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Social Workers and Politics: Direct Political Involvement and Encouragement of Client Involvement in Politics

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The research focused on two aspects of political involvement among social workers. The first was the direct political involvement of social workers on behalf of their clients, and the second, the social workers’ encouragement of their clients’ involvement in political activity. The main purpose of the research was to identify the factors that explain these two types of political involvement among social workers. The data were collected by means of a structured questionnaire from a research sample of 165 social workers in 50 social services departments in Israel. The findings indicate that the factors of the community (as opposed to clinical) field of practice, political self-efficacy, management support, low level of perceived organizational politics, and work in a rural setting contribute most to the explanation of political involvement of social workers. The perception of political involvement as a professional activity did not explain its prevalence among the social workers. The article discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the findings.

Key Words: social workers, politics, involvement, clients
Introduction

The political involvement of social workers is essential because they work in a political arena. The environments in which social workers operate are characterized by power struggles and conflicts of interest; therefore, in order to promote change, they often have to influence the political system (Domanski, 1998; Patel, 2011; Vick, 2012). The political involvement of social workers is based on fundamental values of the profession such as commitment to social justice, equal rights, and fair division of resources and power (Rush & Keenan, 2014). Their task is to work within the political system to promote disadvantaged people and serve as their personal and collective advocates (DeFilippis, Fisher, & Shragge, 2009; Reisch & Jani, 2012). In their different positions, social workers are expected to function in the political system as mediators, agents of change, advocates, and lobbyists (Domanski, 1998).

In addition to direct political involvement, social workers are also expected to encourage their clients to participate in political activity. The aim of client involvement in the political process is to allow them to play a role in decision-making processes that affect their lives (Ohmer, 2007; Postle & Beresford, 2005). Social workers also need to encourage clients to engage in politics because of the changes the clients are expected to undergo as a result of social work intervention programs, which are often associated with political processes (Saleebey, 1997). Encouraging the political involvement of clients may also be a means of raising public awareness of their suffering and transforming their cases into general social issues that warrant social-community solutions (Mendes, 2007).

The ability of clients to influence the political system reflects a process of personal and community empowerment. It contributes to the ability of clients to progress from a condition of helplessness to one in which they have an impact on their own living conditions. Empowerment by means of political involvement contributes a shift from the margins to the center of society, where the clients have a voice, take initiative, and work on behalf of themselves and the collective. Political involvement empowers clients by bringing them together with others in the same situation, raising their critical awareness of institutions, and increasing their self-efficacy.
Social Work and Politics

regarding the generation of change (Author’s own; East & Roll, 2015; Song, 2013; Wu, 2010).

The present research examined the degree to which social workers participate directly in political systems and the degree to which they support their clients’ political involvement. The main purpose of the research was to investigate the factors that contribute to both these aspects of political involvement. As a first study on this subject, it encompassed a comprehensive examination of several personal characteristics (political self-efficacy, perception of political involvement as a professional activity, and clinical or community field of social work practice), as well as several organizational-administrative characteristics (management support for political activity and the perceived organizational politics of the social services department) related to the political sphere. The research examined the relationships and relative contribution of each of these characteristics to the involvement of social workers in the political system and their encouragement of their clients’ political involvement.

Theoretical Background

Political Involvement

Political involvement is defined in terms of the power that citizens have to influence the conditions of their lives. It refers to a redistribution of the power that enables the have-not citizens to play a role in economic and political processes, so that they can participate in and influence the political system. Verba and others (1995) argued that political participation, that is, activities conducted by ordinary citizens in order to affect political outcomes, is the most important means by which citizens can make their interests and preferences known.

Political involvement includes presenting the government with an agenda and obtaining a response to the relevant issues. The participants become players whose position must be considered (Cebolla-Boado & Ortiz, 2014; Verba, Lehman, & Brady, 1995). Political involvement also refers to activity by which the interests, aspirations, and demands of citizens have an effect on key figures in the government and on the decisions they make (Fennema & Tillie, 2001; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Kerrissey & Schofer, 2013).
The definition of the political involvement of social workers is similar, concentrating on the effort to influence the political system in order to promote the rights of disadvantaged social groups (DeFilippis et al., 2009; Domanski, 1998; Haynes & Mickelson, 2006; Reisch & Jani, 2012). The political involvement of social workers and their clients is aimed at improving their access to information, influencing policy, affecting the distribution of funds, implementing programs, and developing and introducing services. Social workers use different means to achieve these goals, such as advocacy, lobbying, negotiations, persuasion, disseminating information, and public protest (Chui & Gray, 2004; Domanski, 1998; Ritter, 2008). As noted, in this research we examined the direct political involvement of social workers on behalf of their clients and the degree to which they supported their clients’ political involvement.

The perception of political involvement as a professional activity

As discussed in the introduction, there is much support for the political involvement of social workers, and there is also evidence that social workers are active in this respect (Domanski, 1998; Patel, 2011; Vick, 2012). However, in many cases, social workers view social and political activism as inappropriate for their professional practice. Some may view the political system as foreign and contradictory to the values of the social work profession. Social workers often see political involvement as an activity that is not objective, which involves unfair exploitation of the foci of power and is thus liable to distract them from the systematic work the profession requires. In fact, “politics” is often considered a dirty word, evoking an image of aggressiveness that clashes with the professional image of sharing and acceptance (Haynes & Mickelson, 2006; Mendes, 2007). Accordingly, many social workers avoid the centers of power in the community and prefer to focus on clinical therapy (Almog-Bar, Weiss-Gal, & Gal, 2015; Mendes, 2007), the development of intervention methods, and research, all detached from the political arena (Reisch & Jani, 2012).

A noteworthy aspect of this view is the objection of social workers to adopting intervention methods that they view as contradicting their perception of the profession (Lee-Treweek, 1997), particularly when the methods seem to jeopardize the
professional process or values (Baines, 2004). In some cases, such resistance intensifies to the point of considering resignation (Abramovitz, 2005; Baines, 2008). Accordingly, social workers’ perceptions regarding the professional nature (or lack thereof) of political involvement are likely to lead to different levels of involvement.

Accordingly, it can be expected that those involved in community practices will be more likely, compared with those involved in private-clinical practice, to participate in political activity and to encourage their clients to be involved politically. In community practice it is particularly important to understand the politics of the community and the broader environment; to become acquainted with stakeholders, who in many cases have different and conflicting aims, goals, and interests; and to work for changes in the political system (Checkoway, 1995; Das, O’Neill, & Pinkerton, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2008; Twelvetrees, 1991; Weil, 1996). In this respect, community practice is not limited to intellectual and technical activities, such as analysis, consideration, and evaluation of information, but also—in fact, mainly—includes activities of persuasion, negotiation, and dissemination of information (Author’s own).

**Political Self-Efficacy**

The concept of self-efficacy is based on social cognitive and social learning theories. Self-efficacy refers to the individual’s evaluation of his or her ability to perform the actions required in order to deal with future situations (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Research on this subject has shown that self-efficacy contributes significantly to a wide variety of tasks, level of performance, persistence, attainment of aims and goals, and actions that involve challenges beyond common tasks (Dull, Schleifer, & McMillan, 2015; Wang & Zhang, 2016). However, it is important to note that a person’s general self-efficacy may vary across situations, and it is not an all-encompassing quality (Bandura & Jourdan, 1991). Self-efficacy is specific to each task or situation (Pintrich & Schunk, 1995). Therefore, in the present research, we examined political self-efficacy—people’s faith in their ability to influence the political system, perform political tasks, participate in politics, and generate change. Political self-efficacy
has been found to be one of the factors that affects the level of involvement in politics (Ritter, 2008; Verba et al., 1995).

Management Support

Management support of employees is critical to their motivation. Research has shown the importance and influence of the managers in organizations (Buick, Blackman, O’Donnell, O’Flynn, & West, 2015; Schult, Galway, Awosika, Schmunk, & Hodgson, 2013), particularly on the introduction of changes in the organization and its services (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002); the development of the organizational culture (Schein, 1992); and the mediation and coordination of conflicting requirements that arise from the external and internal environments (Fleming & Spicer, 2004). This also holds for the influence of managers in welfare organizations, who are likely to play a central role in shaping values and norms regarding political activity. Social workers employed in the social services are affected by the overall view of the management (Author’s own; Postle & Beresford, 2005).

Organizational Politics

Organizational politics is a unique aspect of the study of interpersonal relations in the workplace, and has been discussed extensively in literature on the motivation of employees (Author’s own; Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010). Organizational politics refers to terms such as “power” and “influence,” and to people’s ability to influence matters in favor of their goals (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). Organizational politics involves the promotion of personal interests that conflict with the interests of the organization or of other employees (Meisler & Vigoda-Gadot, 2014). Organizations characterized by organizational politics are guided less by professional, technical, or scientific considerations, and more by interactions of negotiation and persuasion (Gummer, 1990). Organizational politics are expressed when members of an organization identify foci of power and exploit them to obtain personal support or to realize programs or policies that they see as desirable (Author’s own, 2011; Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989).

When organizational politics are prominent in a social services department, the social workers are more likely to participate actively
in the political system in order to achieve their professional tasks; in order to achieve their goals, they need to focus their actions on influence and negotiation; for the same reason, they are likely to encourage their clients to take an active part in the political system.

**Hypotheses**

The theoretical literature gives rise to the following hypotheses:

- A positive correlation will be found between the perception of political involvement as professional and: (a) the political involvement of social workers (as part of their professional role) and (b) social workers’ encouragement of the political involvement of their clients.

- Involvement in community (rather than clinical) social work practice will contribute to: (a) the political involvement of social workers and (b) social workers’ encouragement of the political involvement of their clients.

- A positive correlation will be found between political self-efficacy of social workers, as well as: (a) their political involvement and (b) their encouragement of their clients’ political involvement.

- A positive correlation will be found between management support of political involvement and (a) the political involvement of social workers and (b) the social workers’ encouragement of their clients’ political involvement.

- A positive correlation will be found between perceived organizational politics and (a) the political involvement of social workers and (b) their encouragement of their clients’ political involvement.
Method

Sample

The research was conducted among social workers employed in social services departments in Israel. About 50 of the country’s 123 departments of social services were randomly sampled. The sample included 165 social workers. Two hundred and sixty questionnaires were sent randomly to the departments, depending on the size of each department (2 to 7 social workers in each); 165 were returned (63.46% response rate). The majority of respondents was born in Israel (90.3%), and most were women (84.2%). The average age of the respondents was 37.12 (between 24 and 54 years). More than half of the respondents held bachelor’s degrees in social work (63%), and the rest (37%) held master’s degrees (in Israel, a bachelor’s degree in social work is the minimum qualification for employment in the field). The majority of respondents were employed in the clinical field of practice (69.1%), and the others engaged in macro social work, that is, community or administrative work (30.9%). The mean length of time in the social work profession was approximately 11.28 years (ranging from 1 to 36 years). Most of the respondents were employed in urban social services departments (61%) and the others in local or regional council departments (rural areas) (39%).

Research Instruments

Political involvement scale. The measure of political involvement was based on the earlier work of Verba et al. (1995) and its translation by Gilboa (2000). The scale includes 14 items representing political activities. In correspondence with the research goals, two aspects of political involvement were examined. Regarding the first, the political involvement of social workers, the respondents were asked to note the degree of their political involvement as part of their professional work in each item presented. Regarding the second aspect, the social workers’ encouragement of the political involvement of their clients, the respondents were asked to mark the degree to which they encouraged their clients’ involvement in the activities represented by the respective items. In both sets of items, the ranking was graded on a five-point scale, where 1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = to a great degree, and 5 = to a very great degree.
Scale of perception of political involvement as part of the social work profession. The scale measuring the perception of political involvement was based on earlier research on social workers’ involvement in the recruitment of resources (Author’s own, 2006), which was adapted for the present research. The scale includes 11 statements. The items represent two opposing views of political involvement: negative (it is not professional), such as “political involvement is an activity that dirties the hands of social workers,” “it’s an appropriate activity for politicians or other groups, but not for social workers” (reverse), and a positive (professional) view of political involvement as part of the profession, represented by statements such as: “politics is an activity based on professional knowledge in social work.” The respondents were asked to mark the degree to which they agreed with each of the statements regarding the political involvement of social workers as part of their professional work, on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = 0.89$.

Political self-efficacy scale. The measure of political self-efficacy was based on the work of Verba et al. (1995), which was translated to Hebrew (Gilboa, 2000). The scale reflects the respondent’s inner belief in his or her ability to understand and influence political processes. The respondents were asked to rank their agreement with the items on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = 0.80$.

Management support for political involvement scale. The scale was based on an earlier measure developed to assess the general support of organizational directors (Zeitz, Johannesson, & Ritchie, 1997), which was adapted for the support for political involvement. The scale included 7 items, such as “the management guides the employees to participate in politics,” and “the management encourages employees to participate in activities related to political systems.” The respondents were asked to mark the degree to which each of the items was true for the management of their social services department (the department manager, team leader, or others who directed their departments), on a scale ranging from 1 (do not agree at all) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = 0.81$.

Scale of perceived organizational politics. The POPS questionnaire, based on earlier research (Ferris et al., 1989; Kacmar & Carlson,
1994), was translated to Hebrew (Vigoda, 2000) and used to assess the organizational politics of the respondents’ departments. Organizational politics was defined as the degree to which members of the organization perceive the organizational environment as political, unfair, and directed to promote the goals of the strong and influential. The respondents were asked to rank their agreement with each of 9 items on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = 0.80$.

Questionnaire on personal details. The questionnaire was designed to collect the variables of personal and professional background, such as age, gender, marital status, education, professional experience, field of practice (clinical or community work), and location of the department (urban or rural).

Procedure

After obtaining permission from the Ministry of Social Services and Social Affairs to conduct the research, a request was submitted to the managers of the social services department. All the managers agreed to participate in the research. Two master’s degree students of social work distributed the questionnaire in the departments. The questionnaire included a consent form to be signed by the social workers; among other things, it stated that they were not required to complete the questionnaire and that they could stop answering it at any point.

Findings

The Descriptive Variables

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that the reliability of the dependent research variables, according to Cronbach’s alpha, ranged from $\alpha = 0.80$ to $\alpha = 0.95$. The mean of the variable of encouragement of political involvement by clients was higher than that of the social workers’ own political involvement (see Table 1).
To examine the contribution of the independent variables to the explanation of the dependent variables, we performed multivariate analysis. Two regressions were performed for each of the dependent variables (encouragement of the political involvement of clients, and the social worker’s political involvement). The background variables of education, length of time in the profession, type of social services department (urban or rural) were entered as control variables. In addition, the independent variables of main field of practice, political self-efficacy, perception of political involvement as professional, management support, and perceived organizational politics were also entered into the regression.

The background variables of gender and country of birth were not included, as there were not enough men or immigrants, and the t tests did not reveal any significant differences. The age of the social workers was not examined, because the Pearson’s correlation in the pre-test did not indicate a significant correlation (see Table 2).

### Table 1: Reliability coefficients, means and standard deviations of the research variables (N = 165)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variability</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The social worker’s political involvement</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement of clients’ political involvement</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management support</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political self-efficacy</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of political involvement</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived organizational politics</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The regression model of social workers’ political involvement was found to be significant \((p < 0.001, F = 9.08)\), and to explain 29\% of the variance. Field of practice provided the most significant explanation of variance in the social worker’s political involvement, followed by management support, perceived organizational politics (in a negative direction), and political self-efficacy.

The regression model of social workers’ encouragement of the political involvement of clients was found to be significant
(F = 6.48, p < 0.001) and to explain 21% of the variance. Field of practice, that being involved in community practice, as compared with individual case work practice, provided the most significant explanation of variance in the social worker’s encouragement of clients to participate in politics, followed by perceived organizational politics (negatively), political self-efficacy, type of social services department (rural or urban), and management support.

Discussion

In this research we examined the factors that promote and deter the political involvement of social workers and their encouragement of the political involvement of clients. The research findings show that social workers encouraged their clients to be politically involved (according to their responses to the questionnaire) to more than a slight degree but less than a moderate degree, and that they personally participated in politics to less than a slight degree. One explanation for the finding that the social workers tended to encourage their clients’ involvement slightly more than they participated directly in politics might be associated with the generally accepted methods of social work, which focus on client involvement (Croft & Beresford, 2008; Seden & Ross, 2007) and client empowerment (Author’s own; East & Roll, 2015; Song, 2015; Wu, 2010).

The research findings regarding the minimal political involvement of social workers are consistent with earlier research that showed little involvement of social workers on the social-political level, and more concentration of involvement on the clinical level (Almog-Bar et al., 2015; Haynes & Mickelson, 2006; Mendes, 2007). These findings, along with those of earlier studies, underscore the importance of identifying the factors that contribute to the political involvement of social workers and their encouragement of clients to participate in politics.

The Perception of Political Involvement as a Professional Activity

The research findings show that, contrary to our hypothesis, the perception of political involvement as part of the social work profession did not explain the political involvement of the social workers or their support for their clients’ political involvement.
These findings contradict earlier research that indicated a correlation between professional perceptions and activity associated with the respective views (Baines, 2008; Lee-Treweek, 1997). Perhaps the nature of the social worker’s role, which focuses on clinical activity, as well as the need to receive clients for individual therapy (Almog-Bar et al., 2015) prevents social workers from fulfilling their commitment to political activity.

These findings might also be explained by the dual loyalty of social workers in their organizations of employment. On the one hand, they are loyal to the profession and the code of ethics, values, and ideology of the profession, but on the other hand, they are loyal to the organization that employs them, in this case, the local government (Author’s own; Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2013). Perhaps the social workers’ organizational affiliation, the demands and expectations of the organization, and the social workers’ loyalty to the local authorities hinders them from becoming politically active. Social workers in social service departments are employed by and are subordinate to the local authority or municipality, and are thus obligated to maintain the political stability of the system. In light of this situation, it would be interesting to conduct further research to examine the relationship of loyalty to the organization, on the one hand, and to the profession, on the other hand, with the political involvement of social workers and their support for their clients’ political involvement.

Another explanation of the findings may be that those social workers who expressed a favorable view of political involvement, and particularly those with a very favorable view, might consider minimal political activity (especially due to discouragement by the organization) as inadequate, compared with those social workers who perceived political involvement as unfavorable.

**Working in Community Practice**

According to the research findings, work in the field of community practice explained the political involvement of social workers, as well as their support for their clients’ political involvement, more than any other factor examined did. These findings are not surprising.
Social workers who work on the community level, compared with those working on the individual and family levels, are more involved in politics as part of their jobs. Community workers direct their activity towards change in the overall system, including the community power structure, and this requires them to negotiate with the political system (Checkoway, 1995; Das et al., 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2008; Twelvetrees, 1991; Weil, 1996). It is also noteworthy that the findings show that community practice contributed not only to the personal and professional involvement of the social workers, but also to their encouragement of clients to participate in political activity.

**Political Self-Efficacy**

The research findings indicated a contribution of political self-efficacy to the explanation of the social workers’ political involvement and their encouragement of the political involvement of their clients. These findings are consistent with cognitive-social theory, according to which self-efficacy affects people’s choices and the degree of effort they are willing to invest in given situations (Bandura, 1991), as well as their decisions regarding their degree of involvement in a given activity. Political involvement involves concrete political experience and familiarization with the complex political map, and it requires reciprocity and appropriate reactions to a variety of stakeholders. Political self-efficacy evidently contributes to the involvement of social workers in coping with complex tasks (Dull et al., 2015; Wang & Zhang, 2016).

Another possible explanation of the contribution of self-efficacy to political involvement is related to the perception of politics as an activity that is foreign and not an unequivocally integral part of the field of social work. In this case, personal self-efficacy contributes to involvement in political tasks, even though they are not perceived as an integral to the profession.

**Management Support**

The findings show that management support helped explain the political involvement of social workers and their encouragement of their clients’ political involvement. These findings are consistent with those of other studies that have highlighted the crucial importance of the manager in motivating
employees of an organization (Buick et al., 2015; Schult et al., 2013). Similarly, social workers in social service departments are influenced by the overall view of management (Postle & Beresford, 2005). The findings might also be explained by the structure in which the research participants worked: such social workers are subordinate to local government authorities, which are led by influential elected officials, and they need the support of their managers to gain the legitimation of the leaders of the local governments.

It should be noted that although the significance of the manager’s support was significant in explaining the degree to which social workers encourage their clients to participate in politics, this factor explained the direct political involvement of the social workers to a greater degree. Apparently, the social workers needed greater support from their managers in order to act directly. It appears that the social workers perceived the political involvement of clients (with their encouragement) as less threatening compared with their own direct involvement.

Perceived Organizational Politics as a Barrier to Political Involvement

The findings of the present research reveal an opposite trend to that described in the research hypotheses, namely, that perceived organizational politics would be correlated with more extensive political involvement. That hypothesis was based on the reasoning that social workers in social services departments characterized by strong organizational politics would be more likely to take active roles in the political arena in order to achieve their professional tasks. However, it emerges that the perception of strong organizational politics actually hindered the political involvement of the social workers, as well as their encouragement of the political involvement of their clients.

Apparently, it is necessary to differentiate between a perception of organizational politics that reflect a tendency towards political action in order to achieve organizational and personal goals, and organizational politics that represent an inclination to engage in politics in order to achieve professional goals. In the present research, the perceived organizational politics reflected an organizational system aimed at gaining personal power for the social workers (and not professional power or power for the
benefit of the clients), while the political involvement of the social workers (as examined in this research) reflected a professional goal of benefiting the clients.

Work in a Rural Area as Strengthening Political Involvement

In addition to the issues covered by the research hypotheses, the research findings also indicated that the social workers in rural areas were more supportive of their clients’ political involvement (but did not participate much in political activity themselves).

One possible explanation of this finding may be the much greater proximity and access of citizens to the sources of power in the smaller rural communities. It seems that the access of the citizens in rural areas to the sources of power provided the social workers with a more secure foundation for supporting their clients’ political involvement. The proximity to the sources of power in rural communities is reflected in more social capital in rural compared with urban communities (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2004; Krishna & Shrader, 1999). The emphasis here is especially on linking social capital, based on the relationship of community members or clients with organizations that have power and influence beyond the community system (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Putnam, 2000).

Perhaps the social workers prefer to rely upon existing political ties to initiating and developing new political systems. It would be interesting to examine this subject in further research.

Limitations of the Research

Alongside the advantages of this research, some limitations should be considered. First, the research sample consisted of social workers in social service departments (the largest group of social workers in Israel) and did not include other professional groups. It would be interesting to expand the research on this issue to additional organizations and populations. It is also important to investigate the awareness of political involvement and political activism among national-level decision makers and the academic faculty members who train social workers.

In addition, this research was conducted in Israel, and should be expanded to include additional countries, where the organizational and professional cultures relate differently to the
issues examined here. There are similarities and differences in the characteristics of political involvement in Israel and the U.S. Israel and the United States are both democratic countries, but their respective political scenes are not the same. For example, the political activities in the two countries are motivated by different views regarding the welfare state. In the U.S., there is a clear neoliberal outlook, which focuses on the democratic value of the freedom of individuals to live their lives as they wish, with minimal intervention of society and the state. According to this view, individuals and groups in society should be allowed to act freely, based on their interests. Therefore, the intervention of the state in economic activity for the sake of the welfare of its citizens and realization of socioeconomic rights should be very limited. With regard to social workers in this context, it is important to note that state intervention focuses only on those who are weak and needy, who are unable to manage themselves or with the help of their immediate society without government intervention.

In comparison, although Israel no longer represents the view of social democracy (the opposite of the view of the U.S.), it still bears some characteristics of that perspective. Accordingly, the political arena attributes great importance to the protection and realization of socioeconomic rights and to increasing social and economic equality by the state. The narrowing of economic and social disparity in society and promotion of social justice are given higher priority in Israel than in the U.S. Although there has been some retreat from this view in Israel in recent years, it is still stronger than in the U.S., in both the local and the national arenas.

Differences can be found in the political cultures of the two countries. For example, a critical culture in the democratic political arena in the U.S. sees the individual, not the regime, as sovereign. The element of individualism in Israel is weaker in comparison, and there is a constant expectation of citizens that the state will take care of them. In these respects and others, it is important to study the differences among countries regarding the topic of this research.

It would also be interesting to expand the research to groups that supply resources to organizations and, especially, to clients who receive social services. Finally, it should be noted that the research was exposed to common method bias and common source bias.
References


Tracing the Evolution of the Tarasoff Duty in California

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Since the first Tarasoff decision in 1974, the question of mental health professionals’ “duty to protect” third-parties has been a topic of vigorous debate. The ensuing forty-three years witnessed considerable shifts in the statutory and legal landscape in the United States, including several significant changes in California state law over the past decade alone. In this historical review, I trace the evolution of the Tarasoff duty with a specific focus on the state in which that duty originated, California, with the intention of elucidating the major policy, ethical, and practical questions that have followed in the wake of the Tarasoff decision.

Key Words: Tarasoff, duty to protect, duty to warn

Since the era of deinstitutionalization in the 1960s, imminent danger to self (i.e., suicide) or others (i.e., homicide) has emerged as one of the standard criteria for mandatory psychiatric intervention in the United States (Ward, 2014). Whereas the duties of mental health professionals in California to suicidal clients have remained substantively unchanged since the 1967 passage of the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, which mandated prompt risk assessment and, if necessary, involuntary commitment, the question of the duties of mental health professionals to potential victims of violence other than their clients has been the source of considerable back-and-forth in state courts and legislatures. In fact, prior to the mid-twentieth century, it was not at all clear that clinicians in California had any (legal) obligation to individuals other than their
clients. For reference, the first mandatory child abuse reporting law in California, which applied only to physicians, was enacted in 1963 (Rady Children’s Hospital San Diego, 2012).

Due in part to an ever shifting statutory and legal landscape, as well as considerable inter-state variability, the duties of clinicians to potential victims continue to be a source of considerable confusion and an ethically contested subject. With these facts in mind, I seek to trace the historical evolution of the so-called “duty to protect” with a specific focus on the state in which that duty originated, California, and to elucidate the relevant policy, ethical, and practical questions that attend this duty.

In 1969, Prosenjit Poddar, a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, confided to his therapist that he intended to kill a woman he had previously dated, Tatiana Tarasoff. Poddar’s psychologist, Dr. Lawrence Moore, warned campus police that Poddar was experiencing an acute psychotic episode and recommended that Poddar be involuntarily committed on the grounds of being a danger to others. Poddar was briefly detained by campus police, but was released shortly thereafter and subsequently desisted from treatment. Several months later, on October 27, 1969, Poddar carried out his plan, stabbing and killing Tatiana Tarasoff (for a more detailed discussion of the circumstances surrounding Tarasoff v. Regents, refer to Buckner & Frestone, 2000).

Following her death, Tarasoff’s parents sued Poddar’s therapists, campus police, and the Regents of the University of California for, among other claims made by the plaintiffs, failing to warn their daughter that she was in danger. In 1974, in a decision now commonly referred to as Tarasoff I (Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California, 1974), the California Supreme Court held that psychotherapists had a duty of care not only to their clients, but also to individuals who might be harmed by their clients. Specifically, Tarasoff I held that therapists were obligated to warn potential victims of dangers posed to them by the therapists’ psychotherapy clients. Failing to warn such victims would render therapists liable to civil judgment.

Judge Mathew Tobriner, writing for the majority in Tarasoff I, concluded that “public policy favoring protection of the confidential character of patient-psychotherapist relationships must yield in instances in which disclosure is essential to avert danger to others; the protective privilege ends where the public
Evolution of the Tarasoff Duty

peril begins” (Tarasoff v. Regents of University of California, 1974, section 2, paragraph 17). This statement encapsulates the central values tension at the heart of Tarasoff: at what point does a therapist’s professional and ethical obligation to maintain a client’s confidentiality come into conflict with a compelling interest to promote public safety, and, more to the point, how ought such conflicts be resolved?

Survey data collected by Givelber, Bowers, and Blitch (1984) highlight this conflict: out of the 2785 mental health professionals that they surveyed nearly ten years after Tarasoff I, 45% of clinicians who had breached confidentiality to communicate with a potential victim felt that they had violated their own clinical judgment by breaching confidentiality. This finding resonates with the widely held belief that confidentiality is essential to the practice of therapy (e.g., American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Nevertheless, respondents overwhelmingly endorsed a responsibility to potential victims as a matter of professional and personal ethics. This speaks to the deep bind in which clinicians sometimes find themselves when working with dangerous clients. In Tarasoff I, however, the court erred firmly on the side of public safety by clearly establishing a “duty to warn.”

Prior to Tarasoff I, no court anywhere in the nation had recognized such a legal duty to warn the potential victims of a patient (Cohn, 1983). In the wake of Tarasoff I, individual practitioners and professional organizations raised numerous objections to the court’s ruling, arguing that the duty to warn would jeopardize the practice of psychotherapy by eroding the essential precept of confidentiality and contending that therapists could not reliably assess the likelihood of future violent acts by their patients (Quinn, 1984). Based on these and other objections, including concerns about civil liability, the American Psychiatric Association, the Northern California Psychiatric Society, and other professional organizations filed an amicus curiae brief to challenge the court’s 1974 decision. In response, the California Supreme Court took the unusual step of agreeing to rehear the case, resulting in a second decision, known as Tarasoff II (Tarasoff v. University of California Regents, 1976), being handed down in 1976.

In keeping with the spirit of Tarasoff I, the 1976 decision imposed upon psychotherapists in California a legal duty to protect third parties from harmful acts perpetrated by their patients,
even if doing so required the therapist to breach the patient’s confidentiality. Indeed, the court held that it was precisely because of the “special relationship” between therapists and clients that the therapists have “a duty to control the conduct” of their clients in cases in which third parties may be “foreseeably endangered” by their client’s conduct (Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California, 1976, section 2, para. 5).

However, contrary to Tarasoff I, the court ruled that discharging this duty to protect third parties did not necessarily require warning potential victims:

When a therapist determines, or pursuant to the standards of his profession should determine, that his patient presents a serious danger of violence to another, he incurs an obligation to use reasonable care to protect the intended victim against such danger. The discharge of this duty may require the therapist to take one or more of various steps, depending upon the nature of the case. Thus it may call for him to warn the intended victim or others likely to apprise the victim of the danger, to notify the police, or to take whatever other steps are reasonably necessary under the circumstances. (emphasis added; Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California, 1976, para. 4).

Having moved from a highly specific ‘duty to warn’ to a more general ‘duty to protect,’ the decision in Tarasoff II allowed for increased flexibility on the part of the clinician. At the same time, the 1976 decision also increased the ambiguity with which clinicians now had to contend by providing only vague guidelines as to how clinicians were expected to discharge the newly imposed ‘duty to protect’ (Mills, Sullivan, & Eth, 1987).

Moreover, a provision in the 1976 decision specifically found that therapists could be held personally liable if they “should have” known that a patient was dangerous prior to that patient committing a violent act. Yet the court left unspecified the extent or content of the knowledge that the therapist would have needed to possess to subsequently be held liable or the steps that therapists would need to have taken to protect themselves from liability (section 2, para. 14). This ambiguity resulted in civil actions in which therapists were held liable for situations in which it would have been nearly impossible for the therapist to anticipate the specific injury or to have protected the injured third parties, such
as substance-related car accidents that occurred months after the driver was seen by a therapist (Pettis & Gutheil, 1993).

At the same time, the initial concerns about breach of confidentiality and the ramifications of such breaches for the practice of psychotherapy persisted in the wake of the 1976 decision. In a dissenting opinion in Tarasoff II, Judge William Clark highlighted these concerns when he wrote that:

Given the importance of confidentiality to the practice of psychiatry, it becomes clear the duty to warn imposed by the majority will cripple the use and effectiveness of psychiatry. Many people, potentially violent—yet susceptible to treatment—will be deterred from seeking it; those seeking it will be inhibited from making revelations necessary to effective treatment; and forcing the psychiatrist to violate the patient’s trust will destroy the interpersonal relationship by which treatment is effected. (Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California, 1976, J. Clark dissent, paragraph 28)

Clark, channeling the concerns of many practitioners, was anxious that by codifying an exception to patient-client confidentiality, the court’s decision would have the unintended consequence of dissuading potentially dangerous individuals from availing themselves of psychotherapy or from disclosing homicidal thoughts and plans.

Clark’s sentiments were widely echoed by prominent mental health professionals, including by the presidents of the American Psychiatric Association (Stone, 1976) and the American Psychological Association (Siegel, 1979). Max Siegel, then the president of the American Psychological Association, wrote of Tarasoff, “This was a day in court for the law and not for the mental health professions. If the psychologist had accepted the view of absolute, inviolate confidentiality, he might have been able to have kept Poddar in treatment, saved the life of Tatiana Tarasoff, and avoided what was to become the Tarasoff decision” (Siegel, 1979, p. 253). Siegel’s statement speaks not only to the abiding respect for the precept of confidentiality, but also to one of the tremendous difficulties in adjudicating Tarasoff cases: namely, that it is invariably possible to argue and nearly impossible to refute the counterfactual in which some set of actions taken or
not taken by a clinician (as opposed to the actions they actually took) might have saved a victim’s life.

It should also be noted that although the court’s decisions in Tarasoff I and II applied only to California, the effects of those decisions reverberated nationally. As of 2012, a duty to warn or protect had been codified by legislative statute in twenty-three states and was present in the common law supported by judicial precedent in an additional ten states (Johnson, Persad, & Sisti, 2014). Although a review of statutes and common law precedents in states other than California is beyond the scope of this article, it is certainly interesting to reflect on the extent of state-by-state variability, particularly as it relates to the challenge of adequately training and educating clinicians (refer to Johnson et al., 2014 for a review of inter-state variability).

This challenge is undoubtedly magnified by the ever-changing and often conflicting legal landscape, even within a given state. A mere four years after Tarasoff II, in a case involving the decision to parole a juvenile offender who had threatened to kill a neighborhood child upon his release, the California Supreme Court held that Alameda County “had no affirmative duty to warn Plaintiffs, the police, the mother of the juvenile offender, or other local parents” (a decision which Judge Tobriner dissented) (Thompson v. County of Alameda, 1980). Meanwhile, in 1983, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, whose appellate jurisdiction includes California, went precisely the other direction and broadened the foreseeability criteria laid out in Tarasoff in Jablonski by Pahls v. United States (1983) (refer to Walcott, Cerundolo, & Beck, 2001 for a discussion of Jablonski). In 1986, in response to concerns about ambiguity and liability that followed in the wake of the 1976 Tarasoff II decision, the California state legislature passed a statute that limited therapists’ duty to protect and attendant liability to situations in which the patient communicated to the therapist an imminent threat to an identifiable victim, thereby clarifying that therapists could not be held liable for any and all future harmful actions committed by their current or former clients. Simultaneously, the 1986 statute shielded therapists from any potential civil action that might arise due to breach of confidentiality, as long as they did so within the narrow confines of discharging their duty to protect as defined by the statute.
Ironically, however, the 1986 statute introduced fresh ambiguity by referring to a “duty to warn and protect” (Cal. Civ. Code § 43.92, 1986), rendering unclear whether the legislature intended to reintroduce a specific duty to warn akin to that which had been outlined in *Tarasoff I*. Two years prior to the passage of the 1986 statute, Givelber and colleagues (1984) had found that over 90% of California clinicians believed that they were legally obligated to warn potential victims as a result of *Tarasoff*, so it is not difficult to imagine that the inclusion of the phrase “duty to warn” in the 1986 statute confirmed and reinforced this mistaken belief. That a misunderstanding of the court’s ruling in *Tarasoff II* was so pervasive in California at the time speaks to the need for clear communication of policy to stakeholders, especially in a case such as *Tarasoff*, in which the waters had been muddied by the court’s decision to rehear the case and amend their decision a mere two years after their initial, controversial (and therefore widely circulated) ruling.

Fast forward seventeen years, and the ambiguity inherent in the 1986 statute was explicitly interpreted and codified as a duty to warn in the 2003 issuance of the simplified civil jury instructions (Judicial Council of California Civil Jury Instructions, No. 503A and 503B, 2014), meaning that juries were being explicitly instructed to apply a ‘duty to warn’ criterion in determining whether a clinician could be held liable in a *Tarasoff* cause of action (Weinstock, Vari, Leong, & Silva, 2006). At around the same time in 2004, a pair of appellate court decisions, *Ewing v. Northridge Hospital Medical Center* and *Ewing v. Goldstein*, held that a specific duty to warn existed based on the ambiguous wording of the 1986 statute. In the *Ewing* decisions, the court held that therapists could be held liable if a serious threat to an identifiable victim was communicated to the therapist by the client or by one of the client’s immediate family members and the therapist failed to warn the victim *regardless of other protective actions taken by the therapist*, such as alerting the police. The combined effect of these appellate decisions and the revised jury instructions was that, for a period of several years in California more than twenty-five years after *Tarasoff II*, failure to meet the duty to warn was presumptive proof of negligence.

In 2007, in response to the decisions in *Ewing* and *Ewing*, the state legislature was prompted to revisit the 1986 immunity statute. Although the legislature did insert language clarifying that
warning a potential victim was merely one of a set of actions by which the duty to protect could be satisfied, they elected to retain the phrase “duty to warn and protect” (Cal. Civ. Code § 43.92, 2007). In light of past confusions, it is perhaps unsurprising that this attempt at clarification proved insufficient: in 2013, the state legislature updated the statute yet again, this time removing the phrase “duty to warn” altogether (Cal. Civ. Code § 43.92, 2013). As part of the 2013 revision, and in order to forestall additional misinterpretation, the legislature felt moved to explicitly lay out their intent: “It is the intent of the Legislature that the amendments made by the act adding this subdivision only change the name of the duty referenced in this section from a duty to warn and protect to a duty to protect” (Cal. Civ. Code § 43.92(d), 2013).

Alongside these legislative actions, the California Judicial Council revised the civil jury instructions in 2007 and again in 2014 to clarify that therapists were not necessarily obligated to warn potential victims to discharge their duty to protect. The cumulative effect of these changes to the immunity statute and the jury instructions is that if a therapist chooses not to warn, but instead pursues an alternative course of action, their actions must be affirmatively proven to have been negligent for the therapist to be held personally liable. Still, there remains considerable room for interpretation by judges, juries, and clinicians in the current statute. As one example, what precisely constitutes a “serious threat” of physical violence as opposed to an unserious threat?

It is within this shifting and ambiguous landscape that the legacy of Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California continues to be contested to this day. Alan Stone, the former president of the American Psychiatric Association who had lambasted Tarasoff II in 1976, conceded in 1984 that the duty to warn was “not as unmitigated a disaster for the enterprise of psychotherapy as it once seemed to critics like myself” (Stone, 1984, p. 181). Yet as recently as 2014, Donald Bersoff, himself a former president of the American Psychological Association, described Tarasoff as “perhaps the most notorious case in mental health law” (Bersoff, 2014, p. 461). In insisting that Tarasoff was “bad law, bad social science, and bad social policy,” Bersoff emphasized, as previous critics had, that the legal obligations imposed by Tarasoff, particularly obligations to warn third parties, might have the consequence of reducing the likelihood that patients would disclose violent urges and increasing the likelihood of desistance from therapy,
thereby “making it impossible to work through the threat of violence” (Bersoff, 2014, p. 461).

Douglas Mossman (2009) has offered a parallel critique of the Tarasoff doctrine as “a legal mechanism whereby society assigns mental health professionals the duty of reducing the risk of violence, with the threat of tort liability representing the professionals’ incentive to accede to the duty” and has argued that violence prevention through effective psychotherapy, as opposed to violence prediction, should be the focus of mental health professionals (p. 112). Whereas Givelber and colleagues (1984) found that clinicians were startlingly confident in their own ability to predict violence, there is ample empirical evidence that clinicians’ judgment in this domain is suspect (Large & Nielsen, 2017; Mossman, 2009). One aspect of Mossman’s (2009) critique of Tarasoff that is particularly striking, yet directly in line with the court’s reasoning in Tarasoff that therapists have a ‘duty to control,’ is that the duty to protect positions mental health professionals squarely as agents for social control, which may come into conflict with social justice values (see also Gurevitz, 1977).

What about the functional consequences of Tarasoff? To date, no empirical analyses have specifically addressed whether acutely homicidal clients who receive and remain engaged in therapy are, in fact, less likely to act on their homicidal intentions than similar clients who desist from therapy. It does appear to be the case, however, that psychosocial interventions for violence and aggression can be effective, which supports the broader notion that reducing barriers to adequate treatment receipt and keeping violent clients engaged in therapy are important therapeutic goals (McGuire, 2008; O’Brien & Daffern, 2015; Sher & Rice, 2015). This would seem, in turn, to substantiate Bersoff’s concerns about violent clients avoiding or desisting from therapy because of Tarasoff-related concerns. Unfortunately, there is minimal empirical evidence to assess whether Tarasoff has actually affected clients’ engagement in therapy in this way.

In a recent analysis, Edwards (2010) suggested that duty to warn laws may actually increase the rate of homicides, which Edwards attributes to mental health professionals being more reluctant to provide services to potentially violent clients as a result of duty to warn obligations and to clients being less willing to disclose after becoming aware of the limits to confidentiality.
This contention is not in line with Givelber and colleagues’ (1984) finding that clinicians who viewed themselves as bound by the court’s holding in *Tarasoff* did not report being less willing to treat dangerous patients or being more willing to terminate treatment. Moreover, clinicians who viewed themselves as legally bound by *Tarasoff* were considerably more likely to report having taken concrete steps, such as warning potential victims and notifying the police, when they deemed their clients to be at serious risk of harming another person than clinicians who viewed themselves as ethically, but not legally, obligated to protect potential victims, suggesting that *Tarasoff* was having its intended effect of binding clinicians to a duty to protect (Givelber et al., 1984).

Although the moral-ethical question of whether an increased willingness to warn is desirable is ultimately beyond the scope of this review, it is interesting to note that, in at least some cases, *Tarasoff* warnings may unintentionally be leading directly to the criminal prosecution of individuals with mental illness in California. Issuing violent threats is a criminal offense in California, and police may opt to pursue criminal charges if such threats are brought to their attention (Weiner, 2003). Violence risk assessments conducted by mental health professionals have also come to play an increasingly prominent role in multiple aspects of the workings of the criminal justice system since the *Tarasoff* decisions were handed down (Buchanan et al., 2012) (for more on the ethics of violence risk assessment as it relates to *Tarasoff*, refer to Mossman, 2006). Such cases highlight the delicate and occasionally perilous balance that clinicians are forced to strike between confidentiality and their obligations to their clients on the one hand and their duty to protect on the other, as well as the intersection between mental health professionals and law enforcement officers in applying *Tarasoff*.

In a similar vein, a survey of police desk sergeants conducted by Huber and colleagues (2000) in Michigan and South Carolina, both of which have duty to warn statutes, found that fewer than a quarter of the police stations in question had specific policies related to *Tarasoff* warnings and hardly any of the desk sergeants personally had knowledge about the *Tarasoff* case, although nearly half reported that their station had received at least one such warning from a mental health professional. Huber and colleagues also observed considerable variability in desk
sergeants’ responses to hypothetical questions (e.g., if a warning was received, would the potential victim be notified?), suggesting that not only clinicians, but also law enforcement agencies ought to be formulating responses to and raising awareness about Tarasoff (Huber et al., 2000).

Forty-plus years after Tarasoff I, if there is one thing on which Tarasoff’s proponents and critics agree, it is on the far-ranging impact that Tarasoff has had on mental health policy. To wit, Douglas Mossman (2006) declared that “no court ruling has had a broader or more enduring impact on day-to-day mental health practice…. Thirty years after its promulgation, Tarasoff remains, to mental health professionals, the most influential ruling in mental disability law” (pp. 524-526). As evidence of its far-reaching effects on mental health policy, one need only consider the fact that Tarasoff not only motivated corresponding legal action and legislation in states across the country, but also shaped thinking about other contexts in which health professionals may have a duty to protect third parties, such as the controversy surrounding whether physicians ought to warn the partners of HIV positive patients (for a detailed discussion, refer to Burke, 2015). Simultaneously, Tarasoff prompted numerous and vigorous discussions of the ethical obligations of mental health professionals and reflections on the importance of confidentiality as a central tenet of clinical work.

With respect to the actual practice and provision of mental healthcare in the state of California, Tarasoff, as most recently codified by California Civil Code § 43.92 (2013), has established that mental health professionals do have an affirmative obligation to take reasonable steps to protect third parties from a patient’s violence behavior, at least in cases in which the patient “has communicated to the psychotherapist a serious threat of physical violence against a reasonably identifiable victim or victims” (Cal Civ Code § 43.92(a), 2013). Although this obligation need not necessarily entail warning the intended victim, therapists who fail to discharge their duty to protect may be held personally liable. On the other hand, if, in discharging their duty to protect, the therapist does elect to communicate the threat to the victim or to a law enforcement agency, they are shielded from liability that might otherwise result from the breach of confidentiality.

This is the status of the Tarasoff duty in California today; yet, given the number of alterations, both small and large, that have been made to the duty to protect in California over the last
forty-three years by the courts and the state legislature, it seems almost certain that mental health policy in this arena will continue to evolve over time, necessitating ongoing engagement by and education for mental health professionals practicing in the state of California, as well as consumers and law enforcement agencies.

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Increased Immigration Enforcement and Perceived Discrimination Among Latino Immigrants

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The purpose of this paper was to examine the impact of perceived discrimination among Latino immigrants in the context of recent immigration policies and immigration enforcement strategies. Data for this study were drawn from a pilot study (n=213) of adult Latino immigrants living in Arizona during the summer of 2014. The results of multivariate OLS linear regressions indicated greater perceived discrimination was significantly related to reporting: (1) avoidance of immigration officials; (2) family has suffered; and (3) friends have suffered. In addition, greater perceived discrimination was significantly related to lower confidence in a better future for the individual, their families, their children, and the children of today. Implications for social work practice, advocacy, and research are discussed.

*Keywords: immigration, Latinos, perceived discrimination, immigration enforcement*
There are approximately 11.3 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States (U.S.), representing about 3.5% of the total U.S. population (Krogstad & Passel, 2015; Passel, Cohn, Krogstad, & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014). About eight million undocumented immigrants are part of the U.S. work force, making up about 5.1% of the work force in the year 2010 (Krogstad & Passel, 2015). Although the number of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. has been stable over the past seven years, politicians and the media continue to portray the U.S. as being overrun and overwhelmed by undocumented immigrants who are criminals, take jobs away from “real” Americans, and are a drain on the U.S. economy (Becerra, Androff, Ayón, & Castillo, 2012; Chavez, 2013).

The combination of an increase in fear and distrust of immigrants after September 11, 2001, as well as the Great Recession, has led to immigrants being used as scapegoats and blamed for causing the economic problems in the U.S., as well as a loss of traditional American culture (Chavez, 2013). As a result of this anti-immigrant rhetoric and fear of immigrants, numerous anti-immigration policies and enforcement strategies have been enacted. During President Obama’s Administration, a greater emphasis was placed on border enforcement than removals of undocumented immigrants from the interior of the U.S. As a result, a record number of removals occurred under the Obama Administration, while the number of overall deportations decreased compared to previous administrations (Chishti, Pierce, & Bolter, 2017; Gonzalez-Barrera & Krogstad, 2014). The increase in immigration enforcement strategies at the federal level, as well as the implementation of restrictive immigration policies in several states, have negatively impacted immigrant communities in the U.S. (Arbona et al., 2010; Capps, Castaneda, Chaudry, & Santos, 2007; Hacker et al., 2011).

Americans perceive Latinos as often being subjected to discrimination. Previous studies have found that perceived and experienced discrimination are related to negative health outcomes including stress, anxiety, and depression (Edwards & Romero, 2008; Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014). The current Trump administration’s immigration policies may serve to exacerbate the negative impact immigration policies and enforcement strategies have on Latino immigrant communities. As a result, Latino immigrants who viewed immigration
policies and enforcement strategies as discriminatory during the Obama Administration (Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, & Motel, 2011) may continue to view Trump’s policies as discriminatory as well.

Immigrants come to the U.S. with great optimism in search of increased freedoms and economic opportunities in order to provide better lives for themselves and their families (Raleigh & Kao, 2010). Unfortunately, Latinos, especially undocumented Latinos, may experience discrimination once in the U.S. because of the negative social and political discourse surrounding Latino immigrants. Immigration policies and enforcement strategies, which many perceive to discriminate against Latinos, may also negatively impact the hope and optimism of Latino immigrants living in the U.S. (Becerra, Androff, Cimino, Wagaman, & Blanchard, 2013).

Although anti-immigrant sentiment exists throughout the country, for over 15 years, Arizona has been at the center of restrictive immigration policies and enforcement strategies that specifically target Latino immigrants. Arizona has a population of 6.9 million residents with over 2.1 million Latinos (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Given the increased focus on immigrants and immigration enforcement by the Trump administration, as well as Arizona’s long history of anti-immigrant policies, it is important to examine the impact of immigration policies on Latino immigrants. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the knowledge base and existing literature by examining how perceived discrimination in the context of the recent immigration policies and enforcement strategies impacts participants’ lives and their confidence in a better future.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study utilizes the *legal violence* theoretical framework (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). Violence is often defined as action motivated by the intent to cause harm (Jackman, 2002). However, violence can also have non-physical impacts such as loss of earnings, imprisonment, stigmatization, and exclusion, as well as negative psychological outcomes such as fear, anxiety, shame, and low self-esteem (Jackman, 2002). Structural violence describes how social structures can cause harm and negative
outcomes to certain populations, such as poverty and inequality (Farmer, 2003).

*Legal violence* builds upon the definitions of violence and structural violence to examine the impacts of laws and policies, which themselves are violent in their intention to cause legal harm with their immediate and long-term consequences. As Menjivar and Abrego (2012) argue, current federal, state, and local immigration policies, “…seek to punish the behaviors of undocumented immigrants but at the same time pushes them to spaces outside of the law” which makes undocumented immigrants accountable to the laws in the U.S., without legal protections or rights (p. 1385). Therefore, using the *legal violence* framework in this study enables the examination of the impact of restrictive immigration policies and enforcement strategies on Latino immigrants.

**Anti-Immigrant Policies**

The Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act, introduced as Arizona Senate Bill 1070 (SB1070), was signed into law on April 23, 2010 (Arizona State Legislature [ASL], 2010). It is considered one of the most punitive immigration policies enacted by any state in recent history (Archibold, 2010). It effectively criminalized undocumented immigrants, making it a state crime (a misdemeanor) to not carry proof of legal residence and requiring law enforcement to detain anyone they “reasonably suspect” to be undocumented and ask for proof of legal immigrant status. It also allows any resident of the state to sue authorities if they fail to enforce the law (ASL, 2010). It further contained provisions penalizing state trespassing and human smuggling, as well as the hiring, harboring or transporting of undocumented immigrants (National Conference of State Legislatures [NCSL], 2014).

SB1070 created a great deal national and international controversy. Nevertheless, SB1070 had an impact on immigration legislation all over the country, as many other states adopted similar strategies to address the issue of immigration within their jurisdictions (NCSL, 2014). Since 2010, policies modeled after SB1070 were considered by the legislatures of about a dozen states, but only 5 states enacted them into laws: Alabama’s HB 56, Georgia’s HB 87, Indiana’s SB 590, South Carolina’s SB 20 and
Utah’s HB 497 (NCSL, 2014). Since their passage, each of these laws has been contested in court and several of their provisions have been partially or totally blocked (NCSL, 2012).

Although those restrictive state immigration policies were blocked by the courts, President Trump was elected in large part for his anti-immigration rhetoric. Once elected, President Trump signed an executive order to begin construction of a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico, punish sanctuary cities, and speed up the deportation process of undocumented immigrants, all of which may contribute to increased fear and anxiety in Latino immigrant communities. President Trump’s focus on immigration enforcement and deportations has led to community raids, immigration detentions, and deportations. In February 2017, U.S. immigration officials raided homes across six states and arrested hundreds of immigrants, many with no criminal records (Rein, Hauslohner, & Somashekhar, 2017). The first few months of the Trump administration have led to an almost 33% increase in immigration arrests (Sands, 2017).

Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric

Anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies to regulate immigration have been a part of American politics and public discourse since the first waves of immigrants arrived in the 19th century (Katel, 2005). American attitudes towards immigrants, both authorized and undocumented, have been inconsistent over time, sometimes welcoming the contribution of immigrants to society, and at other times fearing that immigrant communities could have a negative impact on the country (Androff et al., 2011). Negative attitudes towards immigrants often revolved around fears that these groups would not assimilate to American society, which would erode the traditional cultural heritage of the country, or cause divisiveness and social conflict (Huntington, 2004). Historically, anti-immigrant rhetoric often took overtly racist undertones that emphasized a fear that newcomers might change American culture for the worse (Massey & Pren, 2012a).

Political groups that lobby against illegal immigration justify their position on the perceived negative consequences that undocumented immigration brings to this country. Although empirical research has shown these positions to be largely incorrect, one of
their most common concerns is that undocumented immigrants hurt the economy by taking away jobs from American citizens or by accepting lower wages, thereby increasing unemployment levels or decreasing household incomes, particularly among Americans who work in the low wage sectors of the economy (Becerra et al., 2012; Federation for American Immigration Reform [FAIR], 2013a). Moreover, anti-immigrant politicians and activists incorrectly claim that the cost of providing public services (e.g., education, emergency healthcare, or housing) to undocumented immigrant families is a significant drain on government budgets and diminishes the quality of the services provided to legal residents (Camarota, 2004; Congressional Budget Office, 2007; FAIR, 2013b; McDowell & Provine, 2013).

Other anti-immigrant politicians and activists claim that undocumented immigration is inherently wrong because it is illegal and constitutes a crime (Androff et al., 2011). Some go even further, arguing that undocumented immigration is tied with other forms of illegal activity and organized crime, such as drug and sex trafficking, which eventually results in higher crime rates on American soil (Civitas Institute, 2014; Katel, 2005). Hence, they view the increase of undocumented immigrants as a threat to public safety. Indeed, in its most extreme forms, anti-immigrant rhetoric “demonizes and dehumanizes” immigrants, promoting public animosity against them (Anti-Defamation League [ADL], 2014).

Consequences of Anti-Immigrant Policies and Rhetoric

How Policies and Rhetoric Impact Perceived Discrimination

Undocumented immigrants are already marginalized from mainstream society due to their immigration status (Massey & Pren, 2012b). They live in social environments where they are often stigmatized, portrayed as deviant, and used as scapegoats to be blamed for numerous social problems (Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). They may be called derogatory names (Southern Poverty Law Center [SPLC], 2007), sexually harassed (Fussell, 2011) or physically assaulted (SPLC, 2007).

Discrimination may also manifest itself in unfair or abusive treatment, as employers and others may exploit the immigrants’
legal status to violate their civil, labor or human rights (Fussell, 2011; SPLC, 2010; Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). In addition, awareness of anti-immigrant policies such as SB1070 has been found to be positively related to perceived discrimination from law enforcement authorities, and this relationship was not moderated by immigrant generation (Santos, Menjívar, & Godfrey, 2013).

Anti-immigrant rhetoric inevitably affects the socio-political climate in the communities where undocumented families reside (Trujillo & Paluck, 2012), exacerbating the stigmatization and discrimination that affect the lives of undocumented immigrants (Ayón & Becerra, 2013; Capps et al., 2007). Even when anti-immigrant laws are not enforced or when they are redundant to existing laws, “the symbolism in the passage of these laws is potent enough to influence behaviors, perceptions, and a sense of self among those affected (directly and indirectly)” (Santos et al., 2013, p. 81). Moreover, those affected by anti-immigrant climates are not limited to undocumented immigrants themselves. Family members and friends, both documented and undocumented, often experience the fear of having a loved one deported (Santos et al., 2013).

Impact of Perceived Discrimination on Latinos

Adult Physical and Mental Health

The relationship between discrimination and health is well documented in the research literature. In a meta-analysis of studies that assessed the relationship between perceived discrimination and health outcomes, discrimination was associated with negative physical and mental health outcomes among diverse ethnic groups (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). In epidemiological studies with nationally representative samples of Latino adults, higher levels of perceived discrimination have been associated with deleterious mental health consequences, including higher incidence of depressive symptoms (Leung, LaChapelle, Scinta, & Olvera, 2014); substance abuse (Otiniano Verissimo, Gee, Ford, & Iguchi, 2014); PTSD (Pole, Best, Metsler, & Marmar, 2005); and suicidal ideation and suicide attempts (Perez-Rodriguez et al., 2014).

In a national study of adults, greater perceptions of discrimination were related to 12-month and lifetime anxiety and
depressive disorders, whereas lower perceptions of discrimination were related to lower risk of lifetime substance-related disorders (Leong, Park, & Kalibatseva, 2013). Among Latino immigrant parents, discrimination was associated with a higher number of depressive symptoms, even after adjusting for social support and immigration-related stressors (Ornelas & Pereira, 2011). Moreover, discrimination may be one of the mechanisms that explains the increased relationship between time in the U.S. and risk of psychiatric disorders among Latino immigrants (Cook, Alegria, Lin, & Guo, 2009). Among Latina immigrants, higher levels of discrimination were related to lower self-esteem (Panchanadeswaran & Dawson, 2011), greater acculturation stress (Bekteshi & van Hook, 2015), and lower use of healthcare services (Sanchez-Birkhead, Kennedy, Callister, & Miyamoto, 2010).

Discrimination has also been related to negative physical health outcomes, such as a higher incidence of chronic conditions (Molina & Simon, 2013); pregnancy distress; lower infant birth weight (Earnshaw et al., 2013); lower self-rated physical health (Molina, Alegría, & Mahalingam, 2013), and worse health-related quality of life (Otiniano & Gee, 2011). Moreover, discrimination-related stress experienced by Latino immigrants has been found to be associated with disease risk factors, including elevated systolic blood pressure, reduced immune function (McClure et al., 2010), obesity, and higher fasting glucose levels (McClure et al., 2009).

**Children, Youth and Families**

In a systematic review of the literature of the impact of discrimination on children and youth, perceived racism was associated with negative mental health outcomes in most of the studies reviewed (Priest et al., 2013). Among Latino youth, perceived discrimination is associated with lower self-esteem (Smokowski, Rose, & Bacallao, 2009), as well as a higher incidence of negative mental health outcomes, including substance use (Unger, Schwartz, Huh, Soto, & Baezconde-Garbanati, 2014), depressive symptoms (Chithambo, Huey, & Cespedes-Knadle, 2014), and problem behaviors (Bogart et al., 2013). Discrimination also increased Latino adolescents’ risk of suffering PTSD,
even after adjusting for exposure to traumatic events (Perreira & Ornelas, 2013).

The current social and political climate regarding Latino immigrants, as well as the new wave of immigration policies and enforcement strategies, both nationally and in Arizona, warrant further examination of the impact of perceived discrimination among Latinos in the context of the current anti-immigrant climate.

Methods

Sample

After gaining approval from the institutional review board of the authors’ university, data for this study were collected in the summer and fall of 2014 from a sample of 213 adult Latino immigrant respondents living in Arizona (See Table 1). Participants were recruited through social service agencies, churches, and faith-based organizations throughout Maricopa County. Participants completed questionnaires in English or Spanish, depending on their language preference. There were 72 (33.8%) males, and 141 (66.2%) females. The mean age was 38; over 58% of the participants had less than a high school diploma/GED; and 53.1% reported their current financial situation as “average.”
Table 1: Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18–25</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36–45</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46–55</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 and older</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>33.8</td>
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<tr>
<th>Socioeconomic Status</th>
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<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Very Bad</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Elementary School</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Middle School</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than High School</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in the U.S.</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–15</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–25</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 26 years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures

**Independent variables.** The participants self-reported their gender, age, socioeconomic status, highest level of education, and years living in the U.S. Perceived discrimination was measured using the *Perceived Discrimination in the U.S.* (PDIUS) scale, a 6-item scale that has been used in previous studies with Latino populations and has demonstrated good psychometric properties (Becerra, 2012; Becerra, Gurrola, & Wagaman, 2015). The PDIUS uses Likert responses (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Agree, 4= Strongly Agree) (See Table 2). The scale is composed of questions such as “Mexican immigrants are treated badly by people in the U.S.”; “Laws in the U.S. discriminate against Mexican immigrants”; and “Businesses in the U.S. discriminate against Mexican immigrants.” Scores for the scale could range from 6 to 24, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived discrimination in the U.S. The Cronbach’s alpha for the PDIUS in the current study was .81, with a mean score of 17.10 (SD = 4.20).

A principal components analysis (varimax rotation) was conducted to explore content validity. The analysis revealed that all 6 items emerged on one component with an eigenvalue of 1.0 or greater, which accounted for 57.04% of the standardized variance. Component loadings ranged from .70 to .87, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .81. Rotation was not possible given that only one component was identified.

**Dependent variables.** Participants were asked to respond to four statements regarding the impact of immigration policies on their lives. The statements they were asked to respond to were, “As a result of the current immigration policies: 1) I avoid immigration officials; 2) My family has suffered; 3) My friends have suffered.” The response options were 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. In addition, the participants were asked to respond to four questions regarding the impact of immigration policies on their confidence in a better future. Participants were asked to respond to the following questions: “As a result of the current immigration policies how much confidence do you have in a 1) better future for yourself?, 2) better future for your family?, 3) better future for you children?, and 4) better future for the
children of today?” The response options were 1 = Very little confidence to 4 = A great deal of confidence.

**Analysis**

This study analyzed how recent immigration policies impact participants’ perceptions of discrimination, as well as the impact on their lives and their confidence in a better future. Specifically, seven sets of ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regression models were run to examine the relationship between perceived discrimination in the context of recent immigration policies and: (1) participants avoiding immigration officials; (2) suffering of the family; (3) suffering of friends; (4) confidence in a better future for themselves; (5) confidence their families will have a better future; (6) confidence their children will have a better future; and (7) confidence in a better future for the children of today. All models control for gender, age, socioeconomic status (SES), highest level of education, and years in the U.S.

**Results**

As seen in Table 2, model 1 [$\chi^2(6, n = 207)= 31.199, p < .001$], the participants were asked to respond to the following statement: “As a result of the current immigration policies I avoid immigration officials.” The response options were 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The results indicated a significant and negative relationship between higher socioeconomic status (SES) levels and reporting avoiding immigration officials ($B = -.033, CI(95%) = -.066, -.001, p < .05$). In addition, participants with greater perceived discrimination reported avoiding immigration officials ($B = .162, CI(95%) = .128, .197, p < .001$).

In model 2 [$\chi^2(6, n = 207)= 22.913, p < .001$], the participants were asked to respond to the following statement “As a result of the current immigration policies my family has suffered.” The results indicated a significant and positive relationship between greater perceived discrimination and participants reporting that their families have suffered ($B = .403, CI(95%) = .251, .556, p < .001$). In model 3 [$\chi^2(6, n = 207)= 22.862, p < .001$], the participants were asked to respond to the following statement: “As a result of the current immigration policies my friends have suffered.” The results indicated a significant and positive relationship between
a greater perceived discrimination and participants reporting that their friends have suffered (B = .404, CI(95%) = .252, .556, p < .001).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As a result of recent immigration policies…</th>
<th>I Avoid Immigration Officials</th>
<th>My Family Has Suffered</th>
<th>My Friends Have Suffered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B (CI (95%))</td>
<td>B (CI (95%))</td>
<td>B (CI (95%))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.026 (-.170 .222)</td>
<td>.025 (-.159 .208)</td>
<td>-.025 (-.159 .208)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.009 (.057)</td>
<td>-.018 (.053)</td>
<td>-.018 (.053)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-.033* (.017)</td>
<td>.021 (.016)</td>
<td>.020 (.016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.020 (.066)</td>
<td>-.010 (.052)</td>
<td>.052 (.062)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year in US</td>
<td>.084 (.070)</td>
<td>.072 (.172)</td>
<td>.052 (.062)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Discrimination</td>
<td>.162* (.082)</td>
<td>.403*** (.077)</td>
<td>.404*** (.077)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² .570 .490 .489

*p < .05  ** p < .01  *** p < .001
Standard errors in parenthesis
Gender (male = 0, female = 1)

As seen in Table 3, model 1 [χ²(6, n = 207) = 25.741 p < .001], the participants were asked to respond to the following question: “As a result of the current immigration policies, how much confidence do you have in a better future for yourself?” The response options were 1 = Very little confidence to 4 = A great deal of confidence. The results indicated a significant and positive relationship between being female (B = 1.023, CI(95%) = .791, 1.254, p < .001), having a higher SES (B = .565, CI(95%) = .136, .994, p < .01), and a greater number of years in the U.S. (B = .867, CI(95%) = .636, 1.097, p < .001), with reporting greater confidence in a better future. In addition, participants with greater perceived discrimination reported having significantly less confidence in a better future for themselves (B = -.668 CI(95%) = -.962, -.374, p < .001).
In model 2 [$\chi^2(6, n = 207) = 38.876, p < .001$], the participants were asked to respond to the following question: “As a result of the current immigration policies, how much confidence do you have that your family will have a better future?” The results indicated a significant and positive relationship between being female ($B = 6.716, CI(95%) = 3.697, 9.734, p < .001$), and having a greater number of years in the U.S. ($B = .558, CI(95%) = .356, .759, p < .001$). In addition, the results indicated that participants with greater perceived discrimination were significantly less likely to express confidence that their families will have better futures ($B = -.901, CI(95%) = -1.158, -.644, p < .001$).

In model 3 [$\chi^2(6, n = 207) = 10.813, p > .001$], the participants were asked to respond to the following statement: “As a result of the current immigration policies, how much confidence do you have that your children will have a better future?” The results indicated that female participants ($B = 7.485, CI(95%) = 3.247, 11.724, p < .001$) and participants who had a greater number of years in the U.S. ($B = .647, CI(95%) = .364, .930, p < .01$) were significantly more likely to express confidence that their children will have better futures. Participants who reported greater perceived discrimination were significantly less likely to express confidence that their children will have better futures ($B = -.712, CI(95%) = -1.073, .351, p < .001$).

In model 4 [$\chi^2(6, n = 207) = 21.057, p > .001$], the participants were asked to respond to the following statement: “As a result of the current immigration policies, how much confidence do you have that the children of today will have a better future?” The results indicated that females ($B = 4.857, CI(95%) = 1.331, 8.383, p < .01$), older participants, ($B = .295, CI(95%) = .100, .490, p < .01$), participants with higher levels of education, ($B = 1.511, CI(95%) = .526, 2.496, p < .01$), and participants with more years living in the U.S. ($B = .370, CI(95%) = .134, .605, p < .01$) were significantly more likely to express confidence that the children of today will have a better future. Participants with greater perceived discrimination were significantly less likely to express confidence that the children of today will have better futures ($B = -1.329, CI(95%) = -1.629, -1.028, p < .001$).
### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much confidence do you have</th>
<th>In a Better Future for Yourself</th>
<th>In a Better Future for Your Family</th>
<th>In a Better Future for Your Children</th>
<th>In a Better Future for the Children of Today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>B 1.023*** (.117) CI (95%) .791 1.254</td>
<td>B 6.716*** (1.535) CI (95%) 3.697 9.734</td>
<td>B 7.485*** (2.156) CI (95%) 3.247 11.724</td>
<td>B 4.857*** (1.793) CI (95%) 1.331 8.383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>B -.041 (.097) CI (95%) -.232 .150</td>
<td>B .035 (.085) CI (95%) -.132 .202</td>
<td>B -.055 (.119) CI (95%) -.289 .180</td>
<td>B .295** (.099) CI (95%) .100 .490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>B .565** (.218) CI (95%) .136 .994</td>
<td>B .098 (.191) CI (95%) -.277 .403</td>
<td>B .441 (.268) CI (95%) -.086 .968</td>
<td>B -.340 (.223) CI (95%) -.779 .098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>B -.443 (.491) CI (95%) -1.401 .521</td>
<td>B .176 (.429) CI (95%) -.667 1.020</td>
<td>B .232 (.602) CI (95%) -.952 1.417</td>
<td>B 1.511** (.501) CI (95%) .526 2.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year in US</td>
<td>B .867*** (.117) CI (95%) .636 1.097</td>
<td>B .558*** (.103) CI (95%) .356 .759</td>
<td>B .647** (.144) CI (95%) .364 .930</td>
<td>B .370** (.120) CI (95%) .134 .605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Discrimination</td>
<td>B -.668*** (.150) CI (95%) -.962 -.374</td>
<td>B -.901*** (.131) CI (95%) -1.158 -.644</td>
<td>B -.712*** (.184) CI (95%) -1.073 -.351</td>
<td>B -.132*** (.153) CI (95%) -1.629 -1.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.519</td>
<td>.620</td>
<td>.145</td>
<td>.249</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Standard errors in parenthesis

Gender (male = 0, female = 1)
Discussion

The results of this study contribute to the understanding of the relationship between recent immigration policies and perceptions of discrimination among Latino immigrants. Although this study had a relatively small sample size, the sample is of a hard-to-reach population; since many of the harsh immigration policies and enforcement strategies originate in Arizona, examining the impact of increased immigration enforcement is especially important.

The results of this study align with the legal violence framework (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012) because this study examined the impacts of immigration laws and policies, and found that these laws are violent in that they intentionally cause legal harm with their immediate and long-term consequences. This study found that reporting higher levels of perceived discrimination was significantly related with avoidance of immigration officials as well as with higher levels of perceived suffering of family members and friends. In addition, the results indicated a significant relationship between participants with higher levels of perceived discrimination and lower confidence in a better future for the individual participants, for their families, for their children, and for the children of the future. These findings support previous research findings on the harmful effects of discrimination on Latino communities, including: a weakened sense of identity; increased levels of stress; worsened physical and mental health; socioeconomic difficulties; isolation from police; and withdrawal from communities, as a result of recent immigration policies (Capps et al., 2007; Chaudry et al., 2010; Hacker et al., 2011; Roehling, Hernandez Jarvis, Sprik, & Campbell, 2010; Santos et al., 2013; Theodore & Habans, 2016).

Consistent with prior studies, Latino immigrants with greater perceived discrimination reported avoiding immigration officials, which may indicate that there is a lack of trust between immigration and law enforcement agencies and Latino immigrant communities (Barreto & Segura, 2011; Messing, Becerra, Ward-Lasher, & Androff, 2015). The high-profile case of Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos, who checked in with immigration officials as she had for over 20 years, but was detained and ultimately deported, may cause Latino immigrants to further avoid immigration officials. Such avoidance and distrust has not only led to
a fear and unwillingness to report crimes and share information with policing agencies, but there is also the potential negative impact on law enforcement officers’ ability to properly perform their duties if effective police-community relations cannot be established (Barreto & Segura, 2011; Becerra, Wagaman, Androff, Messing, & Castillo, 2017; Theodore & Habans, 2016).

Furthermore, a sense of safety is diminished if a victim of crime, regardless of immigration status, is unwilling to report the crime for fear that they or their loved ones will be targeted as a result of their immigration status. For example, women who are victims of domestic violence have dropped their cases or failed to appear in court for fear of detention and deportation (Glenn, 2017). Instead of the desired effect of feeling safer with increased law enforcement involvement in communities, individuals feel less safe (Hardy et al., 2012; Theodore & Habans, 2016).

This study also found that reporting greater perceived discrimination was significantly related to having lower confidence in a better future for the individual, for their family, for their children, and for the children of today. These findings are important to consider, because immigrants come to the U.S. with great optimism in search of increased freedoms and economic opportunities in order to provide better lives for themselves and their families (Raleigh & Kao, 2010), and losing hope and optimism for the future can have negative implications. Lower levels of hope and optimism have been found to have negative health implications (Bryant & Cvengros 2004; Yarcheski, Scoloveno, & Mahon, 1994). These negative health outcomes are exacerbated when a loss of hope and optimism are combined with higher levels of perceived discrimination and a fear of deportation due to immigration status (Finch & Vega, 2003). The current anti-immigration policies and increased immigration enforcement strategies, including raids, detentions, and deportations, may create further mental health issues for Latinos living in the United States.

Considering the heterogeneity existing among Latino immigrants, this study included several control variables that have received limited attention in the literature examining perceptions of discrimination among Latino immigrants (Araújo & Borrell, 2006; McClure et al., 2010; Molina & Simon, 201X; Otiniano et al., 2014). In one model, having a higher socioeconomic status was related to a lesser likelihood of avoiding immigration officials,
and in another model, being female was related to greater belief in a better future. In regard to the former, higher socioeconomic status and avoiding immigration officials, despite the prevailing social and political rhetoric that Latino immigrants and their children do not acculturate to the U.S., the results of this study support the notion that a growing proportion of Latino immigrants are achieving traditional American indicators of middle class status, such as incomes above the median, homeownership and employment in higher-paying occupations, which then leads to more positive outlooks on the future. In this sense, with increased social, political, economic, legal, and cultural capital, Latino immigrants of higher socioeconomic status may be less fearful of avoiding immigration officials.

Being female and having more positive outlooks for a better future may indicate that the gender roles and power structures of Latino immigrants may shift once in the U.S. The effects of this empowerment can create a ripple effect, influencing greater personal autonomy and independence that enhances their spatial mobility and access to valuable social and economic resources that can increase their confidence in theirs and their children’s immediate and future health and wellbeing (Pessar, 2003). These results confirm the complexities that other studies have noted when investigating the relationship between discrimination and health while accounting for the mechanisms of socioeconomic status (Araújo & Borrell, 2006; Molina & Simon, 201) and gender (McClure et al., 2010; Otiniano et al., 2014). Given these findings, as well as the heterogeneity that exists among Latino immigrants, future research should examine the various characteristics and differences that exist between Latino immigrants and their perceptions of recent immigration policies, discrimination, and confidence in a better future.

**Limitations**

In this study, there are several notable limitations that need to be acknowledged. Participants were only recruited from the state of Arizona; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to the larger Latino immigrant population beyond this sample. Thus, findings should be interpreted in the context of this study. The findings from this study were based on self-reported data, which restricts the ability to establish causal relationships.
Self-reported data also only included reports on perceptions of discrimination and confidence for a better future, but not actual behaviors. The present study included asking questions that were not specific in differentiating aspects of a better future. Further studies examining the relationship between perceived discrimination in the context of recent immigration policies should gather more information on what is meant by a better future in addition to strengthening design methods that can go beyond perceptions to measures that capture behaviors.

**Implications for Policy and Practice**

The intersectionality between individual wellbeing and community engagement must be taken into account when developing effective interventions to serve those affected by recent immigration laws. Findings from this study, along with past literature, indicate the need for social workers to intervene with and on behalf of Latino immigrants and communities in the U.S. (Leong et al., 2013; Santos et al., 2013). Given the established literature on the effects of discrimination on individuals, families, groups, and communities, it is crucial that social workers and policy makers stand against policies that are discriminatory. An inclusive environment can start with adopting cultural and institutional norms, policies and practices that are welcoming and protect immigrants. Evaluating and understanding the impact of current immigration policies is pertinent for social workers working with Latino immigrants on an individual level and also at a systemic level.

The racial and discriminatory undertones of immigration policies perpetuate institutional systems of oppression and work against the core values of social work. Thus, social work professionals should continue to be vehemently engaged with communities on the ground level, as well as be involved with debates at the policy level. Social workers should collaborate with advocacy groups, think tanks, healthcare professionals, law enforcement, politicians, and other stakeholders to create immigration policy solutions that are grounded in social justice and human rights values. Instead of promoting legislation such as SB1070, more emphasis should be placed on policies like the DREAM Act.
While working toward immigration policy solutions is valid, social workers should also educate members of the community on the harmful impacts of existing immigration policies and/or the development and implementation of economically viable and politically feasible immigration policies. Social workers should partner with immigration attorneys or other organizations in assisting individuals in understanding their rights, especially in encounters with law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Social workers can also play an important role in training health and human service personnel and law enforcement personnel in working with Latino immigrants to improve community-police relations. Doing so will not only empower individuals to seek help if they become victims of crime, but also improve the safety in communities by protecting the ability to report criminal activity. The aim of this study was to contribute to the existing literature by analyzing the impact recent immigration policies have on perception of discrimination and confidence in a better future among a sample of adult Latino immigrants in Arizona. We hope the findings from this study can serve as a foundation for future studies as well as a call to action for social workers, policymakers, health and human service personnel, and law enforcement personnel to stand against discriminatory immigration policies.
References


Chapter Title

Perceived Discrimination Among Latinos


Perceived Discrimination Among Latinos


Age Stereotypes and Attitudes Towards Welfare State Arrangements for the Old: A Multilevel Analysis Across Twenty-Nine Countries

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This study investigates whether and how support for welfare state arrangements for the old relate to the stereotypes of the young and the old within society. It is hypothesized that the social status that these groups have in society affect these attitudes through different mechanisms, relating to the deservingness criteria that citizens apply. An empirical analysis of Round 4 of the European Social Survey (including 50,009 individuals from 29 European countries) shows that: (1) the social esteem of people over 70 predicts support for welfare state arrangements for the old; and (2) the social esteem of people in their 20s has a moderate effect on support for these arrangements. Hence, there is little support for a generational conflict.

Key words: population aging, welfare state arrangements for the old, age stereotypes, international comparison

Most countries experience population aging (Lutz, Sanderson, & Scherbov, 2008). This demographic development can have societal consequences, and many have argued that the changing age composition of countries will have an impact on the welfare state in the near future (Castles, 2004; Galasso, 2006). Oftentimes, this expectation focuses on the financial basis of the welfare state, since funding welfare state provisions becomes more difficult as the share of the population that depends on it increases, while the relative number of contributors...
decreases. Whereas the issues concerning the financial basis are highly relevant for the sustainability of the welfare state, population aging may also have social and political consequences, as it can ignite a potential conflict between different generations (Walker, 1990), which may be particularly the case if social provisions are unequally distributed across age groups (Ozawa & Lee, 2011).

This conflict between the young and the old may not only affect the ability of citizens to support each other, which is part of the financial sustainability of the welfare state, but also their willingness to do that, which reflects the social and political support required to sustain the welfare state (De Beer & Koster, 2009). If aging really intensifies the generational conflict, it should be particularly visible with regard to age-related welfare state arrangements benefiting either the young or the old. Given that it is likely that the process of aging implies that a larger share of the population becomes dependent on such arrangements, from a welfare state sustainability point of view it is particularly interesting to investigate welfare state arrangements for the old. The present study addresses this issue.

The question of whether and why people support certain welfare state arrangements has been extensively studied in the field of welfare state attitudes (Svallfors, 2012). Although a lot of these studies focus on attitudes towards the welfare state in general, these mechanisms and conditions also provide answers to the question why individuals would be in favor of specific provisions, such as arrangements for the old. The different perspectives that these studies have on welfare state attitudes are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and in many cases they complement each other, leading to the following insights.

First, there are theories that mainly emphasize characteristics of the benefactor by investigating how individual factors such as self-interest, altruism, and people’s ideological positions relate to welfare state attitudes (Hasenfeld & Rafferty, 1989; Svallfors, 1997; Van Oorschot, 2002). The second set of theories focuses on the characteristics of the beneficiaries by looking at the impact of factors such as deservingness criteria, beliefs about neediness, and perceived levels of misuse of welfare state provisions on attitudes towards welfare state arrangements (Gilens, 1995, 1999; Halleröd, 2004; Van Oorschot, 2006). A third approach explains welfare state attitudes by taking the relationship between
citizens and the government into account, for example by focusing on levels of institutional trust and legitimacy in relation to welfare state attitudes (Bay & Pedersen, 2006; Edlund, 2006; Levi & Stoker, 2000; Pettersen, 2002). And, a fourth set of theories examines how conditions in the social context, such as welfare state regimes, social structures, and national level conditions affect welfare state attitudes and solidarity (Andress & Heien, 2001; Bean & Papadakis, 1993; Blekesaune & Quadagno, 2003; Blomberg & Kroll, 1999; Jæger, 2006; Janmaat & Braun, 2009; Koster & Kaminska, 2012; Larsen, 2008; Lipsmeyer & Nordstrom, 2003; Mau & Burkhardt, 2009).

Based on these prior studies, an explanation of people’s attitudes towards welfare state arrangements for the old includes factors such as the age of respondents (reflecting self-interest explanations), the opinion about elderly people (reflecting deservingness criteria), the extent to which people believe that the government can overcome generational conflicts (reflecting institutional trust), and the age composition of the country (reflecting relative positions of the young and the old). Together, these explanations provide a relatively complete picture of the conditions influencing attitudes towards welfare state arrangements for the old.

Nevertheless, there is one part of the explanation that received very little attention in the literature on welfare state attitudes. Taking into account that contributions to welfare state arrangements produce a collective good (Hart & Cowhey, 1977; Olson, 1971), the question is how support for such goods depends on the relationship between the benefactors (the contributors). The literature about collective action acknowledges that the willingness to contribute to a collective good is related to the interdependence of the actors involved (e.g., Oliver, 1984) and this notion may be relevant for the explanation of welfare state attitudes, as well.

Before theorizing how interdependence among benefactors affects attitudes towards welfare state arrangements for the old, one conceptual difference between the two research traditions should be clarified. Studies of collective action tend to concentrate on goods that benefit the whole group, meaning that they focus on situations of two-sided solidarity where benefactors and beneficiaries are not necessarily clearly distinguished (De Beer & Koster, 2009; Hechter, 1987). Welfare states, however,
also provide arrangements that do distinguish benefactors from beneficiaries, especially if those provisions benefit specific groups. This means that both one-sided and two-sided solidarity are important in the production of such a collective good. What is more, welfare state provisions can be conceptualized as a combination of solidarity between different groups, namely (1) solidarity between the benefactors and the beneficiaries and (2) solidarity among the benefactors that produce the collective good (De Swaan, 1988).

Since the issue concerning solidarity between benefactors and beneficiaries has been addressed extensively in previous studies, the focus in the present study is on the second issue: the level of solidarity among the benefactors. It does so by advancing and testing a model that is closely related to the one presented by Rothstein (2001). In Rothstein’s model, support for the welfare state is conceived of as a combination of two social dilemma situations that the individual citizen faces, namely one dilemma concerning the trustworthiness of the government (revolving around the question: “will the state deliver what it promised?”), and one concerning the trustworthiness of all other citizens (where the individual tries to answer the question: “will fellow citizens contribute and not misuse the provisions?”) (p. 222). The model presented in this study argues that the second dilemma in fact consists of two separate dilemma situations by making a distinction between groups of benefactors and beneficiaries. In research about welfare state attitudes, this particular aspect of welfare state arrangements remained largely implicit.

This analysis aims at extending the existing literature on welfare state attitudes, both theoretically and empirically. The first section develops a social esteem theory of solidarity to understand attitudes towards welfare state arrangements for the old. This theory is grounded in theories of collective action, assuming bounded rational actors that do not make their decision in isolation but are influenced by the choices of others. These individuals are, for example, affected by social structural conditions such as norms, customs, and information (Ostrom, 1998). The following two propositions underlie this theory: (1) individuals are willing to contribute to a collective good if they believe that others are willing to contribute as well; and (2) the perceived social esteem of a group benefiting from the collective
good provides information about the willingness of others to contribute to that collective good. The first proposition is based on the theory of contingent consent (Levi, 1997). While contingent consent theory usually concentrates on levels of trust in fellow citizens and the state, the model proposed here focuses on a different mechanism that is formulated in the second proposition, namely the social esteem that citizens believe that fellow citizens assign to the group of beneficiaries. Hence, the emphasis is not on the trustworthiness of other citizens but on the informational cues that individuals receive concerning the likelihood that their fellow citizens will support a welfare state arrangement benefiting a specific group.

Applying these propositions to the topic of people’s attitudes towards welfare state arrangements for the old leads to the prediction that individuals are more in favor of such arrangements if they believe that fellow citizens assign a higher status to elderly people. This prediction is empirically examined by investigating how status perceptions about two age groups (people in their twenties and people of seventy and older) is related to people’s attitudes towards welfare state arrangements securing a reasonable standard of living for the old. The empirical data are taken from Round 4 of the European Social Survey (ESS, 2008) and include information about 50,009 individuals in 29 European countries.

Attitudes Towards Welfare State Arrangements for the Old

Attitudes Towards the Welfare State

Welfare state attitudes reflect the opinions that citizens have towards welfare state arrangements. Two defining characteristics of these arrangements are that: (1) they are collective means to cover individual risks, requiring individual contributions; (2) the government organizes both the collection and the distribution of the financial resources. Hence, welfare state arrangements consist of formal institutional mechanisms to secure the rights and obligations of citizens regarding who pays what and who receives what. These two core characteristics distinguish welfare state arrangements from other means of risk management such
as private insurances (e.g., the market) and social support within communities or families (Bowles & Gintis, 1996). While private insurances consist of voluntary contributions from individuals using the market mechanism, welfare state arrangements rely on obligatory contributions that are collected through the tax system. And, while the organization of community and family support is to a large extent voluntary and informal, welfare state arrangements are formal institutions.

The market, communities, and the government provide means to cover individual risks, as each of them produces a certain level of social protection. From a policy perspective, covering individual risks through the government is preferred if it leads to comparatively better outcomes compared to the market or the community (Koster, 2009; Lindbeck, 2006; Williamson, 1981). Once set in motion, the resulting policies can become path-dependent and self-sustaining over the course of time (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Rothstein, 1998). In addition to the macro explanation of why governments try to correct market and community failures, the literature on welfare state attitudes takes a micro perspective by investigating to what extent and why citizens prefer government intervention to assist others rather than (or in addition to) using market or community mechanisms, hence emphasizing the role of public opinion in the process of legitimizing social policies (Brooks & Manza, 2006; Burstein, 1998).

With regard to welfare state legitimacy, it is useful to make a distinction between universal and targeted arrangements. While the first kind of welfare state system relies on comparatively generous entitlements that are available for everyone, the latter consists of restricted arrangements that benefit specific groups (Korpi & Palme, 1998; Lewin & Stier, 2002). Based on a self-interest explanation of welfare state support, it may be assumed that a universal welfare state receives more public support than targeted arrangements as it satisfies the needs of more individuals.

Nevertheless, public support can diminish both in universal and in targeted welfare states, but for different reasons. Since universal provisions are more extensive, they are more costly and may therefore be harder to sustain. What is more, since they are based on a system providing support to a relatively large share of the population, some groups can benefit
from them, even if citizens are not in favor of it. Thus, if these arrangements (also) benefit groups that are regarded as undeserving, public support for the universal welfare state may decline (Bay & Pedersen, 2006).

In contrast, welfare state arrangements that are targeted at specific groups can create a stronger division between contributors and beneficiaries. Also, for targeted arrangements it holds that if the beneficiaries are regarded as deserving, the public will be in favor of such provisions. Nevertheless, since fewer citizens benefit from the provisions, overall support may be lower compared to universal provisions and needs to be more strongly based on other motivations than self-interest, as these provisions depend more strongly on the willingness of citizens to pay for provisions from which they do not directly benefit from themselves. As a result, public support for targeted welfare state provisions can diminish if the distance between these two groups becomes too big.

Welfare State Arrangements for the Old

Clearly, welfare state arrangements for the old are neither universal nor targeted as such. These arrangements can be organized as universal provisions (meaning that every citizen above a certain age receives benefits) or can consist of targeted provisions (only the elderly poor receive benefits). Nevertheless, in both cases they are selective in the sense that they benefit one particular group in society at a certain point in time (“the old”), while they are paid for by another group (“the young”). Of course, when the welfare state arrangements are universal, chances are higher that the group of benefactors is entitled to receive the benefits as they pass a certain age limit, compared to the situation in which these provisions are only targeted at the elderly poor.

Even though this holds true, receiving these benefits in the future is not guaranteed for at least two reasons. First, it is not sure whether the benefactors will reach the required age. And, second, even if they do reach that age, it is not certain whether the same provisions will still be available. Both uncertainties mean that benefactors may contribute to a universal welfare state arrangement from which they do not necessarily benefit themselves. This means that welfare state arrangements for the old
imply that there is a distinction between benefactors and beneficiaries, at least at the present point in time. And, the question that follows from this observation is why the benefactors would be willing to support the beneficiaries, given this distinction.

As was outlined in the introduction, there are several ways of theorizing the willingness of benefactors to support the welfare state. Most of the existing approaches focus on the benefactor, or include factors such as characteristics of the beneficiaries, the government, or the wider social context. Adding these factors to the explanation makes the model more detailed, but it still does not fully account for the theoretical idea that the contributions of benefactors may be interdependent (Levi, 1997; Rothstein, 2001; Scholz & Lubell, 1998). To do that, it is necessary to include and investigate the assumption that the willingness of citizens to support a certain group depends on the willingness of fellow citizens to support that group. This theoretical notion leads to an additional explanation of welfare state attitudes.

Instead of arguing that the welfare state requires solidarity between benefactors and beneficiaries, such a theoretical model states that solidarity among benefactors is also needed. As such, this conceptualization reflects the core of collective action theories, assuming that individuals do not make their decision in complete isolation. Instead, these theories show that the preparedness of individuals to contribute to a collective good depends on the (perception of) behavior and attitudes of others, for example, by emphasizing the role of interdependent choices (Granovetter, 1978, 1980; Oliver, 1984; Oliver, Marwell, & Teixeira, 1985), conditional cooperation (Fisbacher, Gächter, & Fehr, 2001; Frey & Meier, 2004), norm conformity (Ostrom, 1998, 2000), fairness (Arneson, 1982; Elster, 1989; Gould, 1993), and trust between individuals (Scholz & Lubell, 1998).

Social Esteem and Solidarity

These collective action theories focus on the social structural conditions under which individuals are willing to contribute to a collective good. Usually, this applies to goods from which the contributors can benefit themselves once they are produced. This means that situations in which individuals are faced with the question whether or not to contribute may run the risk that others may free-ride on their contributions. As a result, in such
a situation individuals are interested in gathering information about the behavior and attitudes of others; for example, they may try to monitor the actual contribution to the collective good of other individuals or find out whether others are trustworthy (Dawes, 1980).

The situation is slightly different when regarding welfare state arrangements for the old as a collective good that is produced by one group in society while benefiting another group. The question that the individual contributors face in this situation is not so much whether the other contributors are trustworthy individuals, but it may be much more informative to know the opinions of other individuals about the group of beneficiaries. Therefore, if a person believes that fellow citizens have a positive image of the other group and believe that they are viewed as deserving, they may be expected to be more willing to contribute to that collective good. As such, it is assumed that the collective good problem among the contributors can be solved indirectly; namely, individuals are willing to contribute if they believe that others will contribute as well. The social esteem of the group of recipients provides an informational cue for individual citizens about the likelihood that others will contribute, and hence decreases the influence of concerns about those who are perceived as free-riders. In addition, the reputation of the beneficiaries may be upheld by norms of reciprocity and fairness that further increase the likelihood that each benefactor is willing to contribute.

From this theoretical argument, it follows that individual support for arrangements that benefit others is affected by the perception of benefactors about the esteem that others assign to the beneficiaries. The social esteem of the group reflects the reputation that a group has within society and provides information about the likelihood that fellow citizens will be willing to support provisions from which that group benefits. These theoretical considerations lead us to the first hypothesis about support for welfare state arrangements for the old. The higher the perceived social esteem of older age groups, the more support for welfare state arrangements for the old (Hypothesis 1).

The first hypothesis states a direct relationship between the social esteem of the elderly and support for welfare state arrangements for the old. An additional hypothesis is derived from the theoretical model. Apart from assuming that a positive
perception about the social esteem of the old leads to stronger support for welfare state provisions for the old, it may also be expected that the esteem of other age groups should not be related to support for welfare state arrangements for the old. According to the theory proposed in this article, support for these arrangements is related to perceptions about the old, and not about the esteem of the young. What is more, it can even be expected that there is a negative relationship between the social esteem of younger age groups and support for welfare state arrangements for the old.

Given that the budget of governments is restricted, they will not have the means to offer extensive provisions to all age groups in society. This means that governments need to make choices about how to allocate their budget, and as a consequence, if the budget for the provisions of one age group increases, the budget for another group decreases. Therefore, the benefactors may face a choice regarding their support for welfare state provisions for different age groups. This argument can be regarded as an extension of the median voter model applied to the provision of old age arrangements (Galasso, 2006; Hollanders & Koster, 2011). According to this model, government spending on welfare state arrangements for the old increases as the population ages. While this could mean that the overall level of government spending increases, this is often not the case. If it is not possible for governments to spend more, they need to reduce spending in other domains. This is not to say that the young cannot enjoy these provisions, but that they have to wait until they belong to the older age group. In that sense, the distribution of age-related government provisions can also be seen as the outcome of a potential conflict between generations. Now, if the social esteem of younger age groups is high, the model predicts that the benefactors are willing to support welfare state arrangements favoring this age group. As it is not possible to support all age groups in society evenly, given budget restrictions, stronger support for the welfare state arrangements for the young results in less support for provision for the old. Hence, according to this model, more social esteem for the young should result in less support for welfare state arrangements for the old. The following hypothesis reflects this expectation. The higher the perceived social esteem of younger age groups, the less support for welfare state arrangements for the old (Hypothesis 2).
Methods

Data

Data for this study come from the European Social Survey (ESS, 2008), which has been conducted every two years since 2000. Round 4 of this international comparative survey contains information that allows us to test the hypotheses. The total dataset investigated here includes the responses of 50,009 individuals in 29 European countries.

Measures

The dependent variable of this study, support for welfare state arrangements for the old, is measured by asking respondents about their opinion concerning the following question: “How much responsibility do you think governments should have to ensure a reasonable standard of living for the old?” The answer categories range from 0 (meaning that the respondents indicate that it should not be the governments’ responsibility) to 10 (indicating that it should be entirely governments’ responsibility according to the respondent). Hence, a higher score reflects more support for welfare state arrangements for the old.

The dependent variables in this study measure the respondent’s perceptions of the perceived social esteem of people in their twenties (“the young”) and people over seventy (“the old”). These variables are measured as follows. Respondents are asked to what extent they think that most people in their country view members of the two age groups “as friendly,” “having high moral standards,” and “with respect.” These questions do not ask about the opinion that respondents have about these two groups, but instead measure how they think that their fellow citizens see people in their twenties and those over seventy. Each of these questions is measured on a four-point scale, ranging from 1 (not at all likely to be viewed that way) to 4 (very likely to be viewed that way). As shown in Table 1, the six items can be reduced to two dimensions, namely one concerning the social esteem of people in their twenties and one measuring the social esteem of people over seventy. Two variables are constructed, one measuring perceptions about the social esteem of people in their twenties (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.79) and one measuring the
To take into account that people’s attitudes towards welfare state arrangements for the old may be influenced by other factors, the analyses controlled for the following background variables: gender (0 = male; 1 = female), the respondent’s age (in years), years of education, and the main activity of the respondent (a variable measuring whether the respondent is in paid work, education, unemployed and looking for work, unemployed and not looking for work, permanently sick or disabled, retired, community or military service, housework, looking after children, or other). Furthermore, ideological position is controlled for by including a variable measuring left-right self-placement (0 = left; 10 = right). Finally, since perceptions of social esteem may be related to people’s own views about the two age groups, two control variables were added measuring feelings about people in their 20s and feelings about people over seventy. These variables are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most people view those in their 20s as friendly</td>
<td>0.768</td>
<td>0.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people view those in their 20s as having high moral standards</td>
<td>0.863</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people view those in their 20s with respect</td>
<td>0.843</td>
<td>0.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people view those over 70 as friendly</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td>0.744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people view those over 70 as having high moral standards</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people view those over 70 with respect</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.798</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalue      2.539 1.492  
Proportion of variance accounted for 42.312 24.861  
Cronbach’s alpha        0.78   0.72  

Source: European Social Survey Round 4  
n = 50,009 individuals in 29 countries  
Varimax rotation. Factor loadings > 0.30 in bold.
measured by asking respondents the question: “Overall, how negative or positive do you feel towards people in their 20s/over 70?” (0 = extremely negative; 10 = extremely positive).

**Method**

The empirical analysis takes into account that the data have a nested structure (individuals are nested in countries). To provide as much insight as possible, the data are analyzed with two different methods. First, an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis is conducted. In this analysis, country dummy variables are included to take into account that the measures of individuals in one country are not independent. These dummies are included in the analysis, but are not reported in the tables to save space. Second, the data are analyzed using multilevel modeling (Snijders & Bosker, 1999). While this method can be used to investigate whether contextual effects at the national level explain individual support for welfare state arrangements (e.g. Blekesaune & Quadagno, 2003; Jæger, 2006; Koster, 2010), it is also a means to take the nested structure of the data into account without explicitly focusing on these contextual effects. Because the present analysis aims at understanding how individual perceptions affect support for welfare state arrangements, and not whether these national circumstances matter, no contextual effects were added to the model. Instead, by conducting a multilevel analysis, it is acknowledged that responses from individuals living in the same country are not independent from each other, without explicitly adding explanatory variables at the national level. A random intercept model was estimated using the MLwiN software package. MLwiN is specifically designed to perform multilevel analyses. It enables researchers to fit different kinds of multilevel models. The Centre for Multilevel Modeling at the University of Bristol developed this software package. For the present analyses, version 2.24 was used (Rasbash, Steele, Browne, & Prosser, 2005).

In both regressions analyses, four models are estimated. An empty model is calculated that serves as a baseline to which the next model is compared (Model 0). This next model includes the control variables (Model 1). Then two models are calculated that include the variables testing the two hypotheses. In the OLS regression analyses, the adjusted R² is used to assess the
explained variance of the variable. In multilevel models, it is not possible to calculate the explained variance. Instead, for each model the -2 log likelihood is estimated. The deviance (the difference between the -2 log likelihood of two models) indicates to what extent the fit of the model improves after including the variables. Because the dataset is very large, the significance levels may be inflated. To deal with this, the significance level is set at $p < 0.0001$.

Results

Descriptive Results

Table 2 provides an overview of the mean scores on support for welfare state arrangements for the old, the perceived social esteem of people in their twenties, and the perceived social esteem of people over seventy per country. What is particularly noteworthy is that the mean level of support for government responsibility for the old is relatively high ($m = 8.49$). This shows that, on average, people are in favor of the government taking action to secure the standard of living of the old. For each country in the sample, the average score on this variable is above the theoretical mean of the scale. The lowest levels of support for welfare state arrangement for the old are found in Switzerland ($m = 7.23$) and Germany ($m = 7.60$) and the respondents in Latvia ($m = 9.29$) and Ukraine ($m = 9.39$) are most in favor of the idea that the government ensures a reasonable standard of living for the old.

Comparing the average scores on the scales measuring the perceived social esteem of people in their twenties and social esteem perceptions about people over seventy, Table 2 shows that the social esteem of the older age group is perceived to be higher than the status of the younger age group ($m = 2.20$ for people in their twenties and $m = 3.06$ for people over seventy). This difference is consistently found for all countries in the sample. Furthermore, the average perceived social esteem of the two groups varies across countries. The mean perceived esteem of people in their twenties is the lowest in the UK ($m = 1.74$) and the highest in Israel ($m = 2.64$). In Slovakia, perceived social esteem of people over seventy has the lowest value ($m = 2.81$), while in Hungary the perceived social esteem of this group has the highest value ($m = 3.36$).
Table 2. Country Means of Support for Welfare State Arrangements for the Old, Perceived Esteem of People in their Twenties, and Perceived Esteem of People over Seventy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Support for welfare state arrangements for the old</th>
<th>Perceived social esteem of people in their twenties</th>
<th>Perceived social esteem of people over seventy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>7.87</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>9.13</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>8.94</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>8.22</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.82</td>
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<td>3.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
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<td>2.81</td>
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<td>Turkey</td>
<td>8.22</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>3.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>9.39</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>8.49</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: European Social Survey Round 4
n = 50,009 individuals in 29 countries

(a) Item: “How much responsibility do you think governments should have to ensure a reasonable standard of living for the old?”; ranging from 0 (should not be the government’s responsibility) to 10 (should be entirely governments responsibility).
(b) Scale score; ranging from 1 to 4.
Regression Results

The results of the OLS regression are reported in Table 3, and Table 4 contains the results of the multilevel regression. As Table 4 shows, 8 percent of the variation in support for welfare state arrangements for the old is due to differences across countries (Intraclass correlation = 0.079). This means that country-level characteristics may play a role in understanding support for these arrangements, but most of the variance is due to variance within countries. The first models reported in Table 3 and 4 investigate the effects of the individual-level control variables. The two analyses yield similar results. The size of the parameters differs only slightly (the only real difference appears in the model with the esteem variables; in the OLS regression, feelings about people in their 20s becomes significant, while it remains not significant in the multilevel regression). The OLS regression shows that about 6 percent of variation in attitudes towards welfare state arrangements for the old is explained by the control variables. The multilevel analysis shows that adding these variables improves the fit of the model (Deviance = 2,030.478; p < 0.0001). Both models show that support for welfare state arrangements for the old is higher among women, older people, those who are lower educated, and people who are permanently sick or disabled. People placing themselves on the right side of the political scale are less in favor of government responsibility. These outcomes are in line with previous research findings of general support for the welfare state (Blekesaune & Quadagno, 2003; Gërxbhani & Koster, 2012). Furthermore, support for welfare state arrangements for the old is positively related to the feelings towards people over 70; the more positive feeling people have, the higher the support for these arrangements.

The second models reported in Table 3 and Table 4 test the two hypotheses. These models investigate how support for welfare state arrangements for the old relate to the perceived social esteem of people in their twenties and to perceived social esteem of people over seventy. The results from the OLS regression show that these two variables explain an extra percent of variance in welfare state attitudes towards provisions for the old (which is statistically significant at the 0.0001 level). The multilevel model (Table 4) shows that the fit of the regression
Table 3. OLS Regression Analysis of Support for Welfare State Arrangements for the Old

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>(s.e.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.100 **</td>
<td>(0.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>(0.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of education</td>
<td>-0.022 **</td>
<td>(0.002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid work</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>(0.066)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.110</td>
<td>(0.073)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed looking for work</td>
<td>0.148</td>
<td>(0.077)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed not looking for work</td>
<td>0.152</td>
<td>(0.091)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanently sick or disabled</td>
<td>0.268</td>
<td>(0.085)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>(0.070)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community or military service</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>(0.206)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housework, looking after children</td>
<td>-0.102</td>
<td>(0.071)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-right self-placement</td>
<td>-0.034 **</td>
<td>(0.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings about people in their 20s</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings about people of 70 and older</td>
<td>0.199 **</td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived status people in their 20s</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived status people of 70 and older</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>6.715</td>
<td>(0.091)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted R^2</td>
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<tr>
<td>R^2 change</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Change</td>
<td>190.011 **</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: European Social Survey Round 4
n = 50,009 individuals in 29 countries
Unstandardized coefficients are reported
The models include country dummies (not reported)
*p < 0.01; ** p < 0.001
Table 4. Multilevel Analysis of Support for Welfare State Arrangements for the Old

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>(s.e.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.065 **</td>
<td>(0.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>(0.001)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years of education</td>
<td>-0.021 **</td>
<td>(0.002)</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed looking for work</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td>(0.084)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed not looking for work</td>
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<td>(0.098)</td>
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<td>Permanently sick or disabled</td>
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<td>(0.091)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
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<td>Community or military service</td>
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<td>Housework, looking after children</td>
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<td>(0.069)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>(---)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Left-right self-placement</td>
<td>-0.043 **</td>
<td>(0.004)</td>
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<td>Feelings about people in their 20s</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feelings about people of 70 and older</td>
<td>0.186 **</td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived status people in their 20s</td>
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<td>(0.011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived status people of 70 and older</td>
<td>0.264 **</td>
<td>(0.013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>7.352</td>
<td>(0.128)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deviance</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Variance individual level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intraclass correlation</td>
<td>0.075</td>
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</table>

Source: European Social Survey Round 4
n = 50,009 individuals in 29 countries
Empty model: -2log likelihood = 166277.870; Intraclass correlation = 0.079
*p < 0.01; **p < 0.001
model significantly increases after adding these two variables (Deviance = 433.970; p < 0.0001). Perceived social esteem of people in their twenties is negatively related to support for welfare state arrangements for the old (b = - 0.046; p < 0.0001 and b = -0.064; p < 0.0001, respectively) and perceived social esteem of people over seventy is positively related to this welfare state attitude (b = 0.285; p < 0.0001; b = 0.264; p < 0.0001). These findings support the two hypotheses derived from the social esteem theory of solidarity. First, support for welfare state arrangements for the old is positively related to perceived social esteem of the elderly. Secondly, levels of support are negatively related to the perceived social esteem of the young.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study extends previous investigations of public attitudes towards welfare state arrangements. Besides the existing explanations that focus on characteristics of the benefactor, characteristics of the beneficiaries, the relationship between citizens and the government, and the social context of individuals, the study presented here shows that the relationship between beneficiaries matters. The theoretical approach and empirical outcomes have a number of theoretical and practical implications that may be further expanded in future research.

Theoretically, the proposed model has the following implications. First, it shows that the welfare state can be thought of as a number of collective action problems that need to be solved to generate support. While this has been previously noted, for example in the literature about contingent consent (Levi, 1997; Rothstein, 2001), the approach taken here differs from these earlier accounts in one respect. The main addition to the previous work is that the collective action problem among citizens can be further elaborated by distinguishing the group of benefactors from the group of beneficiaries. As a consequence, the attention shifts from the social dilemma involving all citizens to the dilemma faced by the contributors to the collective good.

A second addition and extension concerns the approach of the relationships between citizens. While earlier accounts emphasize generalized trust, the model investigated in this study focuses on more specific information about the attitudes that fellow citizens have toward the group of beneficiaries. Instead
of concentrating on the deservingness criteria that citizens themselves apply (Van Oorschot, 2006), people also seem to take into account the criteria that their fellow citizens apply. At least, this is what may be derived from the social esteem model.

The empirical findings imply that future research on welfare state attitudes (and attitudes towards government policies in general) need to be more specific about who is willing to contribute to what and how informational cues can explain such solidarity. With regard to the existence of multiple social dilemmas, a further extension of Rothstein’s (2001) model may be required to fully capture the relevant relationships. Distinguishing between the government, benefactors, and beneficiaries also means that it is not only the question whether the benefactors view the government as a trustworthy actor, but also raises the question of under what conditions the beneficiaries believe that the government will act in their best interest. Taken together, it is suggested that future work should investigate these different social dilemmas, as well as qualitative and informational aspects of the relationships between the different actors.

There are several issues that could not be examined in the present study and that need to be addressed in future studies. One of the main assumptions of the model is that social esteem perceptions serve as informational cues to solve collective action problems. Although this is also suggested in previous research, other (additional or alternative) mechanisms play a role. For example, while the information argument holds that the costs for contributing decrease, this rational approach to solidarity can be complemented by arguments concerning imitation or the customs that citizens follow within society.

What is more, additional research can examine whether information, imitations, and customs provide the basis for norms and sanctions that can further strengthen the willingness to contribute to a collective good. Determining which of these mechanisms explains the willingness to support welfare state arrangements requires other data than what was investigated here. These data can be gathered using a survey across countries like the one investigated here, but it is worthwhile to consider other data-gathering techniques, such as (vignette) experiments to distinguish the different mechanisms and investigate their relative importance.
This study started with the question of how to explain attitudes towards welfare state arrangements for the old. The investigation shows that, apart from the existing explanations, the social esteem of the elderly explains these attitudes. The practical implication of this finding is that, from the perspective of social policy, governments may have the means to generate support for provisions aimed at securing the living conditions of the old. While a common strategy would be to generate such support by emphasizing the value and importance of such provisions, governments can also choose to focus on mechanisms that help to overcome social dilemmas. The feasibility of such a strategy is cannot be answered with the present study and requires additional research examining the effectiveness of such interventions. From a social research perspective on welfare state arrangements for the old, the present study shows that the future of such provision not only depends on whether it serves the best interest of individuals, whether the elderly are viewed as deserving, and whether the governments is regarded legitimate, but also on the social esteem of the elderly.

References


Educational Attainment in Young Adulthood, Depressive Symptoms, and Race-ethnicity: The Long-reach of Parenting Styles in Adolescence

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Vanderbilt University

C. André Christie-Mizell
Vanderbilt University

Utilizing four parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, uninvolved, and permissive) and two types of educational achievement (years of education completed and completion of a college degree), we investigated whether mental health (i.e., depressive symptoms) mediates the relationship between parenting styles in adolescence and the educational attainment of young adults. We further assessed whether the relationships among parenting styles and educational attainment vary by race and ethnicity for African Americans, Hispanics, and whites. Compared to youth with authoritative parenting, those who experienced uninvolved or authoritarian parenting were more likely to experience depressive affect, and these symptoms of depression partially mediated the relationship between parenting and educational attainment. In terms of racial and ethnic differences, African Americans and Hispanics with authoritarian or uninvolved parents earn more years of education than whites. Authoritarian parenting made it much less likely for whites to complete college compared to their African American and Hispanic counterparts.

Key words: educational attainment, parenting styles, depressive symptoms, race and ethnicity
High quality parent-child interactions are important to the educational progress of children (Israel, Beaulieu, & Hartless, 2001). Parenting styles or strategies that include warmth and emotional support have been shown to boost educational goals and achievement among youth (Davis-Kean, 2005; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989). However, less is known about the specific social psychological mechanisms that connect parenting styles to educational outcomes. On the one hand, quality parenting may directly impact educational achievement by encouraging the internalization of positive goal orientation and resilience in the face of educational difficulty (Davis-Kean, 2005). On the other hand, parent-child relationships may shape educational outcomes indirectly. For example, uninvolved parenting—characterized by little communication, indifference, and neglect—may leave a child feeling distressed and may lead to mental health problems (Radziszewska, Richardson, Dent, & Flay, 1996; Widom, DuMont, & Czaja, 2007). In turn, poor psychological adjustment or mental health may impede the ability of the individual to achieve educationally.

In this research, we consider whether the impact of parenting during middle and late adolescence is directly connected to educational attainment in young adulthood or whether the influence of parenting is better understood as indirectly affecting educational progress through mental health—specifically, depressive symptomatology. This investigation adds to the research literature in two important ways. First, with the use of nationally representative, longitudinal data, we are able to trace the direct and indirect (through depressive symptoms) impact of adolescent parenting styles on educational attainment in young adulthood. We utilize data spanning nine years to allow for a careful evaluation of whether parenting styles during adolescence reach into young adulthood and to assess the relationship between parenting styles and educational outcomes for three racial groups: African Americans, Hispanics, and whites.

Second, we focus on depressive symptoms as a potential intervening mechanism between adolescent parenting and the educational achievement of young adults. This assessment adds specificity to the research literature seeking to understand the multiple pathways through which the parent-child relationship shapes youth’s immediate and future outcomes. In the period of
study—adolescence into early adulthood—under consideration here, the incidence of depressive symptoms dramatically increases (Arnett, 2007). The result is that young adulthood can be one of the most stressful periods in the life course, with likely implications for all types of achievement, including educational attainment (Aquilino, 1999; Aquilino & Supple, 2001; Arnett, 2000, 2007). Nevertheless, few studies have explored the extent to which parenting styles in adolescence increase or decrease depressive symptomatology and whether these symptoms impact educational progress.

**Literature Review**

*Theoretical Framework*

Family social capital theory guides this study. Coleman (1990) defined family social capital as the relationships among social actors that “inhere in family relations and in community organization and that are useful for the cognitive and social development of [youth]” (p. 300). Social capital facilitates interaction among individuals within networks, such as families, as well as the exchange of informal resources such as knowledge, social support, and obligations (Coleman, 1988, 1990). In the research literature, family social capital is typically operationalized as the strength of ties between family members and the quality of the relationship between parent(s) and children (Parcel & Dufur, 2001).

Family social capital creates parent-child bonds that allow parents to effectively convey appropriate social norms to their children. In turn, children internalize the appropriate social norms and behaviors, which lead to more positive outcomes (Christie-Mizell, 2004; Christie-Mizell, Keil, Laske, & Stewart, 2011). Furthermore, family social capital has been most associated with authoritative parenting—i.e., a style that includes warmth, responsiveness, bidirectional communication, and firm control (Sandefur, Meier, & Campbell, 2006; Spera, 2005; see also Yang & McLoyd, 2015). This investment in the well-being of youth pays immediate returns (e.g., fewer behavior problems), but also includes later dividends as youth mature—including fewer depressive symptoms and greater academic success.
Coleman (1988, 1990) outlined two additional forms of capital—financial and human capital—that are necessary for the development and deployment of family social capital. Financial capital encompasses economic resources such as income and wealth, while human capital is represented by parents’ education and cognitive ability. These two forms of capital allow parents to build social capital within the family (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1997). For example, parents who are well educated tend to have more stable incomes and experience fewer stressors in life, allowing them the opportunity to spend time with their children to build social capital. Children of parents with low financial and human capital have limited access to resources like health care, housing, and the provision of cognitively stimulating materials and experiences (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). In turn, these parents are less likely to be able to invest in building social capital within the family (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Coleman, 1988, 1990).

Parenting Styles and Family Social Capital

**Authoritative parenting.** The four parenting styles considered in this research are authoritative, uninvolved, permissive, and authoritarian. Authoritative parenting includes setting clear limits, engaging children in reasoning, and being responsive to their emotional needs (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Spera, 2005). This type of parenting is thought to best encourage and engage family social capital to the extent that it creates positive parent-child interactions (Coleman, 1988, 1990; Parcel & Menaghan, 1993, 1994). In fact, a number of research studies have found a positive relationship between authoritative parenting styles and higher student achievement (e.g., Gonzalez, Doan Holbein, & Quilter, 2002). Moreover, parental practices in line with authoritative parenting reduce the risk of depressive symptoms among youth by curbing involvement in non-normative behavior (Bolkan, Sano, De Costa, Acock, & Day, 2010; Bulanda & Majumdar, 2009; Milevsky, Schlechter, Netter, & Keehn, 2007). Consequently, the absence of depressive affect may increase adolescents’ educational achievement (see e.g., McLeod & Fettes, 2007).
Uninvolved parenting. Uninvolved parenting (or indulgent parenting) is characterized by a lack of responsiveness to a child’s needs and emotional distance (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Whereas authoritative parents will engage in conversations with their children regarding rules and expectations, uninvolved parents do not impose rules and expectations on their children (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). As a result of lax supervision and expectations, parents who are uninvolved create less family social capital. In turn, children of uninvolved parents respond to their parents’ lack of warmth and attention with depressed affect and may become defiant in an attempt to elicit parental attention and involvement (Ge, Best, Conger, & Simons, 1996). These issues can intensify over time, leading to even poorer mental health and lower academic achievement.

Permissive parenting. Unlike authoritative parents, permissive parents are less likely to interact with their children, and when they do communicate with their children, they are more likely to allow their child to dominate the interaction (Baumrind, 1989, 1991). Because of a lack of demands and expectations for the child, this style of parenting leads to a poor parent-child social ties and creation of lower levels of family social capital. Although permissive parents provide emotional support, they are less likely to impose strict rules, preferring instead to promote independent decision-making and self-regulation of emotions, with avoidance of confrontation and discipline (Baumrind, 1991). Permissive parenting has been associated with higher depressive symptoms tied to lower self-regulation among youth (Maccoby, 1992; Radziszewska et al., 1996). Further, children of permissive parents often reject outside authority, which can lead to poor performance in school (Dornbusch et al., 1987).

Authoritarian parenting. Baumrind (1989) described authoritarian parents as neither warm nor responsive to their children. Authoritarian parents are strict, demanding, and tend to communicate demands and expectations through rules and orders (Baumrind, 1991). The lack of negotiation and explanations of rationale for rules may lead to fear and decreased family social capital (see Bolkan et al., 2010). Ozer and colleagues (2013) found that the strict control of authoritarian parents is related to higher levels of depressive symptoms. Moreover, the harsh parenting and control associated with an authoritarian style may harm academic achievement by building resentment and
inhibiting youth from taking ownership in school work (Baumrind, 1991; Ozer, Flores, Tschann, & Pasch, 2013).

**Racial variations.** Despite a fairly large body of literature reporting the advantages of authoritative parenting compared to other styles of parenting, these impacts have not been found to be uniform across race-ethnicity. For instance, some research shows that authoritarian parenting may not be as harmful to minority children compared to their white counterparts (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Jarrett, 1995; Radziszewska et al., 1996). The contexts in which racial and ethnic minorities are reared vary greatly compared to whites. Minorities are more likely to rear children in environments where single parenting is more common, housing is more likely to be in dangerous or higher crime areas, the family is more likely to face discrimination, and economic resources are lower (Christie-Mizell, Pryor, & Grossman, 2008; McLeod & Shanahan, 1993; Quillian, 2012, 2014; Sampson, Sharkey, & Raudenbush, 2008; Wight, Chau, & Aratani, 2011). These contexts and stressors may shape the impact of parenting styles. Minority children, especially those who are economically disadvantaged, may require more direction and firmness to keep them safe (Lareau, 2002; McLoyd, 1990). Therefore, the current research will add to the growing body of literature seeking to show how parent-child relationships vary in impact on outcomes by race-ethnicity.

**Other important factors.** Beyond race-ethnicity, the extant literature around parenting, depressive symptoms, and educational attainment identify several other relevant factors, including gender, family structure, region of residence, and religion. Females are more likely to experience psychological distress. Indeed, studies have found that, beginning in puberty, symptoms of depression, major depressive disorder, and dysthymia are twice as common in women as men (e.g., Leibenluft, 1999).

Family structure, such as family size and living arrangements, may also have an impact on children’s well-being. Increased family size has been shown to have a negative impact on children’s educational attainment, due to the depletion of resources within the family unit (Downey, 1995). Resources within the family are spread thin when there are more children in the family, which may lead to weaker ties and increased depressive symptoms. Single parents are more likely to have fewer resources to share with their children, which may lead
to negative outcomes for children, such as poor mental health and decreased educational attainment (Amato, 1994; McLanahan, 1997; McLanahan & Sandefur, 2009). Although children may struggle when adjusting to a stepparent, there are benefits to having two parents in the home, such as financial and social resources (McLanahan & Sandefur, 2009).

Religiosity and one’s geographic region of residence have been shown to impact depressive symptoms for youth (Christie-Mizell et al., 2008; Petts & Jolliff, 2008) and educational attainment (Muller & Ellison, 2001; Parcel & Dufur, 2009). Religious settings may offer social support and a resource for coping for youth and their parents, leading to decreased levels of depression (Kosmin, 2011). People that live in the South attend church more frequently than people in other regions of the country (Kosmin, 2011). Finally, regional and religious differences could affect the incentive to invest in education (Muller, 2001; Sander, 1992).

Figure 1: Hypothesized relationships between central variables
Summary and Hypotheses

In this paper, we considered the relationships among parenting styles, depressive symptoms, and educational attainment as youth age from adolescence into young adulthood. Figure 1 further illustrates the relationships tested here. There were three objectives for this study. The first objective was to determine the relationship between parenting styles and depressive symptoms. The second objective was to establish whether parenting styles and depressive symptoms are related to educational attainment for young adults. Finally, the third objective was to investigate whether race moderates the relationship between the parenting styles and educational attainment. These objectives resulted in the development of the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a-c: Compared to authoritative parenting, there is a positive relationship between (a) uninvolved, (b) permissive, and (c) authoritarian parenting and depressive symptoms.

Hypothesis 2a-c: Compared to authoritative parenting, there is a negative relationship between (a) uninvolved, (b) permissive, and (c) authoritarian parenting and educational attainment.

Hypothesis 3a-c: Depressive symptoms mediate the relationship between (a) uninvolved, (b) permissive, and (c) authoritarian parenting and educational attainment (with authoritative parenting as the comparison group).

The purpose of these hypotheses is to examine whether mental health—depressive symptoms, in this case—is one mechanism that links earlier parenting styles to educational attainment in young adulthood. To test these hypotheses, we assess both years of educational attainment as well as whether the respondent has earned a college degree.

Our fourth hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 4a-b: Authoritarian parenting is less harmful to the educational attainment of a) African American and b) Hispanic youth, compared to whites.

In this hypothesis, we focus on authoritative versus authoritarian parenting and whether the impact of these two styles
varies by race-ethnicity. Existing research (see e.g., Christie-Mizell et al., 2008) suggests that African American and Hispanic parents may be more likely to take the stricter stances associated with authoritarian parenting. Therefore, with respect to educational attainment, we examine whether authoritarian parenting may not be as harmful for African Americans and Hispanics, compared to whites.

Data and Methods

Data

Data for this investigation were drawn from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 Cohort (NLSY97), a longitudinal study of the educational and labor market experiences of youth in the United States. The youth sampled were born between 1980 and 1984 and ranged in age from 12 to 16 by December 31, 1996. Data collection began in 1997 and the most recent round of interviews for the NLSY97 was done in 2013. The full NLSY97 sample consists of a nationally representative group of youth that have been interviewed annually since 1997, with over-sampling for poor and minority youth.

Measures

Measures for this study were taken from the first (1997, baseline), sixth (2002), and tenth (2006) waves of the data. This pattern allows for our mediator (depressive symptoms, 2002) to occur subsequent to the independent variable (adolescent parenting style, 1997), but prior to the dependent variables (educational attainment, 2006). Over these three waves of data (i.e., 1997 to 2006) collection, 317 respondents were missing on one or more of our study variables. In supplementary analyses, we utilized multiple imputation to recapture these respondents. The findings using multiple imputation did not differ significantly from a complete cases analysis. Therefore, we present the complete cases analyses in the models below. Our final sample consists of 4,078 young adults, who were 21 to 25 years old in the tenth wave. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for all study variables in the total sample. All analyses were weighted to correct for the oversampling of poor and minority youth.
Educational attainment. The main dependent variable was years of educational attainment and was measured in 2006. The mean of education for the sample is 13.65 years. Each respondent’s education was also measured as a categorical variable splitting the sample between those who had earned a college degree (1 = yes), compared to those who did not. By the time of the final wave (2006) utilized in this study, 26% of the sample had earned a college degree.

Depressive symptoms, parenting styles, and race-ethnicity. Depressive symptoms, measured in 2002, is both a main dependent variable and mediator in the analyses below. It is measured as a five-item version of the mental health inventory (MHI-5). The questions included how often, within the last month, the
respondent felt: (1) “nervous”; (2) “calm or peaceful”; (3) “down-hearted or blue”; (4) “happy”; and (5) “so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up.” Each item ranged from 1 (none of the time) to 4 (all of the time). The mean for depressive symptoms was 1.97, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .77.

Our measures of parenting styles and all control variables were captured in the baseline year (1997), when the adolescent respondents (ages 12-16) were interviewed to assess their parents’ level of supportiveness and responsiveness. Researchers at Child Trends, an organization involved in the NLSY97 questionnaire design process, then combined the responses to produce a parenting style variable (Moore et al., 1999). More specifically, and in line with the relevant parenting literature, Child Trends researchers developed two items—one measuring parental supportiveness (i.e., responsiveness) and the other measuring parental strictness or permissiveness (i.e., demandingness). At baseline, when the respondents were 12 to 17 years old, they were asked how supportive each parent was on a 3-point scale, ranging from 1 (very supportive) to 3 (not very supportive). Then, with appropriate description, each respondent was asked to categorize each parent as either (1) strict or (2) permissive. The two-level variables were then combined to yield: uninvolved (permissive and not very or somewhat supportive), permissive (permissive and very supportive), authoritative (strict and very supportive), and authoritarian (strict and not very or somewhat supportive). This measure of parenting has been validated elsewhere and utilized widely in the parenting literature (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). In this research, we utilize maternal parenting styles, which were available for the vast majority of respondents. Of the 4,078 total respondents, 404 (10%) had uninvolved parenting, 1,488 (36%) had permissive parenting, 1,710 (42%) had authoritative parenting, and 476 (12%) had authoritarian parenting. We utilized authoritative parenting as the reference group in all analyses below.

Race-ethnicity was a major independent variable. We created dummy variables to distinguish among African Americans (1 = yes), Hispanics (1 = yes), and whites (1 = yes). Whites comprised 78% of the sample and were the omitted category for the analyses. Blacks were 12% of the sample and Hispanics were 11% of the sample.
Control variables. In the analyses below, we compared females to males (the omitted category). Household income was measured in dollars and the mean was $58,100. For this study, we coded income in quartiles to account for skewness in the original measure. We then compared the highest quartile to the three lower quartiles. Preliminary sensitivity analyses supported this decision. Further, parent’s education was included as a dummy variable to capture whether one or both parents had a college degree. If one parent was missing on this variable, then only the other parent’s education was used. Of the total sample, 20% reported that their parents have a college degree.

At baseline, the average age for the total sample was 13.95 years. To aid in our estimation of educational attainment, we also divided age using dummy variables to compare those that were five or fewer years post high school during our final wave in 2006. Relying on auxiliary analyses (available upon request), this scheme was devised to account for respondents who had an adequate amount of time to complete college. That is, because we assessed the completion of a bachelor’s degree as one outcome, it was important to account for differences that would make this milestone more probable for some respondents compared to others. In 2006, 42% of the total sample was five or fewer years post high school.

The number of dependent children per household was assessed at baseline. The average number of dependent children for the entire sample was 2.35. Utilizing census designations at baseline, region of residence was reported as South (32%), North Central (30%), Northeast (17%), or West (21%). In our analyses, we compare those who live in the South to all others.

At baseline, respondents were asked how often they attended church in the past twelve months and the responses ranged from 1 (never) to 8 (everyday). We compare those who reported never attending (16%) to all others. We further compared individuals who reported being reared in a traditional two-parent home to other family structures (e.g., single parent home and stepparent household). Sixty-three percent of our respondents reported being raised in a two-parent household.
Analytic Strategy

To test our hypotheses that depressive symptoms mediate the impact of parenting styles on educational attainment, we utilize a series of regression models and proceed in four steps. First, we estimate an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to establish that parenting styles are associated with depressive symptoms. Second, we estimate whether parenting styles impact both measures of educational attainment—years of education and earned a college degree. Years of education is estimated using an OLS regression and college degree (1 = yes) is calculated with a logistic regression. Third, we added depressive symptoms to the models for educational attainment to determine whether, and the extent to which, the impact of parenting styles is mediated. Finally, we estimated a series of interactions by race-ethnicity and parenting styles to test our contention that authoritarian parenting is less harmful to the educational attainment of African Americans and Hispanics, compared to whites.

Multivariate Findings

Table 2, Model 1 represent the regression model for depressive symptoms. Both uninvolved parenting and authoritarian parenting were positively associated with depressive symptoms compared to authoritative parenting. Additionally, women were more likely to report higher levels of depressive symptoms, while those reared in two-parent homes reported lower symptoms of depression.

Models 2–3 of Table 2 are the findings for years of educational attainment. Compared to authoritative parenting, uninvolved, permissive, and authoritarian parenting resulted in fewer years of education (Table 2, Model 2). Also, African American and Hispanic youth reported fewer years of education, compared to whites. Women in our sample reported more education. Further, those respondents who are five or fewer years post-high school reported fewer years of education. Conversely, those in the top quarter of high family income, those whose parents finished college, and those who grew up in a traditional two-parent home completed more education. Finally, respondents from a large sibling group,
Table 2. Depressive Symptoms, Education (years), Earned College Degree (1=yes) Regressed on Selected Variables. NLSY97—1997 to 2006 (N = 4,078).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Depressive Symptoms</th>
<th>Education (years)</th>
<th>Earned College Degree (1=yes)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Model 3</td>
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<td>b</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.02</td>
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<td>-.47***</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
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<td>Hispanic (1=yes)</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>-.49***</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>.60***</td>
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<td>.83***</td>
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<td>R-Square or Pseudo R-square</td>
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* Reference group is authoritative parenting.

a Reference group for race-ethnicity is white.

Note: Models 1-3 represent ordinary least square regressions, while Models 4-5 are logistic regressions; *p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 (two-tailed tests).
those who grew up in the South, and individuals who never attended church attained fewer years of education.

In Table 2, Model 3, we added depressive symptoms to our estimation of years of education and found that depressive symptoms in late adolescence and early adulthood were inversely related to educational achievement. Recall that one of the goals of this research was to test for mediation. The impact of uninvolved parenting \((\text{Sobel t-test: } -3.27, p < .001)\) and authoritarian parenting \((\text{Sobel t-test: } -2.96, p < .001)\) on years of educational attainment of youth was partially mediated by depressive symptoms. Mediation for permissive parenting was not possible because there was no association between permissive parenting and depressive symptoms (Table 2, Model 1).

Models 4–5 of Table 2 show the results of the logistic regression analyses for the probability of earning a bachelor’s degree. In Model 4, compared to authoritative parenting, uninvolved, permissive, and authoritarian parenting were associated with lower odds of having completed a bachelor’s degree. Further, African Americans and Hispanics, compared to whites, reported lower odds of earning a college degree. The young women in our sample reported higher odds of completing a bachelor degree. Age was positively associated with higher odds of earning a bachelor’s degree, while five or fewer years post-high school was associated with lower odds of obtaining a college degree. Moreover, those from high income backgrounds, those with parents who have college degrees, and those who grew up in traditional two-parent homes had higher odds of attaining a college degree. Respondents who reported many siblings and those who never attended church had lower odds of completing a bachelor’s degree.

In Table 2, Model 5, we added depressive symptoms to our estimation of probability of earning a college degree. In late adolescence and young adulthood, depressive symptoms resulted in lower odds of earning a bachelor’s degree. Moreover, depressive symptoms partially mediated the impact of uninvolved \((\text{Sobel t-test: } -2.34, p < .05)\) and authoritarian \((\text{Sobel t-test: } -2.21, p < .05)\) parenting on the probability of earning a college degree. Mediation for permissive parenting was not possible because there was no association between permissive parenting and depressive symptoms (Table 2, Model 1).
Table 3. Education (years) and Earned College Degree (1=yes) Regressed on Selected Variables. NLSY97—1997 to 2006 (N = 4,078).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Education (years)</th>
<th>Degree (1=yes)</th>
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<td>Parent’s education (1=college degree)</td>
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<td>0.18</td>
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*a Reference group is authoritative parenting.
*b Reference group for race-ethnicity is white.
Note: Model 1 is an ordinary least squares regression and Model 2 is a logistic regression; *p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001 (two-tailed tests).
Figure 2: The joint influence of race-ethnicity and adolescent parenting styles on years of educational attainment.
In Table 3, we explored whether the association between parenting styles and educational attainment varies by race-ethnicity. We were especially interested in whether authoritarian parenting was as harmful to the educational attainment of minority youth, compared to their white counterparts. Model 1 of Table 3 shows that the association between parenting and years of education was moderated by race-ethnicity. Figure 2 graphically displays these interactions. Compared to whites, authoritarian parenting had a positive impact on how many years of education were attained by African Americans and Hispanics. Notice in Figure 2 that the years of education was higher among African Americans and Hispanic youth who were accustomed to authoritarian parenting. For whites, years of education was highest among those with authoritative parenting. Interestingly, and not predicted by us, uninvolved parenting was not as harmful to African Americans and Hispanics as it was for white youth. That is, compared to authoritative parenting, uninvolved parenting lowered years of education more so for whites than for racial minorities in our study. Testing for moderation does not substantively change the other findings in the model. Respondents who were five or fewer years post-high school attained fewer years of education, while women earned more years of education than men. Those with high income, parent’s with college degrees, and youth reared in a two-parent home earned more years of education. Finally, more siblings, growing up in the South, no church attendance, and depressive symptoms resulted in fewer years of education.

Model 2 of Table 3 shows that race-ethnicity moderated the relationship between authoritarian parenting and the probability of earning a bachelor’s degree. Figure 3 graphically displays these interactions. Authoritarian parenting, compared to the other styles, led to greater odds of earning a bachelor’s degree for African American and Hispanic youth. Young African American adults with authoritarian parents were three times more likely than their white counterparts to earn a bachelor’s degree. Hispanic young adults with authoritarian parents were about two and a half times more likely than their counterparts to earn a bachelor’s degree.

Similar to our prior estimation of the probability of earning a college degree, women and older respondents had higher odds of earning a college degree. Respondents who were five
or fewer years post-high school had lower odds of completing a degree. High family income in adolescence, parents with college degrees, and being reared in a traditional two-parent home led to higher odds of earning a college degree. Growing up with more siblings, the lack of church attendance, and depressive symptoms resulted in lower odds of earning a college degree.

Figure 3: The joint influence of race-ethnicity and adolescent parenting styles on the odds of earning a college degree
Discussion and Conclusion

Using family social capital theory and its reliance on the centrality of parent-child bonds for predicting youth outcomes, we examined how parenting styles impact depressive symptoms and educational attainment for youth. Specifically, and as Figure 1 illustrates, we tested whether depressive symptoms mediated the relationship between parenting styles and educational attainment. Our study employed two measures of educational attainment: years of education and the odds of earning a college degree. Further, we explored whether race-ethnicity moderated the impact of parenting styles on educational attainment. Four hypotheses were developed to accomplish these goals. We found support for hypotheses 1a and 1c—that uninvolved and authoritarian parenting would be positively related to depressive symptoms. However, we did not find support for hypothesis 1b—that permissive parenting would be associated with depressive symptoms.

Although some authors (see e.g., Gelfand & Teti, 1990, or LaFrenière & Dumas, 1992) have speculated that permissive parenting leads to depressive symptomatology in children, that finding is not supported in this research. Consistent with what we found, Lamborn and her colleagues (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991) argued that permissive parenting was not associated with depressive symptomatology initially because adolescents value self-reliance and the independent decision-making that is often associated with uninvolved parenting (see also Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, & Dornbusch, 1994). However, we cannot rule out that over time permissive parenting may be associated with depressive symptoms as a consequence of bad decisions during adolescence and young adulthood. Future research should extend our study further into adulthood to more fully assess the relationship between permissive parenting and depressive symptoms.

Consistent with hypotheses 2a–c, our results indicated that, compared to authoritative parenting, uninvolved, permissive, and authoritarian parenting were negatively related to educational attainment for youth. With respect to years of educational attainment, hypotheses 3a and 3c were supported: depressive symptoms partially mediated the relationship between uninvolved parenting and educational attainment and the
relationship between authoritarian parenting and educational attainment. We did not find support for hypothesis 3b – depressive symptoms did not mediate the relationship between permissive parenting and years of education. In terms of our other measure of educational attainment—i.e., the odds of earning a college degree—we also found support for hypotheses 3a and 3c. Depressive symptoms did mediate the relationship between uninvolved parenting (H3a) and college degree completion, as well as the relationship between authoritarian parenting (H3c) and earning a bachelor’s degree.

In our fourth hypothesis, we focused on authoritarian versus authoritative parenting and predicted that authoritarian parenting would be less harmful to the educational attainment of African Americans (H4a) and Hispanics (H4b). With respect to years of education, we found support for both hypotheses. African American and Hispanic youth who experienced authoritarian parenting attained more education than those from authoritative homes. Conversely, whites’ education prospects were more harmed by authoritarian parenting, with those who were reared in authoritative homes earning significantly more years of education. One interesting and somewhat surprising finding was that African American and Hispanic youth who experienced uninvolved parenting were less harmed than their white counterparts. That is, whites who were from uninvolved homes achieved fewer years of education than either African Americans or Hispanics.

Hypothesis 4 also received support in our prediction of the odds of completing a college degree. Authoritarian parenting was less harmful to both African Americans (H4a) and Hispanics (H4b). That is, African Americans and Hispanics from authoritarian homes had higher odds of completing a college degree than those from authoritative homes. For whites, the reverse was true. White youth from authoritative homes were more likely to earn a college degree compared to those whites who came from authoritarian families.

The findings in this study indicate that parenting styles have an impact on youth during adolescence and continue to have an impact into young adulthood in two ways. First, parenting styles during adolescence directly affect how much education is attained in young adulthood. Second, parenting styles also exert influence on educational progress through mental
health. That is, excessively strict (i.e., authoritarian) or overly relaxed (i.e., uninvolved) parenting practices are detrimental to the mental health of youth as they progress into their early adult years. In turn, psychological maladjustment—depressive symptoms, in this case—impedes educational attainment. It is noteworthy that this pattern of mediation applies to both educational outcomes (i.e., years of education and odds of earning a college degree) explored in this study.

Further, consistent with research that has considered the impact of parenting by race, authoritarian parenting strategies led to more years of education and a greater probability of completing a college degree for African American and Hispanic youth, compared to their white peers (McLeod & Shanahan, 1993). To be clear, our results do not indicate that an authoritarian parenting style should be the preferred method of parenting for minority children. Instead, the findings here suggest that authoritarian parenting was not as detrimental for African American and Hispanic children as it was for white children, with respect to educational attainment. Similarly, and with respect to the relationship between uninvolved parenting and years of education, the educational achievement of African Americans and Hispanics does not suffer as much as that of whites. These findings suggest that the minority youth in our sample are better able to adapt to, and academically excel with, uninvolved and authoritarian parents, compared to their white peers.

Although scholars have consistently argued that authoritative parenting is a superior form of parenting, the previous research has overlooked how these experiences may vary by race-ethnicity. The structural position (e.g., social class), as well as the day-to-day experience of African Americans and Hispanics, may simply mean that these youth may be more adaptive to varying parenting styles. Other related research has shown that various forms of parenting (e.g., spanking—see e.g., Christie-Mizell et al., 2008) have different effects across the racial and ethnic groups studied here. The typical theoretical reasoning is that because the context of daily life differs for racial minorities (compared to whites), research utilizing largely white, middle class families may simply not apply to African Americans and Hispanics (Christie-Mizell et al., 2008; Lareau, 2002). That is, scholars should develop strategies that avoid imposing expectations developed from studies that focus on white respondents.
on racial and ethnic minorities; instead, research should continue to carefully differentiate between the consequences of parenting by race-ethnicity.

This study is not without limitations. First, only the reported parenting styles for mothers were used here. While mother-child data dominates this type of research, other studies also show the importance of considering paternal parenting contributions in conjunction with those of mothers (see e.g., Christie-Mizell et al., 2011). Second, this study may not tell the full story for respondents who may have to take time off from college or those that simply take longer to graduate. Recent research shows that not only are adults taking longer to complete post-secondary degrees, but also that the factors (e.g., family and employment obligations) shaping completion of degrees vary as adults mature (Elman, Wray, & Xi, 2014). Third, this research is not generalizable to other groups beyond African Americans, Hispanics, and whites. It is quite possible the relationships among parenting, mental health, and educational attainment vary for other groups not studied here. For example, Chinese American parents, similar to African Americans, are more likely to employ authoritarian parenting, but their educational outcomes and socioeconomic backgrounds are more similar to whites (Chao, 2001; Kim, Wang, Orozco-Lapray, Shen, & Murtuza, 2013). Therefore, the extent to which the patterns found in this research apply to Chinese Americans—or other groups, for that matter—is unknown.

In conclusion, future research should continue to employ longitudinal data to further investigate the mechanisms that link parenting styles early in the life course to outcomes as youth age into adulthood. Such research elucidates how early relationships both directly and indirectly transform educational outcomes. For instance, had we simply studied the relationship between parenting styles and educational attainment, we would have overestimated the direct influence of parenting styles. Instead, a focus on the mechanisms that link parenting styles to educational progress proved fruitful and revealed that, in addition to direct effects, part of the influence of parenting on education flows through mental health. To the extent that the extant literature has shown that parenting styles are linked to a variety of adolescent outcomes (e.g., self-esteem and social competence—see e.g., Gonzales et al., 2002), other research should
continue this pattern of exploring how other potential mediators link the experience of parenting styles in adolescence to educational attainment in young adulthood.

References


The Welfare Subject in the “One-stop Shop”: Agency in Troublesome Welfare Encounters

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The purpose of this article is to investigate the agency of “welfare subjects” in welfare encounters, situated in a “one-stop shop” reform context, thereby providing increased theoretical sensitivity into the field of welfare encounters’ research. Anchored in a Norwegian reform context, this article analyses agency related to welfare encounters, including welfare subjects’ attempts to hold NAV (the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) accountable to help them. Shifting agency positions are located, the lines of responsibility in the welfare encounters are found to be unclear, and there are indications that this may contribute to the production of destructive agency positions.

Key words: activation, agency, one-stop shop reform, welfare encounters, welfare subject

One-stop shop reforms have been implemented in a number of welfare states in recent years. Scholars of political and organizational science interpret such reforms in light of service integration and accountability aims (Askim, Fimreite, Moseley, & Pedersen, 2011; Byrkjeflot, Christensen, & Lægreid, 2013; Christensen, Fimreite, & Lægreid, 2013; Minas, 2014). Prior to and parallel to these reforms, a broad range of welfare states—liberal, conservative and social democratic—have reshaped their language, philosophy and organization along the lines of individual responsibility, activation and participation (Berkel & Borghi, 2007; Bonvin, 2008; Gubrium, Harsløf, & Lødemel, 2014; Handler 2004; Johansson & Hvinden, 2007; Wright, 2012). As argued by several scholars, these two trends are inherently linked: While a
range of activation reforms in the 1990s were focused on changing policies and benefits, the ‘second wave of activation reforms’ represents a change in governance (cf. Lødemel & Moreira, 2014, pp. 1–2). The organizational reforms aim at putting the systems in better shape to deliver services. This is essential in order to succeed with neo-liberal activation policies promoting self-governance, motivation and individual responsibility.

For the individual engaging in the welfare encounter, the ability to take responsibility, and to hold the system to account, requires rational and reflexive agency. However, people are not necessarily in a rational and reflexive subject position at all times. A particular body of literature pinpoints the complexities of agency related to the welfare subject as being relational, dynamic, differentiated, interconnected, interdependent, intersubjective and interactive (Wright, 2012; see also Greener, 2002; Hoggett, 2001; Lister, 2004). This literature holds potential for a grounded analysis of agency in welfare encounters.

How service users targeted for activation measures are dealing with—or in—welfare encounters is a relevant aspect of social work and social policy. Situated in the context of the Norwegian NAV reform (labour and welfare reform), this paper analyzes agency positions in welfare encounters, related to encounters or sequences over some time that is attached with bureaucratic trouble or tardiness. The empirical analysis focuses on coordination issues and accountability in NAV, from the standpoint of service users, and the production of situated agency in this setting. This article contributes to social work and policy research on welfare encounters by outlining the shifting positions of agency for people targeted to become activated, situated within specific bureaucratic contexts of a one-stop shop reform.

In what follows, I briefly present the context of the NAV reform in light of accountability and the “responsible citizens” discourse, and then outline a specific body of literature on agency which has been developed in the context of social policy and social work research. After presenting the study (including data and methods), the empirical analysis is presented in two parts and followed by a discussion of the themes explored.
Reform Justification, Accountability and “Responsible Citizens”

The NAV reform was adopted by the Norwegian parliament in 2005, and implementation began one year later, followed by ambitious reform aims on behalf of the welfare subject and the Norwegian employment rate, as well as major organizational changes (Lundberg, 2012). The reform included a merger of the employment services and the social insurance administration, two central organizations in the Norwegian welfare state, and the coordination of the new state-level organization with the social services on the municipal level (Andreassen & Aars, 2015).

In the political process that led to reform implementation, a specific problem representation was mobilized and gained dominance—that of the multiservice user, labelled the “shuttlecock” (kasteball) (Syltevik, 2013). The shuttlecock was a specific kind of welfare subject, who needed help from more than one of the former welfare organizations at the same time.

The three welfare organizations provided different “user logics” in the welfare encounter, and the image of the multiservice user being shuttled back and forth without getting the required help became a powerful image for poor coordination. The welfare services were portrayed as incapable of providing relevant help, resulting in passivity and dependency. The solution mobilized was organizational reform through a new one-stop shop in order to provide integrated, holistic and “seamless” service provision. The reform aimed to get people back to employment and to make the services more user-friendly, holistic and efficient (Christensen et al., 2013).

Organizational scholars evaluating one-stop shop reforms (e.g., Askim et al., 2011; Byrkjeflot et al., 2013) see them as approaches for coordinating services and improving accountability both vertically (upwards to central government and downwards to citizens) and horizontally (to partners). Accountability may be understood as a specific social relation: “a relationship between an actor and a forum in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgement, and the actor may face consequences” (Bovens, 2007, p. 450). Sullivan (2003) states that the more contributors there are in public decision-making, the
more difficult it is to specify who is accountable. As Askim et al. (2011, p. 1454) point out in relation to one-stop shop reforms: “while creating opportunities for new forms of accountability, [they] also pose significant challenges in terms of knowing who to hold accountable for what.”

These points are actualized when observing the organization NAV. Behind the “shop,” there are a number of other units and bureaus taking part in the service production, including casework units, call centers, special units, and a number of private contractors providing job training, motivation, and educational programs. During the organizational reform process, it became increasingly clear to authorities, welfare professions, service users, and the general public that this new organizational structure may produce fragmentation and co-ordination problems of its own (Christensen et al., 2013; Ekspertgruppen, 2015; Lundberg, 2012).

The one-stop shops in the welfare sector are strongly related to the implementation of activation policies, and may be seen as a part of the second wave of activation reforms (Gubrium et al., 2014; Lødømel & Moreira, 2014; Minas, 2014). The reforms aim to activate people into employment, partly through a range of liberal power technologies (Barnes, 2009; Mik-Meyer & Villadsen, 2012). Indeed, through the discursive apparatus of neo-liberalism, social policy contexts and governance reforms have been increasingly formed by discourses such as “modernization,” “efficiency,” “empowerment,” and “individual responsibility.” The “responsible citizen” is increasingly expected to share responsibility for delivering public policy objectives by participating in the design, management, and governance of services (Barnes & Prior, 2009; Newman & Clarke, 2009a, 2009b; Patrick, 2014; Wright, 2012). These discourses influence public debates, policy making and social work practices in Norway and elsewhere (Jessen & Tufte, 2014; Johansson & Hvinden, 2007; Kjørstad, 2005; Nilssen, 2014; Syltevik 2013).

As stated above, for individuals to be responsible actors—and to be able to hold the one-stop shop accountable—requires rational and reflexive agency. In this paper, welfare subjects’ agency positions are analyzed within the context of welfare encounters during a one-stop shop reform accompanied by strengthened activation policies. In this regard, the concept of agency must be revisited.
Conceptualizing Agency

Agency is a highly contested concept within the social sciences. In the field of social welfare, many authoritative voices have put forward an understanding of agency that is more moralistic than analytical (for an overview, see Deacon & Mann 1999, p. 423). According to Barnes (2000), social theory has borrowed such concepts as agency and choice from everyday discourse, where actions are characterised as voluntary rather than caused. Agency is a concept commonly used to “characterize individuals as autonomous, purposive and creative actors, capable of a degree of choice” (Lister, 2004, p. 125). As Lister (2004) points out, there is a fine line between acknowledging people’s agency, including the capacity to make mistakes and bad decisions (as everyone does), and blaming them for their misfortune. In focusing on agency, there is also a risk of romanticizing and idealizing. Within the research literature, the models of agency applied can be very different. Deacon (2004) highlights three distinct agency models: (1) choice-making in a quasi-market (cf. Le Grand, 2003); (2) moral subjects acting as interdependent and relational beings (cf. Hoggett, 2001; Lister, 2004); and (3) choice-making relating to welfare dependency. For the purpose of this article, I am inspired by the related and overlapping agency typologies developed by Lister (2004) and Hoggett (2001), as these typologies are applicable to the context of welfare encounters, and their understanding of agency is carefully situated within structure.

Lister distinguishes between different types of agency, ranging from strategic to everyday agency and from personal to political/citizenship agency. She labels these different types of agency (relating to poverty) as “getting by,” “getting (back) at,” “getting out,” and “getting organized.” Hoggett distinguishes between different models of agency and warns about a “lop-sided model of agency which is insufficiently sensitive to the passionate, tragic and contradictory dimensions of human experience” (Hoggett, 2001, p. 37). People do not necessarily act rationally nor reflexively at all times. Inspired by Freud, Hoggett sees people’s self as split in multiple fractions.

In practice, then, people may have multiple selves. He presents a quadrant of four agency models (within the discussion of welfare subjects), one of which is Giddens’ (1984) reflexive and
successful actor (reflexive subject). Reflexivity, as Giddens sees it, is a positive capacity that provides constructive agency. However, people can be highly reflexive and yet still feel powerless about their situation (reflexive objects). Hoggett also problematizes reflexivity and speculates whether all agency is reflexive, or rather that much reflexivity actually happens post hoc, after one has acted (non-reflexive subjects). When people’s confidence, respect or esteem is attacked, they do not necessarily resist. The experience of powerlessness, resulting from poverty, marginalization and domination of various sorts may lead to depression and aggression being turned towards oneself (non-reflexive objects).

Both Hoggett (2001) and Lister (2004) underline that their types and models of agency should be seen as continuums of situations or events rather than personal character traits. They also add a distinction between first-order and second-order agency. First-order agency refers to playing the system or making limited change for oneself; second-order agency refers to changing the system (including political agency). Hoggett encourages a focus on second-order agency in social policy studies, while Greener (2002, p. 703) encourages a focus on first-order agency (game playing within clear rules) in welfare encounters “in an attempt to achieve at least some level of greater transparency and accountability in the administration of benefits.” In this article, I am concerned with individual/first-order agency. Nevertheless, agency should not then be seen as isolated from structure (Barnes, 2000). People act and make choices in various circumstances, and their actions may be grounded in a range of different identities, moral obligations, and moralities, and may also be constrained by external factors. It is therefore an important task for academics in the fields of welfare, social administration, and social work to produce “a more nuanced account of agency as situational and variable, produced and negotiated through contextualized interaction” (Wright, 2012, p. 313).

The Research

The objective of the research project was to explore service users’ experiences of their encounters (in a broad sense) with the new organization, NAV, during the reform process, thereby enabling an exploration of the reforming organization through these experiences. The research project aimed to cover insights
from service users who were in the center of NAVs mandate, which were targeted for activation measures and that the NAV reform was said to better address. Interviewees were recruited with assistance from two local NAV offices in two different municipalities which sent invitation letters to service users receiving rehabilitation allowances, sick leave benefits, and unemployment benefits, and from the NAV unit “Intro og kvalifisering” (see Lundberg 2012 for more details). I interviewed 29 people (22–66 years old) who were involved with NAV as service users and benefit recipients, and who had wide-ranging backgrounds with regard to former employment, as well as social and medical history. All interviewees had mixed experiences with NAV, and all interviewees had experiences that could be related to the reform process which was ongoing at the time of the interview. The majority of the interviewees were receiving vocational rehabilitation allowances at the time of the interview. This group turned out to be useful informants in the study because of the breadth and duration of their experiences with NAV, consisting of multiple encounters that highlighted the situated aspects of agency.

Memory might be biased, and interviewees’ accounts may be self-protective or self-righteous to some degree. As Hoggett (2001) notes, much reflexivity may also happen post hoc. Individuals may or may not be able to reflect on their agency or the lack of such agency within specific contexts. These are valid points, but qualitative interviews are still often the most accessible way of exploring lived experience.

I began my empirical investigations by locating the problematic of the everyday world of the actors that I was interested in studying (Smith, 1987). This is a methodological and analytical choice that privileges the individual informant’s point of view, and that affects my focus on the organization, which becomes more indistinct than, for instance, in mainstream organizational research analysis (see, e.g., Askim et al., 2011). By exploring the subjects’ experiences and points of view, fragments of the NAV bureaucracy and how the individual has acted towards the system are visualised.

Interview transcriptions were analyzed in several stages. Anchored in thematic analysis, the study has resulted in publications on a number of subjects relating to welfare reform, individual–system relations, health/illness and work ethics and
stigmatization (see Lundberg, 2012). In this article, I particularly focus on agency in welfare encounters. I have therefore chosen examples from the data in which I find purposeful to illustrate the situatedness, complexity and contextuality of agency positions. To give insights to the multiple elements of shifting and situated agency when dealing with NAV, the illustrations in this article are chosen from the experiences of service users who all have experiences with former administrations (to varying degrees), have been employed for years prior to their need for services from NAV, and have faced multiple problems related to unemployment and illness.

Navigating in a Fragmented System

The individual—NAV relationships are contextual and therefore variable, but NAV has certain ways of responding to the individual request that imply accountability issues. A general account that many of the interviewees in the study shared was the image of NAV as being a chaotic and fragmented organization that was challenging to navigate. Although this was a theme with variations and nuances, one common experience concerned the shifting of caseworkers. Jonas turned to NAV after a combination of unemployment and a broken arm. In the process of deciding an appropriate form of activation, he experienced five caseworker changes. For people on benefits linked to demands for activation, contact with caseworkers may be crucial. For Jonas, it was critical to have an available caseworker to hold to account at this time. Post hoc, he reflects on the responsibility relationship regarding caseworkers and the system:

The last one didn’t have anything to apologise for because she didn’t even know I’d been waiting. All the Post-its stuck on top of the other Post-its saying, ‘Call him about a meeting’, that’s where the mistake was. (Jonas, 30s)

Jonas’ experience indicates accountability issues linked to whom to hold accountable (Askim et al., 2011; Sullivan, 2003). However, the issue is more complex than the mere shifting of caseworkers at the local NAV offices. Most of the informants learned that their caseworkers were constrained by what happened at the regional casework units. This represented an
organizational change: In the former offices, the service users mostly dealt directly with the very same employees who processed their cases. Ideally, this new internal division of labour in the “seamless” NAV system should not be a concern for service users (Askim et al., 2011). However, for the individual dealing with several caseworkers at the local NAV office, as well as several units in the system, it is often hard to know whom to hold accountable for what.

The individual–system relationship cannot be evenly balanced. The individual welfare subject has more insights into his/her situation and needs than does the system, while the system has more insights into its resources and measures. In complex cases—which those involving activation often are—information becomes a critical resource for the individual service user. Hildegunn, a former teacher in her early 50s who suffered from serious illness, experienced the critical issue of poor information first hand. She was changing from sick-leave benefits to vocational rehabilitation, but her caseworker asked her to delay applying so that her health condition could be evaluated. Hildegunn was assured that she had time to wait, but when she finally applied, she got a letter from the NAV casework unit informing her that the casework process would take three months:

When I received that letter, I just felt (…). I was just irate. First, it was just so disrespectful. I felt … how could they do such a thing? I had done everything properly. So I called them—I was calm and explained the situation to them. They told me that, well, that’s the way it is, it will take approximately three months. I asked what I should do when the sick-leave benefits ran out, as I wouldn’t have a penny to live on. Nothing. Well, I could apply for social benefits, they said. Then, I got so angry. I had done everything properly in order to get what I was entitled to in time; this is not my fault, it’s their fault. (Hildegunn, early 50s)

Hildegunn felt that she was treated with courtesy in her encounter with NAV on the phone, even though the employee at the call center could not help her solve her problem. She was encouraged to send a “service complaint” to NAV, which she did, although 18 months later, she still had not received a response.
Furthermore, she was referred to a different part of the NAV system—the social services, for immediate help.

Hildegunn was not eager to apply for social benefits, which she felt carried stigma and humiliation. She felt a lack of options in the situation, which was ultimately solved by way of a private loan from a family member. This aspect of “everyday agency” represents relational and interconnected agency (Wright, 2012), a resource obviously not available for all service users in similar situations. Following Titterton (1992), Lister (2004, pp. 130–131) sees personal, social and material coping resources as an unequally distributed yet important aspect of “getting by.” By viewing Hildegunn’s activation of family resources in this light, one can grasp the aspect of agency in this situation, although she described herself as being powerless in the situation.

One aspect of agency in welfare encounters relates to social goodwill from employees (Dubois, 2010). The issue of social goodwill is interesting, as it may depend on specific individual relationships. It also shows the negotiated and interconnected dimension of agency between service users and case-workers (Barnes & Prior, 2009; Wright, 2012). Aslaug, who was in her 50s, experienced a high level of service provision in her encounter with NAV. She even obtained the direct phone number of her caseworker in the casework unit so that she would not have to phone the call center if she had problems filling out her forms. This is a service imbued with certain exclusivity. Having been a caseworker in the public sector herself for many years, she understood “the language of administration,” as she put it. Her knowledge may be seen as a cultural coping resource (Lister, 2004; Titterton, 1992) that helped her in the welfare encounter.

Social goodwill from caseworkers comes in several forms. One of the activation technologies deployed by NAV to serve people undergoing vocational rehabilitation is a standardized electronic “employment status form” (ESF), which service users have to submit electronically every two weeks. Einar, who was in his 40s, received benefits because of complex personal problems involving serious mental illness and difficulties dealing with deadlines and money, which had resulted in a difficult financial situation. In periods of serious depression, Einar failed to manage the ESF, and so his benefits stopped. Therefore, his caseworker began to manage the ESF for him. At one point Einar’s caseworker was replaced. As a result, the ESF was not
submitted during a period where he was severely depressed to the point of rarely even getting out of bed. His benefits were cut and his bills went unpaid. Einar explains:

Suddenly the benefits stopped. (...) The last thing they told me was that I didn’t have to send in these forms, as I’d had problems with that. (...) I’d gotten a new caseworker without them letting me know, and she didn’t take care of it [administer his ESF]. And it took a while before I discovered it. (...) It was apparently a problem with communication in the NAV system, but I was the one who got burnt. (Einar, 40s)

Einar suffered from depression at the time. This is a condition that Hoggett (2001, p. 47) describes as a “collapse of agency.” However, his first caseworker’s goodwill enabled Einar to be kept secure financially. This was an act with substantial consequences for Einar’s life situation at the time, and illustrates the relational aspect of agency (Wright, 2012).

Welfare Subjects as Customers, Salesmen, Quasi-bureaucrats and Frustrated Citizens

At the time when Jonas (introduced above) experienced frequent caseworker changes, his case was at a critical point. For the purpose of illustrating the (sometimes) dynamic nature of agency positions, I will here focus on the step before, when he was granted vocational rehabilitation in the first place:

I had spent quite a bit of time online really, to check all my rights. And I knew those things well (...). It’s really very quick, all the consultations, but that’s because I had prepared myself so well, and that is what they said as well. I had read all my rights, everything I was supposed to do, up front. And I was a very pleasant customer for them ... or user. Right? Plain and simple. And they told me so. (Jonas, 30s)

The role Jonas describes taking on is very much in line with Hoggett’s (2001) “reflexive subject” and Lister’s (2004) “strategic agency.” Jonas describes himself preparing for the meeting and looking into what kind of agency he has in the situation, learning the codes of the system. Perhaps coincidentally, he even
describes himself as a customer, a term not commonly used in the Norwegian welfare policy context. Although not in a customer role where he can choose between different providers in a market, his term of choice may reflect a mentality, a specific orientation towards the public services that may have helped him, as he does not feel any stigma, shame or embarrassment. On the contrary, he comes with high expectations of what the system can do for him.

While such expectations may illustrate a customer mentality, or at least an ideal actor making choices in a welfare “quasi-market” (Le Grand, 2003), his behaviour may also be seen as taking the role of a salesman, as he explains, justifying and selling his case to NAV in order to get access to the services and resources he wants. This form of “making out” (Greener, 2002; Hoggett, 2001) relates to an important aspect of accountability: the actor has an obligation to explain and justify his/her actions. Jonas expected NAV to do so. Although he faced difficulties closing the contract with NAV, he managed to get what he wanted, namely the funding of two years of education at a private learning institution.

Before getting the final approval from NAV regarding his choice of education, Jonas was faced with shifting caseworkers who failed to prepare his case. In this situation, his roles as customer and/or salesman had shortcomings. He tried asking different units in NAV for help, including his local NAV office and the call center. He kept calling, and kept going down to the office, insisting on being helped. Newman and Clarke (2009b) have shown how subversion of identities (such as service user, consumer, activist, citizen) may be used by individuals in order to exert their power. Jonas’ change of strategy, then, demonstrates the dynamic side of agency.

Acts of subversion in order to make the system adapt to them and their needs took several forms in the narratives of the participants in this research. Some interviewees told stories that involved engaging help from actors outside the NAV system, such as their union, and in one case, a social worker at a hospital who helped by mobilizing a doctor to write a letter of recommendation to handle the individual’s request for vocational rehabilitation as quickly as possible (Lundberg, 2012). These are acts of “getting by” and “playing the system” (Lister,
2004), reminding us of the sometimes interconnected and situational dimensions of agency (Wright, 2012).

Some of the interviewees also referred to situations where they tried to coordinate different units within the system. Caseworkers at the local NAV office might ask service users to contact the casework unit for help. At a certain point, service users would try to make the different NAV units communicate with each other. In this case, they were trying to coordinate different “hands” in the system to work together. In doing so, they often referred to NAV’s written guidelines, which require a level of agency relating to a sense of bureaucratic competence and reflexive agency (Hoggett, 2001).

Such acts may lead to taking positions as quasi-bureaucrats. Erna, a former teacher in her 40s, with a long career as a welfare subject in former and current welfare organizations, exemplifies this role clearly. She had learned a whole repertoire of tricks and skills to deal with the system, having experienced a variety of practices, including several bureaucratic errors that had led her into difficulties. I asked her if she thought it was difficult to manage the bureaucratic procedures:

No, I’m totally into that stuff, that’s no problem at all. It’s repetition, repetition. However, that’s where they try to catch you: ‘Perhaps your documentation is not in order?’ Not at all.

(Erna, 40s)

Occasionally she had experienced a delay in the processing of her case because NAV had lost her documents. Therefore, she started to take a copy of all the papers she handed in to NAV, and when talking to NAV on the phone, she made notes and asked for the names of the people to whom she was talking. In this way, she developed a routine and acted according to the role of a quasi-bureaucrat. This represents a particular everyday agency strategy developed from a particular bureaucratic context of the failings of the bureaucracy.

At one point, Erna submitted a receipt to get a refund for a tuition fee. Eventually, she went down to her local NAV office to ask why she had not yet received her money. The employee at NAV said that they had not received any receipt:
I take a copy of all papers I hand in to them. When I hand it in, I demand that they stamp it. They ... (say) okay, but they don’t like it. And I say, ‘And ideally, I’d like your name, too.’ (laughs) One time I handed in a receipt for some tuition money. (...) After a few weeks, I went down and I asked them why the money hadn’t come. And they asked me where I handed it in, because they couldn’t find the receipt. I handed it in here, I said, so you must have lost it. ‘Nothing gets lost here’, she told me. ‘Well, if you believe that, that’s fine’, I told her, ‘but you can have a new copy from me, with the NAV stamp on it.’ You should have seen her then. She got mad. (Erna, 40s)

This example of the welfare subject acting as a quasi-bureaucrat represents a form of agency that could be interpreted as “getting by,” which is not too different from the reflexive subject position Jonas assumed (analyzed above). However, in this case the welfare encounter takes place in a social context where Erna’s actions may also be understood as “getting (back) at” the system by beating it at its own game (Lister, 2004). The account shows a lack of trust and negative expectations regarding the system’s capability to manage Erna’s request, guided by experience. Her act makes NAV accountable by documenting their errors through the same textual devices that the system itself deploys in the management of its tasks.

As illustrated, these welfare subjects do not remain passive; they are active actors trying to solve bureaucratic issues and to make the system accountable to them. Some of them do this with greater success than others, and their agency positions may shift in different bureaucratic contexts. A number of more or less strategic attempts to activate NAV to be accountable in order to sort out bureaucratic errors are identified in Lundberg (2012). One interviewee described simplifying his case so that he would be treated more smoothly in the system, even though he knew he might be on the edge of the law in doing so. Another interviewee reported that in order to get sympathy from his caseworker and perhaps a quicker processing of his case when his pension was mistakenly stopped, he lied about his current economic situation (Lundberg, 2012). Such moves may be morally questionable, but they may represent a rational action strategy in the moment.

Einar, quoted above, felt a need to develop a relationship with his new caseworker in order to give her insight into his
current (variable) health situation. Unfortunately, he had trouble getting in touch with her:

I was told that I’d been assigned a new caseworker. And that caseworker, I’ve still never actually met her. I’ve been down (to the office) many times now; it’s been over a year. (...) I’ve asked, I’ve called, I’ve been down there several times and told them that I want to talk to her, I’ve sent letters and emails, I’ve emailed her superior and referred to the attempts that I’ve made to get in touch. And I’ve asked her to get in touch with me and ... At one point; I heard that she was moving over to a different job, and that they thought that was why she hadn’t contacted me. (Einar, 40s)

As indicated, these accounts, which highlight the position of the “reflexive object,” are common in the data. Furthermore, several interviewees tried to overrule their caseworker by asking the management at their local NAV office to assign a new caseworker. As service users do not have a formal right to change their caseworkers, this may or may not work, depending on the social goodwill of the management. Service users may also use their voice by making formal complaints. At one point, Erna sent a formal complaint to NAV’s complaint unit regarding failing casework procedures, loss of documents, and failure to process her case on time, as well as several experiences of bad service. She sent a lengthy letter and was disappointed with the short, formal letter she received in reply.

When welfare subjects feel that they repeatedly “hit a wall” within the system, there is the danger that over time, they experience a “failure of recognition” and frustration, which may lead to uncontrolled anger (Hoggett’s non-reflexive subject) or even mental illness, such as depression (Hoggett’s non-reflexive object). Erna sometimes struggled to control her anger:

I had high blood pressure and felt totally miserable, and I was short of breath and short tempered. So then I started to get back at them. I banged on tables and counters. (...) I remember that I told them (loudly): ‘Where is the merger? Where is this fantastic merger between you? Where is it? You’re more distant than ever before!’ (...) You’re in a very vulnerable situation and kind of fighting, sort of on the margins of society. I faced some kind of opposition to getting my rights. (...) It’s horrible to say
it, but I understand if someone goes berserk at the NAV office. I’d go so far as to say I understand the mechanism inside the human being when they finally... yes. (Erna, 40s)

In the interview, Erna illustrated perhaps all four of Hoggett’s (2001) types. In the account above, she reflects on the long-term consequences of suffering and “the real experiences of powerlessness” (Hoggett, 2001) after years of fighting a system that does not seem accountable to her. Her understanding of the mechanisms that make people snap or lose control of their emotions at the local NAV office indicates a painful realization of this point.

This point is relevant when evaluating threats and violence in welfare encounters. Since 2012, the Norwegian media and the national management of NAV have placed the problems of violence and threats from service users on the agenda, reporting an increase in threats and violence towards employees (e.g., Stavanger Aftenblad, 2013). In the summer of 2013 these issues also took a dramatic turn as a NAV employee died after being knife-stabbed on duty (Aftenposten, 2013). Threats and violence represent serious work environment issues for frontline workers in work and welfare agencies. In the research literature on welfare encounters, violence from welfare subjects is interpreted as a last resort for the underprivileged, as “the argument of those who have run out of arguments” (Dubois 2010, p. 167). Many of these actions also have a psychosocial dimension that can be understood as non-rational, “bad agency” (Hoggett, 2001; Wright, 2012).

Conclusion

While the intentions of the NAV reform, one of the largest reforms in Norwegian welfare state history, were oriented towards service integration, many service users experienced a reproduction of dysfunctions in the new organization (see Andreassen & Aars, 2015; Ekspertgruppen, 2015; Lundberg, 2012). Problems illustrated in this paper include shifting caseworkers and various systemic errors related to information flows and coordination issues. As stated in the introduction, the paper aims to answer how service users perceive challenges with
coordination and fragmentation, and what kinds of agency positions are produced or required in this setting.

In the welfare subject–welfare system relationship, the individual is accountable to NAV through a range of duties, and the system has a range of routines, techniques and resources to sanction the individual if he/she does not carry them out. Requests from service users are treated within the system’s administrative and institutional frameworks, technologies and bureaucratic procedures. Service users may complain through NAV’s internal system, or they could make their voice heard in the media or by contacting politicians, ombudsmen or service user representatives. As shown in this article, they also try to make the system accountable to help them by referring to official guidelines, by acting as coordinators and quasi-bureaucrats, and by selling their case. An individual may take different and shifting positions in different situations, and the ability to do so is often required in order for the welfare subject to achieve favorable outcomes. Those who manage to contribute to constructive encounters leading to successful outcomes for themselves demonstrate agency as reflexive subjects.

Welfare encounters may be sites for social investments for some and sites for marginalization processes for others. As shown in the analysis, reflexivity is also needed in order to cope in simple in-the-moment situations in everyday welfare encounters. As I have illustrated, some of these coping strategies may turn into resistance. As Hoggett (2001) states in his seminal paper, welfare institutions do not exist exclusively through the interaction between individuals. The individual may experience the welfare state as a helping hand or as a closed fist. In that regard, the institutional apparatus of the welfare state under strengthened activation policies may contribute in producing “bad agency.”

The analyses in this article have shown tensions being reproduced in the context of a one-stop shop reform linked to “the second wave of activation reforms” (Lødemel & Moreira, 2014; Minas, 2014). The empirical descriptions are in line with the findings of a recent and thorough report on NAV and its users (Ekspertgruppen, 2015). While the aims of providing integrated services and getting more welfare subjects into paid employment are yet to be realized, a straightforward answer to how the lessons from the NAV reform will influence Norwegian social
policy in the time to come is not easy to find. On a general level there is strong support for the Norwegian welfare model, but organizational reforms that are unable to fulfil their goals may clear the path for new answers to policy issues.

Recently, the lessons from the NAV reform have been mobilized by the current (right-wing) government’s announcement of an implementation of more “flexible” labor legislation. One of the main policies in the new legislation will allow more, and longer, temporary employment contracts. These plans, which mark a shift in the Norwegian model, are backed by the argument that NAV is unable to help people with disabilities into employment (Arum, 2013). According to the proponents of the new policies, people with disabilities and people with scarce work experience will be able to get a foot in the door if employers can take them on temporarily, to try before they buy. In this way, failures of the NAV reform are mobilized to usher in policy changes in the neighboring policy field of labor legislation.

The lessons from the reform may also be used in other ways. Policy makers and other stakeholders aiming for quick solutions may announce welfare reforms more heavily grounded in symbolic politics of individual responsibility. This discourse, linked to an agency model of choice-making related to welfare dependency (see Deacon, 2004), may contribute to “othering” of underprivileged groups (Lister, 2004) in order to push forward a less inclusive-oriented and more disciplinary activation regime. This may produce frustrated citizens and destructive agency positions. Therefore, in order to hold policy makers accountable for their decisions, they need to be reminded that the welfare state should function as a security net, even for those who are not capable of a rational, reflexive subject position at all times.

Endnotes

1As elsewhere, the terms used to describe those targeted by welfare organisations are shifting away from, for example, “client” and “claimant.” Currently in Norway, “user” is the politically correct term, in what is partly an effort to avoid stigma (Lundberg, 2012, 2013). The term “customer,” which is favored in, for example, Britain’s Jobcentre Plus, has never dominated in Norway.
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Since its inception, social work has professed an abiding commitment to social justice. Indeed, it is perhaps one of the few professions to have maintained such an obligation. This pledge is officially inscribed in the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). This document affirms the pursuit of social justice as a core value, not just for members of the Association, but also for social workers in general. However, what kind of social justice does the Association advocate and how just is it? While answers to these questions are critical to the Association’s members and broader social work community, they are, without doubt, of vital importance to those whom social work seeks to serve. This paper examines the nature and scope of the principles of social justice subscribed to by the NASW.

Key words: social work, equality, ethics, values, justice, rights, social justice

Is Social Justice Necessary?

We have long sought to perfect justice (Sen, 2009). The journey so far has been slow and arduous, and it is apparent that a relatively large number of today’s pilgrims consider themselves to be comparatively no better off than their predecessors (Chomsky, 2017). Even by contemporary standards, many in the North, East and South would not deny that considerably more progress could be made to expand just economic, political and social frontiers. The promise of rights, entitlements, opportunities and resources for ordinary citizens, which were once held
by only a small, insular elite, have fallen far short of the ideal (Piketty, 2014). Nevertheless, the last man to proclaim that the destructive economic and political history of (il)liberalism was at an end, Francis Fukuyama (1992), was patently wrong. In fact, some have argued that the defense of liberal democracies in recent times poses just as serious a threat to civil liberty and human rights as has illiberal aggression (Grayling, 2010; Waldron, 2012). Indeed, even Fukuyama (2014) has retreated from his earlier exuberance and conceded that political institutions in the U.S. are in decay, and as Zygmunt Bauman (2011) contends, there is a real danger of Western nations descending into what has been coined “liberticide” (p. 20), i.e., the gradual and silent demise of personal freedom.

Along the path from New York through Guantanamo Bay to Abu Graib and beyond, Westerners have become increasingly accustomed to accepting ever-diminishing degrees of freedom with equanimity. “We have forgotten the sad lesson learned by Martin Niemöller, the Lutheran pastor and victim of Nazi persecution,” writes Bauman (2011):

First, they took the communists, he mused, but I was not a communist, so I kept silent. Then they came after trade unionists, and as I was not a trade unionist, I said nothing. Then they came after Jews, but I was not a Jew … And after Catholics, but I was not a Catholic … Then they came for me … By that time there was no one left to speak up for anyone. (pp. 20–21)

Greater justice remains an indispensable, though distant, ambition. The fact that justice must be vigorously pursued is a major reason for the continuing relevance of social work. In pursuing justice, and its more recent offshoot, social justice (Barry, 2005), a profession like social work must confront the vexing question: What does social justice require? This paper examines the official response of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and asks: What model of social justice does it proclaim, and is it just enough? The paper clarifies the nature and scope of the model of social justice subscribed to by the Association, and contends that it must be certain that it represents the most robust, comprehensive and generous scheme possible. Rawls’ (1971) theory of justice offers such a possibility.
To fully comprehend the gravity of the NASWs response, a cursory survey of theories of social justice is first in order.

A Sense of Social Justice

A sense of justice is, according to John Rawls (1971), an innate capacity and natural proclivity. Nevertheless, as Marc Hauser (2006) explains, while each of us is endowed with a moral faculty, i.e., a capacity that enables us to automatically generate seemingly universal, albeit often unconscious, judgments concerning justice, this is subject to parametric variation in respect to culture, circumstance and time. If this is so, then, regrettably, our sense of justice and capacity to act on it is by no means uniform. Moreover, we can simply choose to ignore our more just insights in the quest for personal gain (Kaplow & Shavell, 2002). History reveals the litany of grave injustices that attest to the powerful impulse towards the satisfaction of self rather than mutual interests. Normative systems of social justice have been developed to curtail the excesses inherent in idiosyncratic, i.e., private or privileged, schemes.

Systems of Social Justice

In essence, normative systems of social justice are based on general rules that set out what constitutes the right thing to do and a good life in addition to the institutional arrangements required for optimizing the attainment of these (Vanderschraaf, 2011). Despite the importance of achieving this aim, there is a surprisingly limited range of available systems. They are to a large extent mutually exclusive and posit organizing principles that not only vary, but may also be incompatible with each other, in both theory and practice. There is, as a consequence, considerable variation in the substance, scope and outcome of social justice afforded by them. At the very least, they can be either “thick” or “thin” (Walzer, 1994; Williams, 1995).

Thin conceptualizations are based on rudimentary and commonplace constituents of social justice. Although they are undeniably limited and narrow, thin forms of social justice are, nevertheless, neither simplistic nor inconsequential. As Michael Walzer (1994) pointed out, “there isn’t much that is more
important than ‘justice,’ minimally understood” (p. 6). Indeed, this is justice “close to the bone” (Walzer, p. 6). Thick models of social justice, by contrast, are more comprehensive and pluralistic. They attempt to encompass differences in subjective interest and cultural expression.

Thinner rather than thicker schemes become most apparent in the face of gross injustice. Deceit, murder, torture, enslavement and tyranny are paradigmatic atrocities recognized as unjust in most, if not all, social orders, for reasons unconnected with contrasting shades of cultural meanings or shared understandings of what is right or good. But, minimalism is not, as Walzer (1994) made clear, foundational. “Minimalism makes for a certain limited, though important and heartening solidarity, but it doesn’t make for a full-blooded universal doctrine” (Walzer, 1994, p. 11). Once again, this constraint serves to narrow the range of available options.

**Thick, Thicker, and Thickest Social Justice**

“To ask whether a society is just,” Michael Sandel (2010) posits:

> is to ask how it distributes the things it prizes—income and wealth, duties and rights, powers and opportunities, offices and honors. A just society distributes these goods in the right way; it gives each person his or her due. The hard questions begin when we ask what people are due, and why. (p. 19)

There are essentially three approaches to the question of the just distribution of goods: virtue, welfare and freedom. Each of these norm-based models of distributive social justice varies in thickness.

**Social Justice as Virtue**

Of the three ideal forms, social justice as virtue is perhaps the thinnest. Derived from Aristotelian and Platonic origins, it rests on the cultivation of virtues that are deemed excellent and merit recognition, reward and emulation. Virtue-based social justice attempts to ensure that people get what they deserve. Just desert is virtually dependent on one’s character. Thus, a just outcome is one in which each recipient benefits in proportion to his or her desert.
The notion that a just society ought to affirm particular virtues and conceptions of a decent life based upon these, has an intuitive and, despite its antiquarian origins, popular appeal. “There is a tendency for common sense to suppose that income and wealth, and the good things in life generally, should be distributed according to virtue” (Rawls, 1971, p. 310).

The ascription of virtue to character has served as justification for discriminating those deserving access to social goods and services from the undeserving. Few, if any, social service programs, past or present, are devoid of eligibility criteria requiring value judgments. Workfare programs, for example, are particularly discerning about the work ethic of the unemployed. Indeed, there are some in social work who insist on the relevance of virtue, and by extension, merit, in ethical decision-making (Dolgoff, Harrington, & Loewenberg, 2012).

This ideal of social justice has inspired political movements from one end of the ideological spectrum to the other. As Sandel (2010) argues, the notion of virtue is just as likely to find favor among the Taliban as it is to the Moral Majority. However, apart from the significant difficulty involved in distinguishing merit from legitimate expectations, which even ardent conservatives like Thomas Sowell (1999) admit is insurmountable, the idea of making the distribution of social justice contingent on virtue, however refined, would seem anathema to liberal societies, as it risks lapsing into intolerance, coercion and blame. Social justice derived from, and dispensed on, the basis of intrinsic worth and moral desert guarantees a maldistribution of social goods. It privileges individual virtue and ignores institutional vice in remediing cases of injustice (Young, 2011). Surely, virtue is, and ought to remain, its own reward?

Social Justice as Welfare

Approaches to social justice that focus on welfare constitute a radical departure from the narrow confines of an exemplary character. They are instrumental rather than expressive and rely on reason and rationality as opposed to intuition and aesthetics. The most influential account of why and how welfare ought to be maximized is utilitarianism (Sandel, 2010). Utilitarianism was founded by the eighteenth century English moral philosopher and legal reformer, Jeremy Bentham (1789/1996),
and expounded upon a century later by his successor, John Stuart Mill (1859/1979). At the core of this doctrine lies a simple and appealing notion. Simply put, utilitarians posit that the highest principle of justice is to maximize the overall balance of pleasure over pain and thereby the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

Whereas Bentham (1789/1996) recognized no qualitative distinction among pleasures and believed they could all be measured and compared on a single scale, Mill (1861/1979) believed it was possible to discern higher from lower pleasures—to assess the quality, not just the quantity or intensity of desires. However, Mill’s (1861/1979) attempt to recast utilitarianism as a less calculating and more discriminating doctrine, carried him well beyond the confines of the utilitarian orthodoxy, and undermined its most redeeming feature, that of impartiality. For Bentham (1789/1996), it was presumptuous to judge some pleasures as inherently better or worse than others. Rather people’s preferences were to be taken as given, without passing judgement on their moral worth. To do so would be to return to the same problem posed by indeterminate virtues. Thus, all preferences count equally. Mill’s (1861/1979) attempt to refine utilitarianism and prevent it from reducing everything to a crude calculus of pleasure and pain inevitably required a moral ideal independent of utility itself.

The pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain has, in essence, retained its potency both as a source of motivation and an end in itself. Utilitarianism continues to be a highly pragmatic doctrine that is entirely focused on promoting whatever proves useful for creating the greatest happiness, or welfare in contemporary terms, for the greatest number. The means to happiness, for today’s utilitarians, is prosperity (Sandel, 2010). Aggregated prosperity makes people better off than they would otherwise be as individuals, raises their standard of living and makes the provision of social welfare affordable.

The idea of maximizing welfare by spurring economic growth has become firmly embedded in free market societies such ours. However, while utilitarianism has led to prosperity it has been at the expense of deep and widening immiseration. In fact, what was intended to realize the greater, common good might be said to have resulted in its antithesis. Economic inequality, according to Lawrence, Bernstein and Allegretto
(2006) is steeper in the United States than in any other democracy. The richest one percent of Americans possess over a third of the nation’s wealth, more than the combined wealth of the bottom 90 percent of American families (Lawrence, Bernstein & Allegretto, 2006). Welfare is undoubtedly becoming less rather than more extensive.

The fact that utilitarianism lacks moral sentiment means that it is indiscriminate about how utility is construed. As Peter Singer (2011) recently reaffirmed, “the classical utilitarian regards an action as right if it produces happiness for all affected by it than any alternative action and wrong if it does not,” with the qualification that “more happiness means net happiness, after deducting any suffering or misery that may also have been caused by the action.” Hence, a utilitarian will judge lying as bad in some circumstances and good in others, depending on its consequences” (pp. 2-3). What is good and what is right, in other words, is not merely coincidental, it can be contradictory. John Rawls (1971), for instance, observed that on the utilitarian view, “slavery, serfdom, and other infractions of liberty,” have historically been regarded as both right and wrong, good and bad. According to Rawls (1971):

> Whether these institutions are justified is made to depend upon whether actuarial calculations show that they yield a higher balance of happiness. To this the utilitarian replies that the nature of society is such that these calculations are normally against such denials of liberty. Utilitarians seek to account for the claims of liberty and equality by making certain standard assumptions. Thus they suppose that persons have similar utility functions which satisfy the condition of diminishing marginal utility. (pp. 158–159)

Thus, the rejection of institutional “infractions of liberty and equality,” should they be recognized as such, are made on utilitarian, and not humanitarian, grounds. According to utilitarian logic, then, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with torture. Any objection to it must show that the consequences of practising it, will, taken as a whole, cause more harm than good.

The same turn of logic could also be called upon to support a radical redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor. With so many having so little and so few possessing so much more
such a transfer might be calculated to create more happiness overall. However, utilitarians can simply invoke the Benthamite maxim that “everybody is to count for one, nobody for more than one” (Mill, 1861/1979), in defense of any qualms about manifest disparities, and hence, need to redistribute. What matters most in utilitarianism is to maximize, not equalize, the net distribution of welfare. Thus, the principle of utility licenses some to forego greater life prospects for the sake of others, particularly among those who are already less favorably situated, without considering this an injustice.

**Social Justice as Freedom**

Like social justice as virtue and welfare, social justice as freedom takes the worth of the individual as its starting point. However, it represents a substantial departure from the former in positing that each person has an innate right to freedom, irrespective of virtue or utility that a just society is bound to respect. However, they are deeply divided over the depth of the entitlement and value of the liberty conferred. At one extreme are the advocates of an unfettered right to freedom known as libertarians.

Libertarians insist that a precondition for the exercise of free agency is the abolition, or at the very least, minimization, of anything which might contravene the boundaries of personal entitlement and discretion. They are particularly sensitive to intrusions into private affairs for the purpose of providing public welfare, and are bitterly opposed to the taxation and redistribution of income and wealth earned through individual thrift, industry and prudence, to finance it.

Robert Nozick (1974) ranks amongst the most widely known and influential of libertarian thinkers. Nozick (1974) began his seminal defence of libertarianism in *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, by declaring that “individuals have rights that are so strong and far-reaching that there are things no person or group, including the state and its officials, can or may do to them, without violating these rights” (p. ix). He concluded that “a minimal state, limited to the narrow functions of protection against force, theft, fraud, enforcement of contracts, and so on, is justified” (Nozick, 1974, p. ix). Anything more, including being taxed to help others, is completely unjust; in fact it “is on a par with forced labour” (p. 169). State services, including enforcement
and protection, are derived from private contributions. Little wonder that Nozick (1974) added that “many persons will reject our conclusions instantly, knowing they don’t want to believe anything so apparently callous towards the needs and suffering of others” (p. ix).

Yet, critics have been no more acerbic about the tenets of libertarianism than Nozick himself. In fact, Nozick (1974) felt obliged to acknowledge that “many people who take a similar position are narrow and rigid, and filled paradoxically, with resentment at other freer ways of being” (p. x). He realized that his kinship with these people placed him in some “bad company” (Nozick, 1974, p. x). Indeed, it put him in the same company as Milton and Rose Friedman (1980), Friedrich Hayek (1960) and Ayn Rand (1961). As “bad” as these views are, they have been taken seriously as ideals of socially just states both at home and abroad. Indeed, the drive towards realizing pro-market, anti-government ambitions based on them remains strong.

Fortunately, there is an alternative to the austerity of libertarianism that retains the primacy of liberty tempered by a sense of fairness. Just states, according to those of a more egalitarian persuasion, John Rawls (1971) being the most prominent among them, are required to redistribute wealth in order to preserve the basic endowment of liberty. While libertarians consider inequality, unfairness and injustice as the simple facts of life and urge us to accept and, indeed, take advantage of them, even if only indirectly, Rawls (1971) reminds us of an equally unassailable fact, i.e., that the way things are now does not determine the way they may yet be. He added that:

We should reject the contention that the ordering of institutions is always defective because the distribution of natural talents and the contingencies of social circumstances are unjust, and this injustice must inevitably carry over to human arrangements. Occasionally this reflection is offered as an excuse for ignoring injustice, as if the refusal to acquiesce to injustice is on a par with being unable to accept death. The natural distribution is neither just nor unjust; nor is it unjust that persons are born into society at some particular position. These are simply natural facts. What is just and unjust is the ways that institutions deal with these facts. (Rawls, 1971, p. 102)
Rawls (1971) maintained that given a genuinely equal chance to decide for themselves, people would consent to principles of social justice that offered the most extensive, equal liberty for all and mitigated impediments, both random and systematic, that proved most decisive in utilizing it, especially for those most hard done by. Rawls (1971) sought to operationalize Kant’s (1785/2002) categorical imperative that no one can ever be used as a means to another’s ends, even for a greater good, but must always be treated as an end in oneself, and for reasons that run deeper than it is an inalienable right to self-possession and interest. For Rawls (1971), as for Kant (1785/2002), freedom, or more precisely autonomy, was as much a moral as legal right.

Another distinguishing feature of Rawlsian social justice, based again on Kantian philosophy, is that what is right takes priority over what is good. This is an essential precedent, since conceptions of the good can be expected to vary in ways that right cannot. As Rawls (1971) observed, “it is, in general, a good thing that individuals’ conception of their good should differ in significant ways, whereas this is not so for conceptions of right” (p. 447). In the absence of any common agreement about what is right, people will have no recourse when things go wrong in pursuit of their good, as in cases where one’s good is maintained at others’ expense (libertarianism) or is sacrificed for the common good (utilitarianism).

Nevertheless, social justice as fairness is not without its critics. The most frequent criticism is that Rawls’ (1971) “difference” principle does not eliminate inequality. Disparity can occur one way (favoring the worst off) or another (advantaging the better off) (Dworkin, 2011). However, Rawls’ (1971) theory of justice was not premised on “flat equality” (Dworkin, 2011, p. 346). Rather, it aimed to ensure that primary goods were distributed fairly, not squarely, and that the outcome would be to the benefit, rather than detriment, of the least well off.

Others have been more derisive in their criticism. John Kekes (2007) certainly ranks amongst the harshest of critics. According to Kekes’ (2007):

What Rawls calls justice, denies that people should get what they deserve, ignores their responsibility for their actions and economic condition, discounts their efforts, ... and ...
systematically deprives people of their legitimately earned income in order to give it to those who have not earned it. (p. 52)

However, Kekes (2007) simply highlights what Rawls (1971) tried to remedy, i.e., an unequal concern for all individuals. The antipathy of anti-egalitarians like Kekes (2007) to proposals for redistributive schemes of even more modest scope than Rawls’ has already been noted. Whereas Kekes (2007) focuses on the wisdom or folly of individual choices, Rawls (1971) is concerned about the interpenetration of choice and circumstance in determining just outcomes. As Rawls’ (1971) cogently argued, the basic economic, political and social structure that people find themselves in influences their life prospects as much as their individual transactions. It is important to maintain a focus on the overlap, especially in view of the general shift towards viewing the causes of, and responsibility for contending with, inequality and injustice as personal rather than political, in recent times (Young, 2011). Rawls (1971) attempted to reassert those terms and conditions of the social contract that the traditional welfare state set out to honor, i.e., fairness, equity and justice for one and all.

Nevertheless, Amartya Sen (2009) claims that Rawls was only concerned to describe ideally just institutions and was therefore of no use in guiding the comparative judgments that need to be made to curb injustice in the real and very imperfect world. Sen (2009) proposed “capabilities,” i.e., things people can do and be with some assistance (see pp. 18-19) as a more useful, down-to-Earth alternative. These capabilities are life, bodily health and integrity, sense, imagination, thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, play, control over one’s environment and other species (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993). On close inspection, however, capabilities turn out to be far more elusive and of less practical value than anything Rawls suggested. Indeed, Sen (2009) concedes:

even in terms of the Rawlsian characterization of distinct problems of justice, capability is a rival only to the use of primary goods (i.e., ‘rights and liberties, powers and opportunities, income and wealth, and above all self-respect’ [Rawls, 1971] p. 62]) in judging relative advantages … and that leaves out other issues, including the place of personal freedom and the need for fair procedures. (p. 297)
Contrary to Sen (2009), Rawls’ (1971) principles of justice were tailor made for comparative “real world” judgments. Indeed, there is a burgeoning literature describing various applications of Rawls’ theory to actual concrete political controversies. (Simply type “Rawls” and a qualifier into a Google search for a sample of these.)

Even sympathizers of Rawls’ justice as fairness complain about the shortcomings of his theory of justice. A common complaint is that Rawls’ theory is insufficiently egalitarian. They declare that it is better that everyone has the same wealth, and so share a common fate, even if that meant less material wealth all round (Dworkin, 2011). Rawls (1971) certainly advocated a complex, as opposed to simple, form of equality in the distribution of primary goods. However, these were to be divided evenly unless an unequal difference in the distribution of any one, or all, of these goods was to everyone’s advantage. Although his vision remains hypothetical, it is arguably the thickest and most practical conception of redistributive social justice currently vying for our collective attention.

Social Work and Social Justice

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) considers social justice to be a core value. Challenging social injustice is one of a number of principles listed in the NASWs original (1996) and revised (2008) Code of Ethics. The NASW (1996/2008) makes it clear that the Code is relevant to all students and practitioners of social work regardless of function, context or clientele (NASW, 1996/2008). Although it is not listed in lexical order, the NASW does not rank the significance of social justice above or below other core values. In fact, the Association points out that it is reasonable to expect that the place of social justice will alter in the face of value conflicts. Of course, the trade-off between social justice and other values makes knowing what may be lost and gained as a consequence of the particular approach taken to it all the more imperative.

The NASW (1996/2008) states that in challenging social injustice:

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups
of people. Social workers’ social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people (p. 8).

The statement of principle is not definitive about the type of social justice that social workers are encouraged to pursue. This is a critical omission in light of the relative “thickness” of various approaches. While accessibility, partnership, publicity, and diversity in challenging a lack of social and political capital are alluded to in the statement, none of these values is precluded from conceptions of social justice as thin as libertarianism. Even the notion of “social change” has limited application insofar as it seeks to achieve more awareness of oppression and pluralism generally. A conspicuous omission is any explicit mention of redistribution. The inclusion of this distinguishing feature would certainly reduce any ambiguity. In any event, despite its relative significance, no further statement is made about the principle of social justice. One is, therefore, compelled to look at the imbrication of other values and parts of the Code to supplement this meagre description.

According to the Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics, the “principles and standards must be applied by individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments” (p. 7). One might infer from this statement that the Association subscribes to a conception of social justice that is virtue based. However, this must simply remain a possibility since nothing more is said about “character.”

The Code lists four other values alongside social justice. These are Service limiting workers’ self-interests (p. 8), the importance of human relationships emphasising partnerships (p. 9), integrity urging fidelity and ethical conduct, competence focusing on professional development (p. 9), and the dignity and worth of the person encouraging mindfulness of, and respect for, difference and diversity (p. 8). The latter also asks social workers to enhance client self-determination (NASW, 1996/2008, p. 10). However, workers are advised that clients’ capacity and prospects for
self-determination are subject to compromise. Such advice begins to chart the direction of social justice. The status accorded personal freedom in the principle of self-determination is consistent with formulations of social justice that regard liberty as negotiable. Only libertarians hold liberty to be sacrosanct.

The standard of ethical behavior expected of social workers help to further illuminate the nature of social justice (NASW, 1996/2008, p. 20). These standards refer to social workers’ ethical responsibilities as professionals, in practice settings, to clients, colleagues and the profession. The notion of rights is a prominent feature. The standards make it clear that social workers have a responsibility to protect and promote clients’ individual, legal rights. Rights figure in all but virtue-based theories of social justice. However, according to the Code, respect for rights, like liberty, can be tempered. Once again, only libertarians consider rights to be inviolable. There are, nevertheless, two notable points of distinction. Social workers ought to advocate “within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients’ needs, and allocation procedures that are open and fair … and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles” (NASW, 1996/2008 ss. 3.07a & b respectively). They “should also engage in social and political action to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully” (NASW, 1996/2008, s. 6.04). Both points are, at the very least, compatible with conceptions of social justice based on redistribution. However, reliance on fairness and equal access as distributive principles distinguish this from utilitarian forms of social justice. Nevertheless, they still fall short of such egalitarian schemes as Rawls’. Access to resources is not synonymous with provision, and equality, as has been argued, is neither practical nor desirable. In fact, as Rawls (1971) and others (Dworkin, 2011 and Young, 2011, in particular) have cogently argued, equality rivals fairness in profoundly unjust ways. What, then, does social justice require?

Which Social Justice?

If social work is troubled about falling into bad company, and seeks to defy current convention, then it is obliged to pursue the thickest form of social justice available. Social work
would do worse than attempt to operationalize Rawls’ theory of justice. Rawls’ (1971) model of social justice is one of a very few with sufficient substance and promise to be capable of mounting a serious challenge to the minimization of state responsibility for individual freedom and public welfare. It is, nonetheless, still not perfect.

References


Will We Build A Wall?  
Fear of Mexican/Latino Immigration in U.S. History

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A presidential election was won on the strength of a nativist philosophy which asserts that the U.S. must build a wall of separation with its closest neighbor to the South. The current president has voiced not only his frustration and prejudices but the nativist sentiments of the public. The emphasis on “building the wall” and the antagonism expressed towards Mexico have deepened the centuries-old sense of fear and separation felt by members of the Mexican/Latino immigrant group. Can we look at history in search of plausible explanations? This paper examines past and contemporary reasons that might explain the observable antagonism to the Mexican/Latino population in the U.S. today.

Key words: immigration, U.S. Mexicans, nativism, ethnocentrism, historical discrimination, civil rights

A presidential election has just been won on the strength of a nativist philosophy that asserts that the U.S. must build a wall of separation with its closest neighbor to the South. President Trump’s anti-Mexican statements during the campaign and after the inauguration have been amply chronicled by the television and the press in 2017. The dangers of President Trump’s rhetoric and performance are clearer after one year of his presidency than they were before. As he himself states, he has not “evolved” in understandings (Sullivan, Haberman, & Davis,
2018). When his Chief of Staff attempted to soften some of his prior statements, the president responded to his political base: “the wall is the wall, it has never changed or evolved from the first time I conceived of it … The wall will be paid for directly or indirectly … by Mexico…” (Sullivan et al., 2018, para. 4). He was relentless in his contradiction of his Chief of Staff, who had said that “a 50 foot wall from sea to shining sea isn’t what we’re going to build” (Sullivan et al., 2018, para. 14). The President was giving voice to his frustration and prejudices as he captured what many citizens still wanted to hear. Given these feelings among the public—that many liberals may have thought had been overcome—the time is ripe for looking at history in search of plausible explanations for such an ingrained anti-Mexican sentiment. This paper will examine past and contemporary reasons that might explain the observable antipathy to the Mexican/Latino population in the U.S. today.

The Historical Roots of Anti-Mexican Attitudes

Many people associate anxiety about Mexican/Latino immigration in the U.S. exclusively with very recent Mexican and Latin American migrations. This is not the case. In the 15th Century, at the same time that the Spanish were settling in Mexico and other parts of North America, the British, the Dutch and the French were also trying to compete for lands in the continent. The Black Legend about the Spanish “race” as a “brutal, sanguinary and sadistic” group of abusers was being propagated and taking root (Fuentes, 1992, p. 132). Even decades later, in the colonial territories, those who were moving inland, heirs to the Puritan thinking about the Spanish influence, sensed according to De León (1987) “an ‘errand into the wilderness’ and felt a compelling need to control all that was beastly—sexuality, vice, nature, and colored peoples [sic]” (p. 1).

Order and discipline had to be rescued from the wilds in the name of civilization and Christianity. Moving westward with this mission uppermost in their minds, whites psychologically needed to subdue the external world—forests, beasts, and other peoples—for the rational had to be ever in command. (De León, 1987, p. 1)
Today, the anxiety and fear of Mexicans persists after centuries and many waves of migrants.

The Spanish Legacy: A Long-focus-lens View

Spanish explorers were “the first Europeans to traverse much of the United States” (Daniels, 1990, p. 96) before the frequently described arrival of the Pilgrims to Plymouth Rock in 1569. After his ship wrecked in 1536, Cabeza de Vaca walked across what is now the western country from Galveston, Texas to Culiacan in Mexico. From the city of Santa Barbara in Mexico, the Spanish explorers and missionaries were lured north into what are today New Mexico and Arizona. New Mexico was settled in 1598 (in fact, before the founding of Jamestown in Massachusetts in 1610). From Santa Barbara in Mexico, “Spain hurried to lay claim to Texas” for at least two reasons: to resist threats from the French and to Christianize the Caddo Indians in the “kingdom of Teja,” ca, 1680s (Iber & De León, 2006, p. 57. See also Stewart & De León, 1993).

The founding of St. Augustine by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés in 1565 provided an entry for Spain to respond militarily to French Huguenot settlement in South Carolina (Daniels, 1990). Florida was in Spanish hands for over two centuries from 1565 to 1819. At the same time the Spanish were settling in Mexico and other parts of North America, the British, the Dutch and the French were also trying to compete for lands in the continent. The Spaniards had established themselves in Cuba, where “encomiendas” had been developing. Bartolomé de las Casas, who had been an “encomendero,” began speaking out against the treatment that representatives of the Spanish Crown were giving Indians. De las Casas became a Dominican Friar and moved to Mexico, where he continued to speak out indicting the Spaniards for their behavior. His indictments quickly became the bases for a broadly encompassing Black Legend about the Spanish “race.”

In 1769, Junípero Serra founded twenty-one missions in California and the accompanying regiment to his expedition established a fort in San Diego (Daniels, 1990). And these locations were only the most significant ones. Except for Florida, New Mexico, Arizona, California, parts of Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Oklahoma and Kansas remained part of Mexico until 1848.
when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo annexed them after the U.S. War with Mexico. Florida was acquired after many years of disputes and negotiations in 1819. In the west and southwest of the U.S., the Spanish/Mexican population was not, for a very long time, an immigrant population but rather an autochthonous one.

An atmosphere permeated very early that transferred the sentiments towards the Spaniards to the Spanish/Mexicans once the first had left. The cruelty ascribed to the Spanish colonists also existed among other colonists but the fears that the Black Legend had spread among Anglos fueled attitudes specifically about Mexicans, which were different from the attitudes about other foreign nationals arriving in the U.S. Rosales (1997) describes this entrenched Anglo attitude:

Anglo-Americans held negative views even before confronting Mexicans on New Spain frontiers where the encounter itself deepened prejudices and provided at least one important rationale for ‘Manifest Destiny.’ The violence of the Texas Rebellion and the Mexican War further fueled the antipathy. (Rosales, 1997, p. 5)

Additionally, with the arrival of African slaves to the new world, racism took complete hold of the minds and hearts of the White population. Racist attitudes in the U.S. persisted from the antebellum South until the Civil Rights movement and beyond. Even today, we can easily identify them in many policies, if not federal, passed by state legislatures. Racist attitudes and policies colored immigration in the U.S. from the start as illustrated by the “yellow peril” legend forbidding Chinese immigrants and by the internment of Japanese American citizens during WWII.

Texas played an important role in shaping the attitudes of Anglos toward Mexicans. In 1821 the Mexican government granted the Missourian entrepreneur Moses Austin colonization rights in Texas. He and his son Stephen and hundreds of followers moved into Texan territory. Austin’s ambitions included “his sole and only desire … to redeem it from the wilderness—to settle it with an intelligent, honorable and enterprising people” (Stephen Austin, quoted by de León, 1987, p. 3). De León further comments that it was clear that Austin’s and other politicians’ desire was to Americanize Texas, “settled by
a population that will harmonize with their neighbors on the East, in language, political principles, common origin, sympathy, and even interest” (de León, 1987, p. 3). In other words, the Americanization of Texas did not have room for native Mexicans who were deemed neither civilized nor capable of being anything other than field hands. However, current scholarship shows that Mexicans were never peripheral to their history, particularly in Texas, where they participated actively in state and local government and “undertook a conscious effort to modernize the society of Texas” after the Texas war for independence in 1836 (Stewart & de León, 1993, p. 99).

In looking for historical explanations of the disdain with which Mexican immigrants are regarded, one cannot ignore the early religious clashes between Roman Catholicism (Spain and its colonies being the main inheritors) and Henry VIII. The English saw the Spanish as heartless, and Spanish and Spanish Americans as the embodiment of racial impurity, exemplified by mestizaje with the Moors and the Indians. In Protestant Christianity they saw native Catholicism as pagan and demonic. Although the anti-Catholic feelings in colonial America were to some extent rhetorical because few members of the public had ever seen a Catholic, they persisted with unusual strength. By the end of the colonial period in the Eastern border, there were “only about 25,000 practicing Catholics … and almost all of those in Pennsylvania and Maryland” (Daniels, 1990, p. 109).

Another major factor that persisted far beyond the colonial period, and can even be detected today, is hostility to the language. The maintenance of the English language became a much stronger issue in the new nation. After the annexation of the various Spanish territories in the Southwest, Spanish remained predominant in many areas. For example, Rosales (1997) states that Texan local politicians delivered speeches in both English and Spanish well into the early 20th century, and of course the New Mexican legislature conducted business in Spanish until they became a state. Part of the statehood discussions as to whether New Mexico and Arizona could be joined pivoted on language and what the Arizonians called “racial differences.” Arizonian’s fears were summarized in a protest presented to Congress in 1906, which suggested that any amalgamation with New Mexico had little chance of success. Finally, by 1912, after a long and protracted debate over language in Congress,
President Taft signed the New Mexico Statehood Proclamation. This proclamation settled, at least temporarily, the language issue, as it recognized the state’s constitution, which stated: “For the first twenty years after this constitution goes into effect all laws passed by the legislature shall be published in both the English and Spanish languages” (State of New Mexico, 1911/2017, Art. XX–12).

Nativism and Flooding Immigration

The financial panic of 1873 began an anti-immigrant period that was to last almost until WWII. Labor strikes, unemployment and overall financial distress were serious problems. In 1894, a group of Harvard graduates formed the Immigration Restriction League, a pressure group that argued for fundamental changes in the immigration policies.

According to one of its founders, Prescott F. Hall, the question for Americans to decide was whether they wanted their country ‘to be peopled by British, German and Scandinavian stock, historically free, energetic, progressive, or by Slav, Latin and Asiatic races historically downtrodden, atavistic and stagnant.’ (Daniels, 1990, p. 276)

Within the spirit of restricting immigration, a large number of bills made their way through Congress (1895, 1897,1913,1915), sometimes getting to the presidents, who typically vetoed them, until 1917. These bills had a common theme, which was literacy. Presidents Grover Cleveland, Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson stated, as many do today, that the U.S needed labor and that the immigrants were here to do work Americans did not want to do. (Yet, as we well know today, factual labor needs do not overcome the assumptions of loss of even undesired employment opportunities experienced by many in the native populations.) A bill was finally passed in 1917, but by then, European immigration had decreased due to the war in Europe. The 1917 law was in essence a literacy bill that was eventually proven not to have had the desired effect of restricting immigration. (Daniels, 1990; Lukens, 2012; U.S. Immigration Legislation Online, n.d.).

In 1910 the Mexican Revolution erupted, and in 1914 WWI was declared. American soldiers fighting in the War created a
labor shortage in the U.S. and Mexicans that had been coming to this country as a consequence of the Mexican Revolution were encouraged to work in the USA. The restrictive 1917 Immigration Law did not fundamentally affect residents of some countries of the Western Hemisphere, including Latin America because, in spite of the literacy restrictions in the bill, waivers were given for temporary agricultural and railroad workers. However, the restrictive measures emboldened the nativist spirit that continued to prevail. In 1921, the Emergency Immigration Restriction Act established an immigration system based on quotas related to the percentage of the population who had originated in given countries. However, it provided a loophole for many Europeans who moved to Western Hemisphere non-quota countries before coming to the U.S. This led to the laws of 1921 and finally to the Act of 1924 which related quotas and birthplace (McSeveney, 1987). The way quotas were determined favored the Northern European countries that had been represented in the U.S. population for a long time. In a recent *New York Times* article, Stapinski (2017) vividly discusses the consequences of the 1924 immigration Act that closed doors for the poorest and neediest Italians.

As we have just seen, during the peak of the Nativist debate, Mexican laborers had been granted temporary entry to work primarily, but not exclusively, in the fields. However, after 1924, the Immigration and Naturalization Service tightened the enforcement of border crossings, and Mexicans were often deported without due process. The 1929 Immigration Act was a victory of nativists and resulted in the deportation not only of Mexican nationals but of many native Mexican-Americans from industrial cities like Chicago where they had been working in the car industries. As the economic situation deteriorated, the popular imagery and the political talk often referred to “half-breeds” and many other racial epithets and criticized their inability to become citizens.

Between 1929 and 1936, at least six hundred thousand Mexican nationals and their children, many of whom were born in the U.S., returned to Mexico—this represented about one third of the U.S. Mexican population. Economic downturns had been a constant factor in their lives, but nothing compared to the suffering created by this crisis. (Rosales, 1997, p. 49)
The Bracero Program

Between 1942 and 1965, a very important development took place. Given the scarcity of labor created by WWII, the U.S. and Mexican governments signed a formal agreement for the recruitment of workers. There were two types of workers recruited by the so-called Bracero Agreement. Part of the agreement was for agricultural workers. As part of the agreement, 4.6 million contracts were issued between 1943 and 1965. The second part of the agreement related to railroad maintenance workers, and 69,000 authorizations were issued between 1943 and 1945 (Alarcón, 2011). The important thing to remember in relation to this government-to-government agreement is that both the U.S. and Mexico promised to apply the protections of the law (labor laws, public health, fair treatment, etc.) to the “bracero” workers. The governments also agreed to withdraw a certain amount of savings (about 10%) from the workers’ salaries. These monies would be returned to the workers at the end of the contract, generally by the Mexican government. However, no savings were initially returned and the controversy over the issue continued until a settlement was reached in a California court in 2008 (Belluck, 2008). The final blow to the Bracero Agreement was dealt by the U.S. and the Mexican governments when, in 1947, they targeted for return undocumented immigrants from California and Texas. Finally, in 1954, through Operation Wetback, more than one million workers from the West Coast were deported. Many other laws and mass deportations followed in the 1950s, targeting undocumented workers, but the impact of the “braceros” became indelibly registered in the public psyche.

Another important variable which was a determinant of the historical discrimination towards Mexicans, and to some extent of their self-perception, was the conflicting messages sent by the Bureau of the Census in its counting practices and the equally conflicting messages sent by some of the early Latino organizations in relation to race among Mexican Americans. The first time the Census identified Mexicans in its population counts was in 1930. Until 1920, the Census had not identified Mexicans; however, the enumerators tended to note the presence of Spanish surnamed “mulatos” in the Western States (Ortiz & Telles, 2012, p. 4). The 1930 Census provided specific instructions for the counting of Mexicans, identifying them as
a very mixed group belonging primarily, if not totally, to the laboring classes. According to Ortiz and Telles (2012), the use of ‘laborers’ in the first line of the Census instructions “suggests that class may have played a role into the use of Mexican in that laborers might have been classified as Mexican but higher status Mexicans might have been classified as White” (Ortiz & Telles, 2012, p. 4). This caused the Mexican government and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) to protest about using Mexican as a racial category, and from there on, until the 1980 Census which allowed for self-identification, Mexicans who may have marked “other” in the Census form were classified as White. In looking at the LULAC advocacy effort, one may say that it was based more on pragmatic rather than unprejudiced considerations.

An interesting significant event, which involved a number of well-known civil rights attorneys and LULAC in the post WWII period, addressed race/class classification in a criminal case which made it to the Supreme Court. The case, Hernandez v. the State of Texas, was about a migrant cotton picker accused of murder in a small town in Jackson County, Texas. The lead defense attorney, Gustavo Garcia,

envisioned the Hernandez case as a challenge to the systematic exclusion of persons of Mexican origin from all types of jury duty in at least seventy counties in Texas. It was not surprising to him when Hernandez was found guilty and the decision was upheld by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. (Allsup, 2010, para. 1)

When the Supreme Court finally heard the case in January, 1954, under Chief Justice Warren, the defense attorney, Garcia, argued that the 14th Amendment guaranteed protection not only on the basis of race but of class. The State of Texas contended that the 14th Amendment covered only race, Whites and Blacks, not class, and that Mexican Americans were White—at least at that moment. However, the Supreme Court, ordering the reversal of conviction, “accepted [recognized] the concept of distinction by class, that is, between white and Hispanic, and found that when laws produced unreasonable and different treatment on such basis [class differences], the constitutional guarantee of equal protection is violated” (Allsup, 2010, para. 2). This was a great
triumph for the concept of “other white” applied to Mexicans, a concept that persisted until the 1970s.

These changing classifications fueled Mexicans’ own problematic definition of self and influenced the public images of the group. Given the complex intersection of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and other dimensions in the modern world, it is not surprising to find that members of many groups find themselves confused by the Census and sometimes the courts, which, by default, required until very recently single classifications. The question of any individual’s racial classification among Hispanics is left to the individual. “What am I?” a person would ask. The answer could be Hispanic and White, for example, or Hispanic and Black, etc.

Does History Explain the Continued Disdain and Fear of the Mexican Immigrant?

Although the history of Mexican immigrants in the U.S. has been characterized by complicated policies since there was a border, the history of other groups can be said to be similarly complex. However, disdain appears to have remained unabated for Mexicans even though, in many cases, they had been fluidly moving across the diffused southern border of the U.S. since 1848. It must be recognized that Filipinos, Chinese and Japanese Americans were also victims of discrimination and repatriation, but after WWII, and after the Civil Rights efforts, their situation was much improved.

After WWII, Mexicans and Latinos had continued their struggle, primarily in the area of land rights and the labor front, struggle that gave rise the most significant Chicano civil rights movement of contemporary times. The 1960s was a time of civil rights struggle. The movement involved many leaders and many goals, ranging from the struggle for the rights of workers (led by César Chávez) to the return of land in New Mexico (led by Reies Lopez Tijerina). Reies Tijerina took a bold approach with the Alianza Federal de las Mercedes that proposed separatism and militancy on the bases of lost land and language. César Chavez, the icon of today, a Ghandi-like leader, focused on the defense of the work place. Strikes and unionization, which had not been the tools of migrant workers before, became the call
of Chávez’ resistance. For César Chávez, the Braceros, who continued to enter the U.S. providing cheap labor for the agricultural fields, represented an unrelenting impediment to the improvement of the living and working conditions of the Chicanos already living here. Iber and De León (2006) state that “for millions of ordinary Americans, mostly oblivious to the terrible plight of migrant workers, the activities and efforts of the late César Chávez (and, ultimately, those of the United Farm Workers, the UFW) served as an introduction to the Chicano/a movement” (pp. 266–267). Chicanos had entered the public discourse. As long as there were unorganized Mexicans who followed the crops in the West, there was plenty of room for disdain, disempowerment and rejection. The harsh living conditions in which these workers lived and labored insured the perpetuation of poverty, poor education, isolation, bad health conditions, etc., all of which created a caste-like group, a target of unjustifiable rejection. Today, in spite of progress and changing public attitudes, many examples of continued rejection are endorsed from the highest levels of government.

Alarcón (2011) suggests a circular migration pattern for undocumented workers across a porous border. The flow of temporary workers continued even after Operation Wetback in 1954. It was clear that the border was porous and that any control of immigration would require legislation. Up to 1968, Mexicans were able to enter the U.S. without numerical restriction (Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002). However, in 1968, the Western Hemisphere cap of 120,000 was applied, and Mexicans had to compete for a limited number of visas. But Massey et al. (2002) also suggest that the hemispheric limitations coincided with the end of the Bracero program that had provided temporary opportunities to many agricultural workers. Thus, the limitations imposed on Mexicans were felt very keenly, and illegality became a real (and perhaps the only) option for a country with a long history of labor exchanges with the U.S.

Many other important pieces of legislation followed the 1968 measures and restricted the number of legal entries from Mexico and Latin America (e.g., the 1976 country-based quotas; the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, IRCA, and many others). No one expected the dire repercussions of these policies. Scholars comment on the paradoxical nature of the U.S. immigration policies which were not intended “to create a large
undocumented Latino population living north of the border,” but which unleashed a chain of events with compounding dire effects through a succession of positive and negative measures (Massey & Pren, 2012, p. 6). The exponential growth of the Latino population between 1970 and 2010 was often ascribed only to the undocumented, and that situation caused tremendous damage to the legality of Mexican/Latino immigrants.

César Chávez’s explanation still provides a valid rationale for the negativism experienced by the immigrant Mexican today: as long as there is heavy movement of people across the border who can be easily exploited for their labor, it will continue to be possible to devalue natives, old-time residents, and recent arrivals.

**The Latino Threat Narrative**

The large and continued number of Mexicans and other Latin Americans entering the U.S, often undocumented, had become a preoccupation of the public even before 2001. The September 11, 2001 attack, although not related to Latinos, brought about the reappearance of overt anti-immigrant sentiments that, while focusing on the Muslim population, quickly spread to all immigrants. Immigration problems became recurrent in the public narrative. In 2008, the economic crisis intensified anti-immigrant public feelings. Mexicans and Hispanics were associated primarily with labor areas where unemployment was high (construction, hospitality industries, service professions, and others). This aggravated the hostility of low paid native workers. Yet, the immigrant population, particularly of illegals from Mexico and Latin America, continued to grow, and by 2010, reached 50.5 million. Rather than attempting to find real solutions, a demonization of the Hispanic population generally (not exclusively the Mexican) emerged in very public ways. These sentiments were exploited to garner political support and agency resources, as examples for border security and control.

The result was a self-perpetuating cycle in which rising border apprehensions were manipulated to produce a conservative reaction that demanded more enforcement measures, which in turn produced more apprehensions, which then produced more conservatism and even harsher enforcement
measures, which generated more apprehensions (Massey & Pren, 2012, p. 6).

But as we have discussed, it was not hard to blame Hispanics, whether Mexican or others. Their very presence fueled old notions of criminals, sex offenders, drug dealers and other people living outside the law. Specific cases of a criminal act were reported, and the public clamored for radical measures to be taken against this “despised” group which was living in the midst of white America. For example, in August 2016, *Time* Magazine reported Trump stating that “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best …. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems [to] us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists.” And, attempting to soften the statements, he added: “And some, I assume, are good people” (Reilly, 2016, pp. 3, 7). The narrative was intense and journalists spoke of a drowning of the culture, alien hordes, and the flooding of the U.S. (Andreas, 2000; Chávez, 2001). Massey and Pren (2012) have suggested that it is not easy to document the rise of xenophobia because it is not asked in surveys, but they trace it to the rise of border apprehensions and the rise of conservatism in the U.S., which are reliably measured. Reporting the results of a recent Gallup survey, McCarthy (2015) suggests that “the treatment of Hispanics, particularly of immigrants, takes on special significance as the nation continues to debate immigration reform” (p. 4). Very pointedly, he reports on the gravity of the issue which has been highlighted by Donald Trump, not only during his presidential election campaign, but also as his presidency began and executive measures were implemented.

The Current Situation in the U.S.

According to the Pew Hispanic Center (2011), the number of immigrants annually leaving Mexico for the U.S. declined by 60% between 2006 and 2010. A decline was also reported by the Migration Policy Institute in 2016, which stated:

In the last decade and a half, the Mexican share among all immigrants dropped from 29.5% in 2000 to 27.6% in 2014 … Mexico is no longer the top origin country among the most
recent immigrants to the U.S. In 2013, China and India overtook Mexico as the most common countries of origin of immigrants who have resided in the U.S. for one year or less. Furthermore, more Mexican immigrants have returned to Mexico than have migrated to the U.S. since the end of the 2007–2009 Great Recession. (Zong & Batalova, 2016, pp. 1–2)

This decline, however, did not alter the anti-immigrant public discourse brought about by the political campaigns since 2012.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA 2007-2012) was the immigration policy that allowed some minors who entered the country with their undocumented parents to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and to be eligible for work, study or service in the armed forces. The cause of these “dreamers,” as they were known, was highlighted during and after President Obama’s re-election campaign in 2012. These events activated the same nativism that had historically plagued the U.S.

In July 2016, a document from the Migration Policy Institute Transatlantic Council on Migration suggested that anti-immigrant sentiment all over the world is not necessarily changed by the reality of numbers. Nothing could have been truer for the status of the Mexican immigrant in the U.S.

Anti-immigrant sentiment does not reliably correspond to an increase in the volume of newcomers, either in absolute or relative terms. Sharp reaction—such as significant legislative changes, symbolic signs of exclusion (e.g., banning minarets), and (in extreme instances) anti-immigrant violence—have occurred in places without large or sudden increases in the immigrant population. Meanwhile, several countries and regions that have recently received sizeable unexpected inflows have not experienced social disorder. (Papademetriou & Banulescu-Bogdan, 2016, p. 6)

During the 2016 presidential campaign, the fear and anxiety about Mexican and Latin American immigrants reached peak expression in the language of Donald Trump, who aspired to tailor his message to large numbers of displaced workers whose situation had deteriorated in the past decade. A 2016 MPI report suggested that “economic concerns that lead to the perception of immigrants as competition for scarce resources and
opportunities ... can be particularly acute in areas less accustomed to migration and where segments of the native population are experiencing economic hardship” (Papademetriou & Banulescu-Bogdan, 2016, p. 1). This clearly played out in the election in 2016, as Trump’s message appeared to make an impact upon his intended target audience.

The nativist discourse of the current President of the U.S. is frequently offensive to American citizens’ values, but crowd approval of many aggrieved workers fuels his slogans. The anti-immigrant and pointedly anti-Latino views were evident in his comments on former candidate Jeb Bush, whom Trump said had to “like the Mexican illegals because of his wife” (Kaplan, 2015, para. 2). Unfortunately, Trump’s constant harping on the border wall and his apparent conviction that Mexico would pay for it continued to ignite the nativist flames of his followers. But beyond personal insults, even before Trump’s election, Mexico was the target of inaccurate public speech intended to humiliate. Mexican immigrants were framed as usurpers of American jobs, even though the business community attempted to correct the record, suggesting that immigrants were doing jobs that Americans would not or could not do.

Another point to which we have referred in the historical narrative was that the American public at large had never fundamentally acknowledged the contributions of Latinos, particularly Mexicans immigrants and their descendants, to the culture and fiber of the U.S. (Fuentes, 1992; Griswold del Castillo & de León, 1996; Sheridan, 1986). As César Chávez feared, the Mexican immigrant, unlike the European, had been seen as a laborer (a bracero) and little else (Rosales, 1997). Even today, Mexican immigrants are seldom the object of admiration in the way that other immigrants are recognized when “pulling themselves up by their bootstraps.” Some efforts of Latino actors are recognized and gain a level of popular support and understanding (e.g., Edward J. Olmos’s Films, such as Stand and Deliver [Labunka, Law, & Muska, 1998]) but they are often popular because of the actor’s stardom. Even the “dreamers” who have become well-known because of their accomplishments now worry about their future. The issue of ending the protections of DACA reached unforeseen proportions with the “shutting down of the government” in January 2018.
Various Forms of Remediation Were Attempted

During the Civil Rights period, the issue of broadening the basis of the Chicano movement beyond the plight of the agricultural workers had been pursued by Reies Tijerina with the *Alianza Federal de las Mercedes* (1963–1970). The aliancistas had always been more openly combative in pursuits beyond the rights of workers. They wanted lands returned and had some success when El Chamizal, the disputed border area of the Rio Grande, was returned to Mexico in 1963 through a treaty signed by Presidents Kennedy and Lopez Mateo. Chávez had looked towards the unions as support for the field workers and looked to peaceful means to solve the problems of workers. On the other hand, some members of the *Alianza*, Tijerina in particular, upholding a strong sense of entitlement, believed that confrontation might get them further afield. The aliancistas projected self-assurance and did not shy away from confrontation. But they quickly became associated with violence in the minds of the authorities and the public tended to reject the perceived strength of their movement.

*LULAC* (1929—today), the oldest of the Latino organizations, was committed to a more legalistic agenda and weighed in, as we have seen in the Hernandez case, in civil rights cases. LULAC attempted to develop a cooperative relationship among the various Latino, Black and white groups, to develop an agenda for all Latinos and to respond to challenges through a well-thought out platform of political and legal action that has often been compared to the NAACP. In fact, the cooperation between LULAC and the NAACP and a number of California attorneys advanced greatly the cause of school desegregation which had begun with the well-known California case of *Mendez v. Westminster*. In a recent book about this little known and successful case before the CA Supreme Court in 1947, Strum (2010) writes:

All parties agreed that Mexican ancestry, not race ... was the crux of the matter. But counsel for the many parents who joined in the suit laid the groundwork for a far broader assault on arbitrary classifications and discrimination against one people because they happened to share a heritage. The heritage was not only Mexican; it was also Spanish-speaking. For school boards, assumptions about language skills,
cleanliness, ability to learn, and “Americanness” were code words for long-established anti-Latin-American prejudices. *Mendez* exposed these to the light of social science and law and found them wanting. (Strum, 2010, p. IX)

What the variety of approaches and philosophies that have been involved in the long struggle for Mexican recognition shows is that in spite of the efforts and successes, the Mexican-immigrant and even the Mexican-American remained more marginalized and disparaged than other immigrant groups.

While many Latinos were relieved that the 2001 terrorist attack did not involve any immigrants from the Americas, the term “immigrant” began to escalate public suspicion. The situation of the Mexican immigrant became further aggravated with the economic downturn of 2008. Immigrants became the obvious target of hatred, and Mexicans being the closest, most numerous and poorest, fitted the public search for a scapegoat.

The building of a wall announced during the 2016 Presidential campaign became a rallying cry for those who had harbored not just populist philosophies but xenophobic and chauvinistic points of view. Steve Bannon, until recently one of Trump’s most influential advisors and driving force behind right wing *Breitbart News*, made no bones about banning all immigrants; his ties to the KKK were never hidden, receiving endorsement by its leader, David Duke. In spite of hopes that Trump’s election would extinguish the racist fires, now President Trump’s rhetoric and anti-Hispanic actions could continue unobstructed.

From a post-election vantage point, it has become clear that candidate Trump’s campaign views about Judge Gonzalo Curiel of the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of California, or his views on DACA, or the Wall, or for all matters related to Hispanics, did not necessarily change after his election. His views about a whole cultural and linguistic tradition continued to be made explicit in almost daily behavior.

The racism at the core of Trump’s agenda was laid bare when he pardoned former Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who was awaiting a prison sentence for defying a court order that barred him from racially profiling Latinos. As a result of the August 25 pardon, Arpaio, who rose to national prominence
for his anti-immigrant tactics in Maricopa County, will never be held accountable for his years of unconstitutional conduct. (Southern Poverty Law Center [SPLC], 2018, “Promoting a racist agenda,” para. 10)

Concluding Comments

Researchers have looked into linguistic differences, religious beliefs, perceived threats to norms and values of the receiving society and many elements that can hinder openness to immigrants. The general consensus is that no single factor can be directly correlated to outbreaks of public dissatisfaction with new arrivals of any immigrant group (Papademetriou & Banulescu-Bogdan, 2016). And yet, each of those factors appears with frequency and is used often as explanation for why a particular group is not fitting into the nucleus of a specific society. What the research literature shows is that a predilection for groups that blend easily into the host society has been a historical and sociological fact.

Nativist and xenophobic dialogues have ebbed and flowed in the public discourse in the U.S., with different groups being targets at different historical periods. These historical periods usually were the result of, or predicted, global crises. For example, the strength of movements such as the KKK or the Know Nothing Party at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th Century was a result of primarily southerners losing their grip on slavery at the same time that they were overwhelmed by outsiders--Catholics and foreigners, all people deemed different. The sequelae of slavery and the unabated fear of Blacks has always been a factor that, by extension, served to continue anti-Mexican sentiments and behaviors. Mexicans were darker and were viewed as a threat to the expectations of the community. Spikes or “perceived spikes” of undocumented immigrants can “harden attitudes toward immigration … particularly when substantial shares … of flow originate from the same country or sub region” (Papademetriou & Banulescu-Bogdan, 2016, p. 9), in this case, Mexico and Latin America.

One can continue to search for explanations of how and why the negative perceptions about Mexican immigrants have survived with such persistence. We have shown how Mexicans in particular have been a targeted immigrant group in the U.S.
In spite of the fact that, as the popular saying goes, “they did not really cross the border but the border crossed them,” the massive size and economic power of the North was a magnet that caused large numbers of immigrants to arrive to fill labor needs throughout the decades. The constant flow was made up of both documented and undocumented persons. Mexico was, as Porfirio Díaz, controversial seven-term President of Mexico, is reputed to have said, “too far from God and too close to the United States.” Mexicans were a constant presence in the host country and never appeared to gain stability or to blend with the natives.

Mexicans/Latinos were not helped to identify as Americans with ease. It was not until second and third generations had served in the military and received schooling that made them feel less separate from peer groups that they claimed more readily their American identity. It would appear that Mexicans/Latinos, if not fully despised, were certainly not highly regarded, desirable or fully appreciated as a community. Recently, the current emphasis on “building the wall” and the antagonism expressed towards Mexico and its leadership have deepened the sense of fear and separation felt by the members of the Latino immigrant group. Thus, it can be said, that the ghost of the Black Legend has risen again. Linguistic, religious and social differences that fueled animosity and contributed to the distancing of the early immigrant groups continue today, feeding mutual suspicion. The current political leadership and its xenophobic inclinations fuel sentiments that may have been dormant in the general public.

It is sad to recognize that there are no complete explanations for the prejudicial sentiments which U.S. citizens have exhibited towards Mexican and Latino immigrants. Changes in attitudes will require a profound cultural transformation. However, on a more hopeful note, there has been a significant increase in the educational, political and business gains made by earlier Latino immigrants and their children. Once the current xenophobic wave passes, this may significantly weaken the historical animosity toward the group. The level of political leadership exercised by Hispanics today is significant, and combined with demographic changes, cannot be ignored.
References


Mendez v. Westminster. 161 F.2d 774 (9th Cir. 1947).


The practice of surrogacy is not new in human history. Given the needs of parental hopefuls combined with developments of new medical procedures, gestational surrogacy as compensated labor is an emerging reality in the United States. It is the exchange of money between surrogates and intended parents that has made gestational surrogacy much more complicated and much more controversial. Important questions now arise as gestational surrogacy becomes a commercial enterprise. What is the proper way to view surrogates, intended parents, surrogacy professionals and their role in society as a whole in relation to the work of surrogacy? There is a shortage of empirical research to assist us in understanding this phenomenon, especially from the perspective of surrogates and their families.

Heather Jacobson’s book, as the first ethnographic study of gestational surrogacy in the U.S., begins to fill this important gap in the literature. Jacobson collected data from 2009 to 2015, by interviewing surrogates and their family members, intended parents, and surrogacy professionals in Texas and California. This was supplemented by disciplined examination of surrogacy websites, forums, and blogs. Through her extensive fieldwork and rigorous analysis, this book, in six well-written chapters, illustrates the American commercial surrogacy market, presents illustrative sketches of surrogates and their families, and further examines surrogacy as a shadowy workforce in the U.S.

The first chapter introduces fundamental concepts in gestational surrogacy by illustrating the story of a surrogate named Molly. This chapter provides some background to understand commercial gestational surrogates from a social and cultural perspective, and further lays the foundations for examining research questions based on surrogates’ stories. Jacobson
reviews the history of surrogacy and describes the emergence of commercial surrogacy in the second chapter. Here Jacobson also documents the surrogacy rules for intended parents, surrogates, and surrogacy professionals. The rules for each party involved in the process demonstrate a mixture of altruistic and profit-driven motives and work.

The third chapter further examines whether and how surrogates perceive surrogacy as work by asking these women how they think of their work, how they interact with others, and how they confront negative cultural assumptions about surrogacy. Jacobson well captures the inspirations and motivations of American women to work in this highly contentious field. Her research suggests that they are primarily driven by altruistic motivation and their own personal enjoyment of being pregnant. These motives far outweigh the lure of monetary benefits. This also goes a long way in helping us understand why most surrogates are quite reluctant to characterize surrogacy as hired employment or work.

The author explores the relationships between surrogates and intended parents from the initial contact to postpartum in the fourth chapter. Surrogates expect a close, authentic, supportive, and respectful relationship between themselves and intended parents. However, these relationship expectations, which often feel more like friendship, also obscure the reality of surrogacy as a paid occupation. If the relationships between surrogates and intended parents lack warmth and mutual respect, surrogates are more likely to feel like unskilled paid laborers.

The fifth chapter looks at the experiences of the spouses and children of surrogates and the effect gestational surrogacy has on the daily life of surrogate families. Benefits to spouses and children include compensation and happiness of childbearing. Although families receive monetary and emotional benefits, family members have concerns about surrogates’ health and safety issues. As Jacobson suggests, gestational surrogacy is a family contract among surrogates, partners, children, and intended parents. The family contract indicates that surrogacy as a form of paid work rests heavily on family members’ active involvement and significant sacrifices. Yet these very features of surrogacy also work to limit the recognition of gestational surrogacy as a form of employment.
The last chapter introduces the rules associated with money in the surrogacy market. Surrogates are trained and socialized to accept surrogacy as paid work. However, they are not allowed to frame it as reproductive work primarily for the purpose of profit or monetary reward. This contradiction makes surrogates invisible among the scope of traditional occupations.

Surrogacy is a rapidly growing occupation in recent years, and acknowledgement of this type of work as an occupation still has social, ethical, religious, and legal strictures in American society. This book documents the processes, relationships, and structures of American gestational surrogacy and provides original and thoughtful insights into the world of contemporary reproduction. Overall, this a book of very readable research, accessible to anyone interested in understanding more about the gestational surrogacy. This book should become a valuable reference for policymakers to reconsider strengths, challenges, and future of surrogacy in the U.S., as well as the rights of surrogates and other relevant parties.

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The contention of this book is that Donald Trump’s rise to the American presidency produced a crisis so profound that the reaction in its wake could be a harbinger of democratic renewal. Stated this way, especially if it had come from a group of lesser lights, this would easily strike the reader as partisan wishful thinking at best, to be dismissed as some sort of naïve neo-Hegelian political negative dialectic. But this particular group of writers is hardly partisan; they span from center-left to center-right, and they all are easily counted among the top ten of current American public intellectuals. So without a doubt, when they speak with one voice on matters of social policy,
The Trump phenomenon, they write, did not come out of the blue yonder, but has been brewing piecemeal in the Republican party for decades. If Trump himself represents anything of note, it is in his ability to gather together many of the disparate but increasingly radicalized strands of ideological voices presented in one form or another in the Republican coalition. These include voices of populist religion, nationalism, nativism and economic protectionism. Over the past few decades, the Republican establishment has been relatively successful in playing each of these factions off against one another, with each feeling itself heard just enough to remain within the Republican umbrella. Trump reveals the long-term instability of this coalition; the Republican establishment has been increasingly preparing for its own demise. Trump exposes the Republican establishment’s unwillingness to really push the agenda of any of these factions to conclusion, while he, Donald J. Trump, is the standard bearer for actually doing so.

In the demise of the Republican establishment, these writers see a great opportunity for a new era of democratic renewal. But for this to happen, there must be a clear vision set forth of compelling and practical ideas and policies that can rally the support not only of those who voted against Trump in the 2016 election, but also of that significantly large faction of voters who did vote for Trump but are now quite dissatisfied with the results.

The first and longest part of the book is devoted to analysis of how the ground was prepared for Trump throughout the post-War period, but especially since the rise of Ronald Reagan. Chapters devoted to the dog whistles of race and class offer significant insights into veins of resentment and discontent stoked by political and media culture warriors for many years, largely under the radar of those not tuned in to it directly. Alternative media sources on the right continuously eroded the respect and authority for the norms of social reporting based on deep research and garnering of factual data. This coincided with a growing sense that “minority rule” was not only legitimate but even inevitable in the complex world of modern America.

This aspect of “minority rule” deserves special attention, as it has a long history in the American republic. Although we Americans think of ourselves as a democracy, and democracy
means rule by majority, there have always been compromises to
this principle. Our sacred Bill of Rights, as well as other amend-
ments to the U.S. Constitution, can be seen in many ways as
anti-democratic in spirit. That is to say, they are explicitly con-
stituted to put limits on rule by majority. Likewise, many of the
compromises allowing for a United States to emerge at all are
explicitly tuned to give smaller and less populated states out-
sized power in relation to larger and more populated states.

An obvious example of this is simply the fact that every
state has two senators. Thus Wyoming has one U.S. Senator
representing approximately 290,000 citizens (half of the state
population) while California has one U.S. Senator representing
approximately 19 million citizens. In other words, in terms of
representative power in the federal legislature, a Wyoming cit-
izen has something like 65 times that of a California citizen.
Similarly lopsided power distribution favoring minority rule
is found in many areas of government, most notably for the
Trump election, in the Electoral College. It needs to be empha-
sized that while Republicans and conservatives of late have been
very effective in efforts to increase their minority ruling power
through highly gerrymandered voting districts and partisan
purging of voter registration lists, it has been Democrats and
liberals who for decades reflexively moved to bypass majoritar-
ian political solutions to social policy in favor of judicial solu-
tions. The point here is not to pose questionable equivalencies,
but simply to underline that the drift we have seen away from
the slow process of consensus building and toward the notion
that a legislative faction of 50% plus one is a sufficient mandate
to authorize imposition of an even radical social policy agenda
has been brewing for decades and has been utilized across the
political spectrum. Trumpism would be unimaginable if these
practices were not already firmly in place.

Part Two of this book looks at what can be done in the are-
na of social policy to create new democratic norms and values
in the near and more distant future in America. These authors
contend that the absolute bottom line for a way forward is a re-
assessment of our economic system, the distribution of costs and
rewards within that system, and a strong and steady move away
from “winner takes all” policies and toward policies facilitating
more economic equality. We must assume that once we get into
the weeds, Dionne, Ornstein and Mann would have substantive
disagreements on the details. Yet the very fact that this basic demand for curbing current practices is agreed upon by writers representing the Brookings, American Enterprise and Manhattan Institutions respectively, is itself an important fact.

In further chapters, these authors outline ideas for reviving an understanding of patriotism based on mutual respect among citizens rather than jingoistic nativism, and on reviving and expanding more traditional norms of behavior in the political sphere. This latter point is quite interesting because, as is shown throughout this book, much of what we value most about the American social and political system is based not in laws per se but rather in the implicit behavioral norms we expect from politicians. While these norms have certainly been tested at various times in our history, appeals to these norms (basic honesty, civility toward and respect for the integrity of opponents) also have carried strong authority in the face of violations. Think, for example, of Joseph Welch’s public challenge to Joe McCarthy—“Have you after all no sense of decency, sir?”—which historians of the era often cite as the turning point in McCarthy’s communist witch-hunting. Beginning at least with Republican Newt Gingrich’s skillful use of C-Span cameras to launch his “back bench” campaign against leading House Democrats, and then on to the founding of the so-called Tea Party and Freedom Caucus groups among Republicans, it has become an explicit tactic to loudly violate these “norms of decency” in relation to political opponents. Violation of these norms is not illegal, and thus respect for these norms cannot be legislated. Trump has been the master at such norm violation, turning it not only against Democrats but against the Republican establishment itself. At the same time, Trump’s flaunting and flagrant violations drive home the point that restoration of norms is an essential component of a post-Trump revival of democracy and a civil society.

While I highly recommend this book, especially for those in our profession who, even as we speak, are giving serious thought to those elements we need to include in future policy discussions, I have to say that the phrase going through my mind most often while reading this book was “that’s a lot easier said than done!” I tend to agree with these authors’ contention that a heavily skewed economy lays at the root of our current situation. If that means anything, it is that our current situation is contoured by decades of neo-liberal exaltation of money as the highest good.
According to neoliberal logic then, those who have money and wealth will utilize it with increasing precision to create for themselves even more money and wealth. This being the case, we are not now simply in need of better social and economic policies. We are in need of a rather thoroughgoing spiritual revolution, a broadly cultural change in values throughout our entire society away from neoliberal exaltation of money, profits and wealth display. Frankly, I don’t see anything nearly so fundamental coming from these authors. They seem confident that the reward of a future sustainable and pleasantly civil society shared by all is sufficient to maintain allegiance to their vision. I am much less confident. It is a replay of the old commons dilemma, in which the common good of all is pitted against the selfish good of individuals. The results when such games are played out in human history are not usually very encouraging.

Nevertheless, we do need to be thinking in terms of common good social policies, and this book is at least one potent starting point for diagnosing our current problems and pointing a finger in a positive direction forward.

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Whether approaching this book as a family therapist, social work educator, policy analyst or simply as a sibling, this presentation of adult sibling relationships is a highly readable and accessible contribution to the literature on family relationships. The book shares key findings and in-depth case studies gleaned from interviews and questionnaire data from 262 siblings aged forty and older, with at least one living sibling.

The authors provide a comprehensive contextualization of the study of sibling relationships, long overlooked in favor of parent-child and spousal interactions within the family, taking the reader through a review of relevant studies on family relationships ranging from biology to history, social sciences to culture,
and fast-forwarding to families in popular culture. The overarching framework spotlights themes of affection, ambivalence, and ambiguity, which are viewed as intrinsic to adult sibling interactions. Additionally, these interactions are examined through a life course perspective in which family history can be seen to repeat itself in subsequent generations, and within a theoretical perspective focusing on families as systems applying concepts borrowed from Bowen's family systems, Minuchin's structural family therapy, and Satir's experiential family therapy.

Key lessons are drawn from the author's wide-ranging review of the literature on family relationships. These include the importance of sibling relationships as sources of affection and support that enhance well-being from middle through late adulthood; the need of older siblings to seek reciprocal relationships with younger siblings, and the desire of younger siblings to seek comfort and support from older siblings; the impact of parental favoritism on both the favored and unfavored child and its lasting impact on sibling relationships across the lifespan; the need to create a positive bond between siblings when one lives with or faces a significant life challenge (e.g., health, disability), as well as a recognition by professionals of the needs of siblings serving in a caregiving role; the lasting impact and grief resulting from the loss of a sibling at an early age, even in instances when the death preceded the surviving sibling's birth; and the greater emotional connection of sisters, which creates an opportunity for professionals to develop such capacity among brothers.

The author's findings support ambivalence as an important characteristic describing adult sibling relationships from middle to late adulthood, pointing to a need to further study the "components of closeness" (p. 72) to include feelings, behaviors, and expectations in an age-informed context. Insights for potential child-rearing best practices were shared, with a nuanced understanding of the need for all things in moderation when it comes to both children's behaviors and parental practices. The generational context of strained sibling relationships is addressed, ranging along a continuum from the desire to reconnect or to maintain distance, and to feelings of ambivalence in between. While opportunities to improve connections later in life may occur as a result of an important event in the life of the family was noted, it may be necessary for siblings to learn to
accept current circumstances and adjust their expectations. The experience of siblings in blended families was also addressed, with a suggestion for use of genograms and family maps to facilitate identification of and changes to historical patterns.

The book concludes with a review of practice approaches suggested by research findings on adult sibling relationships, including contributions from practitioners and advice from siblings. Practitioners described processes seen while treating siblings in emergency situations and over time. A smaller number recommend therapy for improving boundaries when other efforts fail.

Siblings focused on the importance of communication, forgiveness and acceptance, as well as the importance of personal effort generally in improving and maintaining positive adult sibling relationships. While sensitive to and seeking to avoid overgeneralization of cultural considerations, the authors do address the level of culture. An in-depth, culturally grounded approach would provide important contributions to the literature on adult sibling relationships.

Noteworthy were the voices of adult siblings, through case studies and quotations, as well as analysis of qualitative data. According to adult siblings in the study, improving challenging sibling relationships ultimately requires a willingness to be vulnerable, acceptance that each sibling has a point of view, and a sense of “hope that, with effort, a better relationship can be achieved” (p. 243).

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My interest in healthcare had brought me to this book by Adam Gaffney. I wanted to learn more about how the modern-day health care laws and rights evolved. The book starts in the early 1700s and ends at the start of the Trump administration in 2017. The debates over whether healthcare is a right
or a commodity and whether private or public healthcare is better are discussed throughout the book. These debates have persisted throughout healthcare's history. Although this book does not answer these pressing questions, Gaffney provides detailed historic evidence explaining the concepts and ideas related to these issues. The detail and evidence, such as treaties, revolutions and laws, give the reader a greater understanding of healthcare, laws, social movements and health organizations. Gaffney is an advocate of human rights and healthcare and it shines through this book.

Gaffney has written this book in seven chapters. Each chapter goes into a comprehensive understanding about healthcare and the right to health during a historical period. Gaffney writes about historic evidence from all around the world including Chile, China, and the Soviet Union. He discusses each era using evidence and facts. Beginning with a helpful introduction bringing the reader insight about the book's topic, the subsequent chapters are written in chronological order beginning with the 18th century. The book's central concern is the meaning of human rights as it relates to healthcare, and the origins and progression of our ideas about this. He explores this topic through both sociological and historical lenses up to and including the modern day. As the idea of human rights evolved, there is a clear emergence of discussion as to whether healthcare should be seen as a right or as a commodity. How this question is answered in turn, leads into whether healthcare is best served as a public or a private system. The book provides insight on why healthcare is being fought for and what it means to the economy.

The first chapter discusses the ancient world with perspectives from Plato and Aristotle. Gaffney examines hospitals from different eras and countries regarding ethics, rights, and healthcare. Does religion play a role in how healthcare is perceived? Gaffney makes useful observations on the ways Buddhism has played in a role in Chinese hospitals and health care rights, as well as how Christianity played a role in health care rights in other parts of the world. These religions are seen as acting creatively in the idea of charitable medical care, natural rights, the right to health, and universal healthcare.

The right to healthcare and human rights is explored in chapter two. Gaffney gives insight on what this concept has meant
in particular times and places, such as France in the late 1700s, from which came the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*. This document states “Men are born and remain free and equal in rights” (p. 42). The French Revolution also advanced the ideal of the rights universal of human beings, including a right to healthcare.

Chapter three touches on the debate between public versus private healthcare, and the impact of each system on those in poverty. The traditional poor laws were the public system of poor relief and were seen by many to be inadequate for those in poverty in industrialized Britain. Therefore, a New Poor Law was created, but was left woefully under funded, under staffed, and with limited resources. This is largely the system of relief that made its way into the twentieth century.

Meanwhile, a revolution started in Germany about medical reform and the emergence of social medicine. There we see the development of public health insurance, which only subsequently influenced programs in Britain and the United States. A chapter focusing specifically on the United States delineates the progression of healthcare thinking and policies as these developed after World War II. Here again we see the influence of the term “human rights,” as it was affected by the war and war relief efforts. The 1948 adoption in the United Nations of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDRH) in many ways frames our thinking about healthcare.

Gaffney uses the concept of first, second and third worlds to categorize ideas about healthcare provision. He explains people in the first world are seen as having “a *de facto* legal right to healthcare …” (p. 118). Examples of this are given from the United States and Great Britain. The second world is seen as illustrating “the mixed legacy of communism with regard to advancing a right to healthcare …” (p.118), and here examples included stem from China and the Soviet Union. Finally, third world examples stem from Latin America, Cuba, and Chile. Gaffney suggests that in relation to the third world, “the tides of global political change affected the emergence and/or rollback of health rights” (p.118). Gaffney compares and thoroughly explains the healthcare system in each “world” and its effects on the population there.

The final chapter examines the era of neoliberalism. The information in this chapter gives the reader a better understanding
of where we stand today in relation to healthcare policy. Topics discussed in this chapter include the HIV and AIDS epidemics in America, shock therapy in Russia, and the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). Once again the issue of universal healthcare and the continuance of private versus single-payer healthcare is raised. Gaffney compares different countries which have both types of systems, along with the pros and cons for individuals within each system. The book wraps up with the presidential election of 2016. Gaffney discusses the candidate views on healthcare, giving special attention to accessibility and affordability. He ends with questions of whether the nation will continue to fund Obamacare or see some sort of “Trumpcare” as the future of healthcare. This review is being written nearly a year into the Trump administration, and quite frankly Gaffney’s questions are still to be answered, with solid evidence pointing in opposite directions!

For much the same reason, this book is not outdated, even though it was written before the 2016 election. The issues remain alive, and Gaffney’s book helps us all understand why certain healthcare systems have worked well, why some have failed, and what can be done to improve all systems of healthcare. The evidence and data in this book gives us hope that we will not simply repeat a history of failure, but rather that, even in the Trump administration, we might learn from that history.

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