS IN LATIN AMERICA <i>Cindy Calvo</i>	53
CHILD SUPPORT AS LABOR REGULATION <i>Yiyoon Chung</i>	73
ANYTHING GOES: SCIENCE AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN COMPETING DISCOURSES <i>Philip Dybicz</i>	101
THE ROLE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD IN MAKING WELFARE REFORM POSSIBLE <i>David I. Siegel</i>	123
SANCTIONING POLICIES—AUSTRALIAN, AMERICAN AND BRITISH CROSS-NATIONAL REFLECTIONS AND COMPARISONS <i>Harry Savelsberg</i>	151

BOOK REVIEWS

- Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal.* Kim Phillips-Fein.
Reviewed by Robert Leighninger. 175
- Democracy without Decency: Good Citizenship and the War on Poverty.* William M. Epstein.
Reviewed by Gertrude Schaffner Goldberg. 177
- Organizing for Educational Justice: The Campaign for Public School Reform in the South Bronx.* Michael B. Fabricant.
Reviewed by Eva Gold. 179
- Remaking Citizenship: Latina Immigrants and New American Politics.* Kathleen M. Coll.
Reviewed by Lirio K. Negroni. 181
- American Uprising: The Untold Story of America's Largest Slave Revolt.* Daniel Rasmussen.
Reviewed by Phillip Seitz. 184
- The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration.* Isabel Wilkerson.
Reviewed by Richard Sherman. 185
- Living the Drama: Community, Conflict, and Culture among Inner-City Boys.* David J. Harding.
Reviewed by Wilma Peebles-Wilkins. 187
- Moving to Opportunity: The Story of an American Experiment to Fight Ghetto Poverty.* Xavier de Souza Briggs, Susan J. Popkin & John Goering.
Reviewed by Margeurite Rosenthal. 189
- Democratic Insecurities: Violence, Trauma, and Intervention in Haiti.* Erica Caple James.
Reviewed by Amy Wilentz. 191

World Crisis Effects on Social Security in Latin America and the Caribbean: Lessons and Policies. Carmelo Mesa-Lago.
Reviewed by Vladimir Rys. 194

From Madness to Mental Health: Psychiatric Disorder and its Treatment in Western Civilization. Greg Eghigian (Ed.).
Reviewed by Christopher Hudson. 198

Suicide: Foucault, History and Truth. Ian Marsh.
Reviewed by Oona Morrow. 200

Net Worth Accumulation by Different Quintiles of Older Adults Approaching Retirement Age and 10 Years Later

MARTHA N. OZAWA
Washington University
George Warren Brown School of Social Work

YEONG H. YEO
University of North Carolina
School of Social Work

The shift in responsibility for income security from the government to individuals makes the accumulation of net worth a vital issue. We investigated the rate of net worth accumulation for people aged 51 to 61 in 1991 (N=7,544) and 61 to 71 in 2001 (N=5,711) using the RAND Health and Retirement Study. We found that the rate of net worth accumulation by the fifth (top) quintile was extremely high in 1991, and the distribution of net worth became more skewed in favor of the wealthy in 2001. Older adults in the first and second quintiles are unable to face the challenge of the shift in responsibility for income security from the government to individuals.

Key words: Net worth, approaching retirement, income security, rate of accumulation, inequality

The social policy that is addressed to older adults has changed drastically in recent decades. Succinctly, the message is this: "Income security in old age is largely your responsibility." Such a message is reflected in the 1983 amendments to the Social Security Act that signified the federal government's first explicit policy to promote work among older adults. The amendments increased the normal retirement age from 65 to

67; the age will reach 69 by 2027. The Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-182) eliminated the earnings test for those who retire between ages 65 to 69. Furthermore, the delayed retirement credit has been liberalized over the years. It was 3% per year for those attaining age 65 between 1982-1989 and will reach 8% for those attaining the normal retirement age in 2009.

The other side of this message is this: "Save and invest and accumulate net worth." This message is reflected in employer-supported pension plans: Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs); Roth IRAs; and, most recently, Health Savings Accounts, all of which are directly or indirectly supported by the federal government. Indeed, accumulating net worth (or wealth) is an important key to enhancing income security because the greater the net worth one has, the greater the income one can draw from assets. In 2004, income from assets constituted 12.6% of the total financial income of people aged 65 and older; for the top quintile, income from assets constituted 17.8% of the total financial income, and for the bottom quintile, 2.3%. These proportions were not trivial; they accounted for about half the proportion of earnings (Social Security Administration, 2004, Tables 7.2 & 7.5).

The importance of accumulating net worth has been accentuated further as the public has come to recognize the increasing financial problem that the federal government is facing in funding social security and Medicare programs. In 2010, it is expected that these programs, taken together, will constitute 5.90% of the U.S. gross domestic product, which is expected to surge to 10.20% in 2050 and 11.22% in 2080 (Board of Trustees, OASDI, 2006a, Table IV.F4, p. 171). As the responsibility for establishing income security shifts from the government to individuals, the challenge and struggles that rich and poor people face will be vastly different. It is anticipated that rich people will face them with relative ease, but poor people will not.

In this study, we focused on the accumulation of net worth among older adults who were approaching retirement age. We estimated the rate of net worth accumulation among these older adults at that time and again 10 years later. Moreover, we investigated the accumulation of net worth among different income classes—the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth (or

top) quintiles. The research questions were as follows:

1. How much assets did those approaching retirement have (in our sample)? How much debt did they have? How much net worth did they have? How did these numbers differ among those who were approaching retirement?
2. Did net worth decline or increase 10 years later?
3. Controlling for other variables, what was the rate of accumulation of net worth among those who were approaching retirement? What were the differential rates of accumulation of net worth in the sample in the different quintiles?
4. Did differential rates of net worth accumulation increase or decrease 10 years later, controlling for other variables?

Investigating the net worth of one cohort of older adults at two points in time enabled us to understand whether the level of net worth could be sustained or even increase as these older adults transitioned from nonretirement ages to retirement ages. Moreover, separate analyses for higher and lower quintiles enabled us to investigate the differences in the rates of accumulation of net worth among higher and lower quintiles of the sample.

Review of the Literature and Conceptual Framework

There is no general theory that guides empirical studies on the accumulation of net worth. Economists follow three concepts in investigating the accumulation of net worth: the life-cycle hypothesis, structural variables, and variables for psychological disposition regarding saving and investing.

The life-cycle hypothesis states that rational individuals accumulate net worth so that when they become older adults, they can ensure a continuous flow of income by spending what they accumulated while they were younger adults (Land & Russell, 1996). In particular, it states that after a worker enters the labor force, his or her earnings and net worth rise and reach a maximum at a certain point and decline thereafter, at which time the accumulated net worth begins to be decreased

by spending or withdrawing savings. This hypothesis implies that the size of net worth depends on which point in the life cycle a person is in (Tin, 1998).

Our study included structural variables in modeling our regressions, in addition to age. These variables enabled us to net out the relationship between income class and net worth accumulation, controlling for other variables. Structural factors included employment status, education, marital status, race, and gender.

Employment provides an opportunity to accumulate net worth through employer-provided pension plans and, therefore, a better chance of generating savings out of ongoing income. Governmental data have shown that the ratio of the net worth of working versus nonworking people is about 3:1 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001).

Marital status is a strong factor. Even if total net worth is adjusted for family size, married couples accumulate more net worth than do unmarried people, according to Diaz-Gimenez, Quadrini, and Rios-Rull (1997); Ozawa and Lum, (2001); and Ozawa, Lum, and Tseng (1999). Married couples enjoy an economy of scale in daily living expenses, such as housing and child care costs.

Education has proved to be a strong, positive factor that leads to the greater accumulation of net worth. For example, Diaz-Gimenez et al. (1997) indicated that education has a positive impact on "economic performance" in terms of efficient consumption, saving, and investment. Other studies have supported the impact of education on the accumulation of net worth (Bernheim, 1996; Ozawa & Lum, 2001; Ozawa et al., 1999; Sunden & Surette, 1998; Zhong, 1994).

The literature also discusses individual psychological orientations toward saving and investing. Our study did not explicitly deal with this phenomenon, but it is related implicitly to our study because we included some relevant demographic variables. In this sphere, the main concepts that researchers have been concerned with are: (1) precautionary motives in saving;; (2) time preference; and (3) risk aversion (Cagetti, 2003). People with high degrees of precautionary motives save more to protect themselves from unexpected economic shocks—or "rainy days." People who have a high degree of

time preference want to spend money now, rather than later, decreasing the amount of savings they could otherwise have. Finally, some people tend to be more risk averse than others with regard to investment; they tend to invest in safe instruments, such as certificates of deposit or government bonds, instead of stocks and corporate bonds. It is generally known that bonds are safer to invest in than stocks but may bring about less financial awards.

In Gittleman and Wolff's (2004) study on the differences between blacks' and whites' accumulation of net worth, the concepts of risk aversion and time preference were underlying concepts. Gittleman and Wolff related the type of savings portfolio to the concept of risk aversion and the rate of saving to the concept of time preference. Finding that black households had portfolios that were composed of less-risky investments and that their rate of saving was lower than their white counterparts, they reasoned that black households were more risk averse and had a higher time preference. In addition, on the basis of differential savings plans, Kennickell and Shack-Marquez (1992) and Kennickell, Starr-McCluer, and Sunden (1997) indicated that minorities, households headed by women, and more financially underprivileged households are more risk averse than are their counterparts.

In addition, the concept of necessary consumption has been incorporated into studies on the accumulation of net worth (Keister & Moller, 2000). For example, female heads of households with dependents typically do not have any option but to spend money just to meet their current needs, whether or not they have a psychological orientation to save for rainy days (precautionary saving) or want to delay current consumption for future consumption (time preference) or take risks in investing (risk aversion). In reality, all these ideas may be wishful thinking for female heads of households with dependents, because these women have to spend money for their daily survival. The disadvantage of such female-headed households is reflected in Diaz-Gimenez et al.'s (1997) study, which reported that the average net worth of female-headed households with dependents is only 24% of the average net worth of all households. As a result, many of them are located in a lower quintile of older adults.

Furthermore, health status has been recognized as a strong factor that determines the rate of net worth accumulation. Smith and Kington (1997) found that older adults with excellent health had a net worth that was five times as large as that of older adults with poor health. They argued that those with ill health incurred additional expenditures for medical services and could work only limited hours per week, all resulting in a lower rate of net worth accumulation (Lillard & Weiss, 1997; Smith, 1998).

Methodology

Source of Data

We used data from Waves 1 and 5 of the RAND Health and Retirement Study. Data for Wave 1 were collected in 1991, and data for Wave 5 were collected in 2001. To deal with the price change between 1991 and 2001, we multiplied the 1991 figures for income and net worth by 1.30027 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006, Table 706, p. 482). To adjust income and net worth for household size, we divided income and net worth by the square root of N , that is, we divided these variables by $\sqrt{2}$, which was 1.414, if the person was married. The size of N for our study was 7,544 for Wave 1 and 5,771 for Wave 5. The unit of analysis was individuals.

With regard to our samples in 1991 (Wave 1) and in 2001 (Wave 5), a cautionary note is in order. All those who were interviewed in 2001 were interviewed in 1991, but not all who were interviewed in 1991 were interviewed 2001. The difference in the size of N between these years mostly represented the respondents who died between these years. But, some others lost contact because of changes in addresses. The reason we did not exclude such deceased persons from the data analysis for 1991 was that such a decision would result in the loss of vital information on a considerable number of people. Thus, our study did not treat the data strictly as a panel data. Rather, it simply investigated net worth among a cohort of the sample who were interviewed in Wave 1 and the surviving sample who were interviewed in Wave 5 as well.

Conceptualization and Research Model

On the basis of the foregoing review of the literature, our study included income, marital status, education, work, health status, number of children, age, race, and gender, so that we could estimate the relationship between income and net worth, controlling for other variables. These various constructs guided us to choose these variables as controls. We believe that these variables apply to the older adults in our study. To estimate the degree of elasticity of net worth to income, we logged both net worth and income. The elasticity of net worth represents the ratio of the percent change in net worth to the percent change in income. The degree of elasticity tells us how much net worth changes when income changes. The elasticity of net worth to income enabled us to estimate the relationship between income and net worth, in relative terms, thus making it possible to compare the rate of accumulation of net worth among different quintiles, as well as over time. Elasticity is greater and significant when income is related strongly and significantly to net worth.

Definition of Terms and Variables

Dependent variable: Net worth. Net worth was defined as total assets (both financial and non-financial) minus debts. Financial assets included such items as checking accounts, savings accounts, mutual funds, stocks, bonds, and retirement accounts. Non-financial assets included such items as homes, vehicles, other residential or nonresidential real estate, and business interests. Debts included housing debts, credit card debts, installment loans, and other miscellaneous debts.

Independent variable: Income. Income was defined as before-tax annual income during the year before the year of the survey—1991 and 2001. Logged income was included as the independent variable in the model involving the entire sample and the five other models involving persons in the five quintiles.

Control variables. Age was a continuous variable. Race/ethnicity was dummy coded, with whites assigned to the reference group. Gender was dummy coded, with women assigned to the reference group. Marital status was dummy coded, with

married persons assigned to the reference group. The number of living children was a continuous variable. Education was dummy coded, with high school graduates assigned to the reference group. Current work status was dummy coded, with not working assigned to the reference group. Health status was dummy coded, with very good or excellent health assigned to the reference group

Findings

Characteristics of the Sample

Table 1 indicates that between 1991 and 2001, the composition of the sample changed in three ways. The proportion of college graduates increased from 19.32% to 20.80%, the proportion of those who were widowed increased from 7.60% to 13.73%, and the proportion of those who did not work increased from 33.19% to 63.26%.

The level of income declined from 1991 to 2001 by various degrees, except for the top quintile, whose median income virtually stayed the same between 1991 and 2001, with a 1% decline between these years. With regard to median income, the third quintile suffered the most, with a 20.17% decline in their median income, and the bottom quintile suffered a 10% decline in their median income.

The decline in income was due, in part, to the fact that many persons in the study retired between 1991 and 2001, and a large percentage retired before they reached age 65. Governmental data indicate that the proportion of those who retired before 65 increased from 58% in 1980 to 75% in 2004 for men and 70% in 1980 to 78% in 2004 for women (Social Security Administration, 1981, 2005).

In 1991, the mean income ranged from \$8,243 for the first quintile to \$110,429 for the fifth quintile. The ratio of the highest to the lowest was 13.4:1. The median income ranged from \$8,643 for the first quintile to \$86,887 for the fifth quintile. The ratio of the highest to the lowest was 10.05:1.

In 2001, the mean income ranged from \$7,374 for the first quintile to \$117,669 for the fifth quintile. The ratio of the highest to the lowest was 16.0:1. In that year, the median income ranged from \$7,778 for the first quintile to \$85,999 for the fifth

Table 1. Characteristics of the Respondents

	Wave 1 (1991) (N = 7,544)	Wave 5 (2001) (N = 5,711)
	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Race		
White	79.60	78.89
Black	11.23	10.79
Hispanic	6.81	7.15
Other	2.37	2.17
Gender		
Male	51.03	49.38
Female	48.97	50.62
Marital Status		
Married	69.91	64.83
Separated or divorced	17.80	16.61
Widowed	7.60	13.73
Never married	4.70	4.83
Education		
Less than high school	23.12	21.85
High school grad.	37.24	36.62
Some college	20.32	20.73
College or more	19.32	20.80
Current work status		
Not working	33.19	63.26
Part-time work	9.09	5.97
Full-time work	57.71	30.78
Health Status		
Very good or Excellent	51.94	45.13
Good	26.76	30.39
Poor or Fair	21.30	24.49
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Age	55.63	65.57
Number of living children	3.12	3.16
Income, by quintile (\$)	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
First	8,243	7,374
Second	22,024	17,958
Third	35,752	29,020
Fourth	52,299	45,463
Fifth	110,429	117,669
	<i>Median</i>	<i>Median</i>
First	8,643	7,778
Second	22,105	17,939
Third	35,497	28,336
Fourth	51,489	44,308
Fifth	86,887	85,999

quintile. The ratio of the highest to the lowest was 11.06:1. The increase in the ratio from 1991 to 2001 meant that the shape of income distribution became more unequal during that period.

Descriptive Statistics on Assets, Debt, and Net Worth

Table 2 shows the values of assets, debt, and net worth for the entire sample and for those in the five quintiles. Both in 1991 and 2001, the value of the primary residence dominated. For the entire sample, the primary residence constituted 37.5% in 1991 and 32.78% in 2001, respectively, of the total assets. In either year, for the very rich (the fifth quintile), the primary residence constituted a smaller proportion—30.83% in 1991 and 25.37% in 2001. What distinguished the very rich was that they had a relatively larger proportion of their assets in bonds and bond funds and in business interests. Lower quintiles of the sample had little or no holdings in these areas.

By calculating the changes (positive or negative) in assets, total debt, and net worth from 1991 to 2001, we found that the rate of increase in net worth was consistently high for the higher quintiles (the third, fourth, and fifth). In contrast, the rate of increase in net worth was extremely low for the bottom quintile, which had only a 1.61% increase in their mean net worth and a 17.50% increase in their median net worth. The second quintile had a 40.81% increase in their mean net worth and a 66.91% increase in their median net worth. With regard to the entire sample, their mean net worth increased by 60.26%, and their median net worth increased by 57.55% from 1991 to 2001.

It is noteworthy that the bottom quintile faced declines in many types of holdings, indicated by the minus signs. For example, holdings in stock and mutual funds expanded greatly among all quintiles except for the bottom quintile, which decreased by 46.31% from 1991 to 2001. However, we also found that some types of assets increased across all quintiles. For example, holdings in IRA and Keogh accounts increased tremendously, from 204.68% for the fifth quintile to 308.47% for the third quintile.

The changes in total debt indicated that the very rich had a relatively small rate of increase in total debt—6.34%. In contrast, the bottom quintile had a 20.53% increase in total debt.

Table 3 shows the degree of inequality in net worth among the five quintiles of the sample in 1991 and 2001.

Table 2. Assets, Debt, and Net Worth, in Dollars, by Quintile: 1991 & 2001

1991	All	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Financial Assets						
Stock, mutual funds	20,598	7,799	15,644	11,430	17,466	50,494
Checking, saving acct.	13,897	5,932	9,136	11,688	15,561	27,078
CD, gov. saving bonds	7,192	2,323	4,887	6,402	7,833	14,427
Bonds, bond funds	2,872	800	560	1,294	1,548	10,153
All other savings	8,899	2,781	3,735	6,536	8,780	22,613
IRA, Keogh accounts	18,704	4,627	9,223	13,839	20,462	45,217
Non-financial Assets						
Primary residence	89,055	40,773	65,198	77,811	96,378	164,571
Other real estate	32,861	8,937	14,353	21,063	30,528	89,211
Vehicles	13,451	6,381	9,686	12,125	15,960	23,014
Business	29,964	14,082	13,874	13,952	20,852	86,954
Total asset	237,494	94,474	146,297	176,138	235,369	533,732
Debts						
All mortgages	20,814	6,552	11,335	17,163	20,743	48,154
Other home loans	2,604	553	1,027	1,777	3,084	6,555
Other debts	2,489	1,622	2,232	2,255	2,631	3,692
Total debt	25,907	8,727	14,595	21,196	26,458	58,401
Net worth						
Mean	211,587	85,747	131,702	154,943	208,911	475,331
Median	97,460	15,493	62,522	91,944	129,641	255,512
2001	All	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Financial Assets						
Stock, mutual funds	55,926	4,187	21,089	42,705	56,143	155,688
Checking, saving acct.	20,781	5,866	13,510	16,337	23,991	44,236
CD, gov. saving bonds	10,892	2,571	7,182	10,683	14,302	19,731
Bonds, bond funds	6,194	148	1,117	3,176	8,808	17,737
All other savings	9,329	1,801	3,382	5,633	12,275	23,575
IRA, Keogh accounts	64,477	18,321	36,125	56,528	73,758	137,766
Non-financial Assets						
Primary residence	120,608	48,973	87,768	114,009	137,489	214,931
Other real estate	38,104	6,362	10,862	16,717	31,450	125,310
Vehicles	14,689	5,162	10,349	15,382	18,012	24,551
Business	26,951	4,722	8,331	16,332	21,775	83,714
Total asset	367,952	98,112	199,714	297,501	398,002	847,240
Debts						
All mortgages	23,514	8,297	10,536	19,233	27,183	52,364
Other home loans	2,117	930	1,730	1,434	2,566	3,924
Other debts	3,243	1,755	1,999	2,629	3,736	6,068
Total debt	28,873	10,982	14,265	23,326	33,484	62,357
Net worth						
Mean	339,079	87,130	185,449	274,175	364,517	784,882
Median	153,546	18,204	104,356	148,231	229,860	450,525

In 1991, the ratio of the median net worth of the fifth quintile of the sample to that of the first quintile was 16.49:1. In that year, the ratio of the median net worth of the entire sample

to that of the first quintile was 6.29:1. In 2001, the ratio of the median net worth of the fifth quintile to that of the first quintile increased to 24.75:1. In that year, the ratio of the median net worth of the entire sample to that of the first quintile was 8.43:1. These numbers indicate that the degree of inequality in net worth holdings increased from 1991 to 2001. The bottom quintile became poorer both in relation to the nation's median and to the top quintile.

Table 3. OLS Regression Analysis of Net Worth (log), 1991 and 2001

	1991			2001		
	Coefficient	<i>t</i>	R.E. (%)	Coefficient	<i>t</i>	R.E. (%)
Intercept	9.518***	57.42		10.469***	48.48	
Age	0.033***	12.41		0.009*	2.38	
Race/ethnicity						
Black	-0.385***	-16.44	-31.95	-0.484***	-16.15	-38.37
Hispanic	-0.268***	-8.70	-23.51	-0.358***	-9.04	-30.09
Other (White)	-0.188**	-3.19	-17.14	-0.240**	-3.14	-21.34
Male	-0.011	-0.59	-1.09	0.038	1.65	3.87
Marital status						
Separated/divorced	-0.326***	-13.86	-27.82	-0.309***	-9.96	-26.58
Widowed	-0.153***	-4.63	-14.19	-0.171***	-5.06	-15.72
Never married (Married)	-0.347***	-8.17	-29.32	-0.372***	-6.85	-31.06
Education						
< high school grad. (High school grad.)	-0.201***	-8.72	-18.21	-0.252***	-8.52	-22.28
Some college	0.174***	7.29	19.01	0.177***	5.93	19.36
College or more	0.443***	17.36	55.74	0.488***	15.47	62.91
Current work status (Not working)						
Part-time work	-0.022	-0.68	-2.18	-0.098*	-2.10	-9.34
Full-time work	-0.079***	-3.82	-7.60	-0.186***	-7.01	-16.97
Health Status (Very good/excellent)						
Good	-0.160***	-7.73	-14.79	-0.230***	-8.98	-20.55
Fair or poor	-0.322***	-13.35	-27.53	-0.446***	-15.48	-35.98
# of living children	-0.030***	-7.30		-0.031***	-5.96	
Income (log)	0.091***	15.57		0.172***	19.59	
<i>N</i>		7,544			5,711	
<i>R</i> ²		0.318			0.398	
<i>F</i>		206.13***			221.12***	

Note: R.E. = relative effect; * < .05; ** < .01; *** < .001.

Multivariate Analysis

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Analysis of Net Worth, 1991

When the independent variables take the form of dummy variables and the dependent variable is logged, the coefficient needs to be transformed (see Halvorsen & Palmquist, 1980). Thus, we transformed the coefficient by obtaining an exponent of the coefficient, deducting the value of 1 from the exponent, and multiplying the result by 100. This statistical procedure enabled us to express the coefficient by showing a percentage difference—that is, the “relative effect in percentage.” The relative effect was shown after the coefficient in the regression model.

In 1991, the degree of elasticity of net worth to income was 0.091 and was significant ($p < .001$), indicating that when income increased by 10%, net worth increased by 0.91%. The regression results of the other variables were as expected, with the exception of work status. Education was a powerful factor. Those with a college education or higher had a net worth that was 55.74% greater than the net worth of those with a high school education ($p < .001$). The net worth of those with less than a high school education was 18.21% smaller than the net worth of those with a high school education ($p < .001$). Marital status made a significant difference in net worth. Compared with the net worth of married people, the amounts of net worth of those who were separated/divorced, widows/widowers, or never married were all significantly smaller. In particular, those in the never-married sample were the most deprived; their net worth was 29.32% smaller ($p < .001$). Health status mattered as well. Compared with the net worth of persons whose health was either very good or excellent, the net worth of those with fair or poor health was 27.53% smaller ($p < .001$).

The regression results regarding demographic variables were all as expected. Having one more child decreased the net worth by 3% ($p < .001$). An increase in age by one year meant an increase in net worth of 3.3% ($p < .001$). Compared with the net worth of white people, the amounts of net worth of black people, Hispanic people, and others were 31.95%, 23.51%, and 17.14% smaller ($p < .001$, $p < .001$, and $p < .01$, respectively). There were no gender differences in net worth.

The net worth of those who worked full time was significantly smaller than that of those who did not work—not a surprising finding, since older adults with sufficient net worth do not *need* to work. Previous studies reported that wealth was negatively related to employment among older adults (Brown, Coile, & Weisbenner, 2006; Coronado & Perozek, 2003; Farnham & Sevak, 2006; Gustman & Steinmeier, 2002; Imbens, Rubin, & Sacerdote, 2001). For example, Imbens and colleagues (2001) reported that an increase in wealth by \$20,000 reduced the probability of labor force participation by about 1.5 percentage points among older men. By examining retirement trends over the period from 1992 to 2002, Farnham and Sevak found that an increase of housing wealth was related to an increase in annual transitions into retirement. A study on the net worth of the non-aged population also reported a similar phenomenon of less net worth among full time workers (Ozawa, Kim, & Joo, 2006).

OLS Regression Analysis of Net Worth, 2001

The degree of elasticity increased from 0.091 in 1991 to 0.172 in 2001. That is, in 2001, an increase in income of 10% meant a 1.72% increase in net worth. All other variables were related to the dependent variables in a similar way as they were in 1991. However, the strength of these variables as predictor variables increased. For example, in 2001, the net worth of those who had fair or poor health was 35.98% smaller than that of those who had very good or excellent health, but in 1991, the difference was only 27.53% smaller. In addition, the net worth of those with a college education or higher was 62.91% larger, but in 1991, the difference was only 55.74%. The racial/ethnic disparity in net worth was larger in 2001 than in 1991.

OLS Regression Analysis of Net Worth, 1991: Five Quintiles

We conducted separate analyses for each quintile. In 1991, the degree of elasticity of net worth to income increased as the quintile progressed, starting with -0.018 ($p < .01$), 0.302 ($p < .01$), 0.486 ($p < .01$), 0.569 ($p < .001$), and 0.870 ($p < .001$), for the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth quintiles, respectively. The negative elasticity for the lowest quintile meant that as income increased, net worth declined. This anomaly reflects the fact

that among the bottom quintile, the sample tended to engage in credit buying as their income increased (Aizcorbe, Kennickell, & Moore, 2003). The most underprivileged among the first quintile could not engage in credit buying because they were ineligible to obtain credit cards. For those in the top quintile, as their income increased by 10%, their net worth increased by 8.70%, indicating a very high rate of net worth accumulation.

Most other variables that were found significant in the regression model for the entire sample were also significant for each quintile of the sample, but there were some differences. Among the lowest quintile, the men had a significantly smaller net worth ($p < .05$) than did the women. Among the second, third, and fifth quintiles, it was not never-married people, but separated or divorced people, who had the smallest net worth. Only among the bottom quintile did never married people have the smallest net worth.

The most important finding from the five separate OLS regression analyses was that as the quintile progressed upward, the strength of other independent variables, such as education and marital status, weakened. Thus, for the higher quintiles of the sample, it was income that largely determined the rate of accumulation of net worth. In contrast, for the bottom quintile of the sample, the accumulation of net worth was related to many variables in addition to income. For example, education and marital status were significant correlates for the bottom quintile, but were relatively weak predictors for the higher quintiles (third, fourth, and fifth quintiles).

OLS Regression Analysis of Net Worth, 2001: Five Quintiles

The regression results of five separate analyses for the 2001 sample indicate that the elasticity of net worth to income greatly increased for the second, third, and fourth quintiles, but declined for the top quintile. For the bottom quintile, it also increased to the extent that the coefficient became positive, albeit not significant. What all this meant is that the rate of accumulation of net worth of the fourth quintile was higher than for the fifth quintile. For the fourth quintile, as income increased by 10%, net worth increased by 8.61%, but for the fifth quintile, as income increased by 10%, net worth increased by 7.09%. In other words, as net worth increased, income did not

increase as fast as net worth.

The strength of all the other predictor variables except age increased in 2001. That is, a good education meant a greater net worth in a more accentuated way; differences in net worth between blacks and Hispanics, on the one hand, and whites, on the other hand, generally became more pronounced from 1991 to 2001. In the meantime, the difference in net worth between whites and blacks and Hispanics disappeared for all the quintiles. That the variable *age* was not significant in the regression analyses in 2001 partly supports the life-cycle hypothesis.

Elasticity of Net Worth to Income at a Glance

Figure 1 depicts the elasticity of net worth to income for each quintile and the entire sample in 1991 and 2001, controlling for other variables. These figures depict, at a glance, differential rates of accumulation of net worth among the five quintiles and the entire sample in 1991 and 2001. The rate of accumulation of net worth among the entire sample, who were all younger than the retirement age (aged 51 to 61), was low. For each 10% increase in income, net worth increased by only 0.91%. In 2001, the rate of accumulation of net worth among the entire sample increased to 1.72%.

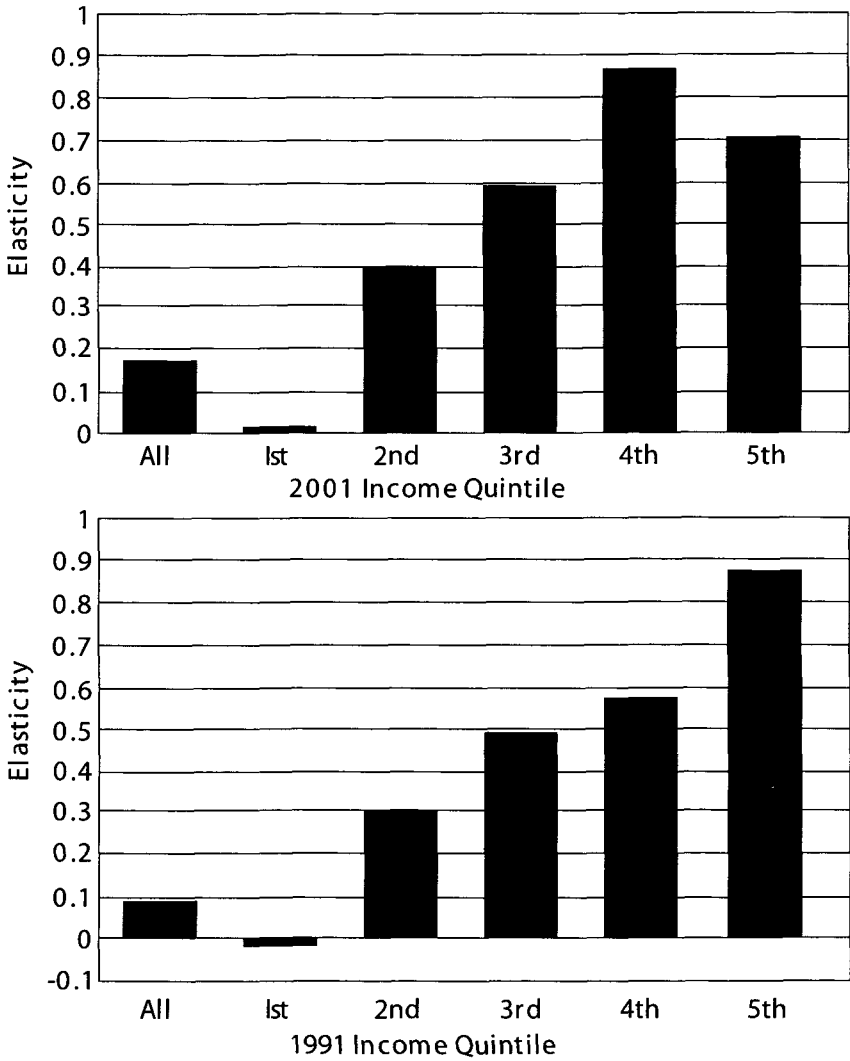
In 1991, the rate of accumulation of net worth among the top quintile dominated that of all the other quintiles by a large margin. In that year, the rate of accumulation surged from 0.569 to 0.870 from the fourth to the fifth quintile. In short, the richer the persons, the greater the rate of accumulation of net worth.

In 2001, the situation changed. In that year, the fourth quintile had the highest rate of net worth accumulation, scoring 0.861. The top quintile had only the second highest rate of accumulation of net worth—0.709.

This change indicates that the relationship between income and net worth became stronger. These figures indicate that the rate of accumulation of net worth increased from 1991 and 2001 for all the quintiles, except the top quintile. Thus, the remaining question is why the rate of net worth accumulation was lower in 2001 than 1991 for the top quintile. This decrease means that the relationship between income and net worth (that is, elasticity) became weaker for the fifth quintile, but stronger for all the

other quintiles. These changes took place in the context of declining incomes for these quintiles and a stable income for the fifth quintile. In other words, for the top quintile, the degree of sensitivity (elasticity) of net worth to income became weaker.

Figure 1. Elasticity between Income and Net Worth, by Quintile of Households, 1991 and 2001



On the basis of these facts, we conclude that the top quintile experienced a healthy increase in net worth in absolute terms during the 10 year period studied. However, the rate of accumulation in net worth in 2001 was lower than in 1991. These findings imply that at a certain point in the life cycle, the rate of net worth accumulation among the top quintile seems to decelerate—indicated by the declining degree of elasticity that was found in this study. It is safe to state that the net worth of the top quintile of older adults keeps increasing in absolute terms, but not as fast as in the other quintiles, as they advance in age.

Discussion and Implications for Social Workers

To recapitulate, this study showed that while the income level of most quintiles declined from 1991 to 2001, the median net worth increased considerably for all the quintiles. For the first quintile, the increase in net worth was small—17.50%. Furthermore, the distribution of net worth among the five quintiles became more unequal. The median net worth of the bottom quintile was 6.1% of the net worth of the top quintile in 1991, but 4.0% in 2001. In real terms, the median net worth of the bottom quintile was only \$18,204 in 2001.

Further, this study confirmed the degree of elasticity of net worth to income increased as the quintile progressed, indicating that the richer the person, the greater the rate of accumulation of net worth. The weakest relationship between income and net worth among the bottom quintile suggests that the poorest older adults did not have enough income to accumulate wealth by saving or investing. They also did not have any meaningful returns (i.e., income from financial assets) from their wealth. However, for the upper income quintiles larger amounts of income could be saved or invested, which resulted in better returns on their investments.

These findings signal that this society is becoming increasingly unequal for older adults. Probably, the older adults in the middle and higher quintiles (the third to the fifth quintiles) may be able to face the impact of policy changes with regard to social security, especially if and when the federal government adopts partial privatization of social security. As was argued

elsewhere (Ozawa, 2009), if the carve-out approach was taken in implementing partial privatization of social security, the scope of the intra-cohort redistribution of financial resources would become smaller. That is, under the current system, a sizable amount of social security benefits are internally redistributed to certain groups who are considered financially needy, such as low-wage beneficiaries. Under a shrunken traditional social security system, the degree of internal redistribution will be lower. Thus, low-wage earners will suffer as a result.

The findings of our study may give policy makers second thoughts about following up on the political slogan: "Save and invest and accumulate net worth." Such a slogan may apply to the middle and upper quintiles of people who are approaching retirement age and those who have already retired. However, it seems almost impossible for the bottom quintile of older adults to live up to such a slogan. Further, the lower quintiles would be hit harder than the upper quintiles in the recent economic crisis. Although the upper quintiles had heavy losses in their assets, they most likely survived the economic crisis. However, those in the lowest quintiles were more affected by job loss or reduced hours of work. Thus the bottom quintile encounters more difficulties in net worth accumulation in the recent economic crisis than the upper quintile. Therefore, using more recent data covering the recent economic crisis period would not change the result of this study; the richer the older persons are, the greater the rate of accumulation of net worth.

What can or should policy makers do, given the reality that a large number of older adults have little or no net worth? It seems imperative for the federal government to create a more effective program that is targeted to the lower quintiles of older adults. An important measure that is related to the current study is to reserve the vital role that the social security system is playing for the lowest quintile of older adults—not more privatization.

It is well recognized that social workers are vital witnesses to and protectors of the society. It is essential that they realize that the distribution in net worth is becoming more unequal as older adults advance in age. As a result, income from assets will also become more unequal. Knowing the realities, testifying before Congressional committees should be a part of

their lives. For example, they can testify that the social security system can face the demographic imbalance by extending the payroll tax base to no limit, as Congress did for Medicare Part A. For another example, they can testify that 30% of the cost of financing social security can come from general revenue, as Japan has done.

References

- Aizcorbe, A. M., Kennickell, A. B., & Moore, K. (2003, January). Recent changes in U.S. family finances: Evidence from 1998 and 2001 Survey of Consumer Finances. *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, 1-32.
- Bernheim, B. D. (1996). *The Determinants and consequences of financial education in the workplace: Evidence from a survey of households* (Working Paper No. 5667). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Board of Trustees, OASDI Trust Funds. (2006a). *2006 annual report of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance Trust Funds*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Brown, J. R., Coile, C. C., & Weisbenner, S. J. (2006). *The Effect of Inheritance Receipt on Retirement* (Working Paper No. 12386). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Cagetti, M. (2003). Wealth accumulation over the life cycle and precautionary savings. *Journal of Business and Economic Statistics*, 21(3), 339-353.
- Coronado, J. L., & Perozek, M. G. (2003). *Wealth Effects and the Consumption of Leisure: Retirement Decisions during the Stock Market Boom of the 1990s*. (Working Paper No. 2003-20). Washington, DC: The Federal Reserve Board, Finance and Economics Discussion Series.
- Diaz-Gimenez, J., Quadrini, V., & Rios-Rull, J. (1997). Dimensions of inequality: Facts on the U.S. distribution of earnings, income, and wealth. *Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Quarterly Review*, 21(2), 3-21.
- Farnham, M., & Sevak, P. (2006). *Early Retirement and the Housing "Bubble": Preliminary Evidence*. Unpublished Manuscript, New York, NY: Hunter College.
- Gittleman, M., & Wolff, E. N. (2004). Racial differences in patterns of wealth accumulation. *Journal of Human Resources*, 39(1), 194-227.
- Gustman, A. L., & Steinmeier, T. L. (2002). *Retirement and the Stock Market Bubble*. (Working Paper No. 9404). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

- Halvorsen, R., & Palmquist, R. (1980). The interpretation of dummy variables in semi-logarithmic equations. *American Economic Review*, 70(3), 474-475.
- Imbens, G. W., Rubin, D. B., Sacerdote, B. I. (2001). Estimating the effect of unearned income on labor earnings, savings, and consumption. *The American Economic Review*, 91(4) 778-794.
- Keister, L. A., & Moller, S. (2000). Wealth inequality in the United States. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 63-81.
- Kennickell, A., & Shack-Marquez, J. (1992, January). Changes in family finances from 1983 to 1989: Evidence from the Survey of Consumer Finances. *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, 1-18.
- Kennickell, A. B., Starr-McCluer, M., & Sunden, A. E. (1997, January). Family finances in the U.S.: Recent evidence from the Survey of Consumer Finances. *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, 1-24.
- Land, K. C., & Russell, S. T. (1996). Wealth accumulation across the adult life course: Stability and change in sociodemographic covariate structures of net worth data in the Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1984-1999. *Social Science Research*, 25(4), 426-462.
- Lillard, L. A., & Weiss, Y. (1997). Uncertain health and survival: Effects on end-of-life consumption. *Journal of Business & Economic Statistics*, 15(2), 254-68.
- Ozawa, M. N. (2009). Social security. In J. Midgley & M. Livermore, (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Policy* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ozawa, M. N., Kim, J., & Joo, M. (2006). Income class and the accumulation of net worth in the United States. *Social Work Research*, 30(4), 211-222.
- Ozawa, M. N., & Lum, Y. S. (2001). Taking risks in investing in the equity market: Racial and ethnic differences. *Journal of Aging and Social Policy*, 12(3), 1-12.
- Ozawa, M. N., Lum, Y. S., & Tseng, H. Y. (1999). Net worth at retirement and 10 years later. In S. S. Nagel (Ed.), *The substance of public policy* (pp. 245-274). New York: Nova Science.
- Smith, J. P. (1998). Socioeconomic status and health. *The American Economic Review*, 88(2), 192-196.
- Smith, J. P., & Kington, R. (1997). Demographic and economic correlates of health in old age. *Demography*, 34(1), 159-170.
- Social Security Administration. (1981). *Annual statistical supplement, 1981, to the Social Security Bulletin*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Social Security Administration. (2004). *Income of the population 55 or older, 2004*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Social Security Administration. (2005). *Annual statistical supplement to the Social Security Bulletin, 2005*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Sunden, A. E., & Surette, B. (1998). Gender differences in the allocation of assets in investment savings plans. *American Economic Review*, 88(2), 207-211.

- Tin, J. (1998). Household demand for financial assets: A life-cycle analysis. *Quarterly Journal of Economics and Finance*, 38(4), 875-897.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2001). *Household net worth and asset ownership, 1995* (Report No. P70-71). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2006). *Statistical abstract of the United States: 2006*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Zhong, L. X. (1994). Factors associated with bond and stock holding. *Consumer Interests Annual*, 40, 359-360.

Foster Care Workers' Emotional Responses to Their Work

ALISSA SCHWARTZ

The field of child welfare struggles with high rates of job turnover. This study describes the contributors to and experiences of foster care workers' emotional responses to their work. Uniquely drawing from the field of Positive Psychology, it describes and conceptualizes the relationships of multi-level contributors to foster care workers' emotional reactions at work. In-depth interviews conducted with 25 foster care workers found that negative emotions were more prominently featured than positive, but that working in an agency with positive workplace characteristics mitigated this relationship. Theoretical implications and limitations of taking a Positive Psychology approach to the study are discussed.

Key words: child welfare, emotions, employee attitudes, social workers, well-being

High rates of staff turnover are prevalent within the human services field, with annual rates of up to 60% (Mor Barak, Nissly & Levin, 2001). Median annual turnover rates for child protective service workers was found to be 22% in a national survey of state and child welfare agencies (Cyphers, 2001). Similarly, a study of New York State child welfare caseworkers in the private sector reported an annual turnover rate of 26% (Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies [COFCCA], 2003).

Child welfare organizations are heavily burdened by rapid staff turnover, in both the time and resources required to replace people and in the ability of workers to work effectively with their clients (Cyphers, 2001; Lawson et al., 2005;

Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, September 2011, Volume XXXVIII, Number 3

Mor Barak et al., 2001). Prior to taking on a full caseload, new employees need training and phasing-in time. Workers who remain in their jobs find their workloads increase due to unplanned personnel vacancies. Institutional knowledge is not as easily transferred or becomes lost.

Many studies (including Lawson et al., 2005; National Council on Crime and Delinquency [NCCD], 2006; United States General Accounting Office [USGAO], 2003; Zlotnik, DePanfilis, Daining, & Lane, 2005) cite the severe underpayment of child welfare workers as the root cause of turnover, yet child welfare workers make a choice to enter the field. While not earning princely sums, child welfare workers are, for the most part, college-educated (COFCCA, 2003) employees, many of whom hold advanced degrees and could very likely be choosing other fields of work that are more lucrative.

What, then, is attractive to child welfare workers? What do they like about their work? What keeps them coming back to work every day? The focus of this study is on the positive subjective experience of an occupation, that of foster care workers. By describing the contributors to and experiences of foster care workers' emotional responses to their work, it uniquely draws from the field of Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) to describe and conceptualize the relationships of multi-level contributors to foster care workers' affective reactions at work.

Positive Psychology, an emerging area of research in the broader field of psychology, offers a paradigm-shifting direction for inquiry into the experience of child welfare workers. In contrast with psychology's traditional emphasis on pathology and dysfunction, Positive Psychology's primary concern is in developing a greater understanding of how and when humans flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive Psychology recognizes the power in how a question is framed; if one is interested in understanding a positive outcome, such as job retention, why not try positive inquiry?

Positive Psychology has three broad foci: the study of positive subjective experiences, the study of positive individual traits, and the study of institutions that foster positive experiences and positive traits (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The focus of this study is on the positive subjective

experiences of an occupation, that of child welfare workers. As such, it primarily examines child welfare workers' positive relationships with clients and coworkers, as well as the institutions and larger environment within which they work.

In addition to being outcomes worthy of study unto themselves, the experience of positive emotions at work positively impact both job attitudes and job productivity. Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (1998, 2001, 2003) has demonstrated that by broadening momentary thought and action options, positive emotions can fuel "upward spirals" that improve both individual and organizational functioning. Unlike negative emotions, which are associated with specific action tendencies that narrow a range of behavioral options (i.e. fear is linked with a desire to escape, anger is associated with a desire to attack), the thought and action tendencies for positive emotions, regardless of intensity, tend to be broad and vague. For example, joy breeds a desire to be creative, and pride in an achievement catalyzes the desire to imagine even better achievements; indeed, psychological well-being has been found to positively influence job performance in a number of studies (e.g., Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 1994; Wright & Staw, 1999; Wright, Cropanzano, & Meyer, 2004).

The Conceptualization and Study of Workplace Affect

The concept of affect encompasses both mood and emotion and is considered to have both state-like and trait-like qualities (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). That is, both situational and dispositional sources have been identified that contribute to an individual's affect. In general, mood is understood to be a diffuse affective state that is not associated with any particular incident, while an emotion (or feeling) is generally understood to be a reaction to a particular incident (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

While the phenomena of workplace affect was not formally studied until the 1930s, Taylor's time-motion studies in the early part of the twentieth century focused on the reduction of workers' fatigue and was motivated both by a desire to increase the productivity of organizations and to help foster a more satisfying work experience for the employee (Taylor, 1903, 1911). Fatigue reduction studies continued to be of

interest through the First World War.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the study of affect in the workplace was diverse and rich. Examples of the breadth of early studies in affect include Kornhauser and Sharpe's (1932) examination of both workplace and individual factors on affect, Mayo's (1931) well known Hawthorne study of the effect of the social organization of the workplace on affect, and Hersey's (1932) study of how affect changes over time and influences job performance. While these early researchers tended to consider both individual and workplace factors that influenced individuals' affect, by the end of the 1930s the study of workplace affect became narrowly conceptualized as job satisfaction, which was then narrowly measured as individuals' workplace judgments and attitudes, thus losing its connection to the original construct of workplace affect.

While there is no universally agreed-upon definition of job satisfaction, Locke's (1976) conceptualization as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (p. 1300), given in what is still considered a seminal review on the subject, is used in a vast majority of contemporary studies. Job satisfaction, then, was generally considered by researchers in the 1960s and 70s to be a positive affective state towards one's job or aspects thereof.

While job satisfaction was conceptualized during this era as an affective construct, it was measured using only items that related to a cognitive component of job satisfaction (Brief & Weiss, 2002). That is, respondents were generally asked to evaluate their job as positive or negative, but they were not asked to describe their moods or emotions resulting from their work. Thus, job satisfaction was conceptualized as a workplace affect but measured as a workplace attitude.

The 1980s and 90s brought a renewed interest in studying more broadly defined affective experiences in the workplace. Both individual dispositions and factors beyond the work environment were once again of interest (e.g., Davis-Blake & Pfeffer, 1989; Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998; Staw & Ross, 1985). In particular, the field of positive psychology has produced studies which examine the outcomes of positive affective experiences in the workplace (e.g., Cropanzano & Wright, 2001; Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 1994; Wright, Cropanzano, & Meyer, 2004; Wright & Staw, 1999).

Study Questions

The two study questions chosen to explore how using a Positive Psychology perspective on foster care workers' emotional responses to their work could yield novel ways of understanding how to improve the retention of child welfare workers are: (a) What are the contributors (at multiple levels) which elicit foster care workers' positive emotions on the job? and (b) What kinds of positive emotions do foster care workers experience on the job?

Methodology

This study takes a multiple case study (Eisenhardt, 1989) approach. Multiple case studies draw from the traditions of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and case study research (Yin, 2003) and involve gathering data from several cases and generating findings both inductively and deductively (Lin, 1998). Unlike traditional grounded theory research, multiple case studies allow for the use of existing literature throughout all the stages of a study (Eisenhardt, 1989). Literature contributes to the *a priori* identification of important constructs to be explored, and it also aids in the data analysis process of identifying themes.

Sample

The unit of analysis in this study is the individual foster care worker, and in keeping with a multiple case study design, the sample of foster care workers was not predetermined, but developed as the study progressed (Eisenhardt, 1989). A group of five organizations providing home-based foster care services in New York City was conveniently chosen from the population of 34 agencies. These five organizations ranged in size, age, and locale within the five boroughs of New York City. Collectively, they worked at any one time with about 3,300 children in foster care, representing about 19% of the total census of 17,000 children (Administration for Children's Services [ACS], 2007). From these five organizations, a group of 25 individual foster care workers were purposely sampled according to demographic variance (e.g. gender, race/ethnicity, child welfare experience, and educational level). The sample size of 25 individuals yielded enough theoretical saturation in

the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) that it did not prove useful to conduct further interviews.

By purposefully (Miles & Huberman, 1994) sampling foster care workers from five conveniently chosen agencies, this study does not generate a representational sample of the population of foster care workers in New York City. The study's findings, then, may not be as transferable to the population of New York City's foster care workers compared to a study that made use of random probability sampling of the whole population. The generalizations, then, that do emerge from this study are not concerned with *all* foster care workers' experiences per se, but to theory regarding the contributors and outcomes of a range of positive psychological responses in the workplace of foster care workers

Data Collection

A semi-structured, open-ended interview was used; it included eight questions that focused on the contributors and experience of positive emotions at work. The interview was pilot-tested on two social workers to ensure clarity. Interviews were generally between one and two hours long and digitally recorded, with permission from interviewees. In addition, a standardized survey with demographic items was administered following the interview. Interviews were then transcribed for analysis. Publicly available organizational data, such as founding year, number of employees, and annual budget, were also collected. This information allowed the findings from individual interviews to be embedded within organizational contexts.

Data Analysis

Multiple case studies engage in an iterative process of cycling between data collection and analysis and are flexible about the order and cycle of the research process' phases (Eisenhardt, 1989). From the time they were collected, data were analyzed on an ongoing basis, rather than at the end of the data collection cycle. The qualitative software program Atlas.ti (Version 5.2.7) was used in all stages of data analysis, including coding, memoing, supercoding (i.e. bundling together of codes), and forming of families (i.e. groups of cases).

After the initial reading and memoing of each interview, interviews were reread to determine emerging, potentially useful codes for analysis. Initial codes were also applied based on an ongoing review of the relevant literature and through constant comparison with interviews already coded. Initial coding yielded 479 separate codes, many of which overlapped and are not utilized in this present analysis.

Following the open coding process, initial codes were grouped by similarity into larger groups, allowing for greater ease with data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This ultimately yielded 122 categories, many of which again overlapped and are not discussed here. This article primarily makes use of 32 grouped codes that were used to categorize six levels of emotional contributors (individual, coworkers, supervisors, clients, agency, and the larger environment) and 20 distinct types of emotions. It was at this stage that the underlying relationships between categories began to emerge and categories, themselves, were coded according to particular properties and dimensions.

The next stage of analysis involved developing hypotheses regarding the relationships between key constructs (e.g., descriptions of emotional contributors and particular emotions experienced at work). Tactics applied included the comparison of within-group similarities and across-group differences and the comparison of similarities and differences between two cases (or groups of cases) (Eisenhardt, 1989). Credibility of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was assured by paying attention to deviant cases and developing alternate explanations of findings, as well as applying replication logic to confirm that emerging themes were evident across cases.

Results

Description of Participants

A total of 25 foster care workers were interviewed from five different agencies. Twelve of the interviewees had undergraduate degrees from various fields, and ten interviewees possessed graduate degrees in social work. Two interviewees had graduate degrees in other fields, and one interviewee had not completed their college education. More than three-quarters

($n = 19$) of those interviewed were female, and most interviewees identified their race/ethnicity as either Black (non-Hispanic) ($n = 9$) or Hispanic/Latino ($n = 8$). The remaining interviewees identified themselves as White ($n = 3$), Asian ($n = 2$), or Other ($n = 3$).

While more than one-third of the interviewees ($n = 9$) had less than one year of experience in child welfare, more than two-thirds of interviewees ($n = 17$) had worked in their present organization for fewer than three years, indicating high rates of turnover even among more experienced workers. Nearly two-thirds of the interviewees ($n = 16$) were 30 years old or younger.

About half of the workers ($n = 13$) had an annual salary between \$30,000 and \$39,999. Three workers had salaries between \$20,000 and \$29,999, and nine workers had salaries between \$40,000 and \$49,999. The average caseload size was 19 children, and the average number of hours worked each week was 44. As a point of reference, the New York City chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) recommended in 2008 that starting salaries for social workers with a BSW be \$40,600 and for those with an MSW be \$50,800 (NASW-NYC, 2008). The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) recommends caseload sizes of 12-15 (CWLA, 1995).

Contributors to Foster Care Workers' Positive (and Negative) Emotions

Inevitably, the study of positive subjective experience among foster care workers unearthed the negative, as well. Although the purpose of this study was to examine the contributors and experience of positive emotions at work, the abundance of negative responses necessitated their inclusion in the analysis as well. In general, foster care workers made overwhelmingly negative comments about the larger environment within which their agencies were embedded. Most workers spoke very positively about their clients, coworkers, and supervisors, and accounts of agencies could be sorted into three organizational types: *Positive*, *Negative*, and *Mixed*. Interviewees also described a mixture of positive and negative personal characteristics influencing their emotions at work. Each of these levels is discussed in greater detail below.

Environmental factors. Perhaps not surprisingly, foster care workers had overwhelmingly negative things to say about how larger contextual factors and local current events affected their work. They were concerned with the public's generally negative perception of foster care work, the implementation of a new web-based data system, and new Family Court hearing and reporting requirements. In addition, the much-publicized deaths four months prior to interviews being conducted of two children known to New York City's Administration for Children's Services (including 7-year-old Nixzmary Brown, beaten to death by her mother and stepfather) overloaded workers with newly conceived job tasks and further undermined the public's perception of their profession. All but one worker made negative statements about the larger contextual environment within which they worked, while only five workers made positive ones. (Note that any given worker could give both positive and negative statements.) One worker sums up the many difficult changes workers faced in the year prior to the interview:

This year's been awful. A lot of changes. These two children who died came at the same time Connections [the new data system] came into place, new permanency hearings reports. They changed all kinds of things... Everything happened this year.

Agency factors. Workers from different agencies reported many common, negative agency-level practices. They discussed overwhelming job demands, the poor initial training they received, and working for low salaries. Many workers described "drowning in a sea of work." More than two-thirds of those interviewed said they spent half or more of their time on paperwork, describing it as "massive," "frustrating," and "overwhelming."

Each agency, however, also embodied different amounts and types of unique positive and negative characteristics with regard to job characteristics, staffing issues, recognition and support, and agency culture. From workers' comments, a typology of *Positive*, *Negative*, and *Mixed* agencies was created, based on the number and quality of positive and negative

agency-level characteristics described. Of the five agencies, there was one Positive, one Negative, and two Mixed agencies. (One agency was not typed, given that only two interviewees worked there.) It is important to note that agency histories and their plans for future service provision were not collected; thus, the descriptions and analyses of agencies should be understood as only "snapshots in time." As such, any of the agencies described could conceivably have experienced or will experience the unique characteristics ascribed to another agency.

Interpersonal factors. "My coworkers are great.... I have to say between that and the supervision, that's what kept me here." The individuals with whom workers interacted on a daily basis provided great sustenance and motivation. Almost every worker described the positive effect coworkers, supervisors and/or clients had on their emotions at work. Workers talked about three common benefits they received from their interactions with other individuals: recognition, emotional support, and help with their actual work. Workers also benefited from their supervisors' accessibility, knowledge, and guidance. They also enjoyed their clients' attachments and experienced vicarious pleasure in their clients' successes. One worker described her relationship with a former client:

She still calls us and keeps in close contact with us, and that means a lot, because that's saying, 'You were the one constant in my life.'... That makes you feel good.... You really know, 'Okay, we made a difference in her life.'

While some of these workers also had negative things to say about particular coworkers, supervisors, and/or clients, far fewer negative comments were made than positive ones.

Individual factors. Most interviewees described at least one personal factor that had a positive impact on their emotions at work. Many interviewees also described at least one personal factor that had a negative impact on emotions at work, as well. No overall trend for how personal factors impacted emotions at work could be identified, however.

Foster Care Workers' Positive (and Negative) Emotions

So far, multi-level contributors to foster care workers' positive and negative emotions at work have been described. What about the actual range of emotions experienced? What kinds of positive and negative feelings were named? While foster care workers spent considerably more time during their interviews describing the contributors to their workplace emotions rather than discussing their feelings *per se* (see below for further discussion), they did name a wide range of feelings. From their varied descriptions, twenty different categories of emotions were created. Eight categories represented positive emotions (excitement, gratitude, happiness, hope, love/attachment, pride, relief, and satisfaction), and twelve categories represented negative emotions (apathy/desensitization, boredom, embarrassment, anger, frustration/annoyance, nervousness/anxiety, overwhelmed/confusion, resentment, sadness/depression, stress, exhaustion, and worry/fear).

Despite explicitly probing for positive feelings experienced at work, foster care workers named many more kinds of negative emotions than positive ones. While all but one worker named at least one negative emotion, only three-quarters of the interviewees named any positive emotions. This larger vocabulary and greater preponderance for describing negative versus positive feelings parallels current studies on emotion. Rozin and Royzman (2001) discuss how people have a "negativity bias" when describing events, objects, and personal characteristics. Their review of nine different taxonomies of emotion found a general preponderance of words used to describe negative emotions. The authors speculate that people, in general, have a greater need to be able to name and act against negative emotions and that pleasurable emotions are more "idiosyncratic" and require less action.

There is a second, important finding about emotional expression present in the data. In addition to interviewees naming more kinds of negative emotions than positive ones, workers described experiencing twice as many negative emotions compared to positive feelings, with an average of about four negative and two positive (not necessarily unique) feelings named per interview.

Foster care workers in this study may be particularly inclined towards expressing more negative than positive feelings because of commonly held attitudes about how to conduct oneself in New York City and how to operate within their profession. New Yorkers have a reputation for taking themselves very seriously. The City is popularly characterized as attracting strivers of all occupations and passions and is perceived by many people as competitive, crowded, costly, and—perhaps most importantly—cool. And cool people do not share their positive feelings. Cool, hard-working New Yorkers—including foster care workers—gripe about how tough they have it.

In addition, social work, as a profession, has a reputation for taking itself seriously and being humorless. Its focus on righting the wrongs of disadvantaged populations may cause many professionals to have an excessively serious and negative tone. Many social workers feel that it would be improper and irreverent to express positive feelings in the midst of the grueling challenge of working to change conditions for society's most disadvantaged populations. Although gallows humor is sometimes used to relieve the stress of working with particularly difficult clients, it serves as a counterpoint to a generally pervasive culture of grim and serious plodding (Siporin, 1984; Van Wormer & Boes, 1997).

A third important finding is that the arousal levels for foster care workers' negative emotions were much higher than those for the positive emotions, when analyzed according to the circumplex model of affect developed by Larsen and Diener (1992). The circumplex model classifies emotions using two dimensions, that of hedonic tone (i.e. amount of pleasantness/unpleasantness) and arousal (i.e. amount of intensity). Emotions, for example, with high levels of pleasantness and high activation levels include excitement, euphoria, and elation. Emotions with low levels of unpleasantness and low activation levels include sluggishness and boredom.

Factor analyses of self-rated adjectives used to describe a wide variety of emotions have uncovered a circumplex pattern of loadings with a set of emotions, each housed in one of eight octants: high activation (neither pleasant or unpleasant); high activated pleasant; medium activated pleasant; low activated pleasant; low activation (neither pleasant or unpleasant); low

activated unpleasant; medium activated unpleasant; and high activated unpleasant (Larsen & Diener, 1992). The bi-dimensionality and factor structure of the circumplex model has been tested and confirmed in a more recent study of self-reported data, as well (Feldman Barrett & Russell, 1998).

Adjectives housed in the high activation and low activation octants that are neither pleasant nor unpleasant may not be commonly understood to describe emotional states, however. They include "aroused" and "astonished" at the high activation end and "still" and "tranquil" at the low activation end. They are not the subject of this current study.

Using Larsen and Diener's (1992) circumplex model, each of the twenty positive and negative emotions present in the interviews was classified according to hedonic tone and activation level (see Table 1). Workers generally named unpleasant, highly intense negative emotions and pleasant emotions of low intensity. In particular, 23 individuals named highly activated unpleasant emotions, comprising 80% of all negative emotions named. In comparison, only four individuals named highly activated pleasant emotions. Of the 19 individuals who named pleasant emotions, 18 named emotions with low and medium activation levels, comprising 91% of all pleasant emotions named. These findings parallel those found in a qualitative study conducted by Dasborough (2006) of employees' descriptions of their leaders' impact on them. Dasborough found that 88% of employees' positive responses had low or medium activation levels, while 82% of employees' negative responses were highly activated.

Diener, Sandvik, and Pavot (1991) argue, however, that happiness results from the *frequency*, not intensity, of positive affect. Although it may not negatively impact foster care workers that most of their positive feelings have low and medium arousal levels, it may be a bigger problem that interviewees, in general, described experiencing more negative than positive feelings. For example, Fredrickson and Losada (2005) found that a ratio of three positive emotions to one negative emotion is required for flourishing psychological and social functioning.

Table 1. Study Participants' Emotions, Sorted by Hedonic Tone and Activation Level

Emotions	Hedonic Tone	Activation Level	# of Interviewees	# of Quotes
Apathy/ Desensitization Boredom Exhaustion	Unpleasant	Low	8	14
Sadness/ Depression	Unpleasant	Medium	8	9
Anger Embarrassment Frustration/ Annoyance Nervousness/ Anxiety Overwhelmed/ Confusion Resentment Stress Worry/Fear	Unpleasant	High	23	92
Gratitude Hope Love/ Attachment Pride Relief Satisfaction	Pleasant	Low	14	30
Happiness	Pleasant	Medium	13	20
Excitement	Pleasant	High	4	5

Membership in one of the three Positive or Mixed agencies had a strong relationship with the ratio of negative and positive feelings interviewees described. On average, interviewees in Positive and Mixed agencies expressed twice as many negative feelings than positive, while interviewees in the one

Negative agency expressed three times as many negative feelings than positive. Both positive workplace relationships and agency practices, then, seem to contribute to foster care worker well-being and may be the "glue" that keeps them from leaving their jobs, despite their experiencing more negative than positive emotions overall.

What if a foster care worker experiences a low number of possibly highly valued positive emotions about her agency and people at work and a larger number of less important (possibly taken for granted) negative emotions regarding her larger environment? Fredrickson and Losada's (2005) ratio does not account for the relative valence of positive and negative emotions. Although this study did not inquire about the valence of interviewees' emotions, it appears that positive feelings about people at work and one's agency may act as buffers against the negative impact of the larger contextual environment, as well as the "need" for a higher ratio of positive to negative emotions.

In sum, despite the findings that workers had a greater vocabulary for negative feelings, named more instances of experiencing negative feelings compared to positive ones, and experienced more highly activated negative feelings compared to positive ones, interviewees in this study had thriving, positive interactions with their supervisors, coworkers, and clients, while being uniformly subjected to larger, negative environmental impacts. In addition, interviewees working in the three Positive or Mixed agencies expressed more positive feelings than those working in the one Negative agency.

Discussion

Study Limitations

One of the greatest limitations in this study is the difficulty people have, in general, in recognizing, describing, and recalling their emotions (Grandey, 2009; Sandelands, 1988). Sandelands (1988) writes: "The problem of describing feeling is linguistic. Feelings are not easily put into words" (p. 450). Indeed, with a preponderance of comments regarding the multi-level conditions at work with very little discussion of the resulting feelings experienced, foster care workers appeared

to have much greater ease in describing feelings *about* work, rather than particular emotions, or feelings *in* work.

Another limitation is the inherent condensation of 25 individuals' varied emotional expressions into 20 categories. Creating an emotional taxonomy is not unprecedented, however. In their discussion of humans' innate negativity biases, Rozin and Royzman (2001) describe nine taxonomies of emotion developed since A.D. 200. The taxonomies range in size from five to eleven emotions, and similar to this study's findings, two-thirds of them contain more negative categories than positive.

In addition, current contextual factors, notably respondents' mood and recent events, affect how individuals make evaluative judgments (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Given that interviews were conducted during a particularly volatile time for the New York City child welfare system (i.e., in the aftermath following Nixzmary Brown's death, the implementation of the new data system, and the establishment of more stringent Family Court permanency hearings and reports), findings about interviewees' workplace feelings and resulting job attitudes may be less generalizable to foster care workers employed during a more stable period.

Another limitation in this study was the lack of additional personnel, either co-researchers or study participants themselves, validating the analysis. This was largely due to a lack of resources. In addition, given that nearly all of the data for this study were self-reported by individual foster care workers, common method variance may explain the relationships among the variables discussed. The incorporation of behavioral observation and collection of data from other sources (case records, employment records, etc.) would have helped to eliminate this problem.

Future Research

Inspired both by the findings and limitations of this present study, many avenues for further research in the study of social and human services workers' subjective experiences in the workplace come to mind. First, given the difficulty or reticence that respondents had in retrospectively recognizing, describing, and recalling their emotions, one way of studying

emotions in the workplace is by gathering data about emotions while they are being currently experienced, such as by using the experience sampling method (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Fredrickson and her colleagues have studied how positive emotions have an “undoing effect” on negative ones and how resilient people are able to find positive meaning in negative events (Fredrickson, Mancuso, Branigan, & Tugade, 2000; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Given the preponderance of negative over positive feelings reported by respondents in this study, greater research is needed on the resiliency of social workers. Why are workers staying on the job despite a negative environmental context? Do positive agency characteristics and relationships with coworkers, supervisors, and clients mitigate the negative effects of the larger environment? If they do, how can they be fostered?

Conclusion

Framing this study from a Positive Psychology framework did not prove to be very useful. The tendency of studies making use of a Positive Psychology framework to dichotomize the positive and the negative can be problematic. Although workers interviewed for this study had a greater variety of words for, cited more moments of, and experienced more highly activated negative feelings compared to their positive ones, interviewees had strong, positive relationships at work, and those working in Positive or Mixed agencies expressed more positive feelings than those working in the one Negative agency.

In the present study, layers of positive and negative workplace characteristics are embedded within one another. Positive workplace relationships and agency practices operate within the context of a largely negative environment and may act to buffer those broader insults. In particular, it appears that the presence of positive agency characteristics, in the absence or presence of negative agency characteristics, can have a positive effect on employee well-being. It is important that agencies practice some positive workplace practices, even if other practices, such as high job demands and low salaries, are negative and cannot be changed. While the negative characteristics

of the larger environment (or within a particular agency) may be difficult to ameliorate, implementing positive agency practices with regard to job characteristics, staffing, recognition and support, and organizational culture may have a positive impact on employees' emotional well-being and retention. A few good feelings generated regarding people at work and the agency as a whole may offset pervasive negative responses regarding the larger environment.

References

- Administration for Children's Services (ACS). (2007). *Monthly update*. Office of Research and Evaluation, New York City Administration for Children's Services. Retrieved May 30, 2007 from <http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/about/about.shtml> accessed.
- Brief, A. P., & Weiss, H. M. (2002). Organizational behavior: Affect in the workplace. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 279-307.
- Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). (1995). *Standards of Excellence for Family Foster Care Services*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.
- Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA). (2003). *Workforce Report 2002*. New York: Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies.
- Cropanzano, R., & Wright, T. A. (2001). When a "happy" worker is really a "productive" worker: A review and further refinement of the happy-productive worker thesis. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, 53(3), 182-199.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Cyphers, G. (2001). *Report from the Child Welfare Workforce Survey: State and county data and findings*. Washington, DC: American Public Human Services Association.
- Dasborough, M. T. (2006). Cognitive asymmetry in employee emotional reactions in leadership behaviors. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17, 163-178.
- Davis-Blake, A., & Pfeffer, J. (1989). Just a mirage: The search for dispositional effects in organizational research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 385-400.
- Diener, E., Sandvik, E., & Pavot, W. (1991). Happiness is the frequency, not the intensity, of positive versus negative affect. In F. Strack, M. Argyle, & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Subjective well-being: An interdisciplinary perspective*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532.

- Feldman Barrett, L., & Russell, J. A. (1998). Independence and bipolarity in the structure of affect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 967-984.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (1998). What good are positive emotions? *Review of General Psychology*, 2(3), 300-319.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218-226.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2003). Positive emotions and upward spirals in organizations. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline and scholarship*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Fredrickson, B., & Losada, M. F. (2005). Positive affect and the complex dynamics of human flourishing. *American Psychologist*, 60(7), 678-686.
- Fredrickson, B., Mancuso, R., Branigan, C., & Tugade, M. (2000). The undoing effect of positive emotions. *Motivation and Emotion*, 24(4), 237-258.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Grandey, A. (2009). Emotions at work: A review and research agenda. In J. Barling, C. P. Cooper, S. Clegg, & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational behavior*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hersey, R. B. (1932). *Workers' emotions in shop and home: A study of individual workers from the psychological and physiological standpoint*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Judge, T. A., Locke, E. A., Durham, C. C., & Kluger, A. N. (1998). Dispositional effects on job and life satisfaction: The role of core evaluations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83, 17-34.
- Kornhauser, A. W., & Sharp, A. A. (1932). Employee attitudes: Suggestions from a study in a factory. *Personnel Journal*, 10, 393-404.
- Larsen, R. J., & Diener, E. (1992). Promises and problems with the circumplex model of emotion. In M. S. Clark (Ed.), *Emotion* (Vol. 13, Review of Personality and Social Psychology, pp. ???). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lawson, H. A., Claiborne, N., McCarthy, M., Strolin, J., Briar-Lawson, K., Caringi, J., et al., (2005). *Retention planning to reduce workforce turnover in New York State's Public Child Welfare Systems: Developing knowledge, lessons learned, and emergent priorities*. Unpublished manuscript, Albany, NY: University at Albany, State University of New York.
- Lin, A. C. (1998). Bridging positivist and interpretivist approaches to qualitative methods. *Policy Studies Journal*, 26(1), 162-180.
- Locke, E. A. (1976). Job satisfaction. In M. Dunnette and L. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of industrial organizational psychology* (pp. 1297-1349). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

- Mayo, E. (1931). Economic stability and the standard of living. *Harvard Business School Alumni Bulletin*, 7, 293.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mor Barak, M., Nissly, J., & Levin, A. (2001). Antecedents to retention and turnover among child welfare, social work, and other human service employees: What can we learn from past research? A review and metaanalysis. *The Social Service Review*, 75(4), 625-661.
- National Association of Social Workers–New York City (NASW–NYC). (2008). *Salary standards for professional social workers*. Retrieved November 20, 2009, from <http://www.naswnyc.org/SalaryStandards.htm>.
- National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD). (2006). *Relationship between staff turnover, child welfare system functioning and recurrent child abuse*. Houston, TX: Cornerstones For Kids.
- Rozin, P., & Royzman, E. B. (2001). Negativity bias, negativity dominance, and contagion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5(4), 296-320.
- Sandelands, L. E. (1988). The concept of work feeling. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 18(4), 437-457.
- Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 5-14.
- Siporin, M. (1984, October). Have you heard the one about social work humor? *Social Casework*, 459-464.
- Staw, B. M., & Ross, J. (1985). Stability in the midst of change: A dispositional approach to job attitudes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 70, 469-480.
- Staw, B. M., Sutton, R. I., & Pelled, L. H. (1994). Employee positive emotion and favorable outcomes at the workplace. *Organization Science*, 5, 51-71.
- Taylor, F. W. (1903). *Shop management*. New York: Harper.
- Taylor, F. W. (1911). *The principles of scientific management*. New York: Harper.
- Tugade, M., & Fredrickson, B. (2004). Resilient individuals use positive emotions to bounce back from negative emotional experiences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86(2), 320-333.
- United States General Accounting Office (USGAO). (2003). *Child Welfare: HHS could play a greater role in helping child welfare agencies recruit and retain staff*. Washington, DC: United States General Accounting Office.
- Van Wormer, K., & Boes, M. (1997). Humor in the emergency room: A social work perspective. *Health and Social Work*, 22(2), 87-92.
- Weiss, H. M., & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective events theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes and consequences of affective experiences at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 18, 1-74.

- Wright, T. A., Cropanzano, R., & Meyer, D. G. (2004). State and trait correlates of job performance: A tale of two perspectives. *Journal of Business & Psychology*, 18(3), 365-383.
- Wright, T. A., & Staw, B. M. (1999). Affect and favorable work outcomes: Two longitudinal tests of the happy-productive worker thesis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20, 1-23.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Zlotnik, J., DePanfilis, D., Daining, C., & Lane, M. (2005). *Factors influencing the retention of child welfare staff: A systematic review of the research*. Washington, DC: Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research.

Social Work and Conditional Cash Transfers in Latin America.

CINDY CALVO

School of Social Welfare
University of Kansas

Conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs are a recent anti-poverty strategy in Latin America. CCT programs provide cash benefits to finance basic needs and foster investment in human capital to extremely poor households. These benefits are conditioned on certain behaviors, usually related to investments in nutrition, health, and education. In the literature, there is a recognizable lack of analyses from social science disciplines related to CCT program implications. This paper contributes in this arena by analyzing the particular role of social work in CCT anti-poverty programs. The educational element of these programs and its theoretical foundation based on the human capital model, the debate around issues of conditionality and targeting, the possible role of CCT programs in a broader reform of social protection systems, and professional practice implications using the Chilean CCT program as a model will be addressed.

Key words: conditional cash transfers, Latin America, social work role, anti-poverty programs

Poverty and anti-poverty programs have become a priority in the national agenda of Latin American governments, as well as a significant issue to be considered by international monetary institutions, scholars and the general public. This is not surprising, because poverty and extreme poverty have steadily increased in Latin America since the 1980s, as the result of the world economic crisis and the adoption of structural

adjustment programs. According to Londono and Szekely (1997), in Latin America from 1982 to 1993 the overall number of people living in poverty increased from 78 to 150 million. Despite small improvements, overall poverty levels have remained as those attained in 1980 (136 million people) (Cepal, as cited in Garland, 2000).

Likewise, income inequality in the region has been particularly troublesome. During the 1990s, income inequality did not improve and remains as high today as it was two decades ago. For example, in the 90s, the poorest 30 percent of the population received 7.5 percent of all national income, while the wealthiest 10 percent received 40 percent (Inter-American Development Bank, 1998). This situation threatens to undermine political stability, and continues the violation of people's rights to a decent standard of living (Garland, 2000). Severe losses in areas such as health and education forced governments and international financial institutions to acknowledge that the adoption of economic growth strategies alone cannot address these problems without a political commitment to poverty reduction and redistribution of the nation's resources (Garland, 2000).

Mexico and Brazil were the first Latin American countries to embrace a new approach to social assistance aimed at lessening the negative consequences of the adoption of the structural adjustment programs. The Mexican Program, *Progresas*, was a nationwide program introduced in 1997. Brazil followed this approach in the late 1990s, and in 2002 the federal program called *Bolsa Família* reached five million beneficiary families (Britto, 2005). These are Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programs for poverty reduction targeting extremely poor households. Generally, these programs address three developmental components—education, health and nutrition—though the educational component prevails as the most important one. Due to the success of these first two programs, other countries have adopted this design for the delivery of social services. According to Valencia (2008), by 2007, there were 16 CCT programs in the whole Latin American and Caribbean region, and 70 million people, conservatively estimated, have received CCT support.

Consequently, a current and extensive body of literature disseminates results from research on the implementation of CCT

programs in different countries. These studies have focused attention predominantly on program impacts on health, consumption, and education; and on addressing poverty reduction. Most of these studies are rooted in economic disciplines with prominent academics and officials from international financial organizations (e.g. World Bank, International Development Bank) setting the direction of the analyses. Thus, there is a recognizable lack of analyses from social science disciplines related to the historical, cultural, political, social, and family implications in a broader and increasingly complex Latin American context.

The social work profession can make important contributions to the analysis of CCT programs, by considering their theoretical foundations, social rights debates among particular disadvantaged populations, policy design, quality of services and beneficiaries' needs, and ultimately, by contributing to the knowledge base by addressing the related implications for professional practice. In particular, the educational element of these programs based on the human capital model, the debate around issues of conditionality and targeting, the possible role of CCT programs in a broader reform of social protection systems, and potential social work practice implications using as a model the Chilean CCT program will be addressed in this paper.

Overview of CCT programs

All CCT programs provide cash or in-kind benefits to extremely poor households to finance immediate consumption and foster investment in human capital. These benefits are conditioned on certain behaviors, usually related to investments in nutrition, health, and education. In some programs, participating households receive two sets of transfers. One is the education subsidy, which is conditional on regular attendance at school. The other set is conditional on regular attendance by household members (particularly children) at health clinics. These kinds of conditions have created political support for money transfers, since it can be argued that the transfers constitute investments in needy households, but they are also a required component of universal coverage programs (De Ferranti, Perry, Ferreira, & Walton, 2004). In this sense,

CCT programs are also viewed as *demand-side* interventions which, for example, subsidize investment in education by the poor (bringing the poor into the education system) vs. long established *supply-side* interventions programs which promote extensive expansion of the school system (bringing education to the poor) (Coady & Parker, 2002). In classical economics, supply-side policies propose that supply is the key to economic prosperity and that demand is a secondary consequence. However, according to Rawlings and Rubio (2005), supply-side actions have been underutilized by the poor because of unmanageable out-of-pocket expenditures, difficult access, and lack of incentives for investing in future human capital. In other words, "since economies of scale imply that it is generally more cost-effective to locate schools in relatively densely populated areas, poorer households, which tend to be disproportionately located in remote areas, may face substantially higher private costs and, as a result, tend to acquire lower educational levels" (Coady & Parker, 2002, p. 1). Conditioning cash transfers on access to services and facilities is, therefore, an attractive policy response to this problem.

Rawlings and Rubio (2005) also point out that CCT programs explicitly address several criticisms of more traditional social assistance schemes (e.g. weak poverty targeting, high administrative costs, and multiplicity of overlapping goals). These authors assert that CCTs are low-cost programs, which are administratively effective, with clear interrelated goals to reduce both long-term and short-term poverty. The "CCT programs address both future poverty, by fostering human capital accumulation among the young as a means of breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty and current poverty, by providing income support for consumption in the short run" (Rawlings & Rubio, 2005, p. 33). Since intergenerational transmission of poverty is an issue, CCT programs are particularly aimed at children, due to their major element of conditionality toward school attendance, regular visits to the clinics, and targeting consumption of nutritional elements. In Valencia's view (2009), this reflects the main assumption that underlies the program design: once individuals are healthy, better fed, and educated, they will be able to overcome poverty over the long run.

Additionally, women have a significant role in the program since payments usually go to the female head of households. Previous research shows that women devote their earnings to meet collective consumption needs more than men do. Thus, according to Gitter and Barham (2008), CCT transfers to women are more likely to be spent on their children's health, nutrition, and education, consequently reinforcing the goals of these programs. Moreover, in some programs women have an important role serving as a community link between beneficiaries and local program administrators, such as the case of the *Progresa* program. Community promoters are responsible for informing beneficiaries about program operations and their rights and responsibilities, as well as monitoring program compliance (De Ferranti et al., 2004).

Further, some CCT programs increase transfers by grade (primarily because of higher opportunity costs for older children), and the transfers are higher for girls in middle school, reflecting a desire to reduce gender bias in education. In most CCT programs, a capping system places a ceiling on the total amount of transfers a household can receive, so as "to not create dependency on the part of recipients, to not erode the incentive for self-help, and to avoid incentives for higher fertility" (De Ferranti et al., 2004, p. 275).

Program Design

CCT programs are considered a new strategy for the delivery of social services mainly because of their key parameters: targeting, conditionality, and evaluation design, which are significantly different from those historically adopted in Latin America. Generally, they are designed and implemented by the central government. Participating communities and households are selected by program officials and transfers go directly to eligible households without passing through state budgets (De Ferranti et al., 2004). The programs use a range of targeting methods to ensure that benefits effectively reach the poorest households. Most CCT programs divide the targeting process into two main stages: the first corresponds to poverty-mapping at a geographic level, focusing on those communities where the distribution of poverty is greater. Yet the selection of eligible communities also includes a consideration of the

supply-side capacity to respond to the increased demand in health and education services. The second stage frequently uses proxy-means testing to collect information about household characteristics. Thus, based on a cut-off poverty point, those households below the cut-off are included in the program. In some cases, CCT programs also use some community-based targeting and self-selection methods to benefit households (De Ferranti et al., 2004; Rawlings & Rubio, 2005).

In terms of conditionality, CCT programs receive mixed reviews. Advocates of conditionalities base their opinions on previous research findings that show larger program effects when transfers are "conditioned" on certain behaviors (e.g., school enrollment) (Schady & Araujo, 2006). This finding is also sustained by economists who suggest that households would behave differently if given an equivalent amount of cash with no strings attached (Das, Do, & Ozler, 2005). Hence, the widespread belief about the ability of CCT programs to influence behavior is used as a measure of their success. Basically, what CCT programs seek is a change in individuals' behaviors when they do not match with societal preferences; for instance, parents who make bad schooling decisions for their child may not take into account the long-term benefits of education (Das, Do, & Ozler, 2005). On the other hand, critiques of this program approach make use of ethical considerations. Lera (2009) points to the many voices claiming conditionalities patronize the poor, by presuming that they do not act rationally unless they are "conditioned" to do so.

In terms of program evaluation, unlike most development initiatives, several CCT programs have used impact evaluations for large-scale social experiments. These evaluations have had strong support from program staff and policymakers (Rawlings & Rubio, 2005). CCT program evaluations in Colombia, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Mexico prioritized the use of robust evaluations since program inception including random assignment, collection of baseline and follow-up data, as well as the use of comparison groups for informing program impacts (Rawlings & Rubio, 2005). Recently, non-experimental methods such as propensity score matching have become very popular in the evaluation literature (Handa & Davis, 2006). Due to the success of these early evaluations, international financial

institutions now support similar evaluations in other countries by lending money, advising and encouraging the adoption of experimental designs (Rawlings, DeShano & Trevino, 2006).

These evaluations have focused on measuring changes in the short-and medium-term indicators of human capital accumulation. In education, the evaluations assessed changes in school enrollment, attendance rates, and repetition rates. In health and nutrition, the evaluations included a range of health care and quality indicators such as vaccination coverage, malnutrition rates, and child growth. Overall, CCT initial studies have shown positive effects on school enrollment and nutrition patterns (Valencia, 2009). The evidence regarding the impact on child labor is not conclusive, since school attendance can be frequently combined with work (Bourguignon, Ferreira & Leite, 2002), and the impact of these programs on poverty reduction is still not clear (Britto, 2005; De Ferranti et al., 2004).

CCT Educational Impacts

The educational component in the design of CCT programs is fundamental because of the belief that CCT programs are effective instruments to alleviate poverty in the long term, inducing “families to support the education of their children in ways that will make them less likely to be poor in the future” (Reimers, DeShano, & Trevino, 2006, p. 5). The focus of this analysis will be on current educational impacts of CCT programs, and their assumed long-term effect on the accumulation of human capital.

The broader review for this paper sought and retrieved published and unpublished studies and reports from annotated bibliographies and from searches on data bases. The studies selected correspond to the first generation of CCT programs in the following countries: Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Brazil. These evaluations followed experimental and quasi-experimental designs. Overall, the programs reviewed achieved their explicit goals of increasing school enrollment and attendance rates. For instance, the Mexican program increased 3.5 percentage points (pp) on enrollment for all grades (Schultz, 2004), and the Ecuadorian program increased from 75 to 85 pp on those children around the first quintile in the poverty index measure (Oosterbeek,

Ponce, & Schady, 2008). The larger effects are for adolescents, such as in the cases of the Mexican, Colombian, and Brazilian programs. In Mexico, children who had completed the last year of primary school (age 12) experienced the larger effects. For this group the enrollment rate increased by 11.1 pp (Schultz, 2004). In Colombia, the program also affected enrollment rates of children ages 14-17 by 5 and 7 pp (Attanasio et al., 2008); and in Brazil the program increased enrollment by 3.2 pp for children in grades 5-8 (approximately ages 12 to 15) (Glewwe & Kassouf, 2008).

In contrast, the program impacts on primary school are modest. For instance, in Colombia there is a small increase in enrollment for children 8-13 years old by 1-2 pp. In Brazil for grades 1-4 the program increased enrollment by 2.8 pp (Glewwe & Kassouf, 2008); and in Honduras, the program increased enrollment rates in children ages 6-13 by 1-2 pp (Glewwe & Olinto, 2004). The larger effects on enrollment for older children could be explained, in part, because those countries already have high enrollment in primary school. Thus, the impacts are especially significant for students in secondary school where the enrollment rates tend to decrease considerably, especially during the transition from primary to secondary education.

In terms of school attendance, CCT programs in Nicaragua and Brazil have also increased rates. In Nicaragua, a statistically significant impact on attendance was found for boys ages 7-13 (Dammert, 2009); and in Brazil, the program has been particularly effective at helping girls to stay in school (Glewwe & Kassouf, 2008). Some of the programs have also contributed to reducing gender differentials in education. This is especially true for the Mexican and Brazilian programs where cash transfers increase for girls in secondary school. However, in Nicaragua the boost in school attendance is greater for boys than for girls. These findings are important because the Nicaraguan program does not provide differential transfers to boys over girls (Dammert, 2009). Furthermore, in Honduras and Brazil, CCT program evaluations have shown a positive impact on grade promotion, as well as on reducing dropout rates. In Honduras, the program reduced dropout rates by 2-3 pp, and increased annual promotion to the next grade by

2-4 pp (Glewwe & Olinto, 2004). In Brazil, repetition rates in grades 5-8 are lower than those in grades 1-4 (Glewwe & Kassouf, 2008).

Child labor is inextricably related to education level, but the CCT impact on child labor is somewhat less clear. Although some programs have had positive results reducing child labor (e.g., Colombia and Nicaragua) (Attanasio et al., 2008; Dammert, 2009), there has not been any impact in Brazil and Honduras (Glewwe & Kassouf, 2008; Glewwe & Olinto, 2004). Some of these studies explain that even though children do increase school attendance, they also combine schooling with housework and income-generating activities. For instance, in Brazil and Nicaragua, researchers suggest that cash transfers might be too small to create the incentive for families to forgo the income from child labor.

In a broader review of CCT programs, evaluations have also focused on school enrollment, school attendance, and child labor; but they do not explore school achievement, quality of the education, changes in family dynamics, participants' perceptions of the program, etc. In part, this is due to the fact that most of the studies available were not designed to assess the effects of CCTs with quality improvement measures (Reimers et al., 2006). In this sense, Valencia (2008) suggests that the quality of education is taken for granted and so has not been incorporated into the design and evaluation of CCT programs. The recommendation to conduct such studies is one of the most important suggestions to come out of this research review. Rawlings & Rubio (2005) point out that CCT evaluations also reveal little about the future income impact of additional years of schooling. This is a long-term question that can be answered only through longitudinal evaluations. Given the above, CCT programs should be critically examined, both in terms of empirical evidence and expected long-term effects.

In sum, the centrality of education in poverty-reduction policies stems from the belief that education is a powerful equalizer and the main asset of most people (Gundlach, Navarro de Pablo, & Weiser, 2001). This belief has been re-enforced by the World Bank in terms of the relationship established between education and poverty (Tarabini, 2008). Historically, there has been certain evidence of this thesis in developing

and developed countries (Parker & Teruel, 2005), showing that educational investments have high returns. Nevertheless, this thesis is not widely confirmed. Ram's study (1989) reviews several economic theoretical frameworks linking the level of schooling and its impacts on income, but he did not produce clear evidence about the effect of education on income inequality or absolute poverty. Likewise, Morely and Coady (2003) recognize that growth in the number of workers with more years of schooling does not necessarily translate into greater future income-producing capacities. Also, studies on job performance show that among those who apply for a particular job, years of education do not predict future performance, especially for applicants for a typical semi-skilled blue collar job (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). In this regard, the estimates of the economic returns vis-a-vis years of schooling have been reviewed by some scholars.

Targeting Concerns

Since the 1980s, Latin American governments sought a change in the distribution of state resources, from universal services to selective programs to those in extreme need. In the context of CCT programs, concerns exist about targeting strategies related to geographical and population selection criteria, and middle-class rights. Most CCT programs select communities considering their supply capacity to respond to the increased demand for services. For example, in the Colombian and Mexican CCT programs, extremely poor populations were left out because they did not have adequate service infrastructure or the presence of banks that could accept the deposits; this is ironic given that those areas have the most need to receive social assistance. These criteria are also utilized for comparative purposes in program evaluation, causing ethical considerations. Further, community selection criteria could be misinterpreted, exacerbating community tensions between those who are included and excluded (Adato, as cited by Valencia, 2008). Similarly, Rawlings (2005) argues that the use of proxy means tests to target individual households within poor communities, and targeting women as the transfer recipients, are inappropriate strategies "in particular situations such as indigenous communities where collective decision-making and

the provision of group-based benefits are valued" (Rawlings, 2005, pp. 153-154).

On the other hand, it is difficult to achieve support to expand highly targeted programs, precisely because they do not benefit middle-income groups which have also been steadily affected by limited universal services and decreases in employment sources. This, therefore, raises another question: "should program benefits target only the extreme poor or also include those poor who are more likely to overcome poverty permanently, even when they are not the poorest of the poor?" (Cuesta, 2007, p. 1018).

Conditionality concerns. Conditionality produces other concerns. Although some scholars agree that conditions can change accountability relationships (household co-responsibility to achieve a basic living standard) (Rawlings & Rubio, 2005), others refer to limited individual choice and increased levels of social control. The idea behind these conditions is to protect people against their own choices, situations that can be considered a way of demeaning the poor (Lera, 2009). In the same way, Veit-Wilson (2009) questions to what extent the target populations agree with the conditions and the way of penalizing the non-compliance. Further, "are the costs and benefits to them consistent with their social value system and respectful towards their modes of life and conception of human dignity?" (Veit-Wilson, 2009, p. 172). For this author, these questions are not just related to whether people accept the sanctions when conditions are not met. Rather, the critical issue is why a child should be deprived of essential resources just because a targeted family member fails to meet the behavioral conditions. These questions emphasize universal human rights and government responsibilities for individuals whose needs have not been met.

Social Work and CCT programs

Social work has a broad array of theories that help us understand the historical, social, political, economic, and family factors that impact people's lives. The diversity of these theories is unified by the ethical commitment of the profession to work for and with disadvantaged populations whose social

rights are being restricted or violated. This is especially true for social workers in third world countries where income disparity and economic insecurity continue to be salient factors for increasingly larger populations. Social work must rethink the concept of poverty that guides its practice, as well as the assumptions inherent in the design of anti-poverty programs. One critical idea to produce this conceptual change is to consider that poverty is not exclusively an individual's responsibility. Society in general produces an unequal system where resources are not well distributed and opportunities are not available to everyone. Particularly in Latin America, "the roots of poverty lie in exclusionary institutions that have been perpetuated since colonial times and that have survived different political and economic regimes, from interventionist strategies to more market-oriented policies" (De Ferranti et al., 2004, p. 1). Therefore, social work has a potential role in advocating and formulating a more comprehensive and cohesive social system that could better redistribute the resources and address the roots of poverty both from individual and structural perspectives.

Usually, poverty is conceptualized from a physiological approach as the lack of income, food, clothing, and/or shelter. From this perspective, people are poor because of a lack of economic resources to satisfy basic needs. This perspective also aligns with economists' point of view regarding an individualistic social environment, which stresses that higher education leads to higher income, enabling individuals to gain more utility, and hence improve their well-being (Jordan, 2008). This is the same assumption that underlies CCT programs. However, poverty cannot be viewed solely from a causal, unidirectional standpoint. Social workers should be aware that poverty is a multi-dimensional concept that goes beyond and includes structural factors that prevent people from accessing both external assets (credit, land, infrastructure, common property) and internal assets (health, nutrition, protection, and education) (Nayaran, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher, & Koch-Schulte, 2000).

Sen is the scholar who has, perhaps, advanced the most in the formulation of a theoretical framework of poverty (Sen & Dreze, 1989). His concept incorporates the notion of inequality and social exclusion as obstacles for the construction of a

system of rights and opportunities. Accordingly, people are poor not just because of a lack of economic resources to satisfy basic needs, but also because they live in a social, economic and political system which does not provide equality of opportunities. Therefore, one obvious concern is the narrow approach to poverty of most social programs, including CCT programs. Within these programs, overcoming poverty depends on people or families, and not on historical, structural or inequity factors (Oneto, as cited by Bivort & Martinez, 2009).

Social work has always claimed to be primarily concerned with poverty and general well-being, but lacks a strong stance against the dominant version of these concepts. "As economists themselves now engage in the debate about this central issue, social work has the opportunity to stake a claim for its views" (Jordan, 2008, p. 447). One possibility is to study CCT programs and bring into the debate tangible and ethical issues surrounding structural, social, and economic conditions, such as those identified above. For practitioners already immersed in the implementation of CCT programs, their practice must be aligned to population rights and beneficiaries' actual needs. The allocation of available resources and the promotion of changes in distribution strategies are also matters of professional responsibility. Advocating for broader social reforms that can improve not only the accessibility and quality of services in education, health, and nutrition, but also the achievement of more equal access to land, property rights, credit, job training, and employment, even when those areas of advocacy have not been traditional ones for social work, is critical.

Social workers must also challenge the construction of citizenship and social participation against poverty. Citizen participation is about the ways in which people exercise influence and control over the decisions that affect them. The interests of the poor are often not represented, lacking "voice" in service delivery (Nayaran et al., 2000), and in policy design (Bivort & Martinez, 2009). In this regard, very few CCT programs have considered citizen participation as a main feature in their design and implementation. There are some experiences which are considered, such as the Mexican CCT community involvement. Still, it is necessary to analyze in depth the kind of citizen participation that is promoted.

Social Policy Formulation

Social workers should be immersed not only in the execution of social policies, but also in the development of policy—social policy understood as the redistribution of resources, protection and social justice (Ortiz, 2007). Thus, social workers should advocate for strengthening government's capacity to redistribute resources. For most Latin American countries, this will imply increasing their tax collection efforts, and over the long run, enacting a more progressive social policy by translating public resources into both universal and targeted social services. As targeted programs, CCTs can certainly have a significant impact on income redistribution (De Ferranti et al., 2004). However, it is also clear that CCT programs are not an exclusive solution.

In this sense, the first step for social work involvement is related to the critical evaluation of CCT assumptions. For instance, current CCT program philosophy assumes that more years of schooling will translate into a better future income and quality of life. Yet, as was argued earlier, this is an assumption now placed into question. A second assumption is that people have access to good quality services. However, CCT programs in extremely poor population areas run the risk of mandating that poor people use low-quality services, an issue that has not been seriously considered by governmental policies (Reimers et al., 2006). A central question is whether a certain amount of the governmental educational budget would be better spent on providing scholarships to poor families or on initiatives that directly improve the quality of education (e.g., teacher training, infrastructure, equipment, textbook production) (Reimers et al., 2006). Reimers et al., (2006) criticize the narrow assumption that the accumulation of human capital exclusively means the accumulation of years of schooling. The educational quality of the poor is often substandard and the years of schooling do not yield the same benefits for the poor as for privileged children. In this sense, CCT demand-side programs are likely to be most successful when combined with supply-side interventions that improve the availability and quality of services in which beneficiaries have to participate.

Another issue under discussion is how countries' economic growth translates into availability of jobs or the

capacity of markets to absorb the expected newly qualified youth. Few studies discuss the nature of the economies in countries with CCT programs and whether, in fact, they bring about job growth that would make such assumptions tenable (Reimers et al., 2006). A number of economies in the developing world "are not generating enough growth to absorb a significant share of those who are now poor, even if they were more educated" (Reimers et al., 2006, p. 51). Since the availability of jobs is a critical assumption of CCTs, job creation should be a component in any long-term strategy for poverty reduction. For instance, "estimates of rates of return on education in marginal, rural communities in Mexico show that for the three main occupations available in these communities, there are no returns on education beyond the primary level" (Reimers et al., 2006, p. 51).

Hence, CCT programs can pursue more ambitious goals. As Cuesta (2007) highlights, CCT programs need be associated with assets other than human capital. For instance, CCT programs can be extended into training, life skills and employability, psycho-social development and formation of civic-minded citizens. In addition, these programs can be extended into credit access and microenterprise. In both Mexico and Nicaragua there has been a tendency to expand CCT programs to include training and other income-generation activities. Both programs are planning impact evaluations to help inform the debate (Rawlings & Rubio, 2005). In sum, governments need to improve CCT programs through expanding or connecting them with other instruments that can provide the basis for a better social protection system.

The Case of the Chilean CCT Program

With the exception of the Chilean program, studies and reports on CCTs in Latin America do not explicitly address the role of social work in CCT program design and implementation. Because of the lack of social work analysis in this area and with the intention of promoting it, this section focuses on the Chilean CCT program as a model to be considered for further involvement of social workers in these anti-poverty programs.

The *Chile Solidario* is a social system that has the objective of

promoting the social integration of the poorest by connecting them with the public benefits network (MIDEPLAN, as cited by Saracostti, 2008). The program has a particular component that combines a temporary cash grant with intensive family-based psychological support provided by a social worker to help families reach minimum levels of well-being in areas including employment, health, education and family dynamics, often through links with other social programs (Saracostti, 2008).

Social work involvement has influenced the Chilean program in two significant ways. First, social workers who were involved in designing the *Chile Solidario* system shared a broader definition of poverty, moving away from the original and more simplistic definition shared by the other CCT programs. This new definition considers poverty as a “multi-dimensional issue in which lack of income is only one factor in defining extreme poverty, along with economic, psychological, and cultural dimensions” (Saracostti, 2008, p. 567). Second, social workers are involved in the implementation of the program, using the family unit as the target of intervention. Consequently, the program has two main components: (1) psychological support which consists of periodic personal visits by social workers or technical staff. The visits last for 24 months, and act to stimulate and empower the family as a nucleus; and (2) a protection bonus for the family. This cash benefit is conditional on the family contract, and it is given to the mother in single parent families or to the female partner of the family. Concluding the family contract, beneficiaries who have met all conditions can receive an additional allowance over an additional three years (Saracostti, 2008).

In the Chilean program, participants are given preferential access to specific programs, such as: technical help and assistance for disabled people; drug rehabilitation and prevention; services for issues of domestic violence; employment programs; and preferential access to primary health insurance (Saracostti, 2008). Moreover, “social workers are also involved at three practice levels: direct practice with beneficiary families, community intervention, and macro policy practice” (Saracostti, 2008, p. 569). Direct practice intervention consists of identifying the poorest families and inviting them to participate in the program. In this sense, the caseworker helps the

family to identify their life needs. Regarding community intervention, social workers play a central role in coordinating the system at the local level. "All community organizations and public institutions working with the selected population are invited to participate in the local network" (Saracostti, 2008, p. 570). Lastly, social workers involved in macro policy intervention coordinate efforts with other ministries to secure and extend complementary services to this population (Saracostti, 2008).

Finally, a study developed by Galasso (2006) about the effectiveness of the Chilean program shows that, in general, the program tends to improve education and health outcomes of participants, and increases the use of social programs for housing and employment. However, there is no evidence that employment programs translate into outcomes related to producing income in the short term. Galasso (2006) suggested that "psycho-social support has been a key component because it increases awareness of social services in the community as well as households' orientation towards the future" (p. 1). Further, it seems that the Chilean program has had certain difficulties in achieving its stated goal of strengthening community participation. The program may unleash processes of isolation, since it did not strengthen family and community networks because it has linked families to public social services only through promoters (Raczynski & Serrano, as cited by Valencia, 2008). Further research is needed in order to obtain a clearer picture of every component of the program and its outcomes in addressing the stated goals.

Final Remarks

CCT programs are considered by scholars and policymakers as a new strategy to addressing extreme poverty. CCT programs are a good example of strengthening government's capacity to redistribute resources. It is undeniable that there are many poor households which benefit from these programs, and that the programs cover basic needs that otherwise would go unmet. However, it is also clear that CCT programs are not an exclusive solution. These programs are not totally new. In fact, they are typical responses to historical and economic consequences of poverty in Latin America. The expected

translation of human capital investments into higher earnings cannot be taken for granted, as it is mediated by the quality of the services, opportunities for employment, and absorption of skilled labor into the economic structure of the countries.

In the end, CCT programs are only a small part of necessary changes to improve social protection programs in Latin America which are aimed at eradicating extreme poverty. They must be interrelated with other structural reforms if governments really want to fight the roots of poverty. Social work can help inform these programs by deconstructing the underlying economists' assumptions and putting on the table social scientists' concerns about opportunities for full participation in the community, human rights, and challenges related to both psycho-social and socio-economic conditions.

Acknowledgements: The author thanks professors Margaret Severson and Chris Jensen Sundstrom at the University of Kansas for their guidance and helpful comments.

References

- Attanasio, O., Fitzsimons, E., Gomez, A., Lopez, D., Meghir, C., & Mesnard, A. (2008). *Child education and work choices in the presence of a conditional cash transfer programme in rural Colombia*. London: The Institute for Fiscal Studies.
- Bivort, B., & Martinez, S. (2009). Policies to eradicate extreme poverty in Chile: A critical analysis of the Puente programme. *Journal of Health Management*, 11(1), 143-155.
- Bourguignon, F., Ferreira, F., & Leite, P. (2002). *Ex-ante evaluation of conditional cash transfer programs: The case of Bolsa Escola*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- Britto, T. (2005). *Recent trends in the development agenda of Latin America: An analysis of conditional cash transfers*. Brazil: Ministry of Social Development.
- Coady, D., & Parker, S. (2002). *A cost-effectiveness analysis of demand- and supply-side education interventions: The case of PROGRESA in Mexico*. Discussion Paper No. 127. International Food Policy Research Institute.
- Cuesta, J. (2007). Field report: On more ambitious conditional cash transfers, social protection, and permanent reduction of poverty. *Journal of International Development*, 19, 1016-1019.
- Dammert, A. (2009). Heterogeneous impacts of conditional cash transfers: Evidence from Nicaragua. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 58, 53-83.

- Das, J., Do, Q-T., & Ozler, B. (2005). Reassessing conditional cash transfer programs. *The World Bank Observer*, 20(1), 57-80.
- De Ferranti, D., Perry, G., Ferreira, F., & Walton, M. (2004). *Inequality in Latin America: Breaking with history?* Washington: The World Bank Latin America and Caribbean Studies.
- Galasso, E. (2006). *With their effort and one opportunity: Alleviating extreme poverty in Chile*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, Development Research Group.
- Garland, A. (2000). The politics and administration of social development in Latin America. In J. Tulchin & A. Garland (Eds.), *Social development in Latin America: The politics of reform* (pp. ??). Colorado: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.
- Glewwe, P., & Kassouf, A. (2008). *The impact of the Bolsa Escola/ Familia conditional cash transfer program on enrollment, grade promotion and drop out rates in Brazil*. Paper presented at the Mid-West International Economic Development Conference. Madison, Wisconsin, May 2.
- Glewwe, P., & Olinto, P. (2004). *Evaluating the impact of conditional cash transfers on schooling: An experimental analysis of Honduras' PRAF program*. Final Report. Department of Applied Economics. University of Minnesota.
- Gitter, S., & Barham B. (2008). Women's power, conditional cash transfers, and schooling in Nicaragua. *The World Bank Economic Review*, 22(2), 271-290.
- Gundlach, E., Navarro de Pablo, J., & Weisert, N. (2001). *Education is good for the poor*. Discussion Paper No. 2001/137. World Institute for Development Economics Research.
- Handa, S., & Davis, B. (2006). The experience of conditional cash transfers in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Development Policy Review*, 24(5), 513-536.
- Inter-American Development Bank. (1998). *Facing up the inequality in Latin America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Jordan, B. (2008). Social work and world poverty. *International Social Work*, 51(4), 440-452.
- Lera, A. (2009). Conditional cash transfers: The need for an integrated and historical perspective. *Global Social Policy*, 9, 177-179.
- Londono, J., & Szekely, M. (1997). *Persistent poverty and excess inequality: Latin America, 1970-1995*. Working Paper 357. Office of Chief Economist Inter-American Development Bank.
- Morely, S., & Coady, D. (2003). *From social assistance to social development: Targeted education subsidies in developing countries*. Washington, D.C.: Center of Global Development, International Food Policy Research Institute.
- Nayaran, D., Patel, R., Schafft, K., Rademacher, A., & Koch-Schulte, Initial?. (2000). *Voices of the poor: Can anyone hear us?* New York: World Bank, Oxford University Press.
- Oosterbeek, H., Ponce, J., & Schady, N. (2008). *The impact of cash transfers on school enrollment*. Discussion Paper 037/4. Tinbergen Institute.

- Ortiz, L. (2007). *Social policy: National development strategies. Policy Notes*. New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Retrieved from http://esa.un.org/techcoop/documents/PN_SocialPolicyNote.pdf.
- Parker, S., & Teruel, G. (2005). Randomization and social program evaluation: The case of Progresa. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 599, 199-219.
- Ram, R. (1989). Can educational expansion reduce income inequality in less-developed countries? *Economics of Education Review*, 8, 185.
- Rawlings, L. (2005). A new approach to social assistance: Latin America's experience with conditional cash transfer programmes. *International Social Security Review*, 58(2-3), 133-161.
- Rawlings, L., & Rubio, G. (2005). Evaluating the impact of conditional cash transfer programs. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 20(1), 29-55.
- Reimers, F., DeShano, C., & Trevino, E. (2006). *Where is the "education" in conditional cash transfers in education?* Working Paper No. 4. Canada: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.
- Saracostti, M. (2008). The Chile Solidario system: The role of social work. *International Social Work*, 51(4), 566-572.
- Schady, N., & Araujo, M. (2006). *Cash transfers, conditions, school enrollment, and child work: Evidence from a randomized experiment in Ecuador*. The World Bank, Development Economic Research Group. Mimeo.
- Schmidt, F., & Hunter, J. (1998). The validity and utility of selection methods in personnel psychology: Practical and theoretical implications of 85 years of research findings. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124(2), 262-274.
- Schultz, P. (2004). "School subsidies for the poor: Evaluating the Mexican Progresa poverty program. *Journal of Development Economics*, 74(1), 199-250.
- Sen, A., & Dreze, J. (1989). *Hunger and public action*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Tarabini, A. (2008). Educational targeting in the fight against poverty: Limits, omissions and opportunities. *Globalization, Societies and Education*, 6(4), 415-429.
- Valencia, E. (2008). Conditional cash transfers as social policy in Latin America: An assessment of their contributions and limitations. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 34, 475-499.
- Valencia, E. (2009). Conditional cash transfer programs: Achievements and illusions. *Global Social Policy*, 9, 167-171.
- Veit-Wilson, J. (2009). Who sets the conditions? Conditionality, reciprocity, human rights and inclusion in society. *Global Social Policy*, 9, 171-17.

Child Support as Labor Regulation

YIYOON CHUNG

University of Wisconsin–Madison
School of Social Work

The development of child support policy over the past three decades provides an emblematic case study of the ways in which a new policy that reflects the rise of moral arguments about individual and family responsibility, once established, produces significant consequences for both the economic sphere and political dialogues. I use social control theory to examine a rarely appreciated consequence of child support policies: labor regulation. Particularly, I demonstrate the ways in which the discourse embedded in child support has exalted the importance of work even under the lowest terms, and has deflected public attention away from labor market issues.

Key words: child support, welfare, labor regulation, social control theory, parental responsibility, social constructions, noncustodial fathers, family discourse

The development of the child support system over the past three decades provides an emblematic case study of the ways in which a new policy that reflects the rise of moral arguments about individual and family responsibility, once established, produces significant consequences for both the economic sphere and political dialogues. In this paper, I use social control theory to examine a rarely appreciated economic and political consequence of child support policies: labor regulation. In addition, I describe the ways in which a view of family that glorifies male bread-winners supporting their families through paid work is enmeshed in this process.

Americans have experienced increasing inequality and insecurity for the last three decades (Hacker, Mettler, & Soss, *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, September 2011, Volume XXXVIII, Number 3

2007). Real wages have declined for younger and less-educated workers, and inequality in wages, income, and wealth have grown sharply (APSA Task Force, 2004; Card & Dinardo, 2006; DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Lee, 2006). Despite such economic hardships, most changes in tax law and social policies have reduced the government's role in providing opportunities and security for poor and middle-class Americans, while expanding the scope and size of benefits for the well-off (Hacker et al., 2007). During the same period, the alleged lack of family values and individual responsibility among the poor has increasingly been at the forefront of the public policy agenda, both as a primary cause of the nation's ills and as an area ripe for reform. Within this context, public attention has been deflected away from new and pervasive economic insecurities and inequalities and toward the poor as individuals.

Over the last few decades, as politicians, members of the public, and scholars paid particular attention to welfare and poverty issues and sought to account for the causes of persistent poverty among single-mother families, noncustodial fathers have increasingly been blamed for failing to fulfill their parental responsibilities. For example, Mead (2007a) argued that "low-income men, often the absent fathers of welfare families ... seldom work regularly, and this helps to keep families poor." At the center of this trend, Americans have become familiar with images of deadbeat dads, men who are behind in paying child support and who are portrayed as irresponsible enough to leave their children in poverty. At the same time, the construction of deadbeat dads was increasingly employed as a representation of the nation's social problems. Noncustodial fathers have not only been held morally responsible for their children's poverty, but have even been described as criminal; for example, in a 1996 speech, President Clinton compared not paying child support to robbing a bank (U.S. Newswire, 1996).

In responding to this supposed epidemic of deadbeat dads, federal and state governments have made increasing efforts to enforce noncustodial fathers' parental responsibility through child support policies. Among the enforcement laws, the Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act of 1998 established new categories of felony offenses that targeted fathers who were not paying their child support, and enforced punishments of

up to a 2-year prison term. Overall, child support policies have become not only a political arena for expressing and emphasizing moral arguments about parental responsibility, but also a site for offering specific enforcement tools to achieve moral edicts.

In an era of persistent poverty and growing inequality, however, questions remain regarding the effects of using child support enforcement to increase the emphasis on parental responsibility. Following the passage of legislation such as the Family Support Act of 1988, which required states to implement automatic wage withholding for child support payments (Rothe, Ha, & Sosulski, 2004), child support is now automatically deducted from fathers' paychecks; thus, these payments are increasingly out of the fathers' control if their jobs are in the formal labor market. At this point, fathers who do not pay full child support are those who do not have formal earnings sufficient for withholding. In fact, using data from the National Survey of America's Families (NSAF), Sorensen and Zibman (2001) estimated that 43 percent of all noncustodial fathers—not only the noncustodial fathers of children on welfare—who made no child support payments were poor themselves, even when both formal and informal earnings were considered. Nonetheless, over the past three decades, an increasing connection has been drawn between parental responsibility and child support; the assumption is that the primary cause of non-payment is the noncustodial fathers' irresponsibility and the appropriate policy to amend this problem is to increase enforcement of child support payments. Therefore, it is essential to examine the specific ways in which child support policies as a tool for promoting parental responsibility produce economic and political consequences.

Social control theory, advanced by Piven and Cloward, provides a framework to pursue such an investigation. In their book *Regulating the Poor*, Piven and Cloward (1993) pointed out two functions of welfare: (1) moderating political disorder by the expansion of its provision during periods of mass protest; and (2) forcing the poor into the labor market by its contraction and its degradation of welfare recipients after the cessation of mass protests. This paper focuses on the period after 1974, when the United States began to develop and implement a comprehensive federal child support policy, and when the

occurrence of mass protests declined; therefore, I will focus on the second function as I explain the functions of child support as modeled on the welfare system. Piven and Cloward (1993) demonstrated the economic and political functions of welfare as a social control device in the labor market. Similarly, this research examines the economic and political functions of child support as labor regulation. Although much research on child support has considered child support to be justified by moral principles related to parental responsibility, the economic and political consequences of the moral argument that is reinforced by child support have been examined less thoroughly.

The application of social control theory to the case of child support suggests that child support policies function to regulate labor in two ways. First, child support enforcement attempts to push noncustodial fathers into the labor market, which, if successful, may over-populate the labor market and decrease wages and working conditions for all employees. However, since noncustodial fathers may disappear from the labor market to avoid child support enforcement measures such as income withholding, the actual effects of child support enforcement on fathers' work might not be those intended by child support policy. Indeed, the evidence for this first function is inconsistent. However, even the failure of the first function is support for social control theory as long as the second process is operating.

The second way in which child support regulates labor entails the symbolic dimension of child support policies. Child support policies consolidate ideas that degrade noncustodial fathers via attributing poverty among children primarily to noncustodial fathers' misbehavior rather than to systemic problems in the labor market or a lack of adequate social policies for families. In addition, child support policies promote a view that emphasizes the value of a narrowly defined sense of family autonomy in which male bread-winners support their families through paid work, even in the context of the lowest market rewards. The second manner of labor regulation leads the general public to alienate these fathers, and therefore deflects public attention away from insufficient labor market opportunities for low- and moderate-income people; this, in turn, leads to a lack of support for anti-poverty programs and

a lack of labor-friendly policy. Taken together, these result in the decline of productive labor regulation, particularly with respect to wages, working conditions, and both the bargaining power and political mobilization of labor.

The functions of child support I consider in this paper are true of all child support, but I focus on the relationship between the child support system and noncustodial fathers of children who have been on welfare, and consider the broader impacts of this relationship. Such particular attention does not lead to an overly narrow focus, because the majority of cases of child support enforcement have been for fathers who are associated with current or former welfare recipients. This has always been true, although the proportions of children who have been on welfare among child support enforcement case-loads have continually dropped between 1975 and 2007, from nearly all cases in 1975 to 60 percent in 2007 (Office of Child Support Enforcement [OCSE], 2008).

Furthermore, the historical development of child support policy justifies the explicit restriction of the paper's focus: federal child support policy was created as part of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC), and child support enforcement originated out of a concern for recouping a portion of government expenditures for welfare (Abramovitz, 1988; Cancian & Meyer, 2004). Finally, even though child support enforcement now reaches a greater proportion of noncustodial fathers whose children have not received welfare, researchers argue that child support, because it started and was developed as part of welfare, entails regulations that are invasive of privacy and punitive to all families who receive the services (Brito, 1999). Thus, the link of child support to families on welfare is a crucial starting point from which to explore the function of child support.

This paper shares common ground with previous research that examines factors affecting child support outcomes, often in conjunction with welfare (Cancian & Meyer, 2004, 2006; Carlson, Garfinkel, McLanahan, Mincy, & Primus, 2004; Freeman & Waldfogel, 1998; Garfinkel, Miller, McLanahan, & Hanson, 1998; Sorensen & Zibman, 2001), and with research that focuses on the social control functions of welfare (Abramovitz, 1988; Gordon, 1990; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990;

Piven & Cloward, 1993). Social control theory has been applied to the areas of welfare and incarceration, but has been utilized less in the study of child support, so understanding child support through the lens of social control theory is an important contribution of this research. While I use the first body of literature mentioned above—consisting primarily of empirical studies—to draw support for the claims I make, many of the studies take different perspectives on the system and have different theoretical backgrounds. Therefore, this research sets out to bridge these two bodies of study by explaining how child support functions to regulate labor.

Additionally, in explaining the second way in which child support policies function as labor regulation, the study considers moral arguments about parental responsibility embedded in child support. In order to expand the scope of this second process, this study expands on another body of research that investigates the symbolic dimensions of policies (Crowley, Watson, & Waller, 2008; Fineman, 2004; Schneider & Ingram, 1997; Soss, 2005; Stone, 1989).

Reconceptualizing the function of child support as labor regulation does not suggest that the ideas of either child support or labor regulation are in themselves negative. Indeed, all societies regulate labor at different levels, and, given different settings and policy designs, child support might have supported the labor of noncustodial fathers. Instead, the argument is that child support is not limited to its previously perceived functions: saving money for the government; reducing poverty among single-mother families; and enhancing parental responsibility. Among the advantages an insight into the regulating function of child support provides, are developing a perspective on the structural causes of inequality and poverty and initiating the first step toward vigorous discussions about labor policies that are supportive of those who have low or moderate means.

Three Perceived Functions of Child Support

Before demonstrating the function of child support as labor regulation in the following section, in this section I outline the multiple, sometimes conflicting, functions of child support

policy that have been recognized by policy makers, scholars, and the general public. This will provide a sense of what is missing in the current discussion of the function of child support policy. It is often assumed that child support policy functions, or at least ideally should function, in one of three primary ways: (1) saving money for the government; (2) alleviating poverty among single-mother families; or (3) enforcing parental responsibilities of noncustodial parents for their biological children (Josephson, 1997; Waller & Plotnick, 2001).

Saving Money for Governments

Many researchers have pointed out that reducing the cost of governmental expenditures on welfare was the primary goal of the federal child support program at its creation in 1974, and has always been a significant goal (Brito, 1999; Josephson, 1997; Solomon, 1982). The government set out to save money directly by retaining all or most of the child support paid on behalf of welfare recipients (savings are measured by the government's share of collections minus overall expenditures).² The initial federal child support program (enacted in 1975) was almost entirely limited to families receiving AFDC, and all the child support payments made on behalf of these families were retained by the government. In fact, between 1975 and 1988, the government realized direct savings via child support.

However, the child support system has expanded to include an increasing number of non-welfare cases; as a result, since 1989 the government's expenditures on child support enforcement have exceeded the child support collections the government has retained. This change in the child support budget reflects, and also leads to, a shift in child support policies from a direct money-saving device to a social service program that can be justified by other social functions despite its net positive spending. Despite this change, the child support system still has another component of saving money for tax payers that is the indirect savings that can be realized by helping some welfare recipients get off welfare and by preventing many otherwise poor single mothers from entering the welfare system. In this paper, however, I do not discuss these indirect savings extensively because, to the extent that the child support system

shifts toward serving as a social service program, the indirect savings cannot be the sole justification or measure of success; the effect of child support in reducing poverty among single-mother families must also be taken into consideration (Kurz & Hirsch, 2003).

Alleviating Poverty among Single-Mother Families

Members of the general public, as well as many scholars, believe that child support does, or at least should, alleviate poverty among single-mother families (Meyer & Hu, 1999; Nichols-Casebolt, 1986, 1992; Waller & Plotnick, 2001). Nonetheless, because welfare recipients have been required to sign over their rights to child support to the state, much of the child support paid by fathers of children receiving welfare has been withheld by governments and has not been transferred to families. Although the proportion of child support enforcement caseloads associated with mothers currently receiving welfare dropped from 85 percent in 1977 to 14 percent in 2007 (OCSE, 2008), because these mothers constitute one of the most vulnerable and poorest groups in society, the states' practices toward this population are still an important consideration in assessing the function of child support as a device to reduce poverty among single-mother families. In addition, in 2007, 60 percent of child support enforcement caseloads were cases where custodial mothers received welfare (14 percent of current and 46 percent of former welfare recipients), and at least some child support payments made on behalf of their children were diverted to the government. Given the government practices toward single-mother families receiving welfare, poverty reduction seems to be neither a consistent nor a primary justification of child support policy (Cancian & Meyer, 2004; Hirsch, 1988; Pate, 2002).

Despite this, some observers argue that child support does reduce poverty among children because most child support paid on behalf of children not receiving welfare is actually passed through to the custodial-parent families. Further, it has often been claimed, as by Harris, that many families would no longer be poor and, consequently, would not need welfare, if child support were paid (Josephson, 1997). Finally, many researchers have supported the positive potential of child

support to reduce poverty among single-mother families by reporting that noncustodial fathers could provide more, based on the average earnings for all noncustodial fathers, not just those associated with children receiving welfare (Garfinkel et al., 1998; Sorensen, 1997).

However, there has been skepticism about the effectiveness of child support as a fundamental solution to poverty among single-mother families. First, although not all noncustodial fathers are poor, a significant portion of the noncustodial fathers who do not pay child support are poor (Sorensen & Zibman, 2001). Second, research in the area has reported many barriers facing noncustodial fathers, in particular fathers of children receiving welfare, as they attempt to comply with the child support system. Cancian and Meyer (2004) showed that, among noncustodial fathers of children receiving welfare in Wisconsin, only about one in five had an education beyond high school. Furthermore, in their qualitative analysis, Crowley et al. (2008) reported that fathers of children on welfare often resided within neighborhoods with high crime and incarceration rates and rampant societal racism. Using data on all fathers of nonmarital children—not only the fathers of nonmarital children on welfare—Chung (2011) estimated that over 10 percent were in prison more than 12 months between the child's birth and age five. Given the limited income potential and environmental constraints of many noncustodial fathers, the effects of strengthening child support enforcement on poverty reduction among single-mother families may not be significant enough to justify the costs to fathers.

Indeed, research has indicated the limitations of the actual and potential roles of child support in reducing poverty among children. The high rates of post-child-support poverty found in previous studies (see Cancian & Meyer, 2006; Sorensen & Zibman, 2001) may indicate not only the alleged failure of child support enforcement, but also the limited potential of private child support as a device to reduce poverty among single-mother families. Sorensen and Wheaton (1994) estimated that even if all custodial mothers had child support awards and received full child support (while holding current awards levels constant), poverty among single-mother families would fall by just 3 percent. Given this context, even when

child support obligations are effectively enforced among non-custodial fathers, the high poverty rate among single-mother families in the United States would be insoluble and far higher than the poverty rates for their counterparts in many European countries (Christopher, 2002). In sum, the second perceived function of child support—the reduction of poverty among single-mother families—appears to be undermined by a range of factors within the child support system.

Enforcing Parental Responsibility

The moral argument about parental responsibility of non-custodial parents not only motivated the creation of the federal child support program in 1975 and subsequent enforcement tools, but also gained increasing attention in the discussion of child support. From this perspective, and given the earlier findings that direct savings via child support have not been realized since 1989 and that the reduction of poverty has not been the primary focus of child support, it is reasonable to claim that parental responsibility appears to be the most consistent justification for child support policy.

While in the previous two subsections, I discussed whether the first two perceived functions of child support have worked effectively, I do not attempt to answer the question of whether child support enforcement actually promotes parental responsibility. It is because neither a negative nor a positive answer to the question would undermine the main point: it is important to investigate the economic and political consequences of emphasizing the moral argument about parental responsibility that is embedded in and reinforced by child support policies. Despite their importance, these consequences have rarely been examined.

Emphasizing the norm of fathers' financial responsibilities through child support enforcement has different effects across class and race. From its inception, the child support enforcement system has been disproportionately aimed at the poor, particularly poor men of color (despite the trend over time for the system to move away from focusing only on the poor). First, child support enforcement has produced more negative consequences for low-income fathers than for high-income fathers. Low-income fathers have been more likely than

high-income fathers to be subject to the formal child support enforcement system (Lyon, 1999). This is due in great part to the fact that low-income fathers are likely to partner with mothers receiving welfare, and these mothers are required to participate in the formal child support program. Child support enforcement has led to more regulatory and punitive consequences for low-income noncustodial fathers, not only because the formal child support enforcement system restricts and regulates the means of support and the timing of payments, but also because child support enforcement tools are punitive, even to the point of involving incarceration. Furthermore, low-income noncustodial fathers tend to receive child support orders constituting a higher proportion of their income, and thus face larger burdens than those with high incomes (Cancian & Meyer, 2006; Turetsky, 2000).

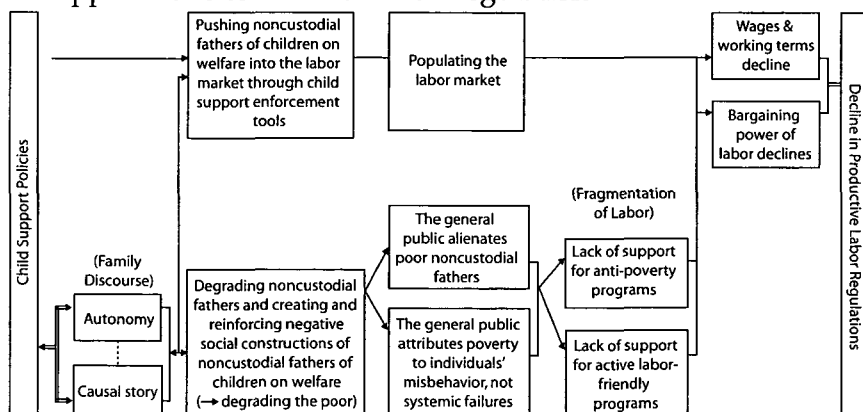
In addition to low-income fathers, child support enforcement has had disproportionate impacts on men of color. This is in part because, as described earlier, the child support system disadvantages payers with low incomes, and minority noncustodial fathers tend to have lower incomes than their white counterparts. Further, the fact that the amounts in child support orders often remain unadjusted while fathers are in prison disproportionately affects men of color because incarceration rates for minorities have been disproportionately high (Mauer, 1997; Pettit & Western, 2004; Western, 2006; Western & McLanahan, 2000). Given these trends, it is clear that, even though race has seldom appeared overtly in the discussion about child support, emphasizing the seemingly race-neutral concept of parental responsibility and strengthening and adding punitive enforcement tools to the child support system produce disproportionate consequences for men of color.

Many scholars go even further and argue that the child support policy has actually been racially motivated (Hansen, 1999; Maldonado, 2006). Hansen (1999, p. 1123) argues that one of the most important characteristics of modern child support is "a racially inflected blaming of African-American fathers." Because deadbeat dads have often been pictured as African American men, the child support argument that blames deadbeat dads serves to point toward African American men as a small, but visible, troubling group whose misbehaviors

are both a cause of the national problem and a target for governmental reform. Therefore, blaming noncustodial fathers for their children's poverty and drawing on child support as the solution may result in the condemnation of minority noncustodial fathers.

Without mentioning class and race, child support, by focusing on parental responsibility, has permitted people to talk about whether and how society should force low-income fathers, particularly low-income fathers of color, to work. From this perspective, the economic and political effects of the child support system reach not only those officially enrolled in the system, but also society members who are economically disadvantaged and/or racial minorities. Building on these observations and embracing social control theory, in the next section I provide a further, perhaps more critical, insight: the scope of those who bear the economic and political consequences of the child support system encompasses all workers. As explained in the following section, labor regulation is at the heart of this political process.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Ways in Which Child Support Policies Lead to Labor Regulation



Child Support as Labor Regulation

The application of social control theory to the child support system suggests two ways in which child support can lead to labor regulation. Figure 1 illustrates these two processes: one occurs through the attempts to enforce fathers' labor market

participation and the other occurs through discursive practices, reflecting and reinforcing negative social constructions of noncustodial fathers and a specific set of meanings about family.

Pushing Poor Noncustodial Fathers into the Labor Market

The major income source of noncustodial fathers of children receiving welfare is earnings; therefore, enforcing payment translates into enforcing work. The underlying assumption of child support policy is that child support enforcement will lead fathers to work. Some child support enforcement tools require fathers who are behind in child support to seek jobs and to report their job search records to the agency on a regular basis (with a consequence of incarceration in the case of non-compliance). Additionally, a great deal of research has focused on testing the effects of child support policy on fathers' work activities (Cancian, Heinrich, & Chung, 2009; Freeman & Waldfogel, 1998; Holzer, Offner, & Sorensen, 2005; Rich, Garfinkel, & Gao, 2007).

Although the perspective that child support as a policy concerns noncustodial fathers' work is not new, social control theory offers further insights into the hypothetical, and mostly ignored, effects of child support on the broader labor market. If child support successfully pushes noncustodial fathers into the labor market, this might tighten the labor market, which would result in a declining general wage rate and worsening working conditions in the labor market (Piven & Cloward, 1993). The law of supply and demand predicts that if the supply of labor increases, wages can be expected to fall. In particular, the degradation of wages and benefits would have particularly strong consequences for those who work in low-wage labor markets, since these markets are where many of the noncustodial fathers whom the child support enforcement system targets for enforcement are likely to seek and find jobs (Cancian & Meyer, 2006; Sorensen & Zibman, 2001). As a policy affecting labor market conditions, child support will be counterproductive if it weakens the working conditions of workers in low-wage labor markets. Of all those in the labor market, this group has experienced the greatest decline in economic rewards since the 1970s (Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin,

& Palma, forthcoming); therefore, the potentially negative consequences of child support enforcement for this group should be of particular concern.

In addition, Piven and Cloward (1993) explore the consequences of an increased labor supply for the bargaining power of workers. Their explanation focuses on the Marxist idea of a reserve army of labor, which basically refers to the unemployed individuals in a capitalist society (Piven & Cloward, 1993, p. 355). The authors claim that capitalists use this population to weaken and divide the working class. When the labor market is saturated with people seeking jobs, employees are less likely to boldly demand better wages and working conditions from employers due to the fear of being replaced by someone in that pool. Therefore, if child support successfully compels more noncustodial fathers of children receiving welfare to search for jobs, to enter the labor market, and to work more, the copious supply of labor will function as a threat to the economic security of a broader range of workers, while serving the interests of employers.

However, as Piven and Cloward (1993) point out, the attempt to regulate labor often meets with resistance. Hence, child support becomes both a site of labor regulation (in terms of the government enforcing child support payments) and a site of resistance to the regulation by the noncustodial fathers.¹ Income withholding has been the most popular and effective method used by states to enforce child support payments (Rothe et al., 2004). In response, poor noncustodial fathers may disappear from the formal labor market in order to prevent their earnings from being discovered and withheld by the government (Holzer et al., 2005). Some may take jobs in the underground economy.

In spite of the fathers' resistance, however, the government has developed ways to enhance enforcement, such as seizing property, revoking driving and professional licenses, and even incarcerating those who are behind in paying child support (Rothe et al., 2004). All of these enforcement methods may work as threats to push noncustodial fathers to work in order to pay child support. However, once any of the enforcement tools are utilized, it may make securing employment more difficult for noncustodial fathers.

Not surprisingly, given this context, studies have reported conflicting results about the effects of child support enforcement on fathers' labor market outcomes. Using data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation, Freeman and Waldfogel (1998) found positive effects of child support enforcement on noncustodial fathers' employment in the formal labor market. Using data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, Rich et al. (2007) found marginally positive effects of states' child support enforcement on all noncustodial fathers' formal work hours. In contrast, in a multivariate analysis using both individual- and state-level data, Holzer et al. (2005) found that child support enforcement decreased employment activity among black men ages 25-34. Cancian, Heinrich, and Chung (2009) reported that higher levels of child support arrears (followed by child support enforcement) reduced formal earnings, particularly for those who had consistent work histories.

If the contrasting efforts of government regulation and fathers' resistance to these regulations cancel one another out and result in fathers' disappearance from the labor market, child support enforcement would not necessarily intensify competition for low-paying jobs and subsequently cheapen labor. However, the failure of the child support system in pushing noncustodial fathers into the labor market is not contradictory to, but provides support for, social control theory. Piven and Cloward (1993, p. 381) made the point that welfare programs, which seem to have failed because they have not successfully pushed single mothers into the work force, have, in fact, succeeded because "they helped communicate meanings which reinforced labor discipline." Similarly, I argue that, in addition to investigating the direct mode of pushing noncustodial fathers into the labor market, it is necessary to examine other, indirect ways that child support policies function to regulate labor. Specifically, it is imperative to examine the rhetorical practices that, in order to sanctify the virtue of work no matter the terms, reflect and reinforce both a specific set of meanings about family and the negative social constructions of noncustodial fathers.

Degrading Noncustodial Fathers of Children Receiving Welfare

In order to assess the nuances of the symbolic dimension of child support, I consider the moral arguments about parental responsibility as a discourse that has been entrenched in child support policies, and take advantage of research that focuses on the symbolic dimension of policies. Discourse, as a social theory, was first introduced by Foucault (1973, 1995; Foucault & Gordon, 1980), and has been elaborated in many different ways by post-structuralists (Hiemstra, 2004). The working definition of discourse employed in this paper is a set of closely related meanings that not only are affected by existing power relations but also actively create power relations. A discourse embedded within a policy may reinforce itself via its influence on specific policy rules and the social construction of target populations.

Particularly, I consider the moral argument about parental responsibility embedded in child support policies as part of a discourse about family. The family discourse unfolds as an attempt to pin down the boundaries, role, and importance of family (i.e., an autonomous family = one man, one woman, and biological children, in which men should work and provide for the family). Even when the family form does not match the ideal within the family discourse—i.e., fathers are not living with children—the clearest norm enforced in child support is the financial responsibility of biological parents to support their own children through paid work.

The family discourse reinforces itself via its influence on the operation of child support policies. Child support enforcement tools include various public rituals that degrade noncustodial fathers and therefore affirm the family discourse. Child support policy scrutinizes noncustodial fathers' behaviors such as work, fertility, and even sexual relationships with their female partners, and places their behaviors on the agenda of public arguments. In addition, child support enforcement degrades noncustodial fathers by treating non-payers as criminals. Such policy rituals exalt the importance of a bread-winner supporting his family members through paid work even when market rewards are low. From this perspective, the irony of incarcerating fathers for non-payment (incarceration does not help them support their children and even prevents them from doing so, and in addition is costly to the government) begins

to make sense; the ritual of incarcerating non-payers affirms the family discourse and exalts the importance of work at any terms.

The family discourse that the child support system embraces sends a set of negative messages about noncustodial fathers of children receiving welfare. Of the two messages I consider in this paper, the first is that noncustodial fathers of children receiving welfare fail to achieve autonomy. In the philosophical and political rhetoric concerning poverty, autonomy is one of the core tenets that Americans espouse (Ellwood, 1988). In most discussions, autonomy is narrowly defined as being accountable for oneself and one's dependents via paid labor (Fineman, 2004, p. 9). In this vision, autonomy is assumed to be attainable by every individual/family, so the failure to achieve autonomy is often attributed to the moral defects of individuals, such as laziness and irresponsibility.

In his discussion of autonomy, Ellwood (1988, p. 16) explained that Americans believe that they have a significant degree of control over their destinies, and that any individual willing to make the necessary sacrifices can provide for him- or herself. Fathers of children receiving welfare are viewed as lacking the determination to do what is required. Mead (2007a) summarized the alleged deterioration of the work ethic among the poor: "many cannot endure the slights and disappointments that work involves. That's why poor men usually can obtain jobs yet seldom keep them." The failure of noncustodial fathers to achieve economic autonomy is often identified as the alternative side of the problem of dependency, both their own and the dependency of families on welfare. This concept of the autonomy of family flows through the rest of the discursive practices surrounding child support.

Noncustodial fathers are consistently degraded by causal stories that assert that the fathers are the cause of poverty among single-mother families. Stone (1989) defines a causal story as a discourse that describes harms and difficulties, attributes their causes and responsibilities to the actions of other individuals or organizations, and invokes society's power to stop the harm. The causal story maintained by the child support system tells the general public that the poverty of single-mother families is caused by noncustodial parents' irresponsibility and refusal to work or to get married (Mead, 1993, 2007b; Rector, 2001). Mead

(2007a) claimed that the fathers of children receiving welfare seldom work regularly, and this "helps to keep families poor." Rector (2001, p. 63) argued that "the collapse of marriage is the principal cause of child poverty and a host of other social ills." The flip side of such causal stories is the assumption that poverty could be reduced by enforcing the parental responsibility of noncustodial parents (e.g., enforcing child support payments and work). The causal story, reinforced by a narrowly defined concept of autonomy, is used to call for government intervention in the alleged problems. The outcome is punitive child support enforcement, which continues to encourage the transmission of the messages that further degrade these fathers.

Because the discursive practices surrounding child support both create negative constructions of noncustodial fathers and reinforce the existing negative views of them, these fathers are more likely to be seen as irresponsible noncustodial parents of poor children than as a group of disadvantaged citizens who need help from society. Degrading images of noncustodial fathers of children receiving welfare establish the belief that these men are morally deficient and are not on equal standing with the general public, especially with regard to social rights and governmental concern and support. Consequently, the members of the general public tend to alienate these fathers. In this process of alienation, these fathers are singled out, recognized as a troubled group due to their specific behaviors (non-work or non-marriage), and used as a symbol of national ills. The failures of the economic system are occluded by this moral discourse, which places the responsibility for poverty on a small but visible group. As Piven (1995, p. xiii) noted, the blame placed on poor individuals functions to "divert widespread public discontent over the shocks of economic decline and changing social mores."

The pervasive influence of the family discourse, strengthened through child support policies, has weakened policies that benefit the working class. For example, Fineman (2004, p. 271) suggested a broader concept of autonomy—allowing choice to be made and to be meaningful. This broadened concept of autonomy calls for governments to ensure that each individual has the basic necessary resources to realize autonomy. However, the moral argument embedded in the

discussion of parental responsibility via child support has excluded any discussion of this broader sense of autonomy. In addition, Stone (1989, p. 298) pointed out that causal stories can construct shared risk and benefit factors among a certain group of people, who may not have natural associations without the causal story, and therefore can mobilize them to take certain collective actions. Conversely, the moral argument concerning child support has encouraged divided alliances between non-custodial parents of poor children and others, in particular dividing noncustodial fathers from the rest of the working class.

The child support discourse has resulted in altering the working class's perception of their collective interests and the goals of political mobilization. Piven and Cloward (1993) emphasized that the working class has a stake in increasing its bargaining power with employers in support of systemic anti-poverty programs (including active labor policies and expanded cash and in-kind benefits for low-income families, regardless of family formation). They claimed that when people had an alternative means of income, they were not as likely to accept degrading forms of work that would not improve their situation. However, the child support discourse may reduce the interests of the working class in welfare programs and persuade them to oppose policies that are in their interest (Piven & Cloward, 1993). Emphasizing parental responsibility via child support has occluded the true nature of social problems in U.S. society. It has often masked the necessity of government support for low- and moderate-wage workers in the labor market and collective provisions for families with children. This obfuscation has thwarted beneficial initiatives put forth by labor organizations, which, in turn, has reduced wages and work benefits and decreased the power of labor to bargain with employers; in other words, it has resulted in the decline of the productive regulation of labor.

Conclusion

This paper examined three perceived functions of child support: saving money for the government, alleviating poverty in single-mother families, and enforcing parental responsibilities. Although the child support enforcement program experienced net gains between 1975 and 1988, the

government no longer saves money directly via the program. In addition, as shown above, child support has not effectively reduced poverty among children. The system has focused primarily on punitive enforcement tools and has provided few devices to help these fathers work and pay child support.

Although the limitations of child support as a solution for poverty among single-mother families are obvious, the government has favored rhetoric at the expense of practical accomplishments, such as improving the status of the most impoverished and weakest groups in society, while increasing spending on the administration of moral initiatives. The moral goal and approach of child support could be a method of supporting other goals such as reducing poverty among children living in single-mother families; however, as the current analysis demonstrates, this is not the case.

Although it may seem morally right for fathers to support their children, I focus on the fact that the rhetoric of parental responsibility itself has not proven to be very successful in encouraging fathers to perform that role. Even if it is true that responsible fathers are more likely to support their children, the literature has found that enforcing the responsibility does not, as a policy, work. Criticizing the behavior of noncustodial fathers of children receiving welfare is limited as a solution to poverty. For example, poverty can be exacerbated by fathers' withdrawal of informal support for their children and some fathers' withdrawal from the formal labor market, and by the reduction of anti-poverty programs due to reduced public support. Moreover, the entire working class is hurt by policies based on this moral discourse. Such policies lead to division and the devaluation of labor by attributing poverty to misbehavior and by taking attention away from the importance of anti-poverty programs and labor-friendly policies.

Poverty in recent decades has been caused by economic downturns and increased social inequality, and therefore cannot be resolved only by the horizontal redistribution of money from often poor fathers to relatively poorer mothers. Both welfare policy for single-mother families and the child support system should be revised. First, the connection between welfare and child support should be severed. In this scenario, welfare mothers would not have to assign their right

to child support to the state, and they would not have to cooperate with the child support system by identifying the child's father as a pre-condition for receiving public aid. All or most of the paid child support should be transferred to custodial-mother families. Additionally, the incentives of public aid such as Food Stamps or Medicaid, and the Earned Income Tax Credit should be extended to fathers with moderate or poor means who try to pay child support (Cancian & Meyer, 2006; Castillo, 2009; Mincy, Klempin, & Schmidt, 2010; Wheaton & Sorenson, 2009). In order to help single-mother families avoid economic hardship, child support assurance—a government guarantee of child support—should be considered (Cancian & Meyer 2006). Furthermore, it is important to recognize that a significant labor force is necessary for society and that maintaining a continuous labor force requires rearing children. Consequently, society should generally value and support families' efforts to rear children. Given that, family allowances—universal payments from government to families with children, regardless of family formation—could be considered.

Importantly, examining the ways in which child support regulates labor offers the insight that child support enforcement has had negative economic and political effects on the poor, the working class, and the labor market. If child support is seen as a labor policy aimed at the poor, in particular poor men of color, as I claim in this paper, labor-supportive devices in the child support system are obviously needed. In order to help poor parents perform their parental roles, more than moral admonition is needed. Rather, the reduction of poverty by collective provision is the larger solution.

A collective solution includes creating employment opportunities that provide both enough income for a decent standard of living and job-related benefits. Investments into social services such as health care, education, and job-training programs would also be important factors in this type of solution. Given the innumerable ways in which the poor are disadvantaged in the United States, researchers interested in policy options for improving the fortunes of less-skilled workers should look beyond outcomes related to fathers' behaviors—that is, compliance rates within the child support system and marriage and work patterns among the poor—which are the

customary dependent variables in much of the literature. In order to reduce poverty, future research should investigate the effectiveness of policy interventions in the labor market. In addition, research should explore which other forms of income-maintenance programs, such as family allowances, would effectively reduce poverty among single-mother families. Future research should also provide an empirical examination of the theoretical arguments concerning the function of child support in the regulation of labor that are included in the current paper.

Acknowledgements: I am grateful to Maria Cancian and Joe Soss for providing comments and suggestions over the multiple versions of the paper, and for support and guidance throughout this research. I thank Jay Gates, the editor of JSSW, and two anonymous reviewers for reviews and critiques; Hongmin Ahn, Brooke Wardle, Steve Cook, and Jennifer Eggerling-Boeck for discussions and suggestions; and Dawn Duren for help with preparing the manuscript.

References

- Abramovitz, M. (1988). *Regulating the lives of women: Social welfare policy from colonial times to the present*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- APSA Task Force. (2004). *American democracy in an age of rising inequality*. Report of Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy in the fall of 2002 approved by the Council of the American Political Science Association (APSA).
- Brito, T. L. (1999). The welfarization of family law. *University of Kansas Law Review*, 48, 229-284.
- Cancian, M., Heinrich, C., & Chung, Y. (2009). *Does debt discourage payment of child support? Evidence from a natural experiment* (Discussion Paper. No. 1366-09). Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty.
- Cancian, M., & Meyer, D. R. (2004). Fathers of children receiving welfare: Can they provide more child support? *Social Service Review*, 78(2), 179-206.
- Cancian, M., & Meyer, D. R. (2006). Child support and the economy. In R. M. Blank, S. Danziger & R. Schoeni (Eds.), *Working and poor: How economic and policy changes are affecting low-wage workers* (pp. 338-365). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

- Card, D., & DiNardo, J. (2006). The impact of technological change on low-wage workers: A review. In R. M. Blank, S. Danziger, & R. Schoeni (Eds.), *Working and poor: How economic and policy changes are affecting low-wage workers* (pp. 113-140). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Carlson, M., Garfinkel, I., McLanahan, S., Mincy, R., & Primus, W. (2004). The effects of welfare and child support policies on union formation. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 23(5-6), 513-542.
- Castillo, J. T. (2009). The relationship between non-resident fathers' social networks and social capital and the establishment of child support orders. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(5), 533-540.
- Center for Law and Social Policy. (2007). *State policy regarding pass-through and disregard of current month's child support collected for families receiving TANF-funded cash assistance*. Retrieved June 2009, from http://www.clasp.org/publications/pass_through_2007june01.pdf.
- Christopher, K. (2002). *Family-friendly Europe: Decent wages and generous social supports to reconcile work and parenting add up to a family policy that's smarter than marriage promotion*. Retrieved December 20, 2007, from http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Europe/Family_Friendly.html.
- Chung, Y. (2011). Children's exposure to paternal imprisonment: Incidence, evolution, and correlates among young nonmarital children. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(5), 575-587.
- Crowley, J., Watson, M., & Waller, M. (2008). Understanding "power talk": Language, public policy, and democracy. *Perspectives on Politics*, 6(01), 71-88.
- DeNavas-Walt, C., Proctor, B. D., & Lee, C. H. (2006). *Current population reports, P60-231: Income, poverty and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2005*. U.S. Department of Commerce and Census Bureau. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- Ellwood, D. T. (1988). *Poor support: Poverty in the American family*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Fineman, M. (2004). *The autonomy myth: A theory of dependency*. New York, NY: New Press.
- Foucault, M. (1973). *The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M., & Gordon, C. (Eds.) (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Freeman, R. B., & Waldfogel, J. (1998). Does child support enforcement policy affect male labor supply? In I. Garfinkel, S. McLanahan, D. R. Meyer & J. A. Seltzer (Eds.), *Fathers under fire: The revolution in child support enforcement* (pp. 94-127). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

- Garfinkel, I., Miller, C., McLanahan, S. S., & Hanson, T. L. (1998). Deadbeat dads or inept states? A comparison of child support enforcement systems. *Evaluation Review*, 22(6), 717-750.
- Gordon, L. (Ed.) (1990). Family violence, feminism, and social control. In *Women, the state, and welfare* (pp. 178-198). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Gottfredson, M. R., & Hirschi, T. (1990). *A general theory of crime*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hacker, J. S., Mettler, S., & Soss, J. (2007). The new politics of inequality: A policy-centered perspective. In J. Soss, J. S. Hacker, & S. Mettler (Eds.), *Remaking America: Democracy and public policy in an age of inequality* (pp. 3-24). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Hansen, D. D. (1999). The American invention of child support: Dependency and punishment in early American child support law. *Yale Law Journal*, 108(5), 1123-1153.
- Hiemstra, H. J. (2004). *Families of love: Foster-adoptive parents and family discourse*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
- Hirsch, A. E. (1988). Income deeming in the AFDC Program: Using dual track family law to make poor women poorer. *Review of Law and Social Change*, 16, 713-740.
- Holzer, H. J., Offner, P., & Sorensen, E. (2005). Declining employment among young black less-educated men: The role of incarceration and child support. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 24(2), 329-350.
- Josephson, J. (1997). *Gender, families, and state: Child support policy in the United States*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Kurz, D., & Hirsch, A. (2003). Welfare reform and child support policy in the United States. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 10(3), 397-412.
- Lyon, M. (1999). *Characteristics of families using Title IV-D services in 1995*. Retrieved September 28, 2007, from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/CSE-Char99/CSE-Char99.htm>.
- Maldonado, S. (2006). Deadbeat or deadbroke: Redefining child support for poor fathers. *University of California Davis Law Review*, 39(3), 991-1022.
- Mauer, M. (1997). *Intended and unintended consequences: State racial disparities in imprisonment*. Washington, DC: The Sentencing Project.
- Mead, L. M. (1993). *The new politics of poverty: The nonworking poor in America*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Mead, L. M. (2007a, March 20). And now, 'welfare reform' for men. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved July 10, 2011, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/19/AR2007031901638.html>.
- Mead, L. M. (2007b). Toward a mandatory work policy for men. *Future of Children*, 17(2), 43-72.

- Meyer, D. R., & Hu, M. C. (1999). A note on the antipoverty effectiveness of child support among mother-only families. *Journal of Human Resources*, 34(1), 225-234.
- Mincy, R. B., Klempin, S., & Schmidt, H. (2010). *Income support policies for low-income men and noncustodial fathers: Tax and transfer programs*. (IRP Discussion Paper No. 1377-10). Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty.
- Nichols-Casebolt, A. (1986). The economic-impact of child support reform on the poverty status of custodial and noncustodial families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48(4), 875-880.
- Nichols-Casebolt, A. (1992). The economic impact of reform on poverty status. In I. Garfinkel, S. S. McLanahan, & P. K. Robins (Eds.), *Child support assurance: Design issues, expected impacts, and political barriers as seen from Wisconsin* (pp. 189-202). Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.
- Office of Child Support Enforcement. (2008). *Child support enforcement, FY 2007 preliminary report*. Retrieved December 1, 2008, from: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pubs/2008/preliminary_report_fy2007/#figure5.
- Pate, D. (2002). An ethnographic inquiry into the life experiences of African American fathers with children on W-2. In D. R. Meyer & M. Cancian (Eds.), *Nonexperimental analyses of the full disregard and pass-through* (Vol. II, pp. 29-118). Madison: Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin.
- Pettit, B., & Western, B. (2004). Mass imprisonment and the life course: Race and class inequality in U.S. incarceration. *American Sociological Review*, 69(2), 151-169.
- Piven, F. F. (1995). Foreword. In S. Schram (Ed.), *Words of welfare: The poverty of social science and the social science of poverty* (pp. ix-xv). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. A. (1993). *Regulating the poor: The functions of public welfare*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Rector, R. (2001). Using welfare reform to strengthen marriage. *American Experiment Quarterly*, 4(2), 63-67.
- Rich, L. M., Garfinkel, I., & Gao, Q. (2007). Child support enforcement policy and unmarried fathers' employment in the underground and regular economies. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 26(4), 791-810.
- Rothe, I., Ha, Y., & Sosulski, M. (2004). *Child support enforcement tools: How are they used in Wisconsin?* Report to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. Madison: Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin.
- Schneider, A. L., & Ingram, H. (1997). *Policy design for democracy*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Solomon, C. (1982). *The Child Support Enforcement Program* (No. 82-168). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.
- Sorensen, E. (1997). A national profile of nonresident fathers and their ability to pay child support. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 59(4), 785-797.

- Sorensen, E., & Halpern, A. (2000). *Child support enforcement is working better than we think*. Urban Institute. Retrieved June 1, 2009 from <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=309445>.
- Sorensen, E., & Wheaton, L. (1994). *Potential effects of increased child support enforcement on poverty, welfare costs, and welfare dependency: Preliminary evidence from TRIM2*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Sorensen, E., & Zibman, C. (2001). Getting to know poor fathers who do not pay child support. *Social Service Review*, 75(3), 420-434.
- Soss, J. (2005). Making clients and citizens: Welfare policy as a source of status, belief, and action. In A. L. Schneider & H. M. Ingram (Eds.), *Deserving and entitled: Social constructions and public policy* (pp. 291-329). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Stone, D. A. (1989). Causal stories and the formation of policy agendas. *Political Science Quarterly*, 104(2), 281-300.
- Sum, A., Khatiwada, I., McLaughlin, J., & Palma, S. (Forthcoming). No country for young men. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.
- Turetsky, V. (2000). *Realistic child support policies for low income fathers*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.
- U.S. Newswire. (July 23, 1996). *Remarks by President Clinton for the Saxophone Club*. Denver, CO. [Available on LexisNexis Academy, <http://www.lnacademy>].
- Waller, M. R., & Plotnick, R. (2001). Effective child support policy for low-income families: Evidence from street level research. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 20(1), 89-110.
- Western, B. (2006). *Punishment and inequality in America*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Western, B., & McLanahan, S. (2000). Fathers behind bars: The impact of incarceration on family formation. *Families, Crime, and Criminal Justice: Charting the Linkages*, 2, 307-322.
- Wheaton, L., & Sorenson, E. (2009). *Extending the EITC to noncustodial parents: Potential impacts and design considerations*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Report.

(Endnotes)

1. The comments of Joe Soss were particularly helpful in developing this argument.
2. Between 1975 and 1984, all child support paid on behalf of children on welfare was retained by the government in order to compensate for costs of welfare (Sorensen & Halpern, 2000). However, after 1984, the federal government required states to transfer the first \$50 of child support received each month

to the family on welfare, and disregard that amount in the determination of welfare benefits. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) in 1996 lifted this mandate; consequently, as of 2007, twenty-six states chose not to pass through any child support to families on welfare (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2007).

Anything Goes? Science and Social Constructions in Competing Discourses

PHILIP DYBICZ

Keimyung University
South Korea

This paper examines, then disproves, the claim that social work practices based upon postmodern thought are either anti-science, or at the very least, weak on their respect for and application of scientific knowledge. Postmodern thought does attack the epistemological theory of positivism as well as the correspondence theory of truth. Hence, postmodern social work practices do seek to displace the role that scientific knowledge plays in guiding the helping situation. Rather than diagnosing causes and effects in a problem-solving endeavor, science is used to circumscribe the boundaries within which a postmodern endeavor at consciousness-raising takes place. Describing this new role for scientific knowledge within postmodern practice is the object of this study.

Key words: postmodern, anti-science, positivism, social work practice, scientific knowledge

With the appearance in recent years of postmodern social work practices—such as the strengths perspective, narrative therapy, and solution-focused therapy—some confusion has arisen over what role exactly science plays in the successful application of these approaches. Some opponents (Amundson, 2001; Pilgrim, 2000; Thyer, 2008; Thyer & Myers, 1999) have criticized them as being weak on embracing scientific evidence or ignoring it completely, thus putting clients in jeopardy.

Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, September 2011, Volume XXXVIII, Number 3

Supporters (De Shazer, 1994; Weick & Saleebey, 1998; White, 2004) have been quick to counter that they do not ignore scientific evidence, yet they recognize it as a truth with a small "t"—which to the other side, appears to confirm their claim about being weak on science.

The relativism inherent within a postmodern approach to practice appears to critics to promote an "anything goes" attitude in which scientific knowledge can be conveniently ignored—at the peril of the client. This critique is valid—but only if an overly naïve understanding of postmodern insights is applied. While scientific knowledge does not take center stage, it does have an important role to play in guiding postmodern practice. The major goal of this paper is to outline this role.

A good analogy can be drawn by making a historical comparison to the time period when the modern, scientific approach to practice began to replace its predecessor—social work practices of the 1800s and early 1900s that were based upon moral knowledge. Some practitioners of this time period (Lubove, 1965) warned that the value-free stance of the new scientific approach would necessarily lead to an "anything goes" attitude wherein moral knowledge could be conveniently ignored—at the peril of the client. And indeed, within both the natural and social sciences, there were some examples where this came to pass, the Tuskegee syphilis experiment (Jones, 1981) being one such prominent example.

While Tuskegee and other such incidents did occur, they represented an overly naïve application of the scientific method that lead to morally reprehensible acts. They do not represent the model or ideal of how a modernist approach to research and practice should be employed. The model for modernist research and practice embraces moral knowledge—not as an investigative tool to uncover mechanisms of causality—but rather, as a guide to social work practice and research that circumscribes the boundaries within which a scientific investigation can take place. Hence, internal review boards have been set up at universities to demarcate appropriate limits on research conducted upon human subjects. The social work profession has developed a robust code of ethics as a means by which to set the conditions for a scientific approach to practice.

What this paper will demonstrate is that postmodern practice seeks a similar goal when embracing scientific knowledge. Postmodern approaches do not seek to employ scientific knowledge as an investigative tool with which to uncover mechanisms of causality in which to promote change, but rather, as a guide to practice that circumscribes the boundaries within which a postmodern inquiry can take place. To clearly define this role for scientific knowledge, this article will describe how the helping situation is defined by both the postmodern and modern discourse. But first, a brief digression in defining the term 'discourse' will be useful.

Discourse

The term "discourse" here is used as offered by Foucault (1991, 1994a, 1994b). Briefly, a discourse is an epistemological framework in which the very ordering of knowledges lends significance and value to how these knowledges are expressed and practiced. As Foucault (1994a) notes, "The facts of discourse would then have to be treated not as autonomous nuclei of multiple significations, but as events and functional segments gradually coming together to form a system" (p. xvii). To better understand this premise, we can turn to the work of the Swiss linguist Saussure from whom Foucault drew some of his insights. Note the similarity to Saussure's (1966/1906-1911) observations on language: "Language is a system of interdependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of the others" (p. 114).

Saussure uses the metaphor of a chess game to illustrate this point. While certain qualities of a chess piece never change during the game (e.g., how it moves, how it captures other pieces), the value and significance of a given piece is determined by its position on the board and its relationship to all the other pieces. Saussure's (1966/1906-1911) structuralist approach applies this principle to a conception of language in the abstract. Foucault (1991, 1994a, 1994b) adopts a poststructuralist stance by applying this principle to the practices of knowledge. To fully appreciate the implications of Foucault's move, we must go beyond the simple metaphor of a chess game.

For example, game pieces are not moved by an

individual person, but rather the interplay of multitudinous voices in society—the dominant plurality in this cacophony wins out in affecting such movement. Yet one will always be able to find dissenting voices—what Foucault (1981, 1991) terms as subjugated knowledges. More importantly to our purpose here, the arrangement or ordering of knowledges not only affects the significance and value granted to them (e.g., how positivism is both expressed and thrust forward as a major knowledge in the modern discourse), but this ordering also affects the grid/playing board upon which they are arranged and the very rules of the game itself. Hence, Foucault (1994a) talks about “space opening up” and how a discourse creates “rules of formation” (1994b) or “rules of right” (1991). Taking a cue from Wittgenstein (1968, 1970), Foucault (1994b) then speaks to how this system of ordering creates the conditions within which practices of knowledge become intelligible.

When applied to the history of social welfare in America, the above dynamic is illustrated in the following manner. During the Discourse of the 1800s and early 1900s, moral knowledge held the greatest prominence. This made the ‘game’ of social work interventions that of an endeavor at moral uplift (Leiby, 1978; Trattner, 1999), whether the site of this intervention happened to be the individual (e.g., Scientific Charity) or structures in society (e.g., the settlement house movement). When the modern, scientific Discourse replaced the above, the “game” of social work interventions also changed even though various objectives (e.g., alleviating poverty and hardship) remained the same. Within the modern Discourse, the game of social work interventions is that of an endeavor at scientific problem-solving (Leighninger, 1987; Perlman, 1963). Within the post-modern discourse (still small “d,” as it has yet to achieve a period of dominance), the game changes once again. As will be presently elaborated upon, social work interventions become an endeavor at consciousness-raising.

This level of understanding concerning the term “discourse”—as is represented in Foucault’s early works—suits this paper’s purpose of explaining the role of science in postmodern practice. What follows will be a description of prominent intellectual thought concerning ontology (i.e. reality), epistemology, and causality for each the modern and postmodern

discourses. This thought does not represent the discourse as such, but rather, their positions of prominence reflect its ordering. A discourse contains not only practices of knowledge in terms of theory, but also practices of cultural knowledges. In addition, Foucault (1981, 1991) later added notions of power: prominent knowledges (e.g., positivism) serve to spawn practices of knowledge (e.g., DSM I-IV) that serve to reinforce their dominance, as well as concrete elements and practices in society (e.g., insurance reimbursement based upon DSM categories) which do the same. Foucault (1991) began using the term "apparatus" to better reflect this concrete production of the discourse in combination with the production of knowledges. The descriptions that follow are descriptions of nexuses of power within the respective discourses.

The Postmodern Discourse—Prominent Intellectual Thought

In seeking to make a very broad statement of contrast between modernist thought and postmodern thought, one can point to the prominence given to human beings. Within modernist thought, a human being is simply one object/organism among an infinite number of subjects to study. Knowledge is something that is discovered. Within postmodern thought—due to the prominence given to language—the human being is given special prominence as the conduit/creator of all knowledge.

To put it simply, the phenomenological theory of truth views reality as the appearance of a phenomenon that we experience: this phenomenon is comprised both of an existence and an essence. Briefly, existence refers to the form of the phenomenon: qualities that define its structure. Essence refers to existential nature of the phenomenon: qualities that speak to its identity. While such a theory of truth can be traced all the way back to Aristotle, Hegel (1807/1977) is credited for providing its most substantial elaboration in more recent times. One key contribution that Hegel offers is that he substantively describes and demonstrates a systematic methodology for investigating and understanding phenomena: the dialectic method. The dialectic is a method of investigation in which existential

qualities of a phenomenon are explored and hypotheses tested via a logical process of contrasting opposites (Hegel's formulation is briefly described as thesis–antithesis–synthesis). Contrasting opposites (thesis–antithesis) is a means to expose contradictions in the identity (i.e., existential nature) of the phenomenon—a consciousness-raising process that prods one to resolve the contradiction. This marks a major break with the modern Discourse, which mainly relies upon the scientific method as its systematic method for understanding reality.

Marx (Marx & Engels, 1845/1998; Marx & Engels, 1848/2008) would employ Hegel's dialectic method in his own investigations concerning political economy. However, by postulating that the essence of a phenomenon is manipulated by material conditions rather than a reflection of the ideal as Hegel proposed, Marx considerably altered Hegel's dialectical methodology. Marx's notion of a false consciousness shares some affinity today with the postmodern project of consciousness-raising. However, where both Marx and Hegel remain in agreement—and what differentiates them from the postmodern formulation of phenomenology—is that they both posited that the essence of a phenomenon is an inherent quality in the phenomenon itself, as is the case with its existence. This expression of phenomenology can be explained by its alignment with positivistic and naturalistic thought coalescing out of the Enlightenment: elements of major foci within the present modern Discourse. As Marx's choice of the term *false* consciousness indicates, there is the stance that one true reality still exists and that accurate perception is needed in order to uncover it. This is further reflected in Humanist psychology's project of seeking to understand one's *true* self.

When phenomenology is aligned with social constructionism and mimesis, one begins speaking about how reality and identity are constructed and thus multiple realities are possible. The validity of the reality rests upon the level of verisimilitude it achieves (in relation to one's actual lived experiences) within the dialogue of community.

This understanding of phenomenology promotes the stance that accurate perception is required to understand the essence of a phenomenon, and thus understand reality (as existence and essence). And it is this view of phenomenology (aligned

with positivism and naturalism) that informs Humanist psychology of the twentieth century, such as Rogers (1951), in which the goal of the therapeutic investigation is to understand one's "true" self. Within philosophical circles, this understanding of phenomenology would continue to dominate up to the work of Husserl (1913/1982). Husserl offered the notion that the essence of a phenomenon does not lie within the phenomenon itself (what he coined as the "natural standpoint"), but rather, within the structure of consciousness of the human being attempting to understand it. But it is his student, Martin Heidegger, who would completely break phenomenology from its alignment with positivism and naturalism.

Heidegger accomplishes this transformation of phenomenology by reducing the scope of phenomenology's project. In his magnum opus *Being in Time* (1927/1962), Heidegger does not seek to explain a basic phenomenological structure for all objects in the universe; rather, he attempts to describe the phenomenological structure for a human being (which he labels "Da-sein"), exploring the essence of what it means to be human. Building upon the insights of Husserl, Heidegger (1927/1962) locates the essence of being human outside of the phenomenon itself. But rather than locate it within consciousness, Heidegger locates it within language, and hence, culture. This transforms the phenomenological investigation from one of accurate perception to one of accurate interpretation, making it a hermeneutical rather than scientific endeavor. Heidegger attempts to describe the external nature of one's essence of being human with the term "world" and the reality of Da-sein as "being-in-the-world."

Gadamer (1960/1999) builds upon Heidegger's hermeneutical move in two very important ways. First, through his elaboration of a "fusion of horizons" he outlines a dialectic method based in relativism. While embracing the core purpose of the dialectic method laid down by Hegel (and Socrates)—that of exposing and thus making implicit contradictions explicit—the hermeneutic and relativistic stance changes the final stage of this process. Rather than the recognition of an antithesis to one's thesis leading to a synthesis of the two, it leads to a "fusion." This fusion is a dialogical event which opens one up to many possibilities of essence, and hence reality. Such a

dialectical process is the foundation for the various schools of critical theory (e.g., feminism, queer theory, critical race theory, etc.). As will be described shortly, when aligned with the theories of social constructionism and mimesis, this entails a consciousness-raising experience in which one actively seeks to manipulate the essence that comprises one's "world."

The other concept that Gadamer expounds upon is that of prejudice or bias. With the essence of a phenomenon existing in language, this means that the very attempt by human beings to understand a phenomenon is what grants it its essence. The world that comprises one's being-in-the-world is made up of biases. To Gadamer, bias has a neutral connotation; it is simply a template for understanding phenomena, and thus, necessary for human beings to interact in their environment. By granting phenomena an essence, bias is not something that is separate from reality: It is an essential part of reality. This becomes problematic when a particular bias serves to diminish one's being, or undercut one's self worth. This is when a fusion of horizons is sought—opening one up to other possibilities that are more life enhancing.

To summarize, a phenomenological theory of truth as expressed within the postmodern discourse is as follows. Reality is viewed as being comprised of an existence plus an essence. This essence exists within language and is granted to phenomena through human beings' attempts to understand it. Thus, bias comprises reality as it informs one's understanding of it. When a particular bias becomes problematic by diminishing one's being, it can be questioned through use of the dialectic method, a consciousness-raising experience that serves to open one up to other possible essences that are more life enhancing. Furthermore, one's essence or "world" directly speaks to one's identity. The prominence of identity in the postmodern discourse will be elaborated upon further when discussing the theory of mimesis. But first, an elaboration of social constructionism and its role in further fleshing out the notion of an essence will be provided.

Social Constructionism—Theory of Epistemology

Social constructionism is a theory of relatively recent origins, gaining much prominence with the work of Berger

and Luckmann (1966). Gergen (1999) is a prolific author who has done much to advance this theory in the field of sociology and social welfare. Social constructionism takes the stance that knowledge of reality occurs through understanding the formation of social constructs rather than a neutral observation of natural laws at work in the universe. Coming into alignment with phenomenology, it views reality as being comprised of existence plus essence. Furthermore, it views the essence of a phenomenon as being a product of language, which is granted to a phenomenon when human beings attempt to understand it. Hence, what is constructed is the essence of a phenomenon, and as part of a greater whole (existence plus essence), this consequently constructs the reality of a phenomenon. Furthermore, it is noted that the existence of a phenomenon has many attributes or qualities. The essence granted to a phenomenon grants prominence to some attributes over others—thus, in effect—shaping the existence of the phenomenon. Conversely, the various attributes comprising the existence of a phenomenon circumscribe what type of essence can be granted to it—as the granting of an essence is a socially mediated process in which agreement within a community must be achieved.

Hence reality is viewed as a social construct, constructed through a socially mediated process involving countless human choices (Gergen, 1999). The idea that these choices exert an influence on each other, and thus move towards forming a self-reinforcing network or system is captured by the term “discourse” (Foucault 1994a, 1994b). As the essence of a phenomenon (and hence its overall reality) is seen as being constructed through this socially mediated process, and this socially mediated process occurs within the scope of a particular historical and cultural context, reality is seen as being situated historically and culturally. In other words, while the existence of a phenomenon may remain fairly constant across various historical and cultural contexts, each unique context grants the phenomenon a different essence—thus creating multiple realities for the same existence within a phenomenon. This leads to the stance that there is no absolute reality (existence plus essence) that transcends time and cultures (i.e. Reality). Hence, the understanding of reality becomes a cultural and historical

project: an examination of the social mediations that construct the essences of a phenomenon.

This has huge implications when the phenomenon to be examined is a human being—as is the case for social welfare interventions. First, questions of essence relate directly to the person's identity. Second, the relativism inherent in multiple realities means that this essence is highly mutable. Third, as this essence is socially mediated, it may arise that a person's own voice is diminished in this mediation, and an essence/identity constructed that undercuts one's self-worth (e.g., being overly identified by one's diagnostic label). This, in turn, undercuts a person's perceived self-efficacy, and thus limits possibilities to bring about change to a problem area of one's existence (e.g., a problem in functioning).

Rather than intervene solely at the existence of a problem area, postmodern practices attend primarily to its essence within a person. This has led to critiques that these approaches ignore the problem, yet these critiques only have validity if one views reality as being solely comprised of existence. Being highly mutable, the constructed essence is highly open to change. This involves an examination and questioning of the social mediated process that produced the oppressive constructs and the recognition that other possible realities exist: in short, this is a consciousness-raising exercise. Once these alternative constructions are recognized, ones are selected by the client that hold most true for him/her and serve to enhance her/his self worth. Next, a community of individuals is sought that will serve to support this newly selected construction. This change towards a more empowering essence/identity of the person in relation to the problem area leads the person to act in a more efficacious manner in regards to issues of functioning, thus directly affecting the existence of the problem by either diminishing it or eliminating it. The dynamics of this process will be elaborated further in the following section on mimesis, which is reflective of social constructionism and phenomenology coming into alignment with notions of narrative.

Mimesis—A Theory of Causality

Paul Ricoeur (1984-1988), in his mammoth three volume work *Time and Narrative*, attempts to advance the project

begun by Heidegger (1962/1927) in *Being and Time*: exploring the essence of being human. He does this by demonstrating how the construction of one's essence/identity occurs within a narrative framework via its relationship to time. The existence of one's identity is represented by one's lived experiences (within mimesis, one is defined by one's actions). These past experiences (which exist as events in one's life) circumscribe the boundaries concerning who one is (i.e., reality/being as existence plus essence). Yet when reflecting upon or communicating to others one's existence (e.g., how one's day went; a problem in functioning) one does not give a second-by-second account of one's actions. Ricoeur (1984-1988) refers to this conception of time as progressing via discrete units as measured by a clock as "cosmic time." Rather, one selectively chooses from the multitude of past experiences deemed most pertinent—constructing a narrative whose theme (essence) adequately captures the reality of the situation (and hence the person) being described. Ricoeur describes this selective arrangement of events as "human time."

Usually, how one selectively chooses these lived experiences is a result of one's prejudice/bias and occurs on an intuitive level. Ricoeur describes this process as prefiguration. This same dynamic occurs when encountering phenomena (e.g., a stop sign) in one's everyday life that one seeks to understand and interact with. If one had to consciously direct the construction process for every phenomenon that one encountered during the day, one would not be able to function. Hence, bias plays an important role in understanding the phenomena we encounter. It also serves to direct our actions.

Ricoeur's (1984-1988) elaboration of mimesis is a postmodern update of the concept of mimesis offered by Aristotle (335 B.C./1996). Ricoeur's update involves breaking up mimesis into three parts. Full treatment of this formulation has been provided elsewhere (Dybicz, 2010). Briefly, this formulation is as follows: I have an image of who I am (based upon my lived experiences) and an image of who I would like to be. The image of who I would like to be guides my present actions. The image of who I am is circumscribed by my lived experiences (i.e., I am defined by my actions). Some important implications arise from this premise.

First, keeping in alignment with the postmodern project's focus on human beings (and how they understand living), the scope of this theory of causality only encompasses human action (as opposed to the modernist Discourse, whose theory of causality seeks to encompass all objects in the universe). Second, mimesis promotes a causality that is future-oriented (who I would like to be); this notion of causality is reflected in the importance given to understanding a client's dreams and goals when employing a postmodern practice approach (De-Shazer & Berg, 1992; Saleebey, 2006). Third, movement toward an image of who I would like to be is an expression of free will; consequently, free-will is an integral component in the "equation" explaining the causes of human behavior.

As mentioned above, narrative/social constructions—which serve to define who one is—usually occur on the intuitive level (via one's bias). These constructions give prominence to some qualities of one's existence over others. This, in turn, defines the horizon of who one can be. Now it may occur that a socially mediated construction/narrative is oppressive to a person in that it undercuts one's self worth by giving prominence to qualities with negative valuations (in the social work helping situation, this usually occurs when concerns about dysfunction are given the most prominence). If the person does not question these constructs, then the person's horizon of who one can become is impoverished and limited.

Thus postmodern practices aim their efforts at assisting the client in questioning these narrative constructions: hence, they represent endeavors at consciousness-raising. While a diagnosis may describe particular qualities of existence of a person, the postmodern emphasis is that a person is so much more than this. Opening up the client's awareness to these other qualities of his/her existence becomes the task at hand. Once a client's consciousness has been raised to this level of awareness, the client can then take greater control of the construction process by engaging in a consciously directed effort at selecting one's lived experiences regarding the issue of concern. This is what Ricoeur (1984-1988) describes as configuration. Past experiences (i.e., expressions of free will) are sought that contradict the theme of negative valuations offered by the old narrative construct, and instead, offer a theme promoting positive

valuations (e.g., strengths). This opens new horizons regarding how one can be in relation to the issue of concern. This new narrative construction is often referred to as a counterstory (Brubaker & Wright, 2006; Dingus, 2006; Nelson, 1995). Seeking to validate this new essence defining oneself (who I want to be), one begins to act accordingly. One seeks to make sure that problems in functioning do not interfere with or diminish the expressions of these positive valuations or strengths in one's actions. In such a manner, these problems in functioning are either eliminated or diminished.

Last, Ricoeur elaborates refiguration as the process of acting as an audience member to these narrative constructions. Capturing the socially-mediated nature of the construction process, refiguration reflects the process that not only oneself, but also other members of one's community, examines this new narrative construction to decide if it does, in fact, achieve a level of verisimilitude ("truth" with a small "t"). Occurring concurrently with building the counterstory, it becomes extremely important to advance the goal of finding a community of persons (i.e., those offering caring relationships) that can legitimate the new construction (i.e., counterstory), and thus, establish its verisimilitude.

The Role of Science within Postmodern Practice

As described above, postmodern practice interventions are endeavors at consciousness-raising. Concerns about identity are prominent, as reflections upon one's identity form the central tenet in explaining human action (mimesis). Identity is seen as arising from narrative constructions; this involves a process of selectively choosing from one's lived experiences. As these past experiences can be configured in a multitude of different ways, there are a multitude of possibilities, or facets, to one's identity—what Bakhtin (1921/1993, 1929/1984) describes as "multiple voices." The existence plus essence comprising one's identity form a reciprocal relationship. One's existence (i.e., lived experiences displaying qualities) circumscribes the boundaries as to the possible essences (i.e., themes speaking to one's qualities) that may arise in a construction. The essence that does arise from a construction gives prominence and value to some qualities over others.

Thus this consciousness-raising endeavor involves the following steps. Problem-saturated (and hence oppressive) narrative constructions are questioned: their dominance as the only possible construction of reality is questioned. As recognition is gained that other constructions are possible, these possibilities are explored, giving attention to those constructions that advance positive valuations, and thus, advance themes reflective of the client's preferred identity. This step involves moving away from the usual intuitive application of bias (i.e., the selecting of lived experiences) to one that is more consciously directed. When a theme(s) (i.e., essence) is identified that reflects a client's preferred identity, past experiences are selected that support this theme(s). Consequently, the client's future actions are directed towards creating additional lived experiences that support this theme(s), as a means to establish the verisimilitude of the new construction (counterstory). Finally, the client is linked with caring individuals who serve to validate this new construction, thus establishing its verisimilitude within a community.

Now, to elaborate a role for science and scientific knowledge (as presently defined within the modern Discourse), one must describe how it aids this consciousness-raising process. Well, the one thing that science prides itself at being extraordinarily good at doing (for it is embraced as its main project) is that of describing the qualities of existence of an object, and how this object interacts with other objects, affecting their qualities of existence. Within the field of social welfare, these descriptions are predominantly focused upon the healthy functioning of the individual in society. As stated above, the qualities of existence of a phenomenon form the building blocks (via lived experiences) from which possible themes (essences) may arise for a social/narrative construction.

Individuals access social welfare services as a result of a problem, issue, or crisis in their lived experiences. Science is able to provide a detailed description of the qualities of this problem and how it impacts qualities of functioning in other areas of a client's lived experiences. This description serves as a "map" that circumscribes the boundaries within which a possible theme may arise. The theme that arises from such a description is problem-saturated (naturally so, as the project is

to provide a detailed description of the problem). To contribute to the consciousness-raising process, this problem-saturated theme is used as the thesis from which to begin a dialectical inquiry. Past experiences are then sought that contradict the theme laid out in the thesis. This leads to a dialogical process in which a multitude of possible constructions are revealed—and a fusion of horizons occurs when the client selects a construction that serves to advance his/her preferred identity.

White and Epston (1990) offer an excellent illustration of this process when employing the technique of externalizing the problem as a means towards consciousness-raising. The first step involves “mapping the influence of the problem” (pp. 42-44). This is when scientific knowledge is used to describe the problem. For example, in his case study of Nick, a six-year-old suffering from encopresis (soiling his pants), White uses principles of systems theory to describe how Nick’s bio-psycho-social functioning has been impacted at home and at school, and how his parents’ functioning has been impacted as well. But rather than using this information to formulate a diagnosis and direct treatment, he uses it as a thesis upon which to proceed to the second step, “mapping the influence of persons” (pp. 45-48). In this step, he asks clients to relate expressions of free will (via past experiences) that contradict the theme of the problem’s influence on one’s actions. From these reflections, lived experiences are chosen that advance a new theme, and hence new construction; for Nick, the quality of being a good boy was changed from “one who does not soil his pants” to that of “one who valiantly struggles against his externalized antagonist, ‘sneaky poo,’ by attempting to resist its influence.” Consequently, Nick began to direct his actions to support the theme arising from this new construction. Also, at this stage (and if appropriate), scientific knowledge arising from the diagnosis of the problem can be offered to the client as information and advice to help advance him/her in securing this new identity. Information and advice represents a form of care (Brubaker & Wright, 2006) that contributes towards achieving verisimilitude of the new construction.

The Modern Discourse

Inquiry in the modern Discourse does not give special prominence to the human being. In its effort to understand all objects in the universe, scientific inquiry views a person as simply one possible object/organism to study out of a infinite multitude. The same methodology is used for all. Due to space limitations and the fact that the following intellectual thought is predominantly well understood, brief descriptions are given.

Correspondence Theory of Truth—Theory of Ontology

This theory views the world, and hence reality, as comprising only existence: the human mind plays no role in the make-up of reality—it is merely a tool used to observe it. Statements about objects describe qualities of this existence and thus are seen as true (i.e., facts) when they are demonstrated (through mutually confirmed observation) to accurately “correspond” to reality.

Positivism—Theory of Epistemology

Aligning with the correspondence theory of truth, positivism emphasizes the role played by accurate observation as the means to understand reality. Truth is founded upon the combination of accurate sense experience (hence its embrace of empiricism) and positive verification (hence its embrace of the scientific method). The ideal condition for achieving this is to acquire a value-free stance. Consequently, the role played by “bias” is fundamentally different from that of social constructionism. Within social constructionism, bias is a core component in the construction of reality. Within positivism, bias is separate from reality; it’s simply a creation of the human mind. Bias is something that interferes with achieving an accurate sense experience—hence, the goal is to eliminate it as much as possible.

Newton’s Third Law of Rational Mechanics (Action-Reaction)—Theory of Causality

This is a theory of causality that seeks to explain the motion of all objects in the universe. An update from a definition first

proposed by Aristotle, Newton's description of a cause producing an effect (a change is the quality/qualities of existence of an object) is seen as applying universally to all things. This is why physics is often held up as the model for capturing reality. Newton's view of causality as the movement of one object/variable impacting another object/variable to produce an effect, coming into alignment with a correspondence theory of truth and positivism, forms a mutually reinforcing network that fundamentally defines the modern discourse.

The Role of Social Construction within the Modernist Discourse

How the modern Discourse was able to define a role for moral knowledge (the prominent knowledge from the preceding discourse) as a means to circumscribe the boundaries for conducting an investigation has been described earlier. Thus, the role defined for postmodern insights—particularly social constructions—the prominent knowledge from a challenging discourse) must be different. Social constructions speak towards the operation of bias. Since the elimination of bias is a major goal in understanding reality, social constructions are eminently useful in identifying this bias. As statements of reality are communicated through language, and social constructions arise through the use of language, the difficulty in removing this bias is further revealed by understanding the social construction process. From the standpoint of conducting social welfare research, this stance may be described as “diminished positivism” (R. Leighninger, personal communication, March 25, 2010)—an acknowledgement that bias is much harder to remove than originally thought. Thus, insights from postmodernism are used as a tool to aid in one's investigation.

The upsurge since the 1970s in the recognition and importance of culture as a variable within the helping situation further reflects this stance. During this period (1970s–present) greater and greater importance has been given in the literature to achieving what first was described as cultural sensitivity, and more recently is termed cultural competency. While not determining reality itself, the social constructions (within the modern discourse) arising from culture become legitimate

variables, which in turn, affect how individuals interact with reality. This stance is illustrated by those who seek to advocate evidence-based practice, yet seek to have this same practice be culturally competent as well (Bates, 2006).

Accommodation of Knowledges between Discourses

By its very definition, a discourse is a particular alignment of knowledges and practices that mutually reinforce and signify each other. This makes it difficult for any true accommodation to take place between competing discourses. Knowledges from a competing discourse are not ignored, but they are subjugated. They take on a different expression when placed in a different alignment (i.e., discourse). A brief historical overview concerning the clash of discourses illustrates this dynamic.

The predominantly moral social welfare Discourse of the 19th century, when faced with the emergence of the modern, scientific discourse of the late 1800s, did not seek to ignore science—as the Scientific Charity movement (Trattner 1999; Zimbalist, 1977) and the Settlement House surveys (Trattner 1999; Zimbalist, 1977) attest. Yet within this predominantly moral Discourse, “science” was expressed much differently than it would be in the modern Discourse. Based upon a jurisprudence approach to investigation seeking to understand how the human soul—and its alignment with “natural laws”—explained human behavior, “science” became a tool to aid in this investigation. Science achieved expression as an organized form of data collection to support jurisprudence-based explanations (Zimbalist, 1977). Looking back at these efforts from within the modern Discourse, they are seen as highly limited and shallow expressions of science, lacking many key insights (such as the need for hypothesis testing). Hence, they are not viewed as being truly scientific (Zimbalist, 1977).

The modern scientific Discourse gained dominance in social welfare by the 1920s. It did not abandon moral knowledge, as described earlier, instead employing it to circumscribe the boundaries of its investigation. Yet, someone from the 19th century would argue that this assigned an overly limited role to moral knowledge—as within this framework moral

knowledge does not speak towards explaining how the human soul drives human action. In present times, the modern Discourse faces a challenge from the postmodern discourse. People operating within the modern Discourse have sought to incorporate postmodern insights concerning language and bias by using them as a tool to aid in one's investigation. Similar to the scenario of "science" within the moral Discourse, a postmodernist would argue that this is a limited and shallow expression of what bias/social constructions could be (by denying that bias actually comprises reality).

To date, postmodernists have not been very eloquent in elaborating a role for science. While stating that they do not seek to completely ignore scientific knowledge, energies have mostly been devoted to critiquing shortcomings of the modernist approach. Being in a subordinate position, this is a necessary step in trying to legitimize this competing position. However, current literature suggests, as was illustrated by the example of White and Epston (1990) above, that scientific knowledge is used as a means to circumscribe the boundaries of one's investigation. Yet, a modernist will view this as an overly limiting role for scientific knowledge—as it is not used to explain human action via the workings of natural laws.

Conclusion

The postmodern discourse, with its unique alignment of knowledges and practices, creates a new "game" for social work interventions: an endeavor at consciousness-raising. Successful consciousness-raising is what produces change. Within this new game, tag phrases such as "the client is the expert" and the social worker/client relationship being one of "editor/author" gain meaning and make sense. This paper has addressed the question of what role scientific knowledge and investigation has to play within an endeavor at consciousness-raising. Looking to the past for a historical comparison has helped direct where to look to find an answer to this question.

As the Tuskegee study (Jones, 1981) illustrates, an overly naïve application of the dominant Discourse's method of investigation can lead to morally reprehensible acts that do considerable harm to participants. This should serve as a

cautionary tale against a similar “anything goes” approach by practitioners using the dialectic method of postmodernism: scientific knowledge has a vital role to play in circumscribing the boundaries within which the dialectic method—aimed at consciousness-raising—is employed.

Within the modern discourse, a universal code of ethics arose to circumscribe boundaries of practice and investigation. This was appropriate, as the modern discourse emphasizes a universal reality. The postmodern discourse emphasizes particularity in the form of multiple realities. Consequently, a continuous addition to the scientific knowledge base—the acquiring of knowledge for a multitude of contexts—is what is necessary to circumscribe boundaries. Thus postmodern social work practice calls for the continued production of scientific knowledge to meet the demands of ever-changing contexts. This role for scientific knowledge may seem shallow or inadequate to a modernist, yet as has been illustrated, such accommodation is the natural result of competing discourses.

References

- Amundson, J. (2001). Why narrative therapy need not fear science and “other” things. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 23, 175-188. doi: 10.1111/1467-6427.00177
- Aristotle, (1996). *Poetics*. (M. Heath, Trans.). London: Penguin Books. (Original work published c. 335 B.C.).
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. (C. Emerson, Ed. & Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Original work published 1929).
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1993) *Toward a philosophy of the act*. V. Liapunov & M. Holquist, (Eds.). (V. Liapunov, Trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press. (Original work published 1921).
- Bates, M. (2006). A critically reflective approach to evidence-based practice: A sample of school social workers. *The Canadian Social Work Review*. 23, 95-109.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966), *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Brubaker, S., & Wright, C. (2006). Identity transformation and family caregiving: Narratives of African-American teen mothers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68, 1214-1228. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2006.00324

- De-Shazer, S., & Berg, I. K., (1992). Doing therapy: A post-structural re-vision. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 18, 71-81. doi: 10.1111/j.1752-0606.1992.tb00916.x
- De Shazer (1994). *Words were originally magic*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Dingus, J. E. (2006). "Doing the best we could": African American teachers' counterstory on school desegregation. *The Urban Review*, 38, 211-233. doi: 10.1007/s11256-006-0034-6.
- Dybiczy, P. (2010). Mimesis: Linking postmodern theory to human behavior. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 46(3), 341-355. doi: 10.517S/JSWE.2010.200900072
- Foucault, M. (1981). *Power-knowledge: Selected interviews & other writings 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1991). *Discipline & punish: The birth of the prison* (2nd ed.). (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1975).
- Foucault, M. (1994a). *The birth of the clinic: An archaeology of medical perception*. (A. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1963).
- Foucault, M. (1994b). *The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences*. New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1966).
- Gadamer, H. G. (1999). *Truth and method* (2nd ed.). (J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall, Trans.) New York: The Continuum Publishing Company. (Original work published 1960).
- Gergen, K. (1999). *An invitation to social construction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1977). *Phenomenology of spirit*. (A. V. Miller, Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press. (Original work published 1807).
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). New York: Harper and Row. (Original work published 1927).
- Husserl, E. G. A. (1982). *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy—first book: General introduction to a pure phenomenology* (F. Kersten, Trans.). The Hague: Nijhoff. (Original work published 1913).
- Jones, J. (1981). *Bad blood: The Tuskegee syphilis experiment: A tragedy of race and medicine*. NY: The Free Press.
- Leiby, J. (1978). *A history of social welfare and social work in the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Leighninger, L. (1987). *Social work: Search for identity*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Lubove, R. (1965). *The professional altruist: The emergence of social work as a career, 1880-1930*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1998). *The German ideology*. Amherst, N. Y.: Prometheus Books. (Original work, unpublished, 1845).

- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2008). *The communist manifesto* (D. McLellan, (Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1848).
- Nelson, H. L. (1995). Resistance and Insubordination. *Hypatia*, 10(2), 23-40.
- Perlman, H. H. (1963). *Social casework: A problem-solving approach*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pilgrim, D. (2000). The real problem for postmodernism. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 22, 6-28. doi: 10.1111/1467-6427.00135
- Ricœur, P. (1984-1988). *Time and narrative* (Vols. 1-3). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rogers, C. (1951). *Client-centered therapy: Its current practice, implications and theory*. London: Constable.
- Saleebey, D. (Ed.). (2006). *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
- Saussure, F. (de). (1966). *Course in general linguistics*. New York: McGraw-Hill Paperbacks. (Original work unpublished notes 1906-1911).
- Thyer, B., & Myers, L. (1999). On science, antiscience, and the client's right to effective treatment. *Social Work*, 44, 501-504.
- Thyer, B. (2008). The quest for evidence-based practice?: We are all positivists! *Research on Social Work Practice*, 18, 339-345. doi: 10.1177/1049731507313998.
- Trattner, W. I. (1999). *From poor law to welfare state: A history of social welfare in America* (6th ed.). New York: The Free Press.
- Weick, A., & Saleebey, D. (1998). Postmodern perspectives for social work. *Social Thought: Journal of Religion in the Social Services*, 18, 21-40. doi: 10.1080/15426432.1998.9960234
- Wittgenstein, L. (1968). *Philosophical investigations* (3rd ed.). (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). New York: McMillian.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1970). *Zettel*. G. E. M. Anscombe & G. H. von Wright, (Eds.). (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- White, M., & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. New York: Norton.
- White, M. (2004). Folk psychology and narrative practices. In L. Angus & J. McLeod (Eds.), *The handbook of narrative and psychotherapy: Practice, theory, and research* (pp. 15-51). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Zimbalist, S. (1977). *Historic themes and landmarks in social welfare research*. New York: Harper & Row.

The Role of the Neighborhood in Making Welfare Reform Possible

DAVID I. SIEGEL

West Chester University
Graduate Social Work Department

This article will analyze the role of the neighborhood in making welfare reform possible. It will consider the neighborhood and its environment as a context for welfare reform, the influence of neighborhood conditions and effects, recent neighborhood theory building, the neighborhood as a source of relevant values, and finally neighborhood programs that contribute to welfare reform.

Key words: welfare reform, neighborhood, social values, social capital, collective efficacy, personal responsibility, self-sufficiency, personal and family sustainability, neighborhood programs, multi-service center

The great recession of 2008-2009 and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (The Recovery Act) have stimulated a new debate concerning how to implement welfare reform in the United States. Despite the fact that the Recovery Act included a program for neighborhood stabilization to respond to increasing housing foreclosures, with few exceptions in the welfare reform debate, the neighborhood has not been considered as a resource to overcome barriers to employment, as a source of neighborhood conditions, or as a context for the experience of work and raising children (Koss, 2008; Siegel, Green, Abbott, & Mogul, 2007; Steptoe & Feldman, 2001).

This seems contrary to classic studies suggesting that the

Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, September 2011, Volume XXXVIII, Number 3

neighborhood environment and conditions are related to the labor market, employability, and welfare receipt. William Julius Wilson (1991) suggested labor force is associated with the social environment in the neighborhood in two ways: (1) People in an environment that forces weak labor force attachment, and have similar limited educational and occupational skills, confront greater risk of persistent poverty. This mindset is embodied in the neighborhoods in which individuals reside. It impacts prospects of marriage to a stable breadwinner, and the overall context in which people live; and (2) "The social context has significant implications for the socialization of youth with respect to their future attachment to the labor force" (p. 10). A youth from a family with a steady breadwinner and a neighborhood where most of the adults are employed will tend to develop some disciplined habits associated with steady employment.

Vartanian (1999a), using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, showed that the neighborhood economic conditions of adolescents were related to their future labor market success. In a related study, he showed that childhood neighborhood conditions were related to adult welfare use (Vartanian, 1999b). His findings suggest that living in a disadvantaged neighborhood is negatively related to future employment and labor market success. In a later study, Vartanian, Buck, and Gleason (2007), using the same data sources, found that childhood neighborhood disadvantage has negative effects on adult neighborhood quality for those living in the lowest quality race-specific neighborhoods. Blacks tended to live in more disadvantaged neighborhoods than whites and had fewer choices of advantaged neighborhoods to live in as adults.

As a response to the lack of consideration of the neighborhood in the welfare reform debate, this article will analyze the role of the neighborhood in making welfare reform possible. It will review changes in the debate occasioned by the great recession and the Recovery Act. Then it will respond to these changes by considering: the neighborhood and its environment as a context for welfare reform; the influence of neighborhood conditions and effects; recent neighborhood theory building; the neighborhood as a source of relevant values; and finally, neighborhood programs that contribute to welfare reform.

The Great Recession, Welfare Reform and Social Values

The great recession of 2008-2009, which began in September 2008 with the failure of a financial institution (Lehman Brothers, and the threatened demise of others, e.g., Citibank, Merrill Lynch), changed the framework for capitalist enterprise and forced a new look at social and entitlement programs and the role of welfare reform. With lack of regulation and new financial instruments (credit default swaps, derivatives, collateralized debt obligations, mortgage-backed securities), the average wage earners and investors were unable to explain the huge drop in the stock market, threats to their financial security, housing foreclosures, job losses, and increasing unemployment. Values of unlimited opportunity or personal responsibility—hallmarks of capitalist enterprise—seem inadequate to explain the greed and avarice threatening the lifestyles of most Americans.

On February 17, 2009, four weeks after his inauguration, President Barack Obama signed into law a \$787 billion economic stimulus package officially known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (The Recovery Act). On the face of the political debate, this was meant to stimulate the economy and job growth. Yet this act is also one of the greatest social welfare legislations in American history. In the health care realm, the spending included \$87 billion for Medicaid, 24.7 billion to subsidize private health insurance for people who lose or have lost their jobs, \$19.2 billion for health information technology, and \$10 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) (Steinbrook, 2009). The Recovery Act also created a Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Emergency Contingency Fund (funded at \$5 billion), under which states can receive 80 percent federal funding for spending increases in funding years (FYs) 2009 or 2010 over FYs 2007 or 2008 in certain categories of TANF-related expenditures (Lower-Basch, 2009). These include basic assistance (cash grants to low income families), non-recurrent short-term benefits, and subsidized employment (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2009). The National Association of State TANF Administrators (2009) indicated that the program guidance was truly designed to get temporary assistance contingency funds flowing to states rapidly.

The Recovery Act, and particularly its welfare provisions, has stimulated a new debate about the values underlying welfare reform and American social values in general. Writing in *Human Events: The National Conservative Weekly*, Rector and Bradley (2009), criticize the recovery act, indicating that,

under the stimulus bill, the federal government will pay 80% of cost for each new family that a state enrolls in welfare; this matching rate is far higher than that provided through the old AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) program. The stimulus bill thus eliminates the reform goal of reducing dependency and returns to the old policy of providing states incentives to build up their welfare caseloads. (p. 8)

This concern about encouraging dependency ignores the current welfare emergency related to the loss of jobs in a recession. It also fails to point out that the stimulus bill provides only for a temporary program to last two years. This signals a growing debate about the values underlying welfare and whether they apply to all parties equally. When money centers are maximizing their profits at the expense of others, and paying large bonuses after accepting bailouts funded by taxpayers, the question of personal responsibility acquires new meaning and the concept of work opportunity assumes opportunity exists.

In accord with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), the emphasis of the states in administering the TANF welfare program has been on "personal responsibility" and "work first," as primary forces for increasing income, living more productive lives, and ensuring family well-being (Pavetti, 2000). These goals were partially reinforced through time limits for receipt of cash benefits and sanctions for violation of employment and training rules (Danziger & Seefeldt, 2002; Lindhorst & Mancoske, 2006). Hawkins (2005) indicates "A focus on the concept of 'self-sufficiency'—and its related terms 'independence,' 'self reliance,' and 'self supporting' have become the embodiment of poverty reduction policy" (p. 77).

Personal responsibility and self-sufficiency alone do not respond to the need for collective and collaborative responses

in periods of economic urgency. Recent Census Bureau data show the nation lost substantial ground in 2008 on poverty and incomes (Pavetti, 2009). The number living in poverty jumped by 2.6 million to 39.8 million people. The poverty rate rose to 13.2%, the highest since 1997. This includes only the earliest months of the recession; the figures for 2009 will look much higher. In the present economic situation, if neighborhood conditions deteriorate, more collective responses seem necessary.

Neighborhood Conditions and Effects

Several recent studies have shown the importance of neighborhood conditions and effects. Siegel, Green, Abbott and Mogul (2007), in a study conducted for the State of Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, developed an index of neighborhood conditions. Specific neighborhood conditions composed the index: unsupervised children or teens; lack of recreational programs for children; assaults/fights; vandalism; use or sale of drugs; lack of police supervision; vehicle break-ins, rundown/ abandoned houses, poor street lighting; thefts; gangs; and guns. The index, based on the above conditions, was related to quality of life for leavers (Tau B = $-.187$, $p < .05$) and returners to welfare (Tau B = $-.196$, $p < .01$). They showed that the neighborhood conditions of those who returned to welfare were significantly different from the conditions in the neighborhoods of those who had left welfare and not returned, especially in use and sale of drugs and presence of guns. An alarming 71 percent of returners indicated the use or sale of drugs in the neighborhood, compared with a still high 51 percent of leavers, whereas 42 percent of returners reported the sale of guns in the neighborhood compared with 27 percent of leavers. Sixty-four percent of leavers and 61 percent of returners indicated the presence of unsupervised teenagers in the neighborhood. For returners particularly, the combination of availability of drugs, unsupervised teens in the neighborhood, and availability of guns in the neighborhood seemed potent.

Steptoe and Feldman (2001) indicate that people in lower socioeconomic areas report more problems with the neighborhoods in which they live. They showed a positive relationship between a scale of neighborhood problems (litter in the street,

smells and fumes, fear of walking around after dark, problems with dogs, noise from traffic or other homes, lack of entertainment, traffic and road safety, lack of places to shop, vandalism, and disturbance by neighbors and youngsters) and lack of social capital, poor health, and individual deprivation levels. The scale was also related to psychological stress and inability to carry out the tasks of daily living, both of which can interfere with the capacity to work.

Mulia, Schmidt, Bond, Jacobs, & Korcha (2008) utilized data from the Welfare Client Longitudinal Study which followed a representative sample of poor women with children receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) over a 4-year period. The study was conducted in a metropolitan county in Northern California which was selected for its demographic and geographic heterogeneity and was concerned about issues that affected problem drinking among low income women (on welfare). A "stress process model" specified psychological stress and problem drinking as a function of exposure to severe economic hardship; stressful life events; and disadvantaged, unsafe neighborhoods. Neighborhood disorder was measured by averaging across eight items on the perceived frequency of the following neighborhood occurrences: (1) drug arrests or busts; (2) people being mugged; (3) people selling drugs; (4) drive-by shootings; (5) people sleeping in public places at night; (6) homes being robbed; (7) arrests for public drunkenness; and (8) teenagers loitering during school. Approximately three-quarters (74%) of the women lived in neighborhoods characterized by disorder, evidenced most commonly by teenage loitering during school hours, drug-related arrests, or people selling drugs. Both neighborhood disorder and stressful events were correlated positively with psychological distress and problem drinking. "Moreover, a 1-unit increase in the neighborhood disorder score—for example, from never observing any indicators of neighborhood disorder to observing all indicators 'sometimes'—increased the odds of a transition to problem drinking by 94 percent" (p. 1287).

With findings like these suggesting the importance of neighborhood conditions, the separation of personal responsibility and self-sufficiency from conditions found in one's personal

surroundings may be artificial. Improving the neighborhood and its barriers to quality of life may be as important to labor market success as addressing other barriers to employment.

Furthermore, it may be that neighborhood characteristics that affect the ability to work can affect the ability to obtain child care. The ability to access child care may be influenced by the inevitable hurdles faced by those living in an impoverished environment. Where crime, drugs, and violence are rampant in neighborhood with high rates of poverty, it may be difficult to find a trustworthy child care provider nearby (Siegel & Abbott, 2007). Having to transport a child to a more distant destination may create additional obstacles to getting to work. Therefore, neighborhood conditions may be neglected variables in the struggle to secure child care, a critical barrier to successful employment.

Methodological Issues

Recent studies have supported the importance of neighborhood effects on a variety of poverty issues and other social problems. However, there are often methodological issues in the studies. Specific characteristics of the neighborhood (e.g., attitudes towards drugs and violence, living in a high poverty neighborhood, or a neighborhood populated by single mothers) are often chosen as indices of neighborhood effects and compared to the effects of other variables such as family or peers. Haney (2008), echoing Jencks and Mayer (1990), laments that researchers often rely on a "black box" neighborhood effect, a-theoretically utilizing neighborhood poverty rates to explain individual outcomes. He suggests, "even more importantly, no prior research on the employment and welfare receipt of unmarried urban women accounts for neighborhood characteristics as a focal part of the study" (p. 5). This seems largely true except for a few studies mentioned above. For the findings on neighborhood effects to be meaningful, various aspects of the neighborhood environment should be included in measures of the neighborhood. Otherwise, the specific influences of the neighborhood and neighborhood conditions are underestimated. It seems the more extensive the measures of the neighborhood, the more one tends to find neighborhood effects.

Another issue is that neighborhood effects studies often analyze negative social conditions and their relationship to social problems. This ignores the potential strength of neighborhoods in creating ties and bonds, social supports, and collaborative activities. Saleebey's (2004) seminal article begins from a strengths perspective when he discusses the power of place. "There is a sense of the environment that social work has to a significant degree, ignored—that is, the immediate, proximal, often small environment where people play out much of their lives" (p. 7). In discussing the "power of small" he notes that we live most of our lives in a small compass (rooms, apartments, city blocks) and from these contexts "for the rest of our lives our well-being is dependent upon getting about the right amount of stimulation and nurturance" (p. 8). The power of small includes the idea of neighborhood which "allows us here to explore the power of geographical/interactional smallness in terms of the power of context" (p. 10).

Neighborhood Theory Building

There has been a great deal of theory building designed to help us understand neighborhood characteristics, their affects on residents' lives, and the potential of the neighborhood to promote efficacy. An important contribution for the understanding of neighborhood effects has been the development of social capital theory (Osterling, 2007; Putnam, 2000). Putnam (2000), in his use of the term "social capital," defined it broadly "as connections among individuals and social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (p. 19). The development of social capital theory has meant a shift from solely individual interpretations of human behavior to an emphasis on the importance of social processes, ties, bonding, and the potential strength of networks within neighborhoods. As such, various types of social capital have been conceptualized to emphasize the functions of different types of ties. Typically a distinction has been made between bonding social capital or intra-community relationships and bridging social capital or extra-community relations (Brisson & Usher, 2007). Bridging social capital encompasses outward-looking networks that connect diverse groups of people and

can be useful as a source of information or external assets. Bonding social capital refers to inclusive and dense social networks within fairly homogenous groups that can be a source of support and strong in-group trust and reciprocity (Osterling, 2007; Putnam, 2000). Social capital theory emphasizes the importance of "weak ties" or social networks that exist beyond one's social group and may create opportunities beyond what is usually available in one's own social group. Social capital theory offers the hope that low income families, despite limited access to resources, can build capital or wealth through investments in relationships with friends, neighbors, politicians, police, business owners, and everyday people.

Despite its contribution to an understanding of neighborhood ties, social capital theory has been criticized in several areas. The concept may have become too broad with too many interpretations, so it means many different things to different people, thereby having an umbrella effect and diminishing its utility (Brisson, 2009; Brisson & Usher, 2007; Sampson & Graif, 2009). Another concern is that other forms of capital (e.g., financial and human) can be accumulated in arithmetic terms such that the more you use, the less you have, where social capital with its emphasis on ties seems to increase the more you use it. It is not as tangible as human capital because it exists in the "relationships among persons" (Coleman, 1988, pp. S100-S101). Additionally, social capital theory may lack context (Brisson & Usher, 2007). Social capital may not be effective if other resources are lacking or because of forces in the economic and political environment. Social capital may be trumped by more macro-effects or social policy. Economic capital, political power, and neighborhood resources may all serve to enhance the ability of social capital to yield a positive return to the community (Osterling, 2007; Warren, Thompson, & Saegert, 2001). As a moral concept, social capital may be neutral, as ties, bonds, and relationships within neighborhoods may be used for negative (e.g., crime and drugs) as well as positive effects (Patillo-McCoy, 1999; Sampson, 2004). Finally, social capital may be used in different ways in poor neighborhoods than in more economically sufficient ones. For example, it may be used to acquire basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter. Thus, the types of resources that result from

social capital may be different in poor neighborhoods (Cohen, 2001).

To address the limitations of social capital theory, the limitations of parochial social ties to create social control, and the changing nature of personal relationships in neighborhoods, Sampson and colleagues (Sampson, 2003; Sampson & Graif, 2009; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997) have proposed an emphasis on the concept "collective efficacy." Sampson (2003) explains,

A major feature of communities that we have closely examined is the capacity of residents to achieve social control over the environment and to engage in collective action for the common good. Strong ties among neighbors are simply no longer the norm in many urban communities, because friends and support networks are decreasingly organized in a parochial local fashion. Weak ties may be critical for establishing social resources, such as job referrals, because they integrate the community by bringing together otherwise disconnected groups. (p. S58)

For urbanites, when strong ties are tightly restricted geographically, especially in low income communities, this may actually produce an environment that discourages a response to local problems. Therefore, Sampson and colleagues focused on mechanisms that facilitate social control without requiring strong ties or association, highlighting the combination of a working trust and shared willingness of residents to intervene in social control. Sampson and Graif (2009) indicate,

This linkage of trust and cohesion with shared expectations for control was defined as neighborhood 'collective efficacy.' Just as self-efficacy is situated rather than global (one has self-efficacy relative to a particular task), a neighborhood's efficacy exists relative to a specific task such as maintaining public order. (p. 1581)

Distinguishing between the resource potential represented by personal network ties, on one hand, and shared expectation among neighbors for engagement

in social control represented by collective efficacy, on the other, helps clarify disputes about neighborhood social capital. (p. 1582)

Sampson further (2004) indicates:

Moving away from a focus on private ties, use of the term 'collective efficacy' is meant to signify an emphasis on shared beliefs in a neighborhood's capability for action to achieve an intended effect, coupled with an active sense of engagement on the part of residents. Some density of social networks is essential, to be sure, especially networks rooted in social trust. But the key theoretical point is that networks have to be activated to be ultimately meaningful. (p. 161)

An emphasis on collective efficacy which is task specific and goal oriented is more definable than social capital and paves the way for action. For this author, this still leaves the question of context: how does collective efficacy work in an economic recession?

Underlying Values in the Neighborhood

The discussion so far helps make explicit some of the reasons there has been little attention paid to the neighborhood and neighborhood conditions as barriers to employment or as a context for raising children in the welfare reform debate. Social capital theory emphasizes ties between neighbors, norms of reciprocity, and trustworthiness that arise from them. Collective efficacy provides an emphasis on interdependence, task specificity, and the accomplishment of mutual goals.

It seems at first glance that an emphasis on self-sufficiency—a major goal of social policies and welfare reform legislation since the 1960s—is at odds with concepts emphasizing mutuality and collective action. Various interpretations of the meaning of self-sufficiency have been proposed, including "a shift from dependency to self-sufficiency" (Benning, 1996; Hawkins, 2005), non-reliance on public assistance, holding a paying job or being in a state of well-being, with limited reliance on welfare benefits (Cancian & Meyer, 2004). Therefore, it seems there are different assumptions underlying what is

valued in the neighborhood and the values underlying welfare reform. A reconciliation is needed between value assumptions in both areas, so that neighborhood conditions as well as solutions can re-emerge as part of the welfare reform debate.

One is reminded that, in this country, welfare (e.g., TANF) is a selective program with a means test that carries a great deal of stigma. It is in accord with a residual conception of social welfare, in which it is seen as a short-term back up to the normal institutions of society (see, for example, Karger & Stoesz, 2007). An emphasis on work is promoted, with time limits and sanctions, as well as individualized training. Personal responsibility, as in the PRWORA, would seem to come from a moral perspective regarding the sufficiency and worthiness of those on welfare and is concordant with a work test of one's value.

If we follow the work of Wilson, Vartanian, and Sampson, both the individual and the neighborhood in which individuals reside may be victims of similar processes in society, including concentrated disadvantage and segregation and lack of access to networks of employment. More recently, these processes may include the result of economic abuse, unemployment, and housing foreclosures, all of which affect the neighborhood. In this context, "self-sufficiency" and "personal responsibility" may be oversimplifying the difficulty of welfare recipients or the underclass in gaining social capital or collective efficacy. Coulton (2003) suggests:

from an ecological perspective, employment is not simply the result of individual attributes such as skills and ambitions, but is embedded within a social, economic, and physical context. Some neighborhoods or communities confer advantages in the search for employment and some, particularly those where many welfare recipients live, present employment disadvantages. Settlement patterns, infrastructure, social relationships, and institutional arrangements within neighborhoods, cities, and metropolitan regions can be positive forces or impediments to achieving the employment and self-sufficiency goals of welfare reform. (p. 160)

Self-sufficiency and personal responsibility in the sense of moving people from welfare to work and from dependency to independence may be legitimate as objects of social policy. However, they may be limiting in overcoming poverty, locational disadvantage, and neighborhood effects, as well as economic and physical stratification. From a social psychological perspective, the attitudes of society toward the poor, disadvantaged, and minorities may limit the viability of self-sufficiency and personal responsibility. Collective efficacy and a focus on using the neighborhood to promote interdependence and shared social goals would seem additive. It would seem efficacy and sufficiency both are goal oriented and related to well-being and that well-being of the self and the collective are mutually supportive.

Limits of Self-sufficiency

While self-sufficiency is a widespread goal of social policy, the use of the term is problematic. It becomes particularly offensive when the economic institutions of society (e.g., the banks and others) develop policies which accumulate risk and seem oblivious to the economic plight of the average consumer. Hawkins (2005), in reviewing use of the term, indicates the following reservations: (a) self-sufficiency is difficult to define, and, thus, even more difficult to evaluate; (b) the term is itself limited, unattainable, and insufficient for policy making; (c) views of self-sufficiency that assume paid work and lack of "dependency" on income-based government benefits belie how people of any income bracket actually live; and (d) the term and its concomitant policy approach suggest that people who are not "self-sufficient" are somehow "insufficient" (Bratt & Keyes, 1997). Bratt and Keyes also argue that nearly all American citizens, regardless of income, receive some form of government assistance. They offer a "continuum of self-sufficiency" with different levels representing varying degrees of self-sufficiency. Hawkins (2005) also adds:

Such notions suggest that the focus on self-sufficiency, independence, and dependence should be reframed as interdependence. Even the most rugged individualist likely benefits from a number of governmental and

non-governmental resources from public housing subsidies to tax deferred college loans to tax deductions on vacation homes and primary residence. (p. 80)

Freeman (1997) indicates how the emphasis on self-sufficiency by many leaders is based on their world view and value orientation. Norm-based definitions, which are restrictive or punitive towards individuals who do not achieve these goals, may deny the influence of the environment. They also may deny the potential of group behavior, social supports, shared responsibility, reciprocity and mutual independence, as well as power across systems, which are more in accord with social capital and collective efficacy.

Personal and Family Sustainability and Social Values

In the search for values to support the connection between the neighborhood and welfare reform, we can consider an alternate goal of "personal and family sustainability" (Hawkins, 2005). Hawkins (2005) suggests that:

personal and family sustainability is based on the premise that society can more effectively reduce poverty using a model that is multifaceted, culturally appropriate, and reflective of the reality of poverty and welfare usage. Sustainability is in fact, widely used as a concept and goal for environmental and global economic issues, and has recently made leeway into the community and social development areas in the United States. (p. 82)

The ecological/environment framework, the community development focus, and the social justice perspectives all share an understanding of sustainability as a holistic examination of the human condition, focusing on creating unified solutions rather than incremental and patchwork policies. Agyeman (2005) states, "Achieving sustainable development requires an emphasis on quality of life, on present and future generations on justice and equity in resource allocation, and on living within ecological limits" (p. 674).

At the community level, sustainability and sustainable

development both concentrate on community development that is future-oriented and focuses on renewal and replenishing resources. Furthermore, the social justice perspective offers a useful connection between sustainability and social welfare policy (Garces, 2003).

Hawkins (2005) attempts to transfer these ideas to the personal and family level by suggesting that the personal and family sustainability (PFS) approach reflects the complexity of poverty and is consistent with the community development idea of sustainable communities. From this perspective he defines personal and family sustainability as “maximizing full human potential to establish long-term economic, physical, psychological, and social well-being for individuals and their families” (p. 86).

In the present economic environment, sustainability as a concept has gained more meaning as people struggle to maintain their homes and their jobs and, thus, sustain their lifestyles. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes substantial funding for a number of important housing and community development programs, including the Public Housing Capital Fund, Community Development Block grants, and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. The latter was created under the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (HERA), “to support state and local efforts to stabilize neighborhoods with high numbers of abandoned and foreclosed upon homes” (National Association of Housing and Redevelopment, 2009). Just as poverty became more legitimate and less stigmatized under the great depression, and work programs characterized the New Deal era, with the housing foreclosures and high unemployment of the recession of 2008-2009, neighborhood stabilization, a.k.a. sustainability, becomes more permissible. When large numbers of people are in similar situations together, it mediates against stigma.

Balance of Social Values

A review of the welfare reform and neighborhood effects and theories literature has suggested a balance of social values to reconcile welfare reform efforts and developmental efforts

within the neighborhood. Key aspects of this model are that it applies to all neighborhoods, it is non-exclusionary, and it balances varying perspectives on social justice.

As a social welfare goal and neighborhood value in this country, it would seem to this author that sustainability needs some balance. As a capitalist country, the United States emphasizes the value of equity; what one gets and what one is entitled to depend on the value of one's work and one's level of contribution. From this perspective, personal and family sustainability may seem utopian or lacking personal responsibility. Sustainability will be more acceptable as a value if it includes personal responsibility.

Personal responsibility seems more appropriate as a social welfare and neighborhood value than self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency is difficult to define and identify; it seems to be related to its opposite (insufficiency). It may undermine group and neighbor activities, and it carries the stigma of welfare. Personal responsibility, on the other hand, signifies that everyone has a part in determining their ultimate future. This includes putting forth their best effort and making contributions to the society.

Personal responsibility, however, has little meaning unless it applies to all members of the collective, not only the most disadvantaged, stigmatized, or those who are on welfare. Captains of industry, money managers, and legislators all are subject to this value. Therefore, it argues against corruption and unmitigated self interests, as well as unsubstantiated welfare dependency. Personal responsibility connotes universal public responsibility.

We need to recognize that people do not develop and are not sustained on their own; they need the support and developmental efforts of the collective (in the community). In the United States, with its immigrant tradition and history of succession, gentrification, and segregation, the neighborhood collective has been associated with one's identity.

Furthermore, sustainability needs an action component suggested by efficacy. Collective efficacy as a neighborhood value emphasizes a bias toward action and is contrary to norm-based conceptions of self-sufficiency in which only individual problems and pathology are seen as primary barriers to employment. Collective efficacy in being task oriented

and related to specific goals addresses the problems of social capital theory, which for many has become too diffuse and unmeasurable as a means of determining characteristics of the neighborhood. However, it does include neighborhood ties and trust necessary for social support. This leads us back to a more structural–functional interpretation, in which different neighborhood structures and programs can be considered efficacious for various tasks. In this context, collective efficacy also has a broader societal meaning, as all citizens have responsibility for insuring a just, tolerant and sustainable society.

Neighborhood Programs

The neighborhood is crucial—both as a context for social policy that relates to welfare reform and as a source of values and consequent programs to address the poverty of those on welfare. From a macro perspective, welfare recipients disproportionately reside in neighborhoods with high concentrations of welfare receipt and social distress, as well as residential segregation (see Brock et al., 2002). Social policy must address these neighborhood characteristics for welfare reform to be successful. This relates to values of collective efficacy, personal responsibility and family sustainability.

Though nominally not considered welfare programs, neighborhood strengthening programs such as community building, comprehensive community initiatives, and community development corporations must be mentioned as means of improving the social environment, and therefore, the social capital and collective efficacy of poor neighborhoods. Schriver (2004), following Walsh (1997), indicates community building takes a more comprehensive approach to poverty in theory and practice because it goes beyond analyzing poverty only in terms of jobs and income “but also as a web of interwoven problems that can lock families out of opportunity permanently” (Schriver, p. 498). In addition, community-building initiatives work toward poverty reduction at multiple levels to address economic, social, and political marginalization that lock people and communities into poverty. Central to community-building efforts is the idea of rebuilding a sense of community support and sustainability.

Austin and Lemon (2005) indicate comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) are another type of neighborhood strengthening program.

CCI's are large-scale approaches to improving conditions in poor neighborhoods through increased collaboration and coordination among various organizations within the neighborhood to address neighborhood poverty and fragmented service delivery ... Local governments, community-based organizations and residents are typically involved in planning and implementing services that meet the needs of the neighborhoods, including workforce development, housing, public safety, infrastructure, environment, health, education, and other human services. (p. 87)

CCIs attempt to increase both the social capital in a community and the participation of residents in the planning and management of the CCI.

Community Development Corporations (CDCs) are one of the prime vehicles for delivering housing and other services to low income households. There is no one exact definition of CDCs, so their role is considered from several perspectives. Bratt and Rohe (2007) define them as follows:

Community development corporations, or CDCs, are non-profit organizations that produce and rehabilitate housing for low-income households, as well as sponsoring economic development and social service programs (e.g., commercial real estate development, childcare, and services for youth and the elderly). (p. 63)

Austin and Lemon (2005) indicate CDCs are nonprofit organizations governed by community boards that often include representatives from financial institutions, governments, or foundations. They most often are involved in housing development, homeownership assistance, encouraging resident involvement in neighborhood affairs, and economic, commercial and business development. CDCs are crucial for providing financial capital for neighborhood development efforts, including improving the physical structure of the neighborhood.

Squazzoni (2009) finds there is broad agreement that community organizations, in particular CDCs, are playing an increasingly pivotal role in mastering and fostering local economic development initiatives by bringing corporate business, civic organizations and public agencies into concrete collaborations. One problem with CDCs is that they need to be "financially responsible, savvy developers, but these roles may conflict with community advocacy" (Bratt & Rohe, 2007, p. 70). It is critically important to blend development with organizing to provide financial capital while maintaining social capital and collective efficacy.

Place-Based Strategies

Austin & Lemon (2005) propose "earnings and asset development to increase financial self-sufficiency" (p. 66), which has traditionally been a focus of many anti-poverty strategies. They divide earnings and asset development into two overall strategies: employment program strategies and asset development strategies. The former includes place-based strategies that target employment services to an entire neighborhood, linking low-income parents to "good jobs," and the use of work incentives and supports. The latter focuses on promoting banking and savings accounts, promoting low-income car and home ownership and linking families to the earned income Tax Credit (EITC).

In accord with its focus, this article will concentrate on place-based strategies which make use of the values of social capital and collective efficacy. Targeting an entire neighborhood is considered helpful in linking low-income workers to a system of supports and services that would raise their income and benefits. Different strategies for targeting the neighborhood are mentioned in the literature and will be used here as examples (Molina & Howard, 2003). Austin and Lemon (2005) describe the neighborhood jobs initiative (NJI), developed by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, as a saturation strategy to target employment services to an entire neighborhood.

The goal of the NJI was to substantially increase employment and earnings among a large number of

residents within the targeted neighborhoods so that regular employment would become a community norm. Implemented from 1998 to 2001 in five high priority neighborhoods (Washington, D.C., Chicago, New York, Hartford and Fort Worth), each site adapted their programs using the following three components: (1) employment-related services and activities such as job development, training and counseling; (2) financial incentives to work, including increasing participants' use of the Earned Income Tax Credit, earnings disregards for TANF recipients, child care subsidies, Medicaid, food stamps and wage subsidies; and (3) community supports for work, including increasing the quality and quantity of residents' social networks to facilitate the sharing of information. (p. 67)

Molina and Howard (2003) describe another approach:

A second strategy was to see if there was a 'ripple effect' e.g. if a large number of people in the neighborhood obtain and retain good jobs that in turn would create positive changes in the neighborhood. These 'spillover effects' were intended to improve a wide range of neighborhood indicators including health, education and safety. (p. 5)

Ragan (2002) gives an example of yet another place-based strategy which uses the concept of the multi-service center, The Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services (MCDJFS) in Ohio.

The most striking characteristic of the human service system in Montgomery County, Ohio is the size and scope of the Job Center. Located in a building that was previously a furniture warehouse in Dayton, the county seat, the Job Center has five and one half acres of office space under one roof. With ample parking and well served by the public transportation system, the Job Center is the locus of many human service programs, employment programs, and service providers. (p. 3)

This makes possible many community-based initiatives based on social values. MCDJFS has been instrumental in

developing the Targeted Community-Based Collaborative program, which complements the programs and services available at the Job Center by providing neighborhood-based supportive services. Social capital and collective efficacy are maximized through the “FISH” philosophy (based on the work style of fishmongers at the Pike Street market in Seattle), which is the center’s approach to customer service, as well as staff relationships. It emphasizes a positive, pro-active approach to interactions between staff and clients.

In Montgomery County, “one stop” really means one stop, as there are 47 partner agencies at the Job Center that provide government-administered programs and privately-administered services. “Because so many services are jointly located, it is easy for clients to determine where in the county they should go for services, and because all services are on site, accessing multiple services is simplified. In addition, because the emphasis is on employment, clients and the larger community see the Job Center as just that, rather than a welfare office.” The value of personal responsibility is facilitated in this way.

With the possibility of many families facing termination of assistance due to the 36 month TANF time limit in Ohio, the county determined that a new strategy was needed with a range of supportive services. Thus relationships with Targeted Community-Based Collaboratives (TCBC) now provide “hard to serve” families with a range of supportive services. In accord with the value of family sustainability, these include:

- Family planning services
- Referral services for substance abuse and family violence
- Family crisis intervention
- Job search and placement assistance referrals
- Education and training referral
- Family life education
- Truancy intervention and counseling
- Juvenile justice intervention
- Youth and adult mentoring programs

- Community education and community service networking
- Tutorial and academic coaching (Ragan, 2002, pp. 5-6)

The TCBC target population is families with gross monthly income less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG) living in neighborhoods with median family incomes below 200% of the FPG. There are now 30 such cooperatives in Montgomery County.

Neighborhood Self-Sufficiency Centers

Schmidt and Austin (2004) report on the efforts of the Santa Clara County Social Service Agency (SSA) to develop "Neighborhood Self-Sufficiency Centers" in response to the signing of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). SSA partnered with both North Valley Private Industry Council (NOVA PIC) and Silicon Valley Private Industry Council (SVPIC).

While the principal tenet of the new welfare to work legislation was to move people into employment, the partnership recognized that successful, sustained family self-sufficiency would be obtained only by providing for the needs of the entire family in their own neighborhoods. (Schmidt & Austin, 2004, p. 218)

From this idea came the concept of developing neighborhood centers in areas where CalWORKs (need to define CalWORKs) participants needed them. From our prospective, values of family sustainability and collective efficacy were added to the usual self-sufficiency mix. After reviewing all submissions, six centers were selected to share in the \$2 million federal welfare-to-work funding (plus \$750,000 foundation funding.)

For example, the North County Consortium provides services to employed CalWORKs participants who are still receiving aid and live in the northern part of Santa Clara County. The consortium is made up of businesses, agencies, and schools that have successfully served CalWORKs participants in the

past and offers job-retention services, case management, educational services, skills upgrade, child care, recreation, support services such as substance abuse and domestic violence workshops, and homeless services. According to Schmidt and Austin (2004),

The North County consortium has four neighborhood outreach centers located in high poverty areas at two elementary schools and two adult education centers. Each center has a site coordinator who provides case management services by assessing the customer's needs upon enrollment and assisting in developing a plan of action for reaching desired goals. (p. 224)

The adult education teachers in each center provide instruction on basic reading, writing, and math, while volunteers provide individual tutoring. At the elementary school sites, computer-assisted basic skills training is provided, along with an adult education instructor to guide students through the curriculum, monitor progress, and provide assessment and feedback. Families are encouraged to take part in the elementary school program called Even Start that provides child care and instruction for children while parents attend literacy class. (p. 225)

Neighborhood Jobs Pilot Initiative (NJPI)

Another example of a neighborhood place-based initiative is the Neighborhood Jobs Pilot Initiative, a public-private-sponsored neighborhood-based workforce development system. Svihula and Austin (2004) provide a case example that began as a partnership between the Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA) and the Rockefeller Foundation in 1998. The primary difference between the NJPI and other community collaboratives is the focus on employment and training-based interventions. One example is the South Hayward Neighborhood Collaborative. The collaborative worked with Glad Tidings Church (GT) to establish on-site education and training services and the Glad Tidings Community Campus (GTCC), which offered high school and college programs as well as business training for the working poor and welfare

recipients. In January 1999, GT created the Institute for Success (IFS), which is a thirty-day Work First employment model that concentrates on job search activities, motivation, critical thinking skills, and retention.

The facility has a training center and lab with twelve computers and a computer library. Key components of the IFS program include personal plan development, weekly progress evaluation, a learning objectives workbook, self-esteem and personal development exercises, and interpersonal communication and job search strategies. Soft skills training, as well as customized job search, career, and family planning services, are provided through the IFS curriculum and staff. The Hayward Adult School provides on site computer, GED, English as a second language, vocational training (such as basic food preparation, carpentry, typist, and data entry), and certificate programs. The IFS enhances the thirty-day job club program with support services to assist with the transition to work. Measures of success [of those who enroll in the IFS program] are based on numbers of participants enrolled, placed in jobs, and job retention at thirty, sixty and ninety days. (Svihula & Austin, 2004, p. 195)

Summary

Much of the welfare reform literature has ignored the neighborhood as a context or environment for welfare reform, as well as a source of neighborhood support. Neighborhood theory building increases understanding of the influence of neighborhood conditions and neighborhood effects as forces influencing well-being and the ability to work. This opens up a broader consideration of social values to underlie welfare reform policy—values such as social capital, collective efficacy and family sustainability along with personal responsibility gain prominence. These, in turn, inform the type of neighborhood programs that make welfare reform possible.

There are a variety of neighborhood-based programs (some beyond the scope of this paper) that can help make welfare reform possible. These include: asset-based strategies, such as linking low income clients to new jobs, job incentives and

supports, and means of transportation; income programs, such as the earned income tax credit; and housing support programs (public housing, section 8). In accord with its focus, this article gave examples of three neighborhood strengthening programs (community building, comprehensive community initiatives and community development corporations) that can improve the environmental context for welfare reform. Finally, several place-based strategies (neighborhood jobs initiative, multi-service centers, neighborhood self-sufficiency centers and the neighborhood job pilot initiative) which facilitate successful welfare reform were reviewed.

References

- Agyeman, J. (2005). Sustainable development. In J. R. Miller, R. M. Lerner, L. B. Schiamberg, & P. M. Anderson (Eds.), *The encyclopedia of human development* (pp. 673-676). Denver, CO: ABC-CLIO.
- Austin, M. J. & Lemon, K. (2005). Promising programs to serve low-income families in poverty neighborhoods. *Journal of Health and Social Policy*, 21(1), 65-94.
- Benning, V. (1996, March 28). In Virginia, a shift from dependency to self-sufficiency. *Washington Post*, p. B01.
- Bratt, R. G. & Keyes, L. (1997). *New perspectives on self-sufficiency: Strategies of nonprofit housing organizations*. Medford, MA; Department of Urban and Environmental Policy, Tufts University.
- Bratt, R. G., & Rohe, W. M. (2007). Challenges and dilemmas facing community development corporations in the United States. *Community Development Journal*, 42(1), 63-78.
- Brisson, D. (2009). Testing the relationship of formal bonding, informal bonding, and formal bridging social capital on key outcomes for families in low-income neighborhoods. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 36(1), 167-183.
- Brisson D., & Usher, C. L. (2007). The effects of informal neighborhood bonding social capital and neighborhood context on homeownership for families living in poverty. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 29(1), 65-75.
- Brock, T., Coulton, C., London, A., Polit, D., Richburg-Hayes, L., Scott, E., & Verma, N. (2002). *Welfare reform in Cleveland: Implementation, effects, and experiences of poor families and neighborhoods*. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corp.
- Cancian, M., & Meyer, D. R. (2004). Alternative measures of economic success among TANF participants: Avoiding poverty, hardship, and dependence on public assistance. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 23(3), 531-548.

- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2009). Overview of the TANF provisions in the economic recovery act. February 26, 2009. Retrieved October 22, 2009 from <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view7id=2693>.
- Cohen, C. J. (2001). Social capital, intervening institutions, and political power. In S. Saegert, J. P. Thompson, & M. R. Warren (Eds.), *Social capital and poor communities* (pp. 267-289). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Coleman, J. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, S95-S120.
- Coulton, C. J. (2003). Metropolitan inequities and the ecology of work: Implications for welfare reform. *Social Service Review*, 77(2), 159-190.
- Danziger, S. K., & Seefeldt, K. S. (2002). Barriers to employment and the "hard to serve": Implications for services, sanctions and time limits. *Focus*, 22(1), 76-81.
- Freeman, E. M. (1997). Welfare reforms and services for children and families: Setting a new practice, research and policy agenda. In P. L. Ewalt, E. M. Freeman, S. A. Kirk, & D. L. Poole (Eds.), *Social policy reform research and practice* (pp. 264-279). Washington, D.C.: NASW Press.
- Garces, J. (2003). Towards a new welfare state: The social sustainability principle and health care strategies. *Health Policy*, 6(3), 201-215.
- Haney, T. (2008). Individual barriers and neighborhood context: Exploring determinants of employment and welfare receipt among unmarried urban women. *Conference papers—American Sociological Association*. January 1, 2008, 1-41.
- Hawkins, R. L. (2005). From self-sufficiency to personal and family sustainability: A new paradigm for social policy. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 32(4), 77-91.
- Jencks, C., & Mayer, S. (1990). The social consequences of growing up in a poor neighborhood. In L. E. Lynn & M. F. H. McGeary (Eds.), *Inner-city poverty in the United States* (pp. 111-186). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Karger, H. J., & Stoesz, D. (2007). *American social welfare policy: A pluralist approach*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Koss, G. (2008, December). HUD kicks off new neighborhood stabilization program. *Planning*, 74(11), 50.
- Lindhorst, T., & Mancoske, R. (2006). The social and economic impact of sanctions and time limits on recipients of temporary assistance to needy families. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 31(1), 93-114.
- Lower-Basch, E. (2009). Questions and answers about the TANF Emergency Fund. *Center for Law and Social Policy*, November 2, 2009 (pp. 1-9). Retrieved December 10, 2009 from <http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/TANF-EFC-Q-Nov-2.pdf>.

- Molina, F., & Howard, C. (2003). *Final report on the Neighborhood Jobs Initiative: Lessons and implications for future community employment initiatives*. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.
- Mulia, N., Schmidt, I., Bond, J., Jacobs, L., & Korcha, R. (2008). Stress, social support and problem drinking among women in poverty. *Addiction*, 103, 1283-1293.
- National Association of Housing and Redevelopment (2009). The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009: A primer for the HCD practitioner. *Journal of Housing and Community Development*, 66(2), 30-35.
- National Association of State TANF Administrators (2009). NASTA developing unified reauthorization agenda. *Policy & Practice of Public Human Service*, 67(3), 32.
- Osterling, K. L. (2007). Social capital and neighborhood poverty: Toward an ecologically-grounded model of neighborhood effects. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 16(1/2), 123-147.
- Patillo-McCoy, M. E. (1999). *Black picket fences: Privilege and peril among the black middle class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pavetti, L. (2000). Creating a new welfare reality: Early implementation of the temporary assistance for needy families program. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(4), 601-616.
- Pavetti, L. (2009). Testimony of Ladonna Pavetti, Director, Welfare Reform and Income Support Division, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. *The safety net's response to the recession*. House subcommittee on income security and family support. Retrieved November 16, 2009 from [www.cbpp.org/files/10-8-09 testimony.pdf](http://www.cbpp.org/files/10-8-09%20testimony.pdf).
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of the American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Ragan, M. (2002). *Human services in Montgomery County, Ohio: Services integration writ large*. Albany: State University of New York, Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government.
- Rector, R., & Bradley, K. (2009). Stimulus bill abolishes welfare reform success. *Human Events: The National Conservative Weekly*, 65(7), 1, 8.
- Saleebey, D. (2004). The power of place: Another look at the environment. *Families in Society*, 85(1), 1-16.
- Sampson, R. J. (2004). Networks and neighborhoods: The implication of connectivity for thinking about crime in the modern city. In H. McCarthy, P. Miller, & P. Skidmore (Eds.), *Network logic: Who governs in an interconnected world?* (pp. 157-166). London: Demos.
- Sampson, R. J. (2003). The neighborhood context of well being. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 46(3), S53-S64.
- Sampson, R. J., & Graif, C. (2009). Neighborhood social capital as differential social organization: Resident and leadership dimensions. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(11), 1579-1605.

- Sampson, R. J., Raudenbush, S. W., & Earls, F. (1997). Neighborhoods and violent crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy. *Science*, 277, 918-924.
- Schmidt, C. M. & Austin, M. J. (2004). Neighborhood self-sufficiency centers. In M. J. Austin (Ed.), *Changing welfare services: Case studies of local welfare reform programs* (pp. 217-230). New York: Haworth.
- Schriver, J. M. (2004). *Human behavior and the social environment: Shifting paradigms in essential knowledge for social work practice*. Boston: Pearson.
- Siegel, D. I., & Abbott, A. (2007). Welfare leavers and returners: Is inadequate child care a condition of poverty? *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 13(2), 157-176.
- Siegel, D. I., Green, J., Abbott, A., & Mogul, M. (2007). Welfare leavers and returners: Correlates of quality of life. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 15(1), 69-97.
- Squazzoni, F. (2009). Local economic development initiatives form the bottom-up: The role of community development corporations. Incomplete reference.
- Steinbrook, R. (2009). Health care and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 360(11), 1057-1060.
- Stephoe, A., & Feldman, P. J. (2001). Neighborhood problems as sources of chronic stress: Development of a measure of neighborhood problems, and association with socioeconomic status and health. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 23(3), 177-185.
- Svihula, J., & Austin, M. J. (2004). Fostering neighborhood involvement in workforce development: The Alameda County neighborhood jobs pilot initiative. In Michael J. Austin (Ed.), *Changing welfare services: Case studies of local welfare reform programs* (pp. 189-215). New York: Haworth.
- Vartanian, T. P. (1999a). Adolescent neighborhood effects on labor market and economic outcomes. *Social Service Review*, 73(2), 142-167.
- Vartanian, T. P. (1999b). Childhood conditions and adult welfare use: Examining neighborhood and family factors. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 61(1), 225-237.
- Vartanian, T. P., Buck, P. W., & Gleason, P. (2007). Intergenerational neighborhood-type mobility: Examining differences between blacks and whites. *Housing Studies*, 22(5), 833-856.
- Warren, M. R., Thompson, J. P., & Saegert, S. (2001). The role of social capital in combating poverty. In S. Saegert, J. P. Thompson, & M. R. Warren (Eds.), *Social capital and poor communities* (pp. 1-28). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Walsh, J. (1997). Community building in theory and practice: Three case studies. *National Civic Review*, 86, 291-314.
- Wilson, W. J. (1991). Studying inner city dislocations: The challenge of public policy research. *American Sociological Review*, 56(1), 1-14.

Sanctioning Policies—Australian, American and British Cross-National Reflections and Comparisons

HARRY SAVELSBERG

University of South Australia
School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy

Over the last two decades welfare policies have undergone major reforms in Anglo-Western nations such as the U.S., U.K. and Australia. Central to these reforms have been the revision of welfare recipient entitlements and responsibilities and the emergence of a responsibility and obligations agenda. The essence of this agenda is conditionality and reciprocity, and it includes the threat of punitive sanctions for failing to comply with mandatory participation requirements. This paper highlights the potent influence of the ideas of American conservatives on policy reforms in the U.S., the U.K. and Australia and provides a thematic cross-national comparison of sanctioning policies in these nations.

Key words: Sanctioning, welfare dependency, neo-liberalism, responsibility

Anglo-Western welfare policy reforms have been widely debated over the past two decades with many arguing a neo-liberal policy convergence is discernable, particularly in the U.S., the U.K. and Australia, and some asserting the emergence of a “new social contract” (Dean, 2002; Gilbert, 2009; Jordan, 1996; Kerr & Savelsberg, 1999; McDonald & Reisch, 2008). The basis of these reforms rests largely on a critique of the traditional welfare ethos which was underpinned by entitlement or needs-based government social assistance. This unconditional social assistance is deemed by prominent neoliberals to be a

Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, September 2011, Volume XXXVIII, Number 3

moral hazard for recipients, stifling self-reliance and fostering a 'heritage of defeat' and potentially sowing the seeds of an 'underclass' (Mead, 1997; Murray, 1984, 1990). To counter this supposed corrosive influence, many neoliberals argue for the scaling back of government assistance and greater accountability and reciprocity from welfare recipients, especially in regards to entitlements and responsibilities. The views of American commentators Laurence Mead, Charles Murray and George Gilder have been particularly influential in the West and have created 'welfare dependence' as a social problem and called for welfare recipients to fulfill strict obligations (Kalil, Seefeldt, & Wang, 2002; Kemshall, 2002; Kerr & Savelsberg, 1999; McDonald & Reisch, 2008; Muncie, 2006; O'Connor, 2001).

The assumptions and beliefs implicit in this policy imperative, which incorporates mandatory participation requirements and sanctioning (or breaching as it is more commonly known in Australia), have been the subject of considerable debate in the U.S. (Daugherty & Barber, 2001; Hasenfeld, Ghose, & Larson, 2004; Kalil, et al., 2002; Wu, 2008), the U.K. (Dean, 2002; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; Mizen, 2004; Stanley, 2005) and Australia (Goodin, 2002; Kinnear, 2003; Mendes, 2003; O'Connor, 2001; Saunders, 2002; Savelsberg, 2009; Sawyer, 2005). A major concern emerging from this debate is the impact of sanctions for noncompliance of mandatory participation requirements on the disadvantaged and vulnerable. Indeed, over the last decade, a body of research literature has developed which suggests that sanctioning is not, as was initially intended by social policy makers, making welfare recipients more responsible (Muncie, 2006), but rather further entrenching their disadvantage and social exclusion.

Based on a review of American, British and Australian welfare reform literature and research, this paper assesses the progressive influence of American conservative thinkers, such as Gilder, Murray and Mead, on the development of American, Australian and British welfare policy reforms. Their work was particularly influential on welfare policy reform in the U.S. during the Reagan administration, and their ideas, especially dependency and sanctioning, would once again find popularity in the U.K. with the Thatcher and later the Blair governments and the Howard (Liberal National) Coalition, and now

with the Rudd Labor Governments in Australia. This paper presents a cross-national thematic comparison of sanction policies from research findings to identify issues and trends regarding some of the commonly reported effects of sanctioning on welfare recipients.

Most of the Australian research data presented in this publication is drawn from a Ph.D. research study completed in 2009 (Savelsberg, 2009). This study investigated the impact of the Australian Youth Allowance (YA) and Mutual Obligation (MO) policies and associated sanctioning provisions on the social circumstances and future prospects of disadvantaged young people. Specifically, it examined the ideological underpinnings of these policies, especially the assumptions (personal and social), and how these reconcile with young peoples' socio-economic contexts, particularly the key institutions of support (family, education and employment).

A review of Australian, U.S. and U.K. literature and research on sanctioning policies was undertaken in regards to the philosophical underpinnings, frequency and effects of sanctioning policy. Specifically in the U.S., in relation to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) and the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) policy; in the U.K., Labour's "New Deal" policies; and in Australia, the Mutual Obligation policy.

The Rise of Sanctioning Policies in the U.S., U.K. and Australia

The Howard Coalition Government's *Social Security Amendment Bill* enshrined the use of sanctions in Australian legislation, drawing to a close the gradual erosion of entitlement-based welfare, progressively underway since the late 1980s, and signifying the full adoption of an "active participation" welfare system (Finn, 1999; Kinnear, 2002; Moses & Sharples, 2000). This shift in Australian social policy has been described as the "new deal" regarding social welfare entitlements, especially in regards to recipient obligations (Kerr & Savelsberg, 1999, p. 125). This new deal, expressed in Australian Federal Government policy statements as *Mutual Obligation*, reflects a free-market ideology ordered by a new social contractual relationship between welfare recipients, the state and the

community—from welfare to workfare (Kerr & Savelsberg, 1999; Kinnear, 2003; McDonald & Reisch, 2008; Sawer, 2005).

A similar activation-style policy approach can be discerned in the U.S. and U.K. welfare reforms. Lindhorst and Mancoske refer to the introduction of the PRWORA in the U.S.—the vehicle used by the federal government to increase the labor force participation of single mothers and thus reduce their dependency on public assistance and expand state sanctioning powers. They write:

To amplify the consequences for failing to comply with new program requirements, Congress passed a mandatory time limit of 60 months for receipt of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and allowed states the option of imposing stricter sanctions on families that were not following through on mandated activities. As a result, states now have greater latitude to involuntarily remove TANF families from the welfare rolls, without regard to their social or economic circumstances. (Lindhorst & Mancoske, 2006, p. 94)

In the U.K., “New Labour entered office in 1997 with a strong commitment to address the problems of the unemployed ... Its first action, for example, was to instigate its New Deal employment program ... a ‘welfare to work’ program” (France, 2007, p. 63). Dean (2002, p. 195), referring to the work of Fairclough (2000), notes that “the very expression, ‘New Deal’... articulates a populist interpretation of contractarianism; a trade off between the government and the people.” Further, Dean notes that this “increased emphasis on the conditionality of welfare rights ... Explicitly or by implication ... accepted as inevitable the end of the protectionist welfare state” in the U.K. These changes also led to an expanded use of sanctions in each of the three nations, as participation (or work) requirements were tightened, eligibility and exemption criteria narrowed and new sanctionable behaviors identified (France, 2007; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Hasenfeld, et al., 2004; Savelsberg, 2009). Whilst sanctions were already in use in the U.K., U.S. and Australia, prior to the introduction of the PRWORA, the New Deal arrangements and the Mutual Obligation policy, their usage was minimal or restricted to only certain categories of recipients.

As the welfare systems of these countries transformed from largely entitlement-based systems towards more activation-style systems—focussed on moving recipients into paid work or some other activity aimed at improving employability—the use of sanctions increased, with sanctions now playing a key role in the enforcement of participation requirements.

As is the case in the U.S. (Lohman et al., 2004) and the U.K. (Finn, 1998; Mizen, 2004), sanctioning in Australia is a form of benefit reduction for those welfare recipients who do not comply with welfare regulations or participation requirements (commonly referred to as activity test requirements in Australia). In the U.S., the PRWORA allows individual States to “define the types of penalties that can be imposed for non-compliance with work-related rules and the circumstances governing them. These include family grant reductions and immediate case closure” (Kalil et al., 2002, p. 643). In the U.K., New Labour has introduced financial penalties against the work-shy, as Frank Field, a former Blair Government Minister explained: “The public will not support a social security system that appears to tell people they can sit in bed all day watching television and drawing benefit” (Field, cited in Powell, 2000, p. 45). As such, young people in the U.K. who fail to participate in a New Deal option without good cause “can be subjected to a two-week benefit sanction. A second or any subsequent refusal results in a four-week sanction” (Finn, 1998, p. 115). In Australia a person who fails to comply with any activity test requirement without a “reasonable excuse” may incur an Activity Test breach and as a consequence a temporary (18%) reduction in benefits for 26 weeks. A subsequent sanction results in a greater reduction (24%) in income for 26 weeks, and for a third sanction the penalty is non-payment of benefits for eight weeks (Department of Family and Community Services [DFaCS], 2007). There are also separate sanctions for administrative breaches, such as failing to attend an interview at Centrelink, which can also result in a reduction in benefits (16% for 13 weeks) (Mullins, 2002).

The Influence of American Conservative Thinkers

The views of American conservatives Murray, Mead and Gilder have been particularly influential in the shaping of welfare policy in Australia, the U.S. and the U.K. As Deprez

(2008, p. 113) notes, in the U.S. the welfare reform debates of the 1980s were heavily influenced by "conservative theorists' proposals for reform," contained within six books published from 1978 to 1986, three of which were written by Murray (1985) *Losing Ground—American Social Policy, 1950-1980*, Mead (1986) *Beyond Entitlement: The Social Obligations of Citizenship* and Gilder (1981) *Wealth and Poverty*. Peck and Theodore argue that for the U.K. Blair Government it was not just ...

a simple case of replicating U.S.-style [workfare] programs. Rather, the U.S. reform process has established some of the key coordinates around which U.K. reforms are being planned and assessed. The discursive framing of the U.K. welfare debate, however, substantially echoes its American counterpart, not least since welfare reform has been taken up in New Labour circles as the very epitome of Third Way policy-making—pragmatic, realistic, tough and (ostensibly) 'post-ideological.' (Peck & Theodore, 2001, pp. 437-438)

In regards to Australia, O'Connor writes "[t]he polemical views of George Gilder and Charles Murray ... now find an echo in the Howard Government's rhetoric about and focus on the 'challenge of welfare dependency'" (O'Connor, 2001, p. 232).

Peck and Theodore (2001, p. 450) caution that in the case of welfare reform in the U.K. (and also arguably in Australia) it is not just a matter of U.S. policies being replicated, rather it was the adoption of "more general *political strategies* of reform management—focusing on issues of dependency, the virtues of work, and so forth."

Welfare Dependency and Sanctioning—The Need for Personal Responsibility?

Dependency and Sanctions

Two key ideas advanced by American conservatives have been enthusiastically embraced by Australian and U.K. governments—namely, welfare dependency and the need for compulsion and penalties (sanctioning) to ensure compliance

with participation requirements (Dean, 2002; Kemp, 1988; Mendes, 2003; O'Connor, 2001). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in its 2008 Annual Report to Congress, defines welfare dependency as "the proportion of all individuals in families that receive more than half of their total family income in one year from TANF, food stamps, and/or SSI [Supplemental Security Income]" (Crouse, Hauan, & Waters Rogers, 2008, chapter 1, para 11).

In the U.K., Peck and Theodore (2001, p. 429) refer to the adoption of an "Americanized" understanding of welfare dependency by the Blair government, specifically defined as the "ostensibly dysfunctional lifestyles and malformed work ethics of the poor."

Surprisingly, welfare dependency has never been defined in a concrete way by Australian Governments, with a definition notably absent from the Howard Government's 1999 *The Challenge of Welfare Dependency in the 21st Century* discussion paper on welfare dependency (Newman, 1999). Importantly, no government policy or discussion paper has ever specified how much or which type of income support an individual could receive before they would be considered welfare dependent (Henman, 2001).

In the absence of an official Australian government definition, Saunders and Stone (2000) offer three possible understandings of the term welfare dependency. The first, "dependency culture as myth," a position long argued by Marxist scholars, holds that no such culture exists. Long-term welfare dependent poor are not viewed as culturally or behaviorally different from the working class as a whole. The argument that there exists a distinctive culture of welfare dependent unemployed people is often dismissed on the grounds that this is an ideological myth created to deflect attention away from the real causes (globalization and capital restructuring) of unemployment. The second "dependency culture as cause" or "cultural underclass theory," "holds that there is a distinct culture among many of those who are long-term welfare dependent, and that this is a major cause of their initial and continuing welfare dependency" (Saunders & Stone, 2000, p. 115). This view has a long, acrimonious history in the underclass debates that raged across the social sciences in the 80s and 90s especially in the U.S. and U.K. (Macnicol, 1987; MacDonald & Marsh,

2005). The third hypothesis, "dependency culture as outcome," appears to be a blend of the two understandings above, asserting that people who have been welfare dependent for long periods of time may show distinct values but that "the initial causes of joblessness will often lie in the collapse of local labor markets rather than in any self-perpetuating culture of dependency" (Saunders & Stone, 2000, p. 116). This view resonates with Labour figures such as Third Way writer (and former ALP leader) Mark Latham (1998) and Frank Field (2000, p. 67) who argued that the U.K. needs to break out of the welfare equals State mentality and adopt "pro-active welfare."

Dependency Culture

It is the "dependency culture as cause" or "cultural underclass theory" explanation, however, that aligns most closely with the view of the Australian Howard government and also, to some degree, the current Rudd Labor Government (Head, 2009). For example, former Howard Government Minister Dr. David Kemp describes how the entitlement-based welfare system in Australia had created a "culture of dependency" amongst the young unemployed:

[b]y international comparison, Australia had developed welfare benefit arrangements which were increasingly recognized as having perverse incentives—encouraging young people (who are at risk or 'marginal') to drop out of school by the too early provision of unemployment benefit and, because of the comparative levels of income support available some preferred unemployment to education and training. These arrangements were supported by a growing culture of entitlement, which more and more was seen to be encouraging a damaging culture of welfare dependence. (Kemp, 1999, p. 13)

In support, Australian academics Saunders and Tsumori (2003, pp. 2-3), from the Centre for Independent Studies, warn that a "stratum of long-term unemployed people [will] become almost permanently detached ... from the world of work and settled into a routine of life on welfare." In the U.K. context, Blair's New Deal reflects similar concerns, as Harris (2000, p. 283) asserts "it is suggested [in the New Deal] that the young

unemployed have formed a dispossessed, alienated and potentially dangerous sub-stratum as a result of their marginalization from mainstream social economic activities."

The view that the provision of welfare assistance decreases recipients' desire or motivation to seek work or overcome any personal difficulties that may be preventing them from working and ultimately weakens the moral fortitude of recipients has been most notably advocated by American conservatives Gilder (1981), Murray (1984) and Mead (1986, 1997). For Murray and Mead, welfare dependency is a problem "rooted in the values of a distinct stratum of people—the 'underclass'—who ultimately lack a strong will to work" (Saunders & Stone, 2000, p. 115). Further, Mead argues that the permissive nature of the American welfare state had caused high levels of unemployment and welfare dependency, and had left the poor without the requisite competence and motivation to achieve what they, and everyone else, wants (education and employment) (Mead, 1997). Gilder (1981, p. 12) too argues that "real poverty is less a state of income than a state of mind and that the government dole blights most of the people who come to depend on it." Like other conservatives, Gilder asserts that the liberal welfare state in America created a situation whereby the poor were getting too much money for too little in return. That is, the welfare system lacked the necessary mutual obligations. Similarly, Murray "contends that a new anti-social, welfare-dependent, dangerous class has emerged [in the U.K.] ... brought into being by the 'incentives to failure' set by an over-generous, postwar welfare state" (MacDonald & Marsh, 2005, p. 6). According to Murray (1984, p. 9), governments which provide a passive entitlement-based welfare system allow individuals to weigh up in a rational and calculating way the option of either accepting low paid demeaning jobs or claiming welfare. Here government is to blame for allowing the welfare system to be misused and allowing over-reliance on the system. Murray would thus argue, "[w]e tried to provide more for the poor and produced more poor instead." He writes:

[t]he tangible incentives which any society can realistically hold out to the poor youth of average abilities and average industriousness are mostly

penalties, mostly disincentives. 'Do not study and we will throw you out; commit crimes and we will put you in jail; do not work and we will make sure that your existence is uncomfortable so that any job will be preferable to it.' To promise much more is fraud. (Murray, 1984, p. 177)

What is 'Welfare Dependency'?

It should be noted, however, that there is much debate about whether widespread welfare dependency actually exists. For instance, Engels (2006, p. 12) after examining the historical use of the term *welfare dependency* in Australia, remains unconvinced of its existence, writing "the Howard Government has yet to provide any hard facts to substantiate its contention that welfare dependency has or continues to exist in Australia." Similarly, Penman concludes, based on a review of recent literature and studies in relation to the issue of welfare dependency, that "the concept of welfare dependency, or income support, is generally not well defined and/or measured in loose and variable ways." Consequently, the lack of an explicit definition and/or the means for measuring welfare dependency makes comparison and the drawing of inferences problematic (Penman, 2006, p. 3).

Australian academic O'Connor describes the application of the American conservative critique of welfare dependency in Australia as "highly suspect and disturbing" as their arguments, he contends, "are, in general, empirically suspect or at the least highly controversial, even in the U.S. context" (O'Connor, 2001, p. 231).

Further, O'Connor questions the empirical validity and reliability of Gilder's and Murray's work (especially claims to have identified the behavioral characteristics of the underclass), arguing that little detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis around the duration of reliance on welfare, the reasons for long-term unemployment and the employment options available to the unemployed is offered. This lack of evidence reveals the ideologically loaded nature of the term 'welfare dependency' and as such raises serious questions about its use in Australian welfare reform (O'Connor, 2001, p. 231).

Fraser and Gordon raise similar concerns about the use of the term 'welfare dependency' in the U.S. context. They write:

naming the problems of the poor, solo-mother families as *dependency* tends to make them appear to be individual problems, as much moral or psychological as economic. The term carries strong emotive and visual associations and a powerful pejorative charge. In current debates, the expression *welfare dependency* evokes the image of 'the welfare mother,' often figured as a young, unmarried black woman (perhaps even a teenager) of uncontrolled sexuality. (Fraser & Gordon, 1994, p. 311)

As O'Connor (2001, p. 231) concludes, "without detailed evidence or ... successful and acceptable pilot schemes, welfare reform will instead be based on gross stereotypes and social experimentation with the lives of the unemployed and poor." Likewise, Gentchev, referring to the adoption of what he refers to as American "left wing welfare dependency" by the Labour party in the U.K., warns:

Labour politicians say that 'their' welfare dependency is about helping not attacking people on welfare. But the experience of the last three years in the U.S. shows the dangers of 'left wing welfare dependency.' ... the Republicans used the anti-welfare climate created to their own ends. They dropped the part about creating jobs, and made the attack on AFDC [Aid to Families with Dependent Children] a central part of their policy. (Gentchev, 1995, sec 5, para 3)

A number of Australian critics (Harris, 2000; Henman & Perry, 2002; Mendes, 2001; Peel, 2003; Schooneveldt, 2003) argue that a focus on welfare dependency enabled the Howard Government to concentrate reform efforts towards altering the behavior and lifestyles of welfare recipients, and not on other more fundamental issues, such as job creation and structural inequalities. As Peel describes it, "the problem of poverty [has been] turned into the problem of welfare dependency." He writes:

[s]uch claims detach the problem of poverty from the problem of inequality, portray poverty as a product of the welfare system itself and suggest that poor

people lack effort and initiative. In other words, we are encouraged to focus on what is wrong with poor people, and on their bad decisions, rather than what might be wrong with the context in which these decisions have to be made. (Peel, 2003, p. 23)

The notion of compelling the unemployed to engage in behavior and activities for "their own good" through the threat of sanctions has its origins in Mead's New Paternalism, defined as "social policies aimed at the poor that attempt to reduce poverty and other social problems by directive and supervisory means" (Mead, 1997, p. 2). It is "a conservative policy in that it focuses on changing how the poor live rather than on improving their benefits or opportunities" (Mead, 1997, p. 11). Mead (1986) considers mandatory participation in welfare-to-work programs to be more effective than voluntary programs, as the latter, he contends, result in the majority of government resources going towards assisting self-motivated job seekers, leaving the most disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals—"the welfare dependent" excluded. He writes:

[t]he unskilled have too many other sources of income, including government benefits, for them to work reliably unless programs require them to. At least for these workers, employment must become a duty, enforced by public authority, rather than an expression of self-interest. (Mead, 1986, p. 13)

Here, it is assumed that individuals may not follow society's interests and as such the new paternalist approach seeks to prevent any divergence. The State, the wise but firm authority figure, must be paternalistic and intervene and direct the poor to undertake those activities that will assist them to meet their ambitions (Mead, 1997). The prevention of "any divergence" (such as avoidance of work) in the U.S., U.K. and Australia is ensured through the use of sanctions which, Australian academic Anna Yeatman (2000, p. 171) argues, is defensible. She draws on Goodin's "carefully considered defence of paternalism [which provides] ... a means of securing the interest of individuals, even if this runs counter to their freedom to choose," to support her contention. According to Yeatman, paternalistic intervention is justified "on behalf of an individual's

interest where their right to choose leads them to engage in self-destructive behavior ... [or make decisions that] ... may be seriously detrimental to their life prospects or irreversible." Examples include, smoking, early school leaving and problem gambling. New paternalism, she contends, can thus be justified in instances where "authoritative others" evaluate an individual's "surface preferences" and find a mismatch between these preferences and the individual's deeper preferences. Thus, Yeatman sees welfare recipients in the same light as Goodin's smokers and problem gamblers, in that:

most welfare recipients want to work, this is their deeper preference. But their lack of positive work experience, together with the non-work-orientated structuring of their everyday existence, mean that they find it hard to act on their 'deeper preference.' (Yeatman, 2000, p. 171)

The Role of Sanctions

Kalil et al. identify several possible roles for sanction policies within the welfare system. First, the "carrot and the stick" argument: here assistance (income support, transportation assistance and child care) acts as an incentive (the carrot) to welfare recipients who comply with work requirements, and for those who don't, sanctions (punishment or the stick). Second, sanctions teach recipients "respect for the rules" by imposing a punishment for failure to abide by those rules. A corollary to this view is that sanctions imitate the work world "... because employees who miss work do not get paid, clients who do not participate should not get paid" (Kalil et al., 2002, p. 644).

Third, sanction policies can act as a motivational tool, where the potential threat of benefit withdrawal acts as an incentive for recipients to comply with requirements. In line with New Paternalist thinking, these approaches assume that sanctions will result in behavioral change, as welfare recipients ("rational actors") will choose to comply (or not) with requirements, depending on their economic situations (Hasenfeld et al., 2004; Kalil et al., 2002; Lee, Slack, & Lewis, 2004). As Kalil et al. write:

a client who is punished via a sanction is expected to come back into compliance (and remain compliant) or seek other forms of economic support, with the end goal of avoiding further financial punishment. Similarly, clients who are not motivated by sanctions or who do not feel punished may have other sources of income. In this function, sanctions may reveal those who do not truly need cash assistance (e.g., individuals committing welfare fraud). (Kalil et al., 2002, p. 645)

American writers Lee, Slack and Lewis are critical of the implicit assumptions underpinning conservative welfare thinking. For instance, they reference Murray's belief that welfare recipients are able to "accurately read the welfare context. That is, they can know what the rules are, understand their meaning and grasp the consequences of not following them" (2004, p. 398). Rather, they argue, many recipients lack such knowledge, which is concerning given their finding that there is a "greater likelihood of working and leaving welfare among those [recipients] with greater understanding of current welfare policy" (Lee et al., 2004, p. 398).

Reflecting the U.S. and U.K. experience, the use of sanctions in Australia for noncompliance with activity test requirements is portrayed by the state as a reasonable and necessary measure for ensuring welfare recipients' active participation. That is, penalties for failing to meet obligations under the new social contract are deemed just, as these obligations are owed to the community and are thought to enhance welfare recipients' future opportunities (promote self-reliance) for economic and social inclusion. These contentions, however, are strongly contested, with critics arguing that rather than promoting social inclusion (and self-sufficiency) these policy measures exacerbate social exclusion (Goodin, 2002, p. 592; Savelsberg, 2009). As Kalil et al., referring to the use of sanctioning in the U.S., note:

[t]here are questions, though, as to whether or not sanctions change client behavior and result in so-called rational decisions (Handler, 1995; Fein & Lee, 1999). Clients may have undetected and serious barriers

to compliance, such as physical and mental health problems (Danziger et al., 2000). Clients may not be fully aware or understand program expectations and sanction policies. In these cases, sanctioning may result in economic or other hardships. (Kalil et al., 2002, p. 645)

Likewise, France, referring to the U.K. experience, argues that research (such as that undertaken by Mizen in 2004) suggests that sanctioning "can cause as many problems as it aims to solve, in that young people can 'disappear' ... and its positive impact may well be limited, in that those most likely to suffer are vulnerable young people" (France, 2007, p. 64).

The Rise and Rise of Sanctioning in the U.S., U.K. and Australia

A number of U.S. (Hasenfeld et al., 2004; Lindhorst & Mancoske, 2006; Lohman et al., 2004), U.K. (MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; Stanley, 2005) and Australian (Mullins, 2002; Ziguras, 2001; Ziguras, Dufty, & Considine, 2003) social commentators assert that sanctioning is an excessive and disproportionately severe punishment for noncompliance with welfare regulations. Further, they note that it is often the most disadvantaged and vulnerable welfare recipients who are adversely affected by sanctions.

In the U.K. during the mid 1990s, the range and duration of sanctions available for noncompliance were expanded by the Conservative Major Government, "including ... the possibility that certain categories of claimants such as young single people could have payment of benefits completely removed for up to a period of six months" (Mizen, 2004, p. 89). Not surprisingly the number of sanctions imposed on claimants for refusing or failing to meet mandatory participation requirements (e.g. job search and motivation programs) doubled from the 1993-1994 figure of 37,000 to 79,000 by 1995-1996. Mizen, citing Bivand, refers to the conclusions of the independent Unemployment Unit which "was forced to conclude, 'it is clear from this ... that a positive outcome [from the active benefits regime] is a reduction in the claimant count, rather than a positive outcome

from the unemployed person'" (Mizen, 2004, p. 90).

There are currently no national figures on the exact number of families affected by sanctioning in the U.S. (Wu, 2008, p. 27) and sanctioning rates provided to the U.S. federal government by individual states tend to vary greatly, "ranging from zero to 29 percent of families" (Kalil et al., 2002, p. 645). It is estimated, however, that "sanctions may have caused over one-half million families to lose welfare benefits between 1997 and 1999" (Goldberg & Schott, cited in Wu, 2008, p. 27). Wu (2008, p. 27), citing research undertaken by Pavetti, Derr and Heketh, asserts that U.S. sanction rates are "quite high, with 45–52% of the recipient cohort sanctioned over a 12-18 month period." From first impressions, the proportion of welfare cases closed as a result of sanctions in the U.S. does not seem large, with about 6 percent of cases in the fiscal year 1998 closing due to sanctions, compared with 22 percent that were closed due to employment (Kalil et al., 2002, p. 645). However, this figure, Kalil et al. argue, may represent an undercount as "more than half (56 percent) of cases were closed for other, unspecified reasons." They write: "'[o]ther' could include procedural reasons, such as failing to turn in certain forms or other eligibility-related requirements. However, since states do not consistently define the circumstances that can lead to a sanction, 'other' reasons could include noncompliance with work or work-related rules" (Kalil et al., 2002, p. 645).

Consideration of the proportion of sanctioned families on the TANF rolls in any given month, they further assert, "may also underestimate the extent of sanctioning because this figure does not include families who remain off welfare because of sanctions imposed in earlier months" (Kalil et al., 2002, pp. 645-46). Taking into consideration these limitations, Goldberg and Schott estimate that:

approximately 540,000 families nationwide lost assistance between 1997 and 1999. Of those, 360,000 remained off TANF at the end of 1999, a figure that is approximately 28 percent of the total caseload decline during this same period. (cited in Kalil et al., 2002, p. 646)

In Australia there has been an alarming rise in the number of people being sanctioned as a result of their failure to

successfully maintain or complete activity test or MO requirements (Savelsberg, 2009). The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS, 2000, 2001), for example, contends that the total number of sanction occurrences (not the number of individuals sanctioned, which is not known) steadily increased from 120,718 during 1997-98 to 302,494 for 1999-2000, peaking in 2000-2001 at 386,946 sanctions before starting to decrease over 2001-2002 and again in 2002-2003 to 269,903 in 2001-2002 and 134,239 in 2002-2003 (Eardley, Brown, Rawsthorne, Norris, & Emrys, 2005, p. 14). According to Eardley et al., the increase during 1995 up until mid 2001 occurred in parallel with the expansion of obligations and requirements placed on workforce-aged recipients and the introduction of the Job Network in 1998. The steep rise in sanctions in 2000-2001, they argue, can be attributed to several possible factors, including the Australian Council of Social Services' (ACOSS) assertion that this reflects a time where Centrelink officers were taking a tougher stand on sanctioning practice. Another reason, however, could be that the number of activity test requirements to be completed increase each year, thus increasing the likelihood that recipients will struggle or fail to meet them (Eardley et al., 2005).

In regards to the distribution of sanctions amongst income support recipients, a number of American (Hasenfeld et al., 2004; Kalil et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2004; Lohman et al., 2004), British (France, 2007; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; Mizen, 2004) and Australian studies (ACOSS, 2000, 2001; Lackner, 2001; Moses & Sharples, 2000; Sanders, 1999) have identified sanctioned claimants as more disadvantaged economically and socially than non-sanctioned recipients. Specifically, these studies show that sanctioned welfare recipients are on average less educated, younger, likely to be living in dysfunctional or abusive family circumstances, be experiencing utility hardships (reduced or complete inability to pay for gas, electricity, water and rent) and accommodation instability, and suffering mental and/or physical ill health.

American new paternalist and sanction advocate Lawrence Mead is, however, dismissive of higher-than-expected sanction rates in the U.S. Commenting on the high sanction rates recorded for a number of U.S. workfare programs, he argues that "demanding programs," such as workfare, can result in higher-than-average sanction rates:

particularly when demands on recipients are first raised, and these sanctions generate part of the welfare savings recorded ... once expectations are made clear, sanctions decrease ... most people leave welfare of their own accord and not because they are forced, or 'thrown,' off. (Mead, 1997, p. 60)

Mead is also dismissive of concerns about those who are "de facto sanctioned"—those discouraged from claiming welfare as a result of tough work policies. He writes "good evidence about the diverted is lacking. All one can say is that to date throwing people off welfare has little to do with the successes of work enforcement" (1997, p. 60). This, however, was not found to be the case for many Australian income support recipients. For example, the Australian Independent Review of Breaches and Penalties in the Social Security System concluded that:

while the system often functions in an appropriate manner, there are many occasions on which its operation in relation to particular jobseekers can be reasonably described as arbitrary, unfair or excessively harsh ... [Further] ... it diminishes people's capacity and opportunity to continue seeking work and become less dependent on social security. (Pearce, Disney, & Ridout, 2002, pp. 12-13)

Despite Mead's assurances to the contrary, it is clear from this thematic analysis of U.S., U.K. and Australian research that for many, if not most, welfare recipients sanctioning exacerbates rather than ameliorates social disadvantage.

A New Social Contract or the 'Politics of Enforcement'

Bill Jordan (1996) invokes the phrase 'politics of enforcement' to understand the contemporary social, economic and political dynamics underpinning welfare and policy reforms. Here an attempt is undertaken to capture the intersecting dynamics of neo-liberalism and market globalization and to analyze the effects on social conditions for individuals, families and communities. Jordan argues that the state,

in response to the imperative of globalization, moves from Keynesian-inspired policies to Schumpeterian ones. In the Schumpeterian Workfare State "governments design social policies to enhance labor market flexibility rather than following the social democratic aim of extending citizenship" (John, 1998, p. 102).

The corollary is not only more precarious economic circumstances, but also that increasingly the basis of community is altered. As Jordan (1996, p. 34) notes, the move is away from facilitating a community promoting a "virtuous circle of civic trust, economic cooperation and social harmony leading to democratic prosperity ... [to] a vicious circle of suspicion, isolation, exploitation and authoritarian backwardness." Thus Jordan argues that:

the perception of a deviant and dependent 'underclass,' living on crime and practicing various kinds of social deviancy, and claiming from the labor and prosperity of the rest of the community, has generated a 'politics of enforcement.' (Jordan 1996, p. 35)

Further, as Ingram, Schneider and Deleon (2007, p. 103) contend, the "politics of punishment" has dominated much of the public policy aimed at "deviants," with policymakers gaining "considerable political capital from punishing those who do not have the power, resources or wherewithal to fight back and whom the broader public believes are undeserving of anything better." Here, as Goodin demonstrates, the fair sounding principles of mutual obligation find punitive policy expression—"merely ... humiliating and harassing the subordinate classes until they finally accept their inferior social status and drop (or are dropped off) the welfare rolls" (Goodin, 2002, p. 592).

The most visible manifestation of the politics of enforcement in Australia, the U.S. and U.K. has been sanctioning. For many welfare recipients, the move towards greater activity test requirements, means testing, compulsion and increased sanctioning provisions has been devastating. These measures in large part have contributed to the removal of substantial numbers of people from social assistance—the cost of which has been transferred to families, the community and

individuals. Importantly, these punitive policies appear to alienate and debilitate those sanctioned, rather than activate and engage them on positive and inclusionary pathways.

References

- Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS). (2001). *Breaching the safety net: The harsh impact of social security penalties*. Sydney: ACOSS.
- Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS). (2000). *Doling out punishment: The rise and rise of social security penalties*. Sydney: ACOSS.
- Crouse, G., Hauan, S., & Waters Rogers, A. (2008). *Indicators of welfare dependence*. Annual Report to Congress 2008. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved July 12, 2009 from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/indicators-rtc/index.shtml>.
- Daugherty, R H., & Barber, G. M. (2001). Self-sufficiency, ecology of work, and welfare reform. *Social Service Review*, 75(4), 662-675.
- Dean, H. (2002). *Welfare rights and social policy*. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Deprez, L. S. (2008). The illusion of change, the politics of illusion: Evolution of the Family Support Act of 1998. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 35(1), 105-131.
- Eardley, T., Brown, J., Rawsthorne, M., Norris, K., & Emrys, L. (2005). *The impact of breaching on income support customers: Final report*. Sydney, NSW: University of New South Wales.
- Engels, B. (2006). Old problem, new label: Reconstructing the problem of welfare dependency in Australian social policy discourse. *Just Policy*, 41, 5-14.
- Field, F. (2000). Welfare dependency and economic opportunity: A response to Lawrence Mead. In P. Saunders (Ed.), *Reforming the Australian welfare state*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Finn, D. (1998). Labour's 'New Deal' for the unemployed and the stricter benefit regime. *Social Policy Review*, 10, 105-122.
- Finn, D (1999). Job guarantees for the unemployed: Lessons from Australian welfare reform. *Journal of Social Policy*, 28(1), 53-71.
- France, A. (2007). *Understanding youth in late modernity*. England: Open University Press.
- Fraser, N., & Gordon, L. (1994). A genealogy of dependency: Tracing a keyword of the U.S. welfare state. *Signs*, 19(2), 309-336.
- Furlong, A., & Cartmel, F. (2007). *Young people and social change: New perspectives* (2nd ed.). Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Gentchev, N. (1995). The myth of welfare dependency. *International Socialism Journal*, 69, sec 5 para 3. London: International Socialism.

- Gilbert, N. (2009). US welfare policy reform: Rewriting the social contract. *Journal of Social Policy*, 38(3), 383-399.
- Gilder, G. (1981). *Wealth and poverty*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goodin, R. (2002). Structures of mutual obligation. *Journal of Social Policy*, 31(4), 579-596.
- Harris, P. (2000). Participation and the new welfare. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 35(4), 279-300.
- Hasenfeld, Y., Ghose, T., & Larson, K. (2004). The logic of sanctioning welfare recipients: An empirical assessment. *Social Service Review*, 78(2), 304-319.
- Head, M. (2009). Australian Labor government unveils historic welfare-cutting plan [online version]. Retrieved (date?) from <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2009/dec2009/welf-d07.shtml>.
- Henman, P. (2001). Deconstructing welfare dependency: The case of Australian welfare reform. *Radical Statistics*, 79/80, 7-17.
- Henman, P., & Perry, J. (2002). Welfare dependency? A critical analysis of changes in welfare recipient numbers. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 37(3), 315-335.
- Ingram, H., Schneider, A., & Deleon, P. (2007). Social construction and policy design. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the policy process* (pp. #s). USA: Westview Press.
- John, P. (1998). *Analysing public policy*. London: Pinter.
- Jordan, B. (1996). *A theory of poverty and social exclusion*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Incorporated.
- Kalil, A., Seefeldt, K. S., & Wang, H. (2002). Sanctions and material hardship under TANF. *Social Service Review*, 76(4), 642-662.
- Kemp, D. (1988). Liberalism and conservatism in Australia since 1944. In B. Head & J. Walter (Eds.), *Intellectual movements and Australian society* (pp. #s). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Kemp, D. (1999). Preparing youth for the 21st century: The policy lessons from the past two decades. *Proceedings of the Washington D.C. conference, 23-24 February 1999: Preparing youth for the 21st century: The transition from Education to the Labour Market*: OECD Publishing.
- Kerr L., & Savelsberg, H. (1999). Unemployment and civic responsibility in Australia: Towards a new social contract. *Critical Social Policy*, 19(2), 233-255.
- Kemshall, H. (2002). *Risk, social policy and welfare*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Kinnear, P. (2002). Mutual obligation: A reasonable policy? In T. Eardley & B. Bradley (Eds.), *Competing visions: Refereed proceedings of the National Social Policy Conference 2001*. Sydney: University of New South Wales.
- Kinnear, P. (2003). The idea of "mutual obligation" in Australian social security policy. In C. Aspalter (Ed.), *Neoliberalism and the Australian Welfare State*. Taiwan: Casa Verde Publishing.

- Lackner, S. (2001). The unheard injustice: Young people and Centrelink breaches. Paper presented at the National Social Policy Conference, 2001, 4-6 July, University of New South Wales: Sydney.
- Latham, M. (1998). *Civilising global capital: New thinking for Australian Labor*. St. Lenards: Allen & Unwin.
- Lee, B. J., Slack, K. S., & Lewis, D. A. (2004). Are welfare sanctions working as intended? Welfare receipt, work activity, and material hardship among TANF recipients. *Social Service Review*, 78(3), 370-403.
- Lindhorst, T., & Mancoske, R. J. (2006). The social and economic impact of sanctions and time limits on recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 33(1), 93-114.
- Lohman, B., Pittman, L., Coley, R., & Chase-Lansdale, P. (2004). Welfare history, sanctions, and developmental outcomes among low-income children and youth. *Social Services Review*, 78(1), 41-73.
- MacDonald, R., & Marsh, J. (2005). *Disconnected youth? Growing up in Britain's poor neighbourhoods*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Macnicol, J. (1987). In pursuit of the underclass. *Journal of Social Policy*, 16(3), 293-318.
- McDonald, C., & Reisch, M. (2008). Social work in the workfare regime: A comparison of the US and Australia. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 35(1), 43-74.
- Mead, L. (1986). *Beyond entitlement: The social obligations of citizenship*. New York: The Free Press.
- Mead, L. (1997). *The new paternalism: Supervisory approaches to poverty*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Mendes, P. (2001). Welfare breaching: Helping/punishing the poor through tough love. *Parity*, 14(6), 5-6.
- Mendes, P. (2003). *Australia's welfare wars: The players, the politics and the ideologies*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
- Mizen, P. (2004). *The changing state of youth*. Hampshire, UK: Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, Houndsmill.
- Moses, J., & Sharples, I. (2000). Breaching—history, trends and issues. Paper presented at the 7th National Conference on Unemployment. 30 Nov.-1 Dec. University of Western Sydney.
- Mullins, C. (2002). *Kicking them while they're down: Youth Allowance and youth poverty, an analysis of the causes and effects of breaches, penalties and debts in the Youth Allowance system*. Sydney: National Welfare Rights Network.
- Muncie, J. (2006). Governing young people: Coherence and contradiction in contemporary youth justice. *Critical Social Policy*, 26(4), 770-793.
- Murray, C. (1984). *Losing ground: American social policy, 1950-1980*. New York: Basic Books.
- Murray, C. (1990). *The emerging British underclass. City?: American Enterprise Institute*.

- Newman, J. (1999). *The challenge of welfare dependency in the 21st century*. [Discussion paper]. Welfare Reform Reference Group, Canberra, Department of Family and Community Services.
- O'Connor, B. (2001). The intellectual origins of 'welfare dependency.' *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 36(3), 221-236.
- Pearce, D., Disney, J., & Ridout, H. (2002). *Making it work: The report of the independent review of breaches and penalties in the social security system*. Retrieved April 17, 2007 from http://www.acoss.org.au/upload/publications/papers/paper124_pearcereport.pdf.
- Peck, J., & Theodore, N. (2001). Exporting workfare/importing welfare-to-work: Exploring the politics of third way policy transfer. *Political Geography*, 20, 427-460.
- Peel, M. (2003). *The lowest rung: Voices of Australian poverty*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Penman, R. (2006). *Psychosocial factors and intergenerational transmission of welfare dependency: A review of the literature*. Australian Social Policy, DFACS, Canberra. Retrieved November 10, 2007, from http://www.facsia.gov.au/research/austsocpolicy_2006/article5.htm.
- Powell, M. (2000). New labour and the third way in the British welfare state: A new and distinctive approach? *Critical Social Policy*, 20(1), 39-60.
- Sanders, W. (1999). *Unemployment payments, the activity test and indigenous Australians: Understanding breach rates*. Canberra: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University.
- Saunders, P. (2002). Mutual obligation, participation and popularity: Social security reform in Australia. *Journal of Social Policy*, 31(1), 21-38.
- Saunders, P., & Tsumori, K. (2003). How to reduce long-term unemployment. *Issue Analysis*, 40. NSW: St Leonards, The Centre for Independent Studies.
- Saunders, P., & Stone, W. (2000). Australian youth and the dependency culture. In P. Saunders (Ed.), *Reforming the Australian Welfare State* (pp#s). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Savelsberg, H. (2009). *Public policy and youth inequality in Australia: The politics of exclusion*. [Phd thesis]. Faculty of Social Science, Flinders University, Adelaide, South Australia.
- Sawer, H. (2005). *One fundamental value: Work for the dole participants' views about mutual obligation*. [PhD thesis]. RMIT University.
- Schooneveldt, S. (2003). Mediating welfare ethics: Selectivity or universalism? In R. Bradley, J. Lyddon, & L. Buys (Eds.), *Proceedings Social Change in the 21st Century*. Laurie, QUT: Brisbane.
- Stanley, K. (2005). Sanctions and sweeteners. Rights, responsibilities and the welfare state. *Public Policy Research*, 12(1), 37-43.
- Wu, C. F. (2008). Severity, timing and duration of welfare sanctions and the economic well-being of TANF families with children. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30(1), 26-44.

- Yeatman, A. (2000). Mutual obligation: What kind of contract is this?
In P. Saunders (Ed.), *Reforming the Australian welfare state* (pp #s).
Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Ziguras, S. (2001). Paying the penalty? Flaws in the breaching system.
Brotherhood Comment. Australia: Brotherhood of St. Laurence.
- Ziguras, S., Dufty, G., & Considine, M. (2003). *Much obliged: disadvantaged job seekers' experiences of the mutual obligation regime*.
Brotherhood of St Laurence, St Vincent De Paul Society &
University of Melbourne Centre for Public Policy.

Book Reviews

Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal*. W. W. Norton, 2009. \$16.95 paperback.

Most analysts of the conservative revolution begin with the aftermath of the failed Goldwater campaign. Kim Phillips-Fein goes further back: to the reaction of some American businessmen to Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. If *Invisible Hands'* subtitle leads you to expect significant information about New Deal politics you will be disappointed. The New Deal is over by page 25. You will also find no mention of one of the most interesting and extreme reactions to the New Deal: the attempt by business leaders such as the DuPont brothers to persuade Marine Corps General Smedley Butler to lead an overthrow of the government. Nor is there any discussion of the attempts to erase from public memory the physical accomplishments of the New Deal, such as renaming Boulder Dam after Herbert Hoover (or the more recent renaming of Washington National Airport after Ronald Reagan).

What you will find is an otherwise very comprehensive account of the many and varied attempts to repeal the New Deal from the end of WWII to Reagan's election as president. Though that event is thirty years past, the book has great contemporary relevance. Phillips-Fein gives us good descriptions of the ideas that fueled the movement, the individual personalities that led it, and the rise and fall of the organizations they created and directed. She covers a vast amount of ground. The narrative moves along briskly and never bogs down in detail. She manages to show the many contradictions, schisms, tensions, and collisions of these groups while maintaining sight of common themes and goals. She notes that neither Goldwater nor Reagan had support of all segments of the business community and both had to duck certain issues to avoid repudiation.

The anti-New Deal movement was anything but monolithic.

Understanding the origins of the "crusade" is difficult and Phillips-Fein does not try to offer a definitive explanation. As she notes, Roosevelt posed no threat to capitalism, so the extremes of fear and rage he provoked seem basically irrational. But the psychological blow to the egos of the business class dealt by the Depression, reducing them from heroes of 1920s prosperity to "incompetent and absurd" blunderers, and the very real threat of organized labor to their previously unquestioned power, seems to have pushed many of them over the edge. In the end it may come down to an inability to cope with the perceived collapse of the world-taken-for-granted as embodied by the Tea Party. She hints at this by calling her first chapter "Paradise Lost."

The enormous influence of Frederick van Hayek, Ludwick von Meis, and to a lesser extent, Ayn Rand is followed through the decades. The contradictions that their absolute faith in the free market posed for their American followers are not overlooked. The attempts of various groups to involve religion in the free market crusade provoked similar ambivalence. Race relations offered yet another arena to unite conservatives but also threaten their principles. One thing most businessmen could agree on was opposition to labor unions, and there is an interesting chapter on role of General Electric as model strike breaker and nurturer of Ronald Reagan. What emerged from this amazing variety of competing and cooperating groups was a general opposition to government intervention on the grounds that, as Hayek pronounced, "submission to the impersonal and seemingly irrational forces of the market" is preferable to "submission to an equally uncontrollable and therefore arbitrary power of other men."

A point that Phillips-Fein might have made more strongly is that this de-legitimization of government and submission to the market were coupled with a belief that the government did not deserve the taxes it assessed and that society could run without them. This doctrine of what I would call "tooth-fairy economics" is perhaps the most important legacy of the anti-New Deal crusade and its embodiment in Ronald Reagan.

Another point that Phillips-Fein makes in her introduction and should have returned to in the conclusion was that a central New Deal discovery, articulated both by John Maynard

Keynes and domestic theorists like William T. Foster and Waddill Catchings, was that consumption is the key to recovery and economic growth during a depression. Ignorance of the crucial role of demand threatens to turn our current Great Recession back into Depression.

*Robert Leighninger, Arizona State University
Editor, Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*

William M. Epstein, *Democracy without Decency: Good Citizenship and the War on Poverty*. The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010. \$65.00, hardcover.

American democracy, claims William M. Epstein, is "without decency." Readers of this journal are unlikely to disagree that the level of poverty and inequality in this very rich country is indecent. Epstein reviews a prodigious number of programs: precursors to the War on Poverty; the brief war itself; social insurance and welfare; and charity and community organization (a strange mixture of auspice and method). He judges them all to be based on individualistic assumptions about the origins of poverty and thus doomed to fail.

Epstein is right that a War on Poverty employability program like the Job Corps did not result in more employment and higher wages for its enlistees. Head Start gains in cognition and educational achievement were not sustained, probably owing to the poor quality of subsequent schooling and persisting poverty of children's families. Yet, assessment of Head Start could acknowledge that hundreds of thousands of poor children experienced the respect and resources regularly accorded to more affluent children. Medicare, Medicaid, Food Stamps, housing subsidies, legal services to the poor, comprehensive community health centers—all extended or initiated during the War on Poverty—decreased inequality although their cash value is not counted as income, and thus is not considered in determining the poverty rate. Nonetheless, poverty was cut in half—from 22% in 1959 to 11% in 1973.

In a rare admission that something worked, Epstein points out that clients on the Lower East Side got more from the welfare system as a result of welfare rights organization. Without evidence, he assumes, "this probably meant that clients in other

neighborhoods got less," (p. 32), clearly overlooking the huge increase in the welfare rolls and rise in benefit levels in New York City and elsewhere in the country during the 1960s.

Though he insists on strict, positivist standards for evaluating social programs, Epstein admits that "theories of social decision making are bedeviled by absence of proof" (p. xi). Nonetheless, he asserts that public policy in the United States expresses the "national will." Without discussion, much less proof, Epstein dismisses possible manipulation of the electorate or the idea that people are uninformed—e.g., "don't let the government take away my Medicare." Above all, he overlooks the political consequences of egregious inequality and that plutocracy or the rule of wealth is a closer description of the U.S. polity than democracy. *Plutocracy* "without decency" is no paradox, no surprise.

Most troublesome is Epstein's failure to distinguish between historical periods and social interventions: "The themes of heroic individualism and social efficiency have persisted through the history of American social welfare with the cold rigidity and indifference of an iron sculpture" (p. 215). Are we to equate the neo-liberalism following the "great U-turn" of the mid-1970s with a New Deal that was sometimes "tinged with social democracy," F.D.R.'s wartime embrace of an "Economic Bill of Rights," the War on Poverty, however short and insufficient?

Epstein's lack of historical distinctions shows in his well-nigh indecent treatment of the War on Poverty precursor, Mobilization for Youth (MFY). Does he recognize where social work was before we (self-disclosure, I was an MFY planner) began to determine what kinds of interventions would expand opportunities for delinquent youth? MFY planners were at odds with settlements in the area, including the famous Henry Street Settlement (Epstein wrongly houses us there physically and conceptually) that viewed delinquency as a mental disease and wanted to attack it with more of the same approaches. We devised programs to alter teachers' attitudes toward neighborhood youth and to increase the likelihood of better educational outcomes. We thought in terms of work programs and enabling neighborhood residents to assert their rights in relation to the institutions on which they depended; yet Epstein equates

these and community organization generally with non-structural, self-help interventions. By the end of the decade, some of us were engaged in the national organization for welfare rights; recognizing that neighborhood-based training programs didn't create employment opportunities, some advocated "new careers for the poor" and full employment or a guaranteed income. Angry about the project's confrontational approach to local institutions, Epstein refers to MFY's "*clamor* for client and resident participation" (p. 33, emphasis added). He further states that the author of a housing report "*moans* about the complexity of the issues (p. 31, emphasis added), and its evaluations are deemed "decrepit, self-serving" (p. 52).

A professor of social work, Epstein offers no solutions whatsoever to the problems he analyzes. What can he possibly teach social work students except that their profession's commitment to improving social conditions is doomed to failure?

Gertrude Schaffner Goldberg

Adelphi University School of Social Work

Michael B. Fabricant, *Organizing for Educational Justice: The Campaign for Public School Reform in the South Bronx*. University of Minnesota Press, 2010. \$22.95, paperback.

Over the past two decades many community organizing groups have turned their attention to improving public schools in low-income urban neighborhoods. They have done so at the insistence of their members, but with some reluctance. Fabricant points out that education organizing demands the stomach and resources needed for protracted struggle, coupled with astute strategists, flexible tacticians, strong relationships, and most importantly, the hearts and minds of a committed base of parents. And still, decisive victories can be elusive. As an organizer remarked once, public education is the "Vietnam" of community organizing.

In *Organizing for Educational Justice*, Fabricant provides a fine-grained account of the Community Collaborative to Improve School District 9 (CC9), an organizing coalition with the goal of improving classroom instruction through a Lead Teacher program. Fabricant's work adds to the case studies

that characterize much of the research done in this field, and like other studies, challenges the notion that school reform is solely the domain of education professionals. The CC9 campaign is the story of Black, Latino, and immigrant parents of the South Bronx participating in forming policies and practices that ensure fairness and quality in their children's education.

Fabricant roots the work of CC9 in a hybrid of the confrontational organizing tradition of Saul Alinsky and the relational organizing and leadership development of Ella Baker and others in the Civil Rights Movement. As Fabricant points out, CC9's campaign, although unique to the New York context, provides important lessons for all those working to preserve and improve public schools at a time when neoliberal policies have diminished financial resources to public schools and legitimized privatization.

The objective of CC9's Campaign for Lead Teachers was to improve classroom instruction by attracting experienced teachers to South Bronx schools. These lead teachers would mentor new and inexperienced teachers, thus contributing to their retention and slowing the revolving door of inexperienced teachers moving in and out of the schools. The Campaign was an initiative of nine community-based organizations led by experienced education organizer Eric Zachary and supported by the Community Improvement Program (CIP), then at New York University and now at Brown. Fabricant relates how the collaborative generated an alliance with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and developed relationships with Department of Education (DOE) staff, all the while pressing the Chancellor and DOE to provide the necessary resources for a Lead Teacher program. He attributes the successes of the campaign in part to the convergence of interests among parties: CC9 parents wanted reforms that would improve teaching and learning, the UFT sought a career ladder for teachers, and the DOE needed programs in which to invest new resources for low-performing schools, won by a state-level organizing initiative called the Campaign for Fiscal Equity.

Fabricant does not make the mistake of telling a facile story by telling only of Campaign successes. He relates the difficulties of harnessing the efforts of nine community-based organizations more accustomed to service provision than to organizing. The groups' uneven commitment to the collaboration

created tensions and contributed to the turnover of organizers hired by the groups. In addition, mounting a cross-school, district-level campaign that focused attention on building relationships with the “top”—the UFT and the DOE—while also needing to renew and expand the parent base at the “bottom” strained the organizers’ capacity. Fabricant recounts the personal transformation of many parent leaders and the deep loyalty and trust that formed among parents and with organizers, but he also tells that despite the constant work the organizers committed to developing parent leaders, sometimes experienced staff needed to intervene when parents did not seem able to fully represent the campaign.

It is impossible to read this book without having tremendous admiration for all those who participated in the Campaign—their intelligence, their caring, their perseverance, their commitment to public education. In an era where public institutions are under attack, CC9 had a vision for public spaces where ordinary citizens could exercise their essential democratic rights and responsibilities. In carving out that space, South Bronx parents were able to make schools a little more accountable to their dreams for their children.

Eva Gold, Research for Action, Philadelphia, PA

Kathleen M. Coll, *Remaking Citizenship: Latina Immigrants and New American Politics*. Stanford University Press, 2010. \$22.95, paperback.

This book, based on a qualitative study conducted with thirty Latina immigrants and active members of *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* (MUA), a community organization founded in California in the early 1990s, contributes to the knowledge base on Latinas in the United States. The study participants were between their 20s and 40s, non-English speaking and of diverse migratory statuses. Many of them were single mothers receiving some type of public assistance, and most had migrated to the U.S. in the early 1990s.

MUA’s creation was a response to the specific social and political conditions of California in the 80s and 90s. The author was the coordinator of the Committee for Health Rights in Central America, and she joined MUA as a research

collaborator. By the time she began her study, MUA had five staff and over 200 members. MUA women were involved in political actions such as marches, civic debate and action, education and training, development of micro-entrepreneurships, job development efforts, lobbying, coalition building, advocacy efforts, and leadership development.

Coll, an anthropologist and lecturer in Feminist Studies at Stanford University, describes and analyzes MUA women's processes of personal and political transformation and the ways in which they claimed their rights and met their daily life responsibilities, processes that culminated in their development of citizenship. For the author, citizenship is much more than a fixed ascribed legal status. It is a right and a process that must be viewed from the perspective of individuals' cultural foundations and practices. These women became citizens through their individual and collective actions and reflections and as they developed a sense of belonging and entitlement and a positive vision of themselves and their children as members of U.S. society.

The book consists of an introduction, seven chapters and an appendix. In the introduction the author discusses her theoretical standpoints, the concept of citizenship, the political and social history of San Francisco, her own trajectory and connections to this city, and MUA and the socioeconomic and political contexts that led to the creation of pro-immigrant advocacy movements like MUA. Each chapter addresses a different component that comprises the process of developing citizenship.

The book provides examples of MUA's strategies to promote political education and collective action such as providing *buena informacion* (good information) and facilitating civic activism. Grassroots immigrant organizing is an underlying component of these women's citizenship development process. Change for these women came as a result of their public participation, the support from other Latinas and the changes in their family relationships. Their thoughts about their rights and social position in the U.S. also changed. They faced laws and policies that forced them to be silent socially and politically. But, through their community participation, they challenged those obstacles and developed valuable social practices and a political identity. Motherhood and citizenship

are mutually constituted as Latinas navigate and seek the help of public institutions. While learning the ropes, these women not only developed as mothers but also as political subjects engaged in participatory citizenship.

Another relevant component of Latinas' citizenship development relates to their *autoestima* (self-esteem), a resource that helped women stand up for themselves and a collective process through which they fully articulated their claims for respect, a voice in their community, and their full rights. It was through the MUA's *autoestima* meetings that they developed political skills and addressed their pressing personal and emotional issues. Latinas regained their voices, changed and developed citizenship as they were able to *desahogarse* (speak up) and *aprender a hablar* (learned to talk) about their realities and challenges. Their narratives provided new and different visions of domestic violence, child rearing, self-esteem and immigrant and worker's rights.

Citizenship emerged as they *convivieron* (passed time) with other women. *Convivencia* (passing time) through workshops and community efforts led them to reformulate citizenship transnationally. In learning about immigration, history, legislation, and the similarities that united them with other non-Latina women, their claim for belonging and membership in the U.S. strengthened.

This book shows an inspiring view of Latinas and the power of community organizing and political action. It is a good educational tool for courses that focus on Latinas, community organizing, leadership development, immigration/migration issues, and human rights. Latina readers may find the book empowering. One possible limitation of the book is the lack of a section specifically devoted to discuss the methodology. Also, other considerations may be necessary when reflecting and analyzing what citizenship means to Puerto Rican women. Because Puerto Ricans are born U.S. citizens, their process of developing a sense of belonging to the U.S. may be influenced by colonialism.

Coll's narratives occur at a time when anti-immigrant sentiment is high, and amidst debate about who belongs in the U.S. In a nation that remains undecided and divided regarding the rights to be granted to our undocumented immigrant

population, Coll's work reminds us that among those undocumented immigrants are leaders and contributors to a new American reality who have gained a right to be called citizens.

Lirio K. Negroni, *School of Social Work,*
University of Connecticut

Daniel Rasmussen, *American Uprising: The Untold Story of America's Largest Slave Revolt*. Harper Collins, 2011. \$26.99, hardcover.

American Uprising tells the story of the massive 1811 New Orleans slave rebellion, and is one of several highly readable, well-researched new books that chronicle events and lives in African-American history—American history, really—from the perspective of participants themselves. Emphasizing agency, books like Isabel Wilkerson's *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (2010) (reviewed separately in this issue) and Dan Biddle and Murry Rubin's *Tasting Freedom: Octavius Catto and the Battle for Equality in Civil War America* (2010) provide inspiration and substance from the lives of Africans and African descendents who courageously challenged the limits imposed upon them by white America. Like the others, *American Uprising* is written in narrative form and is directed to the popular market, and it is enjoying substantial sales—an indicator that black and white audiences are eager to learn about flesh and blood people who made choices, took risks, accepted rewards with joy, and consequences with dignity.

Adapted from Rasmussen's Harvard senior thesis, the book charts New Orleans' commercial growth as center for slavery and details the violence of the sugar plantation owners determined to control their chattel. This back-breaking work resulted in high mortality among the enslaved, and new workers were purchased rather than born because parents didn't live long enough to reproduce and raise children. In this violent context, Rasmussen traces the development of a conspiratorial ideology among the enslaved that drew on the American, French and Haitian revolutions, and the gathering of a small

tribal army that included warriors with previous combat and firearms experience in Africa. The situation came to a head in January 1811 when a large party of rebelling slaves marched from the German Coast area to New Orleans, gathering volunteers, killing plantation owners and burning plantations as they advanced. The city's few troops had been sent to Florida, and essentially it was the plantation owners who were sent to put down the revolt, which they did with incredible ferocity. By week's end New Orleans was filled with the severed heads of Negro (sic.) rebels, a "lesson" to those who might come after. Yet for decades the plantation quarters reverberated with the tales of heroes who chose to die rather than be enslaved.

This story is set against the backdrop of the Louisiana Purchase and the country's growing ambitions to annex Florida and areas to the west. One result of the rebellion was the choice to militarize New Orleans with the formation of a trained militia and installation of Federal troops (steps Rasmussen credits for the victory at the Battle of New Orleans), therefore making further westward expansion possible. This is the first of many conclusions, and one of the book's faults is an inability to bring the story to a close—most likely a sign of this promising author's youth. The book is documented, but in a manner that will be troublesome to those wanting to use the original materials. However, it was not written for academics, but for the people who have long been starved of the actors'—and their own—perspective on African American history. It succeeds in feeding this long-felt hunger admirably.

Phillip Seitz, Independent Scholar, Winner, 2011 Brooking Award for Creativity, American Association of Museums

Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. Random House, 2010. \$30.00, hardcover.

African-American history has most often focused on two epochs, the Civil War and its immediate aftermath and the Civil Rights years, often seen as commencing with the Birmingham bus boycott of 1955 through the Civil Rights bills of 1964–65. Accordingly, literature of the period of 1876–1955 was

comparatively slight. Thus, the migration of almost 6 million African-Americans, occurring over an almost 60 year period, has received only episodic attention, mostly focused on the earliest years, beginning in the 1910s.

Yet, in recent years historians have paid more attention to those other decades. Douglas Blackmon's 2008 *Slavery By Another Name* built on David Oshinsky's 1996 *Worse Than Slavery...* and Danielle McGuire's 2010 *At The Dark End of the Street* highlighted the central role of rape in those many decades; her focusing on Rosa Park's previous career as a rape investigator and organizer for the Alabama NAACP chapter has underscored that the civil rights years occurred over a wide expanse.

Isabel Wilkerson's record of the migration, *Warmth of Other Suns*, captures the protracted exodus from "the terror from which I fled," as Richard Wright had noted. Wilkerson, a Pulitzer-prize winning journalist, provides an overarching history of the period while providing 3 in-depth portraits of escapees from the Florida panhandle, northeast Mississippi and an old mill town in Louisiana. Her subjects left in different decades over different rail routes, heading for Chicago, New York City and California. Their education and socio-economic status varied, but all three fled for greater opportunity, having had their fill of bearing the unchanging, punishing environment. The author's favorite, Ida Mae Brandon Gladney, and her new husband fled an environment of recurring lynchings, where a lack of nearby doctors doomed her diabetic father. George Starling, a high school class valedictorian, looked to escape the iron hand of his father as well as the limited opportunities; Robert Pershing Foster, more privileged than the other two, aspired to be a respected doctor, to escape the limited functions of a southern, Black physician.

By alternating and often connecting the sweep of history and the intimate portraits, Wilkerson helps the reader to more powerfully connect to the material and appreciate why the migration occurred. A teacher would was paid but one-half of what white teachers received; a sharecropper couldn't escape his indebtedness; a rural resident knew of lynchings or burnings occurring every fourth day; parents lamented that their child could only go to school when cotton harvesting was done and had to withdraw when planting season began,

limiting the school year to 5 months. Her graphic description of their plight—her “facts of their lives”—captures the imprisonment and inveterate degradation experienced by African Americans. Decades of this unchanging, often terror-laden existence finally stimulated the mass exodus, as Emmett Scott states, “as if fleeing some curse.”

Wilkerson’s successful work helps correct the long-enduring characterization of the transplanted population. For too long they were depicted as “rabble,” seen by the likes of Daniel Patrick Moynihan as a “tangle of pathology” resulting from their past and their immersion in our welfare system. Actually, compared to native northerners, the migrants were more likely to be two-parent families, to be married, to have their children *not* out of wedlock, to be employed and to have avoided welfare-dependency. Wilkerson helps the reader see them as part of “the universal experience of responding to socio-economic disadvantage” and relocating to a more empowering existence.

Criticism of this work is tempered by the fact that Wilkerson is not an historian and, most basically, by the fact that the work is so masterful; the work is successful in filling a void and educating the reader in multiple, captivating ways. So, one easily forgives that she doesn’t do a historian’s due diligence in citing other major works on the migration, or if she cites the 15th amendment as being ratified in 1880 instead of 1870. These are minor flaws, easily dismissed. *Warmth of Other Suns* is a transfixing, involving work that adds immeasurably to our understanding of the African-American experience and constitutes essential social history.

*Richard Sherman, School of Social Work,
Salem State University*

David J. Harding. *Living the Drama: Community, Conflict, and Culture among Inner-City Boys*. The University of Chicago Press, 2010. \$25.00, paperback.

The author places his work within the body of sociological research on neighborhood effects which includes the classical social research studies of W. E. B. DuBois on opportunities and economic conditions of African Americans in Philadelphia,

the Chicago School ecological studies represented by Park and Burgess and other classical sociological studies on disadvantaged urban communities.

Harding presents fieldwork research results based on in-depth, unstructured interviews with sixty African American and Latino Boston youth. About forty adolescent boys are from the lower-income neighborhoods of Roxbury Crossing and Franklin and approximately another twenty of them are from Lower Mills area of Dorchester, a more working class income Boston African American community with low poverty rates. I consider the Lower Mills interviews as a form of comparative analysis to tease out contextual issues associated with neighborhood effects, culture, and income levels.

This sociological representation of the cultural context of disadvantaged neighborhoods emphasizes social isolation and disorganization. From a social welfare policy perspective, this theoretical underpinning has a deficit focus which discounts the contemporary youth development movement from community organization analytical frameworks such as those from scholars such as Delgado and Staples. These youth development perspectives present a strengths basis for understanding how youth from inner-city Boston neighborhoods create social networks and empower themselves, influence factors which affect their lives and make contributions to their communities. Harding, himself, was a former community organizer in Boston and Springfield, Massachusetts as well as Jersey City. He is, therefore, familiar with this alternative framework for understanding urban youth culture. However, Harding's current work is still grounded in sociological theory that is well established.

Of special interest to social workers and social policy scholars is the chapter on education and cultural heterogeneity. This chapter provides anecdotal accounts from the interviews done in this social research. The positive aspirations associated with educational attainment are consistent with longstanding studies on low income African American families and youth from the strengths perspective. In his work from the 1960s, Dr. Robert Hill found that aspiration levels among African American families far exceeded realistic achievement possibilities given their situations. Harding's findings were very similar in that while the youth interviewed had high

aspirations to get education, they were not as clear how to succeed.

As noted by Harding in his preface, sociologists have studied poor communities for decades. The prevailing approach has viewed economically marginalized residents of inner cities as having different values and norms from mainstream culture. These values and norms in turn have caused violence, family dysfunction, and a range of other social phenomena considered pathological. It was very good to read Harding's acknowledgement that the culture of urban or inner city neighborhoods are not monolithic and not totally alien from mainstream American values. Overall, the research in this book would be considered "good sociology." The book is well-written and interesting reading. It is ethnographic research that is well-grounded in widely accepted theory about cultural and social isolation in poor, urban neighborhoods, but recognizes problems associated with access to resources and mainstream opportunities.

Wilma Peebles-Wilkins, *Dean Emerita, School of Social Work,
Boston University*

Xavier de Souza Briggs, Susan J. Popkin & John Goering,
*Moving to Opportunity: The Story of an American Experiment
to Fight Ghetto Poverty*. Oxford University Press, 2010.
\$19.95, paperback.

Moving to Opportunity examines and evaluates the housing initiative by the same name [hereafter MTO] begun by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1994 (and still in progress at the time the book was written). It was designed to help families living in impoverished and distressed housing projects move to better neighborhoods, assess the interventions and measure the outcomes. Termed an "assisted housing mobility" program, the MTO experiment involved public housing residents in 5 cities (Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and New York) and was loosely based on a desegregation plan developed to implement the 1976 Supreme Court decision, *Gautreaux v. Chicago Housing Authority*, a successful class action suit that argued that Chicago public housing residents were owed assistance to move out of their substandard

apartments in dangerous public housing complexes. Housing vouchers assisted 7,100 black families in obtaining housing outside of the Chicago ghettos. An influential 1992 evaluation reported that those families who had moved to majority white neighborhoods showed improvements in children's school achievement and adults' participation in employment.

In October 1992, Congress authorized a \$70 million MTO housing voucher program with an additional \$1.5 million for relocation counseling. As the authors point out, "Congress had just ordered the largest low-income housing demonstration in decades ... Under newly elected President Bill Clinton, it would soon become one of the most ambitious social experiments ever attempted" (p. 51). Under contract with Abt Associates, HUD's implementation of this experiment involved randomly assigning voluntary public housing or housing-assisted tenant subjects from high poverty census areas into 3 groups: the first received relocation assistance along with housing vouchers restricted for use only in low-poverty areas; the second received housing vouchers with no restrictions and no help; and the third group remained in public housing. HUD also funded research that included both quantitative and qualitative components.

The initial foci of the research were the success or failure of housing relocation and housing stability and achievements in employment and school success. The outcomes in these areas were generally disappointing, with many in the two experimental groups moving back to their old neighborhoods (if not their initial housing projects) within a few years and with mixed outcomes for educational achievement—better for girls, worse for boys—and employment. Unanticipated on the part of the program's designers, apparently, were the difficulties in finding and remaining in suitable and stable housing (this varied by city and depended on the availability of rental housing generally), the lack of public transportation that inhibited seeking and staying in employment, participants' information deficits and lack of information-seeking skills, and perhaps especially, the pull of social connections in the tenants' original neighborhoods. On the other hand, the researchers had not anticipated how important the desire for safety was in motivating tenants to move and the positive outcomes in terms of safety (especially for girls), health and mental health

that characterized those who moved successfully.

In 10 chapters, the book details the unfolding of the residents' experiences at several points over the course of the experiment with attention to the differences among the cities. The text is enhanced, in this regard, by quotes from the renters themselves, whose stories of success and frustration amplify the statistical outcome data. The authors do not shy away from critiquing the underfunded, and therefore inadequate, way in which the supportive counseling services were implemented. Compliers, those in the first group who successfully found housing in low poverty areas, did have modestly better outcomes than the those in the other groups. The authors' summary chapter, "Lessons," appropriately labels MTO as "the strong-idea-weakly-implemented problem" (p. 223) and details the several ways in which the experiment was based on erroneous assumptions about the poor and their available resources.

Moving to Opportunity is carefully researched and documented. It is sometimes repetitive, likely the result of its having three authors. The book will be of interest to social policy and urban planning students and academics as well as planners who have a particular interest in housing for the poor; sociologists interested in social mobility and its deterrents will also find this book informative. It documents once again that expecting that housing will solve entrenched poverty, in the absence of other needed social and economic supports—jobs, adequate income, schools with sensitive teachers and guidance personnel, public transportation and so forth—is foolhardy.

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

Erica Caple James, *Democratic Insecurities: Violence, Trauma, and Intervention in Haiti*. University of California Press, 2010. \$60 hardcover, \$24.95 paperback.

This book on Haiti and the consequences of political unrest and imposed democracy by MIT anthropologist Erica Caple James is one of the most important books on the country published in years. Although marred by excessive academic jargon, it radiates intelligence and understanding. James'

central premise is that in Haiti, an atmosphere of insecurity reigns on every level—political, economic, personal—and thus planning on a personal or familial level, as well as ‘development’ on the national scale, are nearly impossible. James posits further that everyday political insecurity in Haiti means that there is no stable framework against which citizens can make judgments about any event; therefore, all events take on a subjective meaning and are infinitely interpretable, leading at best to bickering and confusion and at worst to internecine violence and political paralysis. Hard truths about Haiti and its international partners are revealed despite James’ difficult academic turns of phrase. *Democratic Insecurities* represents a major advance in ethnographic and sociological scholarship on Haiti.

James’ analysis of urban Haitians’ behavior is among the best writing on this subject. She documents many instances of mysterious, paranoid, proud, and seemingly self-destructive conduct of Haitians in crisis and finds that, at the heart of such actions, a fierce battle over scarce resources is taking place. In moments of extreme national crisis, getting hold of individual micro-donations—doled out according to complicated, indecipherable formulae of victimization developed by international organizations—can lead to bizarrely dramatic (to our eyes) rituals of name-calling, jealousy, revenge, envy, denunciation, and even accusations of witchcraft.

James, who worked with human-rights organizations in Haiti before the 2010 earthquake, describes individual reactions to reductions in supplies and/or payments. More important, she includes narratives of people who come to the fund seeking support: people who were raped for political reasons; a woman whose son was stomped to death by a death squad and whose husband vanished; men who were chased into hiding while their friends were disappeared and their girlfriends raped. She considers and analyzes each story and explains the victims’ anger: they are not only already suffering from trauma, but also from fear of being cut off from crucial supplies for their families.

These victims (or *viktim*, as James calls them) must repeatedly document the details of their victimization in order to qualify for humanitarian funds and goods distributed by

outsiders. James' *viktim* stories combine to paint a picture of a highly neurotic, abused, and neglected population. There is no *post* traumatic stress disorder in Haiti, because there is no *post* about it, ever. It's just ongoing traumatic stress disorder, as if the shells will never stop falling.

James writes with great accuracy about how the bureaucracy of human-rights institutions mirrors the ongoing Haitian trauma. Gossip, rumor and retribution among officials in human-rights work, which James calls "bureaucraft," often closely resemble what Haitians call witchcraft, thus reversing the way outsiders regard Haitian victims. James' implication, of course, is that such behavior often goes all the way up to the top in Haitian politics. James brilliantly captures the mistrustful and dangerous atmosphere in which all remedial activity takes place when resources are scarce and the state offers no institutional infrastructure or continuity.

The book, written before the devastating 2010 earthquake that destroyed Port-au-Prince and much of its environs, when Haiti was already an ongoing economic disaster, is filled with prescient ideas. James writes about "the compassion economy," "the commodification of suffering," the inhuman, unblinking "development gaze," "the emergency framework," the "technologies of trauma," and "trauma portfolios." These are universally useful and important ideas for studying the humanitarian intersection of the world's haves with the world's have-nots. Right now, however, Haiti provides perhaps the most extreme example of this crossroad, the country's failures and geo-neuroses reflecting the enormous, knotty, shameful difficulties encountered during the rush to rescue, when the world attempts to translate outsider money and "good will" into insider improvement or "progress."

James' harshest observations focus on USAID's Human Rights Fund, which she studied during the periods of Jean-Bertrand Aristide's reinstatement as president of Haiti and subsequently that of René Préval's first presidency. Here James provides the *viktim* narratives of political repression and violence, both as individuals' reporting to James, and as they relate their victimization to form a part of the trauma dossier that will qualify them (or not) for help from the HRF. But these narratives, while revealing and vivid (and often contradictory),

are not the most valuable aspect of this very valuable book.

Aside from how much it shows us about the way Haiti works, what *Democratic Insecurities* most accurately demonstrates is how we work in Haiti, with our outsider role as "mobile sovereigns," James' stinging appellation for various kinds of tiny foreign dictators working on the ground, especially field anthropologists, like James herself. Her observations are not only from the field but are also based on solid, painstaking research in the literature of Haitian development, ethnography, and anthropology. The book's detailed index itself is a work of some importance.

Democratic Insecurities has one other central virtue: it is unflinchingly self-aware. James is no cowboy anthropologist blithely critiquing the methods of other cowboy anthropologists. "A crucial dilemma emerged during the course of this work," James writes in her introduction. "How do individual and institutional humanitarian actors grapple successfully with conditions of ongoing insecurity without resorting to the very predatory practices that create such conditions?" How do we correct the system without becoming part of it, becoming tainted by it? After long experience in Haiti, one comes up with a sad and disconcerting answer to this question: No matter how much we grapple with this, we don't grapple with it *successfully*. No one can remain utterly uncorrupted by the predatory political situation. In fact, as James shows us, in places like Haiti, we the outsiders are helping to brew and ladle out portions of the very corruption we seek to remedy. It is to James' great credit that she illustrates this in detail from within the humanitarian edifice.

Amy Wilentz, author of The Rainy Season: Haiti since Duvalier and other works on Haiti

Carmelo Mesa-Lago, *World Crisis Effects on Social Security in Latin America and the Caribbean: Lessons and Policies*. Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2010. \$28.95, paperback.

This book has been written by a leading social security expert and social policy analyst of Latin America. Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Economics and Latin American Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, Carmelo Mesa-Lago

has been a visiting professor, researcher or lecturer in 39 countries. In recent years he played an eminent role in the activities of the International Labor Office and was Chairman of the ISSA task force on the extension of social security. His study evaluates the effects of the global financial and economic crisis on social security, analysing on a comparative basis the situation in the field of pensions, health care and social assistance in 25 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

This text is no doubt one of the earliest reactions of the expert academic world to the financial and economic crises of recent years. This in itself constitutes a disadvantage, because, as the author indicates, the book was completed at the end of October 2009, and hence the data analyzed concern essentially the first onslaught of the crisis. However, the author has turned this situation to his advantage by passing the available information through the grid of his regular analytical framework for the evaluation of social security schemes. In order to understand how Latin America's social security systems are affected by the global crisis, he invites the reader to examine in turn the impact of previous crises: the strengths and weaknesses of social security prior to the current crisis and the actual and potential effects of the crisis on social security. Within each of these chapters, as well as in the conclusions, the situation is examined from the point of view of coverage, sufficiency and quality of benefits, equal treatment and social solidarity, gender equality, efficiency, administrative costs and financial sustainability. On the basis of his conclusions, Meso-Lago then formulates recommendations as to appropriate policies to cope with the negative effects of the crisis.

The wealth of data supporting this analysis permits the reader to draw his or her own conclusions in addition to those formulated by the author. Mesa-Lago points out that while the causes of the previous recessions and of the current economic crisis are substantially different, their repercussions on social security have been similar. The sectors most affected were pension coverage of the population and public access to health care. Both have declined or stagnated in most countries, especially in those with less developed social security systems. He notes, however, that Latin America and the Caribbean were better prepared than before to confront the present crisis because they could count on greater fiscal discipline, lower

public external debt, and higher international reserves along with current account surpluses. The region's main problems have been generated by shocks resulting from its greater openness to the rest of the world plagued with a series of economic dysfunctions.

In dealing with potential effects of the crisis on social security in more detail, the author points to a number of problems which are common to all parts the world. Thus with regard to coverage, we note the presence of increasing unemployment, increase in the volume of informal employment or employer's evasion of payment of contributions. With regard to pensions, the crisis is likely to reduce the benefit levels of those retiring in capitalization systems because of the fall in the value of certain financial instruments and their capital returns. Where the insured is obliged to take an annuity, it will be lower due to the decrease in the value of the accumulated amount in the individual account. From the point of view of pension administration, the crisis could cause a reduction in the number of private pension administrators through bankruptcies and mergers, resulting in less competition, increasing concentration and a rise in commissions and premiums.

The pension system model will play a key role in the impact of the crisis on financial sustainability. Pure individual capitalization schemes are likely to be more affected in the short run because their beneficiaries are exposed to the financial risk of volatile stock markets that influences both the accumulated value in the individual account and the pension amount, particularly for those close to retirement. Nevertheless, solidarity mechanisms, such as the minimum universal pension in several countries and the state solidarity contribution in Chile, should mitigate such adverse outcomes.

The actual impact of the crisis has differed significantly between countries. Social security expenditure has declined as a percentage of GDP in 15 countries and stagnated in nine, while the real value of pensions has fallen drastically. As could be expected, social security deficits have increased, or surpluses shrunk, in 17 countries, the worst affected being those with the oldest pension schemes and a higher proportion of aging population. Pension coverage has decreased in 11 Latin American countries, stagnated in two and increased in four. Among the non-Latin Caribbean countries, it has increased in

Barbados and Jamaica and stagnated in the Bahamas. These results indicate that a number of other factors unrelated to the crisis may substantially modify the final outcome.

The policy recommendations for coping with the consequences of the crisis for social security (health care, pensions and social assistance) are based on successful policies applied during previous economic declines and on the critical examination of the present situation. Some recommended measures come from international and regional organizations. They are modulated following Mesa-Lago's taxonomy developed in earlier work, which recognizes three groups of countries according to the level of development of their social protection systems. In Group 1 we find nearly universal health care and pension coverage, social assistance pensions, the lowest labor informality and poverty incidence and relatively abundant resources. In view of that, policy emphasis is placed on maintaining contributory coverage and expanding protection for the elderly through social assistance pensions, as well as increasing access of the poor and low income population to public health care services. On the other hand, Group 3 countries have the lowest pension and health care protection, the highest labor informality and poverty incidence, no social assistance pensions and fewer resources. Consequently, social insurance systems have a much smaller role to play in attenuating crisis outcomes than in Group 1; policies are hence focused on social assistance programmes targeted at the newly poor and the most vulnerable portions of the population. Countries in Group 2 demand a combination of both types of measures.

This volume constitutes an interesting attempt at presenting policy recommendations based on a careful and systematic analysis of facts pertaining to different aspects of social security schemes perceived within their total societal environment. The chief message the reader is likely to note is Mesa-Lago's criticism of policies implemented in the region in previous decades, promoting deregulation and severe cutbacks in the role of the State, while increasing the role of the market and of the private sector. In his view, the State has a crucial role to play, both in dealing with the consequences of the present crisis and in reinforcing the stabilizing role of social security.

*Vladimir Rys, Social Security Study Centre
University of Geneva*

Greg Eghigian (Ed.), *From Madness to Mental Health: Psychiatric Disorder and its Treatment in Western Civilization*. Rutgers University Press, 2010. \$32.95, paperback.

Although this book is modestly cast as an anthology of writings on the history of mental illness and its treatment, it also introduces the study of the history of the idea of mental illness, of the many controversies, and especially, the history of inhumanity associated with it. Its fifty-five selections, ordered chronologically, span most of recorded history, from biblical selections to the debates on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. The selections are effectively organized into four eras: The "pneumatic age," spanning the ancient world, as well as medieval and early modern Europe; the "age of optimism," encompassing the Enlightenment, the development of the asylum, until the introduction of psychoanalysis; the "militant age," focusing on the impact of the two world wars and the subsequent perversion of psychiatry under Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union; and the "psychoboom," covering the proliferation of therapeutic modalities in the last half of the twentieth century. The selections vary dramatically and include biblical poetry, first person accounts of mental illness, administrative memoranda, legal documents, academic discussions, statistical summaries, and clinical observations.

Each part and each selection is introduced by succinct editorial comments that aim at providing background and context. These comments emphasize the ways that psychiatric theories draw on prevailing metaphors and technologies such as the early pneumatic theories involving the four humors or, in the 19th century, electrical and neural theories, and more recently, informational and computational approaches to cognition. Current theories of chemical imbalances involving the neurotransmitters will remind many readers of the Hippocratic theory of imbalances involving the four humors. Eghigian's comments also highlight the ways that current controversies, such as the nature vs. nurture debate, date back many centuries. A pervasive theme involves what some might regard as an anti-psychiatry bias, focusing on the long history of psychiatric abuse and support for oppressive regimes.

The book includes some limitations. Several of the selections from the classical era, ones that have such indirect relevance to the subject, require more cogent introductory remarks to establish their relevance and implications. Omission of two key writers—Clifford Beers and William James—both associated with the Mental Hygiene Movement at the opening of the twentieth century, is disappointing. The treatment of the relationship of spiritual experience with mental illness, although included in places, could have benefitted from a more in-depth selection, perhaps a first person account, such as Vaslav Nijinsky's, or a theoretical discussion, perhaps Roberto Assagioli's. And finally, the collection might have included a better balance of material on the role of the major mental health professions, not just psychiatry and psychology, but other professions, such as social work.

The book's strengths clearly outweigh its limitations. Its use of personal narratives is a major strength, as it extends the multiplicity of perspectives represented in this work. There are a variety of selections that most readers would otherwise be unlikely to read, ones that provide insight into a variety of historical developments. Discussions of antiquated diagnoses, such as monomania, lypemania, and neurasthenia are all of considerable interest, as well as the treatment of key cases in the development of mental health law, such as the M'Naughten Rule or the case of Elizabeth Packard. Its treatment of the history of the asylum, in America, Europe, and Bengal, is compelling, and includes a patient newsletter that discusses patient unhappiness about the visits of sightseers in an upstate New York asylum in the late 1800s. The search for cures in the first half of twentieth century, through intentional malarial infection, insulin coma, hydrotherapy, and lobotomy, is not light reading. The selections on eugenics, on the Nazi extermination of patients "living a life unworthy of life" in the 14f2 and T4 programs, and of the hospitalization of dissidents under the Soviet Union are particularly shocking and revealing.

Given the breadth and span of the history of mental disorders, public superstition and ignorance about them, and the many attempted remedies, whether barbaric or well-intended, it is not surprising that some key topics may not have been covered by this anthology. Nonetheless, this is an invaluable

collection, highly recommended for both students and mental health researchers, as a sourcebook for ongoing study of the history of the idea of mental illness and its treatment.

*Christopher Hudson, School of Social Work,
Salem State University*

Ian Marsh, *Suicide: Foucault, History and Truth*. Cambridge University Press, 2010. \$35.00, paperback.

Ian Marsh cares about suicide and the people who are affected by it. After working for ten years in the field of suicide prevention as a member of a community mental health team, Marsh has produced an exhaustive analysis of the social, historical, cultural, and scientific practices that have constructed the contemporary clinical understandings of suicide in the field of suicide prevention.

In order to create an opening for alternative approaches to suicide prevention, it is necessary to understand how suicide has been discursively constructed as pathology and how this construction has affected how suicide is treated, experienced, and managed. For Marsh, this requires a Foucauldian approach that attends to the performative role of discourse in shaping the material reality of suicide. In part I, through archival analysis of policy documents, journal articles, books, reporting guidelines, newspaper articles, and first-person accounts, Marsh details how "suicide is discursively constituted, by whom, with what authority, by what means and to what effect" (p. 9).

In part II, Marsh introduces the contemporary regimes of truth that frame suicide prevention. To situate this discursive framing, he draws on medical and psychiatric understandings that describe suicide as "arising as a consequence of mental illness, a form of pathology or abnormality situated within the individual" (p. 65), as well as on accounts of suicide from the news media, and from literary figures struggling with suicide. According to Marsh, suicide is discursively constructed as pathology, stemming from material and mental forces that reside within an individual body. The suicidal subject is understood as either fully determined by a "chemical imbalance" or acting

out his or her individual freedom to die. The truth effect of this discursive framing is that suicide is conceptualized and treated as an individual problem, evidenced by a whole set of prevention policies that are aimed at pathological individuals rather than the social milieu that produces suicidal individuals.

Through detailed archival analysis in part III, Marsh demonstrates that suicide was not always conceptualized as an individual problem. Beginning with ancient Roman and Greek accounts of suicide (Ch. 5), Marsh traces how the meaning of suicide has changed over time (AD 66 – 2000) and argues that suicide is a discursively constituted cultural product. Drawing on Foucauldian notions of biopower—the power to produce and reproduce life itself at the scale of the individual body and the human population—Marsh discusses: the production of the suicidal subject as an expression of sovereign power over the species life of the population (Ch. 6); the role of the body as the material and discursive space in which emergent medical understandings of suicide take shape (Chs. 7 and 8); and the new forms of spatial containment, discipline, and scientific management that the pathologized body elicits (Ch. 9). Suicide is further individualized through the search for unconscious drives and impulses in professional psychiatric discourse and treatment. However, these individualized understandings of suicide are challenged by Durkheim's sociological explorations (Ch.10). In an effort to subvert the performative effects of suicide as individualized pathology, Marsh introduces a counter-performance of suicide by the late playwright, Sarah Kane. Marsh reads her play, *4.48 Psychosis*, as a refusal to occupy the suicidal subject positions created by contemporary psychiatric discourse (Ch. 11).

A discourse analysis of suicide may seem somewhat indulgent and distracting from the “real” and material problem of suicide; Marsh is well aware of this normative critique and has no wish to destabilize the meaning of suicide in order to make it “easier for people to kill themselves.” Rather, he hopes that his research will create “space where a wider framework for understanding and responding to the reality or possibility of such acts could arise” (p. 8). However, in true Foucauldian fashion, Marsh's own positionality and subjectivity remain absent from view. Marsh's own experience in the field of suicide

prevention could have provided a rich empirical context in which to better understand the material effects of the various suicide discourses he has so aptly traced. This book is an excellent demonstration of both the utility and limits of Foucauldian methodologies for understanding complex social, scientific, health problems like suicide. This text will be useful to practitioners and students in mental health and other social sciences who have an interest in operationalizing Foucauldian theories to understand and develop alternative solutions to social problems.

Oona Morrow, Graduate School of Geography, Clark University

INTENTIONAL BLANK

INTENTIONAL BLANK

INTENTIONAL BLANK

INTENTIONAL BLANK

The Journal is proud to announce that
subscription rates for the
Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare,
Volume XXXIX, 2012, will be the same
as current subscription rates.

Renew online,
or mail your payment in U.S. funds to:

Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare
School of Social Work
Western Michigan University
1903 W. Michigan Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5354

William Spanos, *The Legacy of Edward W. Said*. Urbana, IL:
University of Illinois Press, **2009**. **\$25.00** papercover.

Corresponding Authors

Martha N. Ozawa
Director, The Martha N. Ozawa
Center for Social Policy Studies
George Warren Brown School of
Social Work
Washington University
St. Louis, MO 63130-4899
awazo@gwbmail.wustl.edu

Alissa Schwartz
292 Lefferts Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11225
as2272@columbia.edu

Cindy Calvo
School of Social Welfare
University of Kansas
1545 Lilac Lane
Lawrence, KS 66044-3184
cindyk01@ku.edu

Yiyoon Chung
School of Social Work
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Madison, WI 53706
yychung@wisc.edu

Philip Dybicz
Keimyung University
South Korea
pdybicz@gmail.com

David I. Siegel
West Chester University
Graduate Social Work Department
Reynolds Hall, Room 207
West Chester, PA 19383
dsiegel@wcupa.edu

Harry Savelsberg
School of Psychology, Social Work
and Social Policy
University of South Australia
Magill Campus, Magill 5072
South Australia
harry.savelsberg@unisa.edu.au

JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL WELFARE

2011 Publication Information & Subscription Rates

Volume:	XXXVIII
Volume Year:	2011
Publication Period:	1-11 to 12-11
Publication Frequency:	Quarterly
Publication Dates:	March, June, September, December

Subscription Rates:

	Retail Cost	Subscription Agent
Online version only	Individual	
	\$40.00	\$40.00
	Institution	
	\$80.00	\$70.00
Print plus online version* (package)	Individual in U.S.	
	\$48.00	\$48.00
	*includes postage fee	
	Individual Outside U.S.	
	\$55.00	\$55.00
	Institution in U.S.	
	\$88.00	\$78.00
	Institution Outside U.S.	
	\$95.00	\$85.00

*Non-U.S. address + \$15.00 - U.S. mailing address + \$8.00
Institutional subscribers can access the Journal's articles with ip authentication. Please send ip information to swrk-jssw@wmich.edu. Individual subscribers can access the Journal's articles online by contacting swrk-jssw@wmich.edu for a password.

Prepayment in U.S. funds. Single year subscriptions only. Subscriptions non-cancelable. Free replacement within six (6) months of publication of issues not received. Back Issues: \$15.00 per issue, plus \$2.00 for postage. ISSN: 0191-5096. Tax Free Registry No.: A-154961. Federal Tax ID No.: 386007327. Index: Included in Issue Number 4 (December) at no additional cost. Web Site: http://www.wmich.edu/hhs/newsletters_journals/jssw/index.htm. Contact Person: Frederick (Fritz) 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. Tel: 269-387-3205 Fax: 269-387-3217.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

(Revised June, 2011)

JSSW welcomes a broad range of articles which analyze social welfare institutions, policies, or problems from a social scientific perspective or otherwise attempt to bridge the gap between social science theory and social work practice.

Submission Process

Electronic submissions are welcome. Please send to Robert Leighninger at rleighn@asu.edu. Submit hard copies of manuscripts to: Robert Leighninger, School of Social Work, Arizona State University, 411 N. Central Ave. Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ, 85004-0689. Send with an abstract of approximately 100 words and key words. Since manuscripts are not returned by reviewers to the editorial office, the editorial office cannot return them to the authors. Submission certifies that it is an original article and that it has not been published nor is being considered for publication elsewhere. Receipt of manuscripts will not be immediately acknowledged, but author will receive e-mail notification when the manuscript goes out for review.

Progress reports can be obtained by e-mailing the editor at rleighn@asu.edu. Reviewing normally takes 120 days.

Preparation

Articles should be typed, double-spaced (including the abstract, indented material, footnotes, and references) on 8 ½ x 11 inch white bond paper with one inch margins on all sides. Tables may be submitted single-spaced. Please provide a running head and keywords with manuscript.

Anonymous Review

To facilitate anonymous review, please keep identifying information out of the manuscript. Only the title should appear on the first page. Attach one cover pages that contain the title, authors, affiliations, date of submission, mailing address, telephone number and any statements of credit or research support.

Style

Overall style should conform to that found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition, 2001. Use in-text citations (Reich, 1983), (Reich, 1983, p. 5). The use of footnotes in the text is discouraged. If footnotes are essential, include them on a separate sheet after the last page of the references. The use of italics or quotation marks for emphasis is discouraged. Words should be underlined only when it is intended that they be typeset in italics.

Gender and Disability Stereotypes

Please use gender neutral phrasing. Use plural pronouns and truly generic nouns ("labor force" instead of "manpower"). When dealing with disabilities, avoid making people synonymous with the disability they have ("employees with visual impairments" rather than, "the blind"). Don't magnify the disabling condition ("wheelchair user" rather than "confined to a wheelchair"). For further suggestions see the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association or Guide to Non-Sexist Language and Visuals, University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Book Reviews

Books for review should be sent to Jennifer Zelnick, Touro College School of Social Work, 43 West 23 Street, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10010.

Founding Editors

Norman Goroff and Ralph Segalman

Western Michigan University
JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE
School of Social Work
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5354

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Kalamazoo, MI
Permit #87