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Disempowering Minorities: 
A Critique of Wilkinson’s ‘Task for Social Scientists and Practitioners’

MITCH BERBRIER
University of Alabama in Huntsville
Department of Sociology

In this article, I examine Wilkinson’s (2000) injunction that practitioners “omit entirely the ‘minority’ concept” (pp. 124–25). I maintain that Wilkinson’s argument disempowers groups—such as gays and the disabled—who have used a “minority” identity effectively, and speciously indicates that African-Americans would benefit from such retrenchment, thereby implying that social justice is a zero-sum game. Rather, “minority” coalitions are effectively pursuing justice for all. Moreover, Wilkinson’s deconstruction of “minority” conflates conceptual breadth with conceptual vagueness, and conveniently ignores (or denies) the socially constructed character of “race” and “ethnicity.” I suggest that practitioners learn more about the historical development of all of these concepts and honor clients who self-identify as “minority” group members, lest they become alienated from them.

“I didn’t raise my son to sit on the back of the bus. You get in there and fight for your rights.” (from the movie Philadelphia, 1993)

Continued attempts to connect, at any level, disabilities, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, economic position, and gender under a vague symbol is prejudicial and unreasonable. (Wilkinson 2000, p. 127, emphasis added)

Why are so many people attached to their marginality and why is so much of their intellectual labor spent developing theories to justify it? Why insist on difference with such rigidity, rancor, and blindness, to the exclusion of the possibility of common knowledge and common dreams? (Gitlin 1995, p. 32)
Introduction

When, in the summer of 2000, I first happened upon Doris Wilkinson’s article “Rethinking the Concept of ‘Minority’: A Task for Social Scientists and Practitioners,” I was excited to find that another sociologist was working on the meaning of “minority status.” Just a year earlier I had done another literature search and found virtually nothing along these lines (from sociologists!). Based on the title, I eagerly anticipated a thesis that would “re-think” the concept. However upon reading the article I found myself frequently confused and disappointed by the approach taken by my esteemed colleague. While implying that her pursuits are “objective” (p. 115), Dr. Wilkinson here puts the activist cart before the analytic horse, leaving out crucial information that oversimplifies the issues involved and renders her arguments both errant and polemical. The result is a paper that misleads practitioners into thinking that the minority concept is always useless and/or harmful, when from the perspective of many pursuing their vision of social justice it most certainly is neither.

All of this is not to say that I found the article entirely without merit. Dr. Wilkinson is to be commended for what is to me the central insight of her paper, which is to follow Nibert’s (1995) lead in indicating that “the minority concept” can at times be obfuscating rather than clarifying. Specifically, Wilkinson argues that people often use the term “minority” when they mean African-Americans. This critique of euphemistic obfuscation is entirely appropriate: Practitioners, and the rest of us, ought always say what we mean. We ought not speak of “minorities” when we mean “Blacks.” Dr. Wilkinson also correctly points out that there are important differences in both the historical treatment and current circumstances of the descendants of Africans in America, and that those might sometimes be ignored in a leveling of all groups under the rubric of “minority.” To the extent that the excessive and liberal use of “minority” fosters ignorance of important differences between socially recognized groups, such problems ought be addressed, and Wilkinson does us all a service to point this out. (On the other hand, I argue below that that danger similarly exists in categorizing African-Americans with groups under the rubrics of “race” or “ethnicity.” This Wilkinson chooses mysteriously—
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given Wilkinson and King 1987—to ignore.) Finally, Dr. Wilkinson also humbly subjects her own work to critique, indicating that she too has used “minority” where she might have preferred to use “race” or “ethnic,” and pointing out how we social scientists are forced to use terminology, sometimes based on editorial or reviewer constraint, that we might otherwise eschew.

So practitioners (and the rest of us) should heed Wilkinson’s call to refer to Blacks as Blacks and not euphemistically as “minorities”; but we should all be wary of throwing the minority baby out with the minority bathwater (unless that is exactly what we want to do).

A Brief History of the Broadening “Minority” Concept in America

“Frequently ‘minority’ indicates only races (African Americans) or ethnic populations (Hispanics, Asians). At times, it extends to occupationally subordinated groups (e.g. women) and socially isolated populations. Multiracial persons (biracial) and economically depressed persons (unemployed, poor) . . . Sexual orientation, physical handicapped status, and being white and male or female are similarly classified.” (Wilkinson 2000, p. 119)

One of Professor Wilkinson’s problems with “minority” seems to be that it is a concept that is significantly broader than “race” and “ethnicity.” Leaving aside her choice here to include Asians as an ethnic-but-not-racial group, I believe Wilkinson here accurately represents the breadth not of the minority concept, but of claims to the minority concept. She indicates here that “minority” is “extended” to her list of groups. We are not given a specific indication here of who is doing the extending, but I believe that that is important. That is, what is really sociologically important and interesting here is that so many groups are indeed claiming minority status (Berbrier forthcoming). Wilkinson gives short shrift to this crucial issue, thereby failing to incorporate a careful analysis of how and why the minority concept achieved its historical role and cultural resonance. I put it forth as axiomatic that an understanding of its history and (resulting) obdurate social reality would aid practitioners in deciding how and when to use the term “minority.”
While the first sociological use of the term is usually traced to Donald Young (1932), it was Louis Wirth's (1945) landmark definition—as Wilkinson does note—that clearly became the standard, widely cited and extraordinarily influential on the sociological study of race and ethnicity (McKee 1993). Wirth held that "minority" refers to:

"A group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination." (1945, p. 347).

On one level this definition was perhaps the initial effort to denude the term of its numerical connotation and replace it with one of social and economic power. However, Wirth's defining took place in a social context and, as Benton Meyers argued, Wirth was initially trying to distinguish American "minorities" from the idea of a "national minority" (e.g. Albanians in Yugoslavia or Chechens in Russia) in order to lend credence to his [Wirth's] assimilationist view that "minorities need not be disloyal to the state in which they live" and that "they need not have any ambitions to found a state of their own" (Meyers 1984, p. 5). Thus, the "meaning" of term was both controversial and expanding from its very conception.

The Civil Rights Movement of African-Americans became perhaps the crucial historical turning point for the "minority" concept. Historian Earl Lewis (2000) indicates that while African-Americans have been referred to as a "minority" since about 1930, this application was not prevalent until the 1960s. He argues that until Africans came to be considered a part of the nation, rather than alien to it, they could not be considered a minority group within it. Therefore, given the understanding of "minority status" derived from Wirth's definition—with its emphasis on unequal treatment and discrimination—once deemed eligible for minority status, Africans in America immediately became the best example of it, and as the Civil Rights Movement progressed, "minority" became virtually synonymous with "Black" (Gleason 1991). Moreover, by the 1970's "minority" became in effect a "code word" for "Black": If people referred to "minorities" they
very often meant (and, as Wilkinson indicates, many still mean) African-Americans (Lewis 2000).

However, as we know, the Civil Rights Movement impacted not only the status of African-Americans in this society but many, if not all, movements for social justice (Colburn and Pozzetta 1994). Thus, since the 1960's many "minority" groups who had been frequently also labeled "racial" and/or "ethnic" began to more actively and successfully stake a wide variety of claims, many of these building on the foundation laid by American Blacks (see e.g. Espiritu 1992 on Asian-Americans; and Nagel 1996 on Native-Americans). At the same time, many non-racial and non-ethnic groups—often so-called "deviant" groups—also began to claim minority rather than a deviant status (Berbrier forthcoming), and frequently with the help of professional sociologists. For example, in 1971 the sociologist Edward Sagarin edited a book entitled *The Other Minorities: Nonethnic Collectivities Conceptualized as Minorities*. In this book we see the development of the claim that both "racial and ethnic" and these "Other" groups (e.g. women, homosexuals, the disabled, and hippies) were effectively "minority" groups.

How could such claims be made? It turns out that the clear favorite intellectual basis for the claim was Wirth's (1945) classic definition. While Wirth had himself specified "ethnic, racial, national and religious" groups (p. 350) as the types of minorities, his abstract social scientific operational definition left open the door to the possibility of what we may call "minority status claims-making" (cf. Best 1995; Loseke 1999). That is, by defining a subjectively perceived "differential and unequal treatment" as the main criterion for minority status, his operational definition was sufficiently broad and abstract that "Others" would use it to lay claim to the territory. In order to ground their claim in an essential reality, Sagarin and several of his contributors deployed similar abstract definitions that specified criteria for "minority status," and applied these to the Other groups, almost invariably finding that the term "minority" was indeed applicable. Thus, Sagarin's volume is a testament to this kind of minority-status claims-making (as was Robert Winslow's 1972 reader *The Emergence of Deviant Minorities*, which also drew explicitly upon Wirth's definition), and began a form of activism that has continued to the
present (Berbrier, forthcoming). Note that this is a long-standing form of activism, and not a “recent interpretation” of the minority concept as Wilkinson would have it (p. 123); the first documented use of the term with respect to gays, for example, was over fifty years ago (Cory 1951). In the intervening years—as Wilkinson notes with some displeasure—numerous non-“racial” and non-“ethnic” groups have utilized the injury and oppression implied by the minority concept to press claims for social justice.

Minority vs. Race vs. Ethnic

(1) On Operational Definitions and Status Claims

From the outset, Professor Wilkinson wishes to convince us that her concerns about the minority concept are based on generally accepted principles of social science: “As an abstraction most often regarded as virtually synonymous with race, ‘minority’ is actually nonscientific and devoid of conceptual clarity and empirical validity” (p. 115). Her first argument here is that “minority” is used synonymously with “race.” To support it, Wilkinson cites research articles that use the term “minority” to refer to specific groups that Wilkinson would presumably classify as “races.” However, the data she then presents actually speak more directly (and accurately) to the point that it is people-in-society (and not only researchers) who frequently neglect to make distinctions between terms like “minority,” “ethnicity,” and “race.” (She analyzes more discourse from journalistic sources—William Raspberry, USA Today—than academic ones). While I believe that Wilkinson is properly concerned about this issue, this fact of (what we may think of as) poor terminological choices does not preclude the possibility that the term “minority” is (or can or ought to be) used more carefully by researchers, or people-in-society, or practitioners.

Wilkinson’s second point here also appears reasonable, at first glance. Concerns regarding valid operational definition and reliable measurement of abstract concepts are longstanding in the social sciences and few would question the aim of developing terms that are conceptually clear. The problem here is that Wilkinson seems to see lack of clarity and validity through an extraordinarily selective lens: the “minority” concept is curiously singled out. As
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mentioned above, one of Wilkinson’s central themes is that the concept of “minority” is just too broad. As she writes:

“Groups so defined have very few shared attributes with respect to race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexuality, and/or culture. In other words, minimal social and behavioral traits are held in common. Most groups detailed as minorities have separate class positions, racial and ethnic origins, family backgrounds, and lifestyles” (p. 122, emphasis added).

While everything Wilkinson says here seems to be true, there is absolutely no basis for assailing the “minority” concept as the problem. That is, one could easily compose an isomorphic sentence about “culture” or “race”—two terms she notably assumes to be unproblematic—that make about as much sense. Thus, if I tell you that “most groups detailed as ‘cultural groups’ have separate class positions, racial and ethnic origins, family backgrounds, and lifestyles,” should we therefore get rid of the “culture” concept?? Indeed, there are few broader terms in our lexicon than culture, yet we do not claim its meaninglessness; rather we decry its misrepresentation. Similarly, I might argue that most groups detailed as “races” have separate class positions, ethnic origins, family backgrounds, and lifestyles. Do we therefore get rid of the concept of “race”? Obviously, if we take to Wilkinson’s logic, we will lose a number of important sociological concepts, and quickly.

Wilkinson’s argument that all “minority concepts” rely on ideas that are unscientific (“the category lacks concrete indicators and its miscellaneous attributes tend to be flawed and conflicting” [p. 119]) thus seems to be confusing breadth with a lack of scientific verifiability. One wonders by what standard Wirth’s definition of minority is not as empirically verifiable as extant definitions of “race” or “ethnicity.” Relatively speaking Wirth’s definition is fairly clear (at least he provides one), and given the plethora of operational definitions of ethnicity and race (e.g. Isajiw 1974, 1994; Smith 1996), it seems unfair to single out Wirth’s minority concept, or those that follow directly from it, for ambiguity. The definitions of minority are broad—and intentionally so!—but that does not make them vague.

Furthermore, any group—or any putatively objective researcher—can make claims to minority status (or to “ethnic” or
"racial" status for that matter). In theory, each claimant must either adhere to the operational definition or risk that her or his claim will not be recognized as legitimate. For example, Deaf and Gay activists who claim minority status might have their claims recognized more readily than, say, white males who claim to be a minority (Berbrier forthcoming; 1998a) because both social scientists and people-in-society are more likely to recognize the legitimacy of their claims to "subordination" and "discrimination." If there is a debate then, it would be about the accuracy of the claims, not the reasonableness of the operational definition. That is what Wilkinson crucially omits: Just because representatives of many and diverse groups claim minority (or "cultural" or "racial") status does not make those concepts any more or less scientifically valid. Indeed, since that initial deployment in 1951, gay rhetors have regularly explicitly drawn upon a Wirthian notion of minority status to posit very specific operational criteria by which one would judge gays to be a "minority" group (e.g. Herek 1993; Kameny 1971), and I have noted a similar pattern among the Deaf (Berbrier 1998b). Wilkinson, it seems, would define such social movement framing out of existence.

Now, it bears pointing out that "minority" as it is usually used, is not only a broader level concept (vs. race and ethnicity). That is, one thing that the minority concept does that neither the race nor ethnic concepts do is to specifically exclude the powerful. The contemporary definitions that Wilkinson cites bear this out—for example, Farley, in the 1995 edition of his textbook, defining a "minority" as a group that "has restricted power and an inferior status". "Race" usually includes the dominant as well as the subordinate, or following Nibert (1995) the privileged as well as the oppressed (as in the "white" race). "Minority," by either Wirth's or Farley's definition, particularly excludes the dominant and/or privileged. Hence, one might argue that because it definitively excludes the dominant and powerful, the "minority" concept can be (and has been) effective in uniting diverse oppressed groups. From this perspective, by advocating the removal of the term from the vocabulary of social justice pursuits, Wilkinson effectively advocates a form of unilateral disarmament (by the already relatively powerless).
(2) On Categories: Separating African-Americans from (Other) Minorities

Intermingling handicapped status, health conditions, and behaviors with race and ethnic heritage is problematic, unwarranted, and unfair to heretofore disenfranchised racial and ethnic populations. (p. 129)

Another element of Wilkinson’s critique of the broad interpretation of “minority” is that it is African-Americans who are hurt: It results in a leveling of grievances and victimization among all groups, and since African-Americans have historically been and continue to be the victims of the most insidious racism, then there ought to be a separation of Blacks from others in policy and social service considerations. She asserts that we must recognize “hierarchies of need” (p. 130).

Indeed, the minority concept may, in a sense, level all those considered minorities: African-Americans are put in the same category as gays, the disabled, Latino-, Native-, and Asian-Americans. But it is unclear how the categories of “race” or “ethnicity” do any less (or, for that matter, how a pan-ethnic category like “Asian” does not do the same to subgroups such as the Hmong [Hurh and Kim 1989]). Thus, when Wilkinson writes that “only one population assigned minority status in the Americas has ever been subjected to slavery and centuries of systemic racism” (p. 122, emphasis added), I could again replace the term “minority” with either “race” or “ethnicity” and the statement would have similar implications: “Only one population assigned racial/ethnic status in the Americas has ever been subjected to slavery and centuries of systemic racism.” Whether as “minority” or “race” most people would likely immediately recognize that both Wilkinson and I are referring to African-Americans; yet in my example Blacks still are put in the same category as, say, Asian-Americans. The “hierarchy of need” applies to either categorical assignment. If we are talking about a zero-sum competition among disadvantaged groups for scarce resources (a questionable assumption), then the “minority” (or “race” or “ethnicity”) concept may indeed disadvantage African Americans, or at least give insufficient attention to the particular history and plight of
Blacks in America. However, even granting Wilkinson's point, this does not discredit the minority concept any more than the related concepts (although it may increase the number of people dividing up the zero-sum pot).

Think about it this way: one might argue that the experiences of (non-African-American) gays and of (heterosexual) African-Americans are different. Yet if one were so inclined, one might also argue that the experiences of a Black female engineer in Burlington, Vermont and a Black male construction worker in Birmingham, Alabama are different (not to mention the different experiences of gays in these places!). We could continue to parse out more and more specific identities until, we get down to Identity—the individual. This approach turns sociology slowly into psychotherapy: "it's all your own subjective experience, everybody's experiences are different, everyone reacts differently to it, etc..." I imagine Wilkinson does not want to take us down that road.

My point is that of course the Black female engineer in Vermont and the Black male construction worker in Alabama also likely share certain cultural experiences and are also reacted to in similar patterned ways by others: that is what holds them together. That is what we all, including (I believe) Wilkinson, are recognizing when we say that it is meaningful to categorize these people together as "African-Americans." That is why sociologists can reasonably speak of groups or of collectivities in the first place. Presumably, when Wilkinson argues that it is meaningful to categorize people by "race," "ethnicity," "class," and "gender," she is implying the same: that all those classified within a race, ethnicity, class, and gender share something—but not everything! (For that something we would need to know Wilkinson's operational definition of race, ethnicity, class, and gender). Certainly, these people are not all the same, and each of these categories comprise many different kinds of people from many different segments of society.

The concept of minority follows an identical logic! It holds that anyone can see that there are differences between white gay males and Black heterosexual females, and that there is also something they share—such as experiences of discrimination, of hatred, of fear of violent attack, of rights-violations—just for being who they are. For some this has come to be understood,
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in effect, as the "minority" experience, and they often argue that there is something to be gained by recognizing the broad patterns in society that lead to this. The term becomes a resource by which people can then work together on certain things that they share—e.g. perhaps the need for hate-crimes legislation, anti-discrimination enforcement, or sensitivity training for criminal justice workers.

Wilkinson seems to assume that throwing out the minority concept entirely will somehow lead to a greater good, or at least a greater good for African Americans. Clearly I am skeptical about whether the pursuit of social justice is this kind of zero-sum competition. In Professor Wilkinson's view of the world, there is no minority baby, only minority bathwater. I believe that the concern ought rather be that the euphemistic use of minority instead of Black causes leveling; if minority were used more judiciously perhaps to include Blacks (but not become all that Blacks are) then it might be less of a leveler and more of a coalition concept—a Rainbow Coalition, if you will, or a Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. While there surely may be instances when such separation would benefit Blacks, others would argue—as William Julius Wilson does in The Bridge Over the Racial Divide (1999)—that the lack of common cause and common front with others claiming victim status will ultimately hinder the path toward social justice for all, including and perhaps especially for African-Americans (cf. Wilson 1999, p. 8). I would suggest that there might be times when African American political activists will find it much more efficacious to combine efforts with others—be these other "racial" or "ethnic" groups such as Latinos (e.g. Affirmative Action in California), or with gays (e.g. hate crimes legislation). Yet Wilkinson seems to point us in a different direction, arguing that such attempts at connecting groups "at any level" are "prejudicial and unreasonable" (p. 127).

I wonder why Dr. Wilkinson prefers a hierarchy of need rather than an umbrella minority concept. Why not a hierarchy of need in addition to minority coalitions? I am flummoxed. Wilkinson seems to be miffed that some are groups making progress by using "minority status" claims, and she presumes this advantage is gained at the expense of African-Americans rather than, say, the privileged groups in society, or at the expense of no one at all.
On Ontological Gerrymandering and the Social Construction of Categorical Statuses

"Ethnic affiliation and racial attachment, as opposed to externally ascribed ‘minority’ status, are essential parallels with social placement and self-images." (Wilkinson 2000:117, emphasis added).

In a classic critique, Woolgar and Pawluch (1985) take those who deconstruct concepts and practices to task when they, in effect, play favorites by assuming the validity of some concepts while failing to apply symmetrical critical analysis to others (Bloor 1991). While we are likely all guilty of this at times, this problem is especially of concern when the concepts are conceptually linked (e.g. psychology vs. parapsychology [Allison 1979], or science vs. religion [Gieryn 1983]). In the context of Wilkinson’s paper, we might observe here that there is no reason whatsoever to believe that “race” or “ethnicity” are any more real, or any less “political” conceptions than “minority status.” Yet Wilkinson seems entirely comfortable with that assumption.1

One suspects however that these concepts are indeed just as real and just as political, yet somehow in ways that are more to Wilkinson’s liking, and hence not subject to her analytical skills. Wilkinson thus ably deconstructs the minority concept, but some of her key weapons are the putative inherent reality of “ethnicity” and “race,” exhorting in her conclusion that “researchers, clinicians, and teachers must seek ways to incorporate race and ethnicity in all relevant contexts and omit entirely the ‘minority’ concept” (pp. 124–25).

Wilkinson thus essentializes race and ethnicity, while deconstructing minority status. But on what basis? The dynamic and burgeoning interdisciplinary literature on the construction of such “categorical statuses” (Calhoun 1993) indicates extraordinary fluidity in concepts of ethnicity, race, and nation, as well as minority status (Berbrier forthcoming; Hobsbawm 1990; Davis 1991; Nagel 1994; Loveman 1999; Rockquemore and Brunsma, 2002; Roosens 1989; Stern and Cicala 1991). Each of these terms have a history. “Race” once distinguished the Irish from the Jews; now it combines them (Brodkin 1998; Jacobson 1998). The distinction between “race” and “ethnicity” was initially made eighty years ago (Woofter 1933) to recognize the different histories of
American Blacks and white immigrants, yet came to connote the absence vs. presence of culture, and to reflect many white Americans' (and white sociologists') long-standing prejudicial assumption that African-Americans had long ago lost—and thus no longer possessed—any distinct culture, other than "American" (McKee 1993). "Ethnics," on the other hand, came to be immigrants and active carriers of vibrant and distinctive cultures from other places. As a distinct African-American culture came increasingly to be recognized, "ethnicity" (as well as "race") would be used to describe them as well (e.g. Singer 1962)—a point of significant contention (Bonilla-Silva 1999; Loveman 1999; Omi and Winant 1994; Wilkinson and King 1987). My point is that over the years, these terms—"minority," "race," and "ethnic"—have all become common forms of identification both in sociology and in the wider culture. The distinctions among all of them have long been murky, contested, variable and politically charged. The inevitable conclusion from any examination of the literature is that "race" and "ethnicity" concepts are no more ontologically suspect than "minority" ones. Minority is a broader concept, and perhaps more culturally resonant (Berbrier 1998c; Snow and Benford 2000), but that makes it no less real. Indeed, some might argue that it is its very resonance, force, and obduracy that make the idea of minority most "real"—sociologically speaking (Latour 1987). That this empirical observation irritates Wilkinson does not make it any less empirically observable.

Conclusion

The problems with Wilkinson's piece then, are less the issues it broaches—which are important and valid—than the extraordinarily strident and sweeping conclusions it reaches—which are overdetermined by the neglect of crucial and complex issues. The strength of Wilkinson's suggestion is in the idea that people need to be aware of the constructedness of categories, the fluidity of their definition, and the danger of assuming members of categories to be identical. The weakness of her formulation is in her insufficient assessment of the pragmatic and political aspects of the term, the obfuscation of her political agenda behind claims to scientific objectivity and expertise, and in the ontological gerrymandering whereby she decries the heterogeneity of those labeled
"minority" while showing no concern about the heterogeneity of those labeled "race" and/or "ethnic."

Recommendations

Although I am generally in accord with Nibert's (1996) suggestion that we replace "majority/minority" with "privileged/oppressed," I advocate here imposing neither the retention nor the replacement of the "minority" concept. My position is that the "minority" concept is a social reality to many people in society and that practitioners would do well to remain sensitive to this, while working to be clear and direct about what they mean to say. The existence of broad socially constructed categories of "races" and "ethnic" groups does not preclude the existence of a broader socially constructed category of "minority" groups, and it has turned out that the very breadth of the term has made it a useful rhetorical resource for coalition politics. This empirical observation has nothing to do with whether you as a practitioner, nor Wilkinson or I as academics, like those politics! Furthermore, it follows that the idea of minority rights is no less real than the ideas of "racial" or "ethnic" rights. In terms of rights, all of these might be categorized under the even broader rubric of what we often call human rights. (And surely Professor Wilkinson would not have us get rid of that concept too, nor argue that "human" has no meaning because it is too vague a concept).

In the end, what practitioners have to understand, to get back to the epigraph and Todd Gitlin's (1995) concerns in The Twilight of Common Dreams, are the implications of Wilkinson's argument for the fragmentation of justice activism, and the idea of coalition. Gitlin is concerned about a balkanization of oppressed peoples from divergent backgrounds and situations when they would do better to recognize that they usually aspire to similar dreams of justice, peace, material well-being, and lives free from the fear of hate crimes. The pursuit of those is precluded when we overemphasize differences, and when we not only emphasize victim status, but spend most of our energy debating who the most victimized are rather than pursue justice itself.

Certainly gays and Blacks and Deaf people should not be reduced to each other. But to ask practitioners to simply stop using
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the term, period—to tell a Deaf or a lesbian client who claims to be a member of a "minority" group that "you are not a member of a minority group"—seems, after so many years of struggling to allow people to identify themselves on their own terms, rather imperious. I would suggest that practitioners be wary. If the dominant approach becomes purely what Dr. Wilkinson suggests, then the result, unless people are very careful, may be severely strained relations with those who deploy the "minority" label with vigor and with the aim, in their minds at least, of social justice and human dignity.

Note

1. Generally I would argue that Woolgar and Pawluch take their idea of ontological gerrymandering way too far—effectively denying the possibility of talking about any reality—and cast my lot with the "contextual" constructionist school proposed by Best (1993). Nonetheless, I believe that Woolgar and Pawluch's point has been so influential because it sensitizes us to exactly the kind of asymmetrical analysis that Bloor (1991) had earlier indicated, and that I believe Wilkinson is up to, whereby some concepts that are generally accepted as comparable on the same plane of reality as others, are either mysteriously, ideologically, or politically favored over those others.

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The Clinical Irrelevance and Scientific Invalidity of the “Minority” Notion: Deleting it from the Social Science Vocabulary

DORIS WILKINSON*
(conclusion by JOHN SIBLEY BUTLER)

A systematic socio-linguistic and historical analysis of the minority label reveals its multiple irregularities and imperfections. These encompass a misleading array of vastly dissimilar nationality or group designations and the erroneous comparison of behaviors and life styles with racial status. As it is currently applied in U.S. political culture and in a variety of disciplines including sociology and social work, the concept has virtually no substantive meaning nor reality-linked usefulness. A thorough appraisal of the consequences of the perpetual reliance on the notion demonstrates that it eradicates ethnic cultural diversity and ignores historical antecedents and the “lived” experiences of oppressed racial populations.

In fact, the politically framed designation has no psychological nor social significance for targeted racial/ethnic groups. Rather, it comprises “politically correct” language and functions solely for those who seek to equate behavior and conditions with race or ethnic status. Yet, objective examinations clearly show that the word is lacking in definitive dimensions and fails to reference any of the standard rules for logical concept formation and category construction. A thorough knowledge of social science methodology and U.S. history provides insights into the theoretical and research limitations of the minority tool. Thus, in clinical and social science vocabularies, there is an urgent need to disconnect behavior from race for the two are not equal on any criteria. It is simply axiomatic that behavioral frames of reference are completely distinct from race paradigms. The chronic

* Doris Wilkinson, Distinguished Professor of Arts and Sciences and former Visiting Professor at Harvard, has published broadly in the area of race and ethnic relations and critical social theory. Her essay—“Americans of African Identity” was selected as a landmark in 1995.

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insistence on placing racial groups under the minority label constitutes an unusual preoccupation with purposefully defining "the other" without their consent.

Introduction

I have been most pleased with the extraordinarily positive response to my thoroughly researched and objective analysis in "Rethinking the Concept of 'Minority': A Task for Social Scientists and Practitioners." In this follow-up to that milestone article, several interrelated aims are presented. These are (1) to reinforce the fundamental premises introduced in the initial explanation of the deficiencies typifying the minority category, (2) to present the voices of African American scholars and others on the topic of the scientific shortcomings, social policy limitations and clinical meaninglessness of the currently framed minority construct, 3) to re-assert the humanistic need and right of persons of African, Hispanic, American Indian, and other racial/ethnic descent to contextualize and define their own identities without vexing intervention by those who are either members of or who identity with the privileged racial and numerical majority, (4) to introduce a set of valuable references for those who are neither knowledgeable about U.S. history, especially slavery, nor have experienced "Jim Crowism," nor encountered continuing racial discrimination and segregation and the prevailing significance of race (Wilkinson, 1999a), and (5) to support the rational movement to eradicate the use of the all-encompassing minority fallacy that virtually undercuts the unique histories, experiences, and daily dehumanizing encounters of specific racial and ethnic populations in the United States (Butler, 2001; Butler, 1993; Turner, 2000; Strickland, 1979; Wilkinson, 1987). "Umbrella labels do harm when they lump into a single term a variety of diverse people with different problems" (Gans, 1998: 101).

Deficiencies in the Minority Construction

In the spring of 2000, my comprehensive review of the "minority concept" was introduced to the readers of the Journal of Sociology and Social Work. In that carefully researched critical ap-
praisal, several fundamental points with regard to its misuse were outlined. One of the guiding themes of my conceptual analysis is reflected in Randall Robinson's observation that "in America, whites have caused all Americans to read, see, hear, learn and select from a diet of their own ideas with few others placed to make suggestions . . ." (2000: 85–86). The basic principles of the initial discussion are reiterated below in order to reaffirm their implications for the social and behavioral sciences as well as for clinical fields and public policy (See Devore and Schlesinger, 1999; Guinier, 2000; King, 1970; Logan, 1990; Neubeck and Cazenave, 2001; Wilkinson, 1999b).

(1) Minority is a nonscientific word that lacks conceptual precision and empirical soundness. It is also not sensitive to variation. Further, "two-thirds of the world is not a minority . . . [Thus], the word 'minority' for 'nonwhites' doesn't ring true" (Burton, 1995: 351).

(2) Contemporary sociological paradigms and theoretically derived suppositions linked to ‘minority’ are without scientific value.

(3) The label is saturated with political nuances and purposefully denotes behaviors as well as conditions and biological traits.

(4) The conception cancels out ethnic distinctiveness and does not allow for appreciation of the enormous cultural and racial heterogeneity that exemplifies American society.

(5) The category is deficient in concrete indicators and its assorted components (e.g., behaviors, conditions, statuses, experiences) tend to be ambiguous and inconsistent. Consequently, it has no applicability in quality scientific endeavor or culturally specific clinical practice.

(6) Since the designation does not comply with any of the standard principles for concept validity, 'minority' is unwieldy and baseless in sociological inquiry and in the behavioral and biological sciences. For example, "white women who make up a majority of the population suddenly [have become] a disadvantaged minority whose demands [are] juxtaposed against Black claims as equal" (Strickland, 1979: 4).
(7) The word symbolizes one of the most obvious brands of political correctness to have entered the discipline of sociology as well as the broader culture.

(8) Groups defined as minorities can overlap in numerous traits and characteristics or they may not share anything in common such as sex, racial identity, ethnic heritage, personal biographies, nationality, social class position, gender orientation, chances in the opportunity structure, access to power, family life styles, ad infinitum.

(9) The idea of minority does not allow for the lasting effects of racial and economic class inequities or the present-day consequences of white racism.

(10) The classification diminishes rational theoretical discourse in the social and behavioral sciences and completely discounts racial and ethnic group identity and hence legitimacy.

Each of these central points is maintained in this interpretive assessment and the hoped for outcome is the permanent removal of the concept from social science whenever discussions of race, ethnicity, and economic class-status are involved. For when the effects of race and ethnic discrimination are taken into account, "to be referred to as a minority is a disadvantage to those so labeled and maintains the power and privilege of those not in such groups" (Turner, 2000).

Minority is unquestionably extraneous to realistically formulated social policy. Certainly, it has zero usefulness in scientific medicine as a tool for categorization, diagnosis and/or treatment (Braithwaite and Taylor, 1992; Logan et al., 1990; Swignoski, 1996; Williams and Ellison, 1996; Wilkinson, 1997). Kendall Wilson—a well-known African American journalist—points to the economic and political consequences of the misused concept. He notes that "some critics of the word have stated that the term has 'watered down' the gains intended for African Americans in affirmative action and set-aside programs on the federal and state levels." In his comprehensive discussion prepared for this essay, John Sibley Butler points to the absurdity of incorporating white females in the same category as men and women of African ancestry. Understandably, widespread consensus exists among people of African
descent about this unanticipated outcome of the "minoritization" of their history, status, and identity.

Interestingly, the policy and clinical worthlessness and stigmatizing nature of the 'minority' construction were illuminated in a decision in California regarding its application.

San Diego—The City Council unanimously banned the word "minority" from city documents and discussions, saying the word is disparaging. In supporting the ban, Councilman George Stevens said people sometimes expect less of those who are labeled minorities. Councilman Ralph Inzunza said the term no longer applies because census figures show some areas don't have a majority group. USA TODAY WEDNESDAY; APRIL 4 2001: 7A.

Moreover, no contradiction exists between seeking to replace the minority classification and simultaneously talking about race (Edsall and Edsall, 1991; Feagin, 1991; Guinier, 1994; Guinier, 2000; McDaniel, 1995; Robinson, 2000; Wilkinson and King, 1987; Wilkinson, 1997; Wilkinson, 1999a). For those who have studied Demography, U.S. History, Biology, Physical Anthropology, and/or Social Epidemiology, race is a very basic constitutional and socio-demographic variable (Farley, 1996; McDaniel, 1996). In fact, the academic polemics surrounding it have minimal applicability in the biological sciences. "Owing to race and only race, it was American slavery that created [a] bottom rung disproportion, consigning en masse a whole people to unending . . . social debilitation" (Robinson, 2000: 79). Additionally, the meaning of race as well as its distinction from the politicized and emotionalized minority concoction are well articulated in "Race Rules: Navigating the Color Line" (Dyson, 1997). Dyson's insightful assessment underscores the historical fact that that there is only one population in the United States that has ever experienced slavery and centuries of systemic and pathological racism from majorities and 'minorities' and that is the African American race (Bell, 1992; Billingsley, 1992; Clayton, 1996; Du Bois, 1908; Forest, 1968; Hacker, 1992; hooks, 1998; Reverby, 2000; U.S. Riot Commission, 1968; Watkins, 1997; Wilkinson, 1991; Wilkinson, 1992; Wright, 1941). Also, the earliest Americans or American Indians experienced a protracted racist political culture and its enduring manifestations. No other component of the minority misnomer and basically racially neutral
category can make these legitimate claims (Blauner, 1972; Feagin, 1991; Franklin and Moss, 1994; Locust, 1988;)

'Race as context helps us to understand the facts of race and racism in our society. Race as a subtext helps us to understand the forms of race and racism in our culture. And race as a pretext helps us to understand the functions of race and racism in America. They are impure and flexible. ... I'm using these categories as a tool to analyze race and as a way to describe how race and racism have affected American life’ (Michael Dyson, Race Rules: Navigating the Color Line, 1997).

William Turner, a product of the University of Notre Dame and one of the leading scholars in the study of Appalachian African Americans, notes that ‘classifying someone as a ‘minority’ diminishes individual personalities and devalues unique heritages.’

“It is a term of political convenience, a nice-nellyism contrived and promoted by those in power . . . to describe who people are and thus how they are seen, by themselves and by others . . . ‘Just whom are we talking about when we refer to minority groups? Sometimes we’re talking race (Black American) or ethnic groups (Hispanics or Asians). In the next breath—depending on what is politically correct at the moment—minority refers to groups that experience discrimination in the workplace (women, white ones). Multiracial (or biracial) people, economically depressed people, people who are unemployed, white Appalachians, those in the inner city or on reservations are all lumped under the minority label. Then there are minorities such as gays and lesbians, those with physical limitations, and those with handicapped status and mental challenges.”

“The power structure has a vested interest in retaining the usage of minority. It functions to lump those who are rejected in the same package. How un-American. People are who they are—and not what they are . . . After all, to be called a “minority” robs people of their legitimate ancestral heritage. It diminishes the honor of separate histories and identities and experiences . . . It’s not only confusing, it’s also downright belittling. The majority of us should know better” (William Turner, “Wrong Word.” Winston-Salem Journal, June 21, 2000).

At the culmination of the 1970s, William Strickland, a former Research Fellow at the Institute of the Black World in Atlanta
and Professor of Political History in the Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, commented on "the personal 'lostness' [that] mirrors the condition of [a] race [that] has also lost its sense of what it once had been." He noted that the calculated political use of 'minority' was a relevant factor. "The minority question is simply one example of the way we have forewarned our right to define ourselves and the nation" (Strickland, 1979: 5).

"Perhaps the best place to begin is at the beginning, and the beginning was . . . when Mrs. Rosa Parks sat down in the white section of a Montgomery bus and sparked a movement, which inspired Black people throughout the nation and fired the imagination of the world . . . Then a most curious thing happened . . . [A] movement whose strength had been its non-materialism, a movement fueled by the Black church and rooted in southern folkways and national Black culture, was turned into its opposite by America's concessions . . . We have lost hegemony over the interpretation of our condition and America's . . . In all this rainbow of ethnicity, race as the basis of identity and privilege in America was downplayed. The black-white question that had convulsed the country for two decades seemed to melt away. Everybody now was the same. We were all ethnics and minorities together . . . But the Black movement and the minority and ethnic movements are not the same . . . Clearly then the term 'minority' is not a neutral designation. It is in fact a political and not a sociological concept. What I am suggesting, therefore, is that the conception of Blacks as a minority . . . is an ahistorical and badly flawed analytical tool" (William Strickland, IBW Monthly Report May/June 1979).

Conclusion

*Why Black Americans Should Eject from the Minority Concept*

"The term minority has evolved to the point where it is useless as an analytical concept, but very powerful as a funding category. The reason for the former is that a basic rule of classification has

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John Sibley Butler is a Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Management at the University of Texas at Austin. He has published extensively in the area of organizational behavior and entrepreneurship. His remarks were written specifically for inclusion in this paper.
been violated as commentators and "scholars" try to compare certified minorities with Black Americans of African, European and Asian descent. Related to this is how groups "bait-and-switch" Black Americans in order to get included in the funding minority category. This baiting and switching is an expected phenomenon when resources are involved. As one who was socialized as an American Negro, and not a minority, I think that it is time for Black Americans (of European, Asian, and African descent) to remove themselves voluntarily from this confounding and misleading category" (Butler, 2002).

Violating the Classification Rule

"I have been interested in this topic for quite some time, and wrote a piece that appeared in Society (Butler, 1990) that related to how "white minorities" have made use of the "just like Blacks" (other groups are hardly if ever included) argument to see themselves as members of a minority (but not Black) category. In a free country, people should be able to identify themselves in whatever fashion they wish, and all people should recognize this. But, like the Ancients taught us, although truth is forever changing, it stands outside of the thinking of people, like a lighthouse guiding one home. After reading the response to Professor Doris Wilkinson's informative work, it is undoubtedly correct that we need to think about how true the category of minority is to the robustness of all who would like to enter. More importantly, can such a category produce excellent research that stands as the ever-changing nature of truth? It is time for scholars to re-evaluate their tendency to compare all groups (immigrants, gender=white) as well as life-styles and health problems, et cetera. to the Black experience because the Black experience also contains elements of these."

"Perhaps the most interesting trend in the last thirty years is how majority group members gravitated toward the minority label. Undeniably all groups have their own history, but the greatest methodological error is to compare Black Americans (of African, Asian and European descent) to experiences, behaviors, or health conditions or groups. For example, in Mitch Berbrier's "Disempowering Minorities," the following statement is made: 'Certainly gays and Blacks and Deaf people should not be reduced
to each other. But to ask practitioners to simply stop using the term, period—to tell a Deaf or a lesbian client who claims to be a member of a ‘minority’ group that “you are not a member of a minority group”—seems, after so many years of struggling to allow people to identify themselves on their own terms, rather imperious.” This statement is not only revealing in terms of the author’s underlying argument but also violates all principles of classification characterizing the research process. One cannot say, Blacks and gays or Blacks and deaf people, and so on, because there are Blacks that are gays and Blacks who are deaf. As noted in my work, “Homosexuals and the Military Establishment” (1993), a white man who is gay is a white guy with a different sexual orientation and a Black woman who is lesbian is a Black woman with a different orientation than heterosexuals. One should not confuse behavior (even when the source is biological) with racial categories. This is one of the major problems with the “minority” category in research. Of course we can solve this problem by seeing the category as an interaction effect, say for example White gays or White deaf people. But this has not been done systematically (for example, as used in the literature women should be recorded as white women because this is what is meant 100% of the time), and we are left with categories that overlap all groups. Instead of having a clean category, we are left with one that produces confusing results.”

“Now realizing this does not mean that behavior groups, whether the behavior is biologically determined or not, have not had a history of people not liking them and discriminating against them. This is true whether the behavior comes from Black Americans, White Americans, or Asian Americans. But the proper theoretical framework is behavior, and not race. The term minority lumps all groups together, thus creating a ‘research’ category that can produce results that do not square with the realities of the world, and consequently leading to faulty conclusions.”

“For example, one of the interesting things about the title of Berbrier’s paper is that he argues that the term minority empowers groups. As I always inform my Asian students, never ever let them call you, classify you, as a minority. It strips you of your historical accomplishments and forces future generations to develop a complaint mentality. Let us not forget that it was
American Negroes and Black Americans, not African Americans (who mostly complain) that created the foundation for Black success in America. This success was developed in the face of extreme legal and racial hostility. Over 100 private colleges and universities were formed; business people, safe communities, and professionals were developed. “American Negroes” were not minorities, and they thought differently about the world. At the dawn of desegregation, many “American Negroes” quietly noted that only about 12% of the white population in the old south was “worth” integrating with because the majority did not share their thrust for the education of children. The point is that within America, there have always been people who could act and think like free people, in the face of hostility. Even today, some of the best-ranked private schools in the south are in the tradition of Negroes and self-help, while many of the previously all-white state schools of the south struggle for national prominence. Japanese-Americans (though they never developed an emphasis on building institutions or higher education) share historical self-help traditions of building shoulders through the systematic development of business enterprise. Among Europeans, those in the Jewish and Mormon tradition share this historical task of creating the preparation model for future generations in the face of hostility. In an interesting kind of way, the more historical hostility developed toward a group, the better off they are today (as measured by education, home ownership, etc.) if they concentrated on building shoulders. For example, Black southerners faced the greatest amount of legal segregation. Because they did the right thing, their future generations have the highest level of education attainment than those living in other parts of the country today. This is the main reason that Black Americans need to get out of the minority category. This also means re-engineering the history of self-help and the “can-do” spirit that categorized a people who moved from slavery to the building of institutions, community and family.”

“Of course the term minority has become powerful because it presents a funding category rather than an academic one. Like the old G.I. Bill of World War II, it carries with it a certain protection under the law. The difference is that earned veteran status, which was a yes/no indicator, was clear and easily measured.
In years past, African Americans replaced Negroes and Blacks and dominated this minority category. But resources have always attracted people. White females also became a minority, reflecting the fact they did not share, as a group, in the wealth and position fashioned by “whites” (males), but rather came to it as a result of birth or marriage. Although they are unquestionably white, their exclusion has lead to the creation of the ambiguous phrase “women and minorities.” Placing White females in the same category as African Americans is remarkable in itself, and is probably the most significant classification in the last 1000 years. But to be sure, the daily lives of White females, and other white “minority” groups, reflect the background of their primary racial and economic group; some are wealthy, some are comfortable, and some are from poverty backgrounds. That is, any rational analysis of significant life events (housing, marriage, children, friendship circles, etc.) clearly points to the fact that they live their lives as “white” people and are minorities only under certain workplace situations; any reasonable person understands that white females are not minorities in the sense of how the term is used. White men who marry white women do not say that they are married to a minority group member. But this should be expected when so many resources are connected to the concept of minority. While one cannot deny a complicated history of exclusion, groups should draw on their own relevant histories, and not consistently compare themselves to the history of Black Americans because this simply becomes problematic."

“The place of science is to develop theoretical frameworks to analyze where people and groups are, and what science is about is finding truths outside the minds of people, or thinking like the Ancient Egyptians and Greeks. We need to construct a behavioral paradigm that cuts through all racial groups, as opposed to arguing that a person should be placed in a minority group. As a matter of fact, it is because behavior is a different topic than one’s race that a meaningful analysis can evolve. Of course, health groups should not require the term “minority” for funding. But behavior acceptance, especially with respect to whites, is one of the most unusual movements in search of a paradigm.”

“A behavior model would show how certain behaviors that have not been out in the open or taboo become accepted in
society. Among all racial groups, this includes homosexuality and its struggle with religious and civic institutions, the tattooing of one’s body, divorce, living out of wedlock, having children out of wedlock, for example. It is especially interesting to see how certain behavior that was once stigmatized or forbidden has become accepted, or struggles to be accepted. These issues have been tackled in books such as Stephen Carter’s *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* and Matt Wray and Annalee Newitz’s *White Trash: Race and Class in America*. Behavior paradigms must be separated from race paradigms because the non-separation leads to mis-informed analyses and interpretations as well as information. If a white behavior group would like to be defined as a “minority” in the workplace, or when a federal grant is on the table, then God Bless America. But Black Americans of African, European and Asian descent need to do something else” (John S. Butler, 2002).

References


“Minority” Notion


Perceived Effects of Voluntarism on Marital Life in Late Adulthood

LIAT KULIK
Bar Ilan University
School of Social Work

The article presents a study dealing with the perceived effects of voluntarism on marital life in late adulthood among a sample of 595 Israelis (336 men and 259 women). These perceptions were examined from three perspectives: benefits, spousal accommodation, and harmful effects. Comparisons focused on different types of families, based on employment status (pre-retired versus retired) and actual volunteer activity (volunteer versus non-volunteer). The findings revealed that among all types of families, the prevailing tendency was to emphasize the beneficial effects of voluntarism on marital life, whereas perceived harmful effects were least prevalent. Synchronous families (both partners pre-retired) and asynchronous families (pre-retired participant / retired spouse) emphasized the need for spousal accommodation to marital life more than the other two types of families. In addition, men were found to emphasize the need for spousal accommodation more than do women. In asynchronous families (one partner pre-retired and the other retired), women showed a greater tendency than men to mention the harmful effects of voluntarism for the marital relationship. Congruent families (where both partners volunteer) showed a greater tendency to perceive voluntarism as having a beneficial effect on marital life than did other types of families.

Voluntarism has become an integral part of leisure culture in modern societies. This trend can be attributed, among other causes, to the awareness that welfare states are no longer able to provide adequate responses to needy populations. Thus, in many Western societies volunteers play an important role in supplementing and improving the services provided by various human service organizations (Hayghe, 1991). In fact, there are those who view voluntarism as a career in itself. In this connection, senior
citizens are a potential source of volunteer assistance because they generally have free time and extensive life experience (Fisher, Mueller, Cooper, & Chase, 1989). Given the growing centrality of voluntarism in the lives of senior citizens, there is a need to examine the factors that encourage voluntarism among that population. Although a number of studies have dealt with voluntarism among elderly populations, they have focused on specific issues such as motives for voluntarism in late adulthood (Herzog & House, 1991; Hulbert & Chase, 1991), health and voluntarism (Cohen-Mansfield, 1989) and background variables affecting voluntarism among elderly populations (Fisher & Schaffer, 1993). Thus, there is a lack of research on the family context of voluntarism in general and the perceived impact of voluntarism on marital relations in particular.

The basic assumption of the current study was that volunteer work, like paid employment, affects marital dynamics. On the one hand, it may enrich and vitalize spousal relations in late adulthood. On the other, when one partner volunteers and the other does not, jealousy and tension may ensue, especially considering that social contacts usually diminish after retirement (Kulik, 1999). Although attitudes toward the impact of spousal voluntarism may play an important role in stimulating or restraining volunteer activity among senior citizens, this topic has not received sufficient research attention. In an attempt to fill this gap, the current study examined the perceived impact of voluntarism on marital relations among elderly persons in Israel. These attitudes were examined from three perspectives: Perceived beneficial effects (e.g., the contribution of voluntarism toward enrichment of marital life); perceived harmful effects (e.g., marital tension or feelings of jealousy), and the need for spousal accommodation (e.g., taking the partner’s schedule into consideration and accommodating volunteer activity to the partner’s needs).

The study also examined whether the perceived impact of voluntarism on marital is affected by gender. Regarding gender differences, various studies have found that women show a greater tendency to volunteer than men, particularly in areas that conform to gender role expectations (Fisher, Mueller, & Cooper, 1991). Moreover, research has found that women are socialized
to focus on nurturance and interpersonal relationships (Gilligan, 1982). In addition, it has been argued that women are better able than men to cope with the demands of different social systems such as work and family (Barnett, 1993). Based on this evidence, it was assumed that women are also better able than men to combine family responsibilities with volunteer work. It was therefore hypothesized that women will be less likely to emphasize the harmful effects of voluntarism, and more likely to emphasize its beneficial effects.

Another issue examined in the study was the relationship between employment status (pre-retired versus retired) and the perceived impact of voluntarism on marital life. It is commonly believed that retired couples have more free time, which affects marital dynamics (e.g., division of household tasks and satisfaction with marriage). However, existing studies have yielded inconsistent findings, based on examination of one partner’s employment status (see, for example, Szinovacz, Ekerdt, & Vinick, 1992). Therefore, the combined effect of both partners’ employment status needs to be considered. Toward this end, recent studies have compared the attitudes of synchronous couples (both partners retired or both partners employed) with those of asynchronous couples (one partner is retired and the other is pre-retired) (Kulik, 2001; Szinovacz, 1996; Szinovacz & Harpster, 1994). Based on this approach, the current study compared perceptions regarding the impact of voluntarism on marital relations among synchronous couples and asynchronous couples.

It was hypothesized that synchronous-retired couples will have the most positive attitudes toward volunteer activity, i.e., they will be less likely to emphasize the harmful effects of voluntarism or the need for spousal accommodation. This hypothesis was based on the rationale that when both partners are retired, there is a decline in marital tensions generated by work stress. Synchronous-pre-retired families, in contrast, are characterized by relatively high role stress, which may exacerbate the harmful effects of voluntarism and highlight the need to accommodate volunteer work to family life.

In this connection, another question arises: How does volunteer activity *per se* affect perceptions regarding the impact of voluntarism on marital life? The present study also examined this
issue in the context of the dyadic unit. A distinction was made between congruent couples (where both partners either volunteer or neither partner volunteers) and incongruent couples (where one partner volunteers and the other does not).

Research Goals

1. To examine which perceptions regarding the impact of voluntarism on marital relations are most prevalent among elderly couples.
2. To examine whether there are differences in perceived impact of volunteer activity on marital relations, among each of the following three groups of participants:
   a. Men versus women.
   b. Synchronous couples (both spouses are pre-retired or retired) versus asynchronous couples (one partner is employed and the other is retired).
   c. Congruent couples (both partners volunteer) and incongruent couples (one partner volunteers and the other does not).

Methods

Sample and Data Collection

The study presented here is part of a larger project that dealt with marital relations in late adulthood. Data were collected from December 1997 to July 1998, using self-administered survey questionnaires. The research sample consisted of 595 Jewish Israeli participants, of whom 341 (57.3%) were pre-retired (up to two years prior to retirement), and 254 (42.7%) were retired (up to six years after retirement). Among the pre-retired sample, interviews were conducted in pre-retirement workshops offered by various workplaces and organizations. Most of the workshops were held about a year to a year-and-a-half before retirement. The organizations chosen to participate in the study represented a broad range of sectors and occupations (e.g., services, manufacturing, and commercial organizations). The sample of retirees was drawn primarily from pensioners’ clubs throughout the country (northern, southern, and central regions). Clubs were located in large urban localities and small development towns. The overall response rate was approximately 80%.
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Of all the participants, 336 (56.5%) were men and 259 (43.5%) were women. Participants ranged from 54 to 75 years of age. Regarding ethnicity, 186 (31.3%) were Israeli born, 244 (41.4%) were born in Europe, 68 (11.5%) were born in Asia, 60 (10.0%) were born in Africa, and 37 (6.3%) were born in America. As for religiosity, 345 participants (58%) defined themselves as secular, 176 (29.6%) defined themselves as traditional, and 74 (12.5%) defined themselves as Orthodox. Regarding education level, 189 (31.7%) had partial secondary education, 238 (40%) were secondary school graduates, and 168 (28.2%) had post-secondary (academic or other) education. With respect to volunteer activity, 253 of the participants (42.5%) volunteered, and 342 (57.5%) did not. In general, the distribution of participants by background variables reflected the distribution of the population in Israel in that age range (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1998).

Instruments

Perceived Effects of Voluntarism on Marital Life. The questionnaire was constructed for the purpose of this study, and included 10 items relating to the potential impact of voluntarism on marital life. Participants were asked to answer to the following question: What are your views about volunteering (regardless of whether you or your partner actually engage in such activity)? Responses were based on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Factor analysis by Varimx rotation was conducted in order to identify common content areas for the items that measured attitudes toward volunteering. The analysis revealed three factors which, taken together, explain 56.9% of the variance in this item. The first factor explains 25.4% of the variance, the second explains 18.0% of the variance, and the third explains 13.5% of the variance (see Table 1 for a list of the items in the questionnaire and their loadings).

Table 1 indicates that the first factor focus on the contribution of volunteering toward the marital relationship (henceforth “perceived beneficial effects”). The second factor focuses on the need to accommodate volunteer activities to marital life (henceforth “spousal accommodation”), and the third factor focuses on the
Table 1

Factor Analysis of Variables Related to Attitudes toward Voluntarism—Item Content and Loadings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Content</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Community volunteer work improves marital life.</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Both partners should engage in volunteer activity.</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Volunteer activity enriches marital life.</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. When volunteer activity detracts from marital life, the spouse that volunteers should give it up immediately.</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When the volunteer activity of one partner disturbs the other, it should be stopped.</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. When one spouse volunteers, it is important to share these experiences and involve the partner.</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The schedule of volunteer should be adapted to marital life.</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The success of the volunteering spouse depends on cooperation from the partner.</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Volunteer activity may make the non-volunteering spouse jealous.</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Volunteer activity may generate marital tension.</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

harmful effects of volunteering on the dyadic unit (henceforth “perceived harmful effects”).

For each of the three factors, one score was derived by computing the means of the items. The Cronbach’s reliability coefficient for the first factor (“perceived beneficial effects”) was .82;
the reliability coefficient for the second factor ("spousal accommodation") was 0.78, and the reliability of the third factor ("perceived harmful effects") was 0.40. Because there were only two items in the factor, the reliability coefficient was relatively low.

**Background Variables**

Data on several background variables were collected for participants and their spouses: Age, religiosity, education level, and ethnicity (Israeli, Asian-African, and European-American). In addition, participants were asked whether they or their spouses engage in volunteer activity, and how many hours per week they spend volunteering.

**Data Analysis**

Two-way MANOVA (4 x 2, family type x gender) was conducted in order to examine how family type (by employment status) and gender affect the perceived impact of volunteer activity on marital relations.

Four types of families were identified on the basis of employment status. Two types of families were defined as synchronous (both partners employed and both partners retired); and two as asynchronous (pre-retired participant / retired spouse; and retired participant / pre-retired spouse).

In addition, MANOVA was conducted in order to examine whether family type (by volunteer activity) affects perceptions regarding the impact of volunteer activity on marital relations. Four types of families were identified on the basis of volunteer activity. Two types were defined as congruent (both partners volunteer, and neither partner volunteers); and two as incongruent (volunteer participant / non-volunteer spouse; non-volunteer participant / volunteer spouse).

**Results**

a. **Differences in Perceived Effects of Voluntarism, by Family Type (Employment Status) and Gender**

Two-way MANOVA 2 x 4 (family type by employment status x gender) showed a significant effect for family type: $F(9, 1302) = 3.02, p < .01$, while univariate analysis conducted separately for
each factor showed significant differences between the four types of families only for the spousal accommodation factor. Scheffe tests indicated that members of synchronous-preretired and asynchronous families (pre-retired participant / retired spouse) differed from members of the other two groups (synchronous retired, and pre-retired spouse / retired participant). Of the four family types, members of the first two groups showed a greater tendency to emphasize spousal accommodation.

The same MANOVA also revealed a significant effect for participant's gender: $F(3, 432) = 4.84, p < .01$. However, when univariate analysis was carried out separately for each of the three factors, a significant effect was found only for spousal accommodation (see Table 2). In all four types of families, men showed a greater tendency than women to emphasize spousal accommodation. In addition, the MANOVA revealed an interaction between family type and gender for perceived harmful effects of voluntarism: $F(2, 437) = 4.18, p < .01$ (see Table 3).

Simple main effects tests indicated that for both types of asynchronous families (preretired participant / retired spouse, retired participant / pre-retired spouse), the women were more likely to argue that volunteer activity harms marital wife. By contrast, no gender differences were found for either type of synchronous family (i.e., pre-retired and retired) with regard to the perceived harmful effects of voluntarism.

In order to examine differences in ranking of factors, MANOVA with repeated measures for family type was conducted. Significant differences were found between the three factors, across all four family types: $F(2, 430) = 4.18, p < .001$. Simple main effects tests revealed that of these factors, perceived benefits of voluntarism had the most significant effect in all four types of families. By contrast, perceived harmful effects of voluntarism ranked lowest and generally received low scores (below midpoint 3 for all types of families) (see Table 2, “Total” column). The same test found a significant interaction between the three factors and family type with respect to spousal accommodation: $F(6, 876) = 4.34, p < .01$.

Newman Keuls tests indicated that among synchronous-preretired families and asynchronous (pre-retired participant /
Table 2

*Perceived Impact of Volunteer Activity on Marital Life, by Family Type (Employment Status) and Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>S - R</th>
<th>S - PR</th>
<th>AS - PR/R</th>
<th>AS - R/PR</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>F Family Type</th>
<th>F Gender</th>
<th>F Interaction</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>(.59)</td>
<td>(.45)</td>
<td>(.62)</td>
<td>(.61)</td>
<td>(.55)</td>
<td>(.52)</td>
<td>(.57)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.67**</td>
<td>5.96*</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>(.67)</td>
<td>(.48)</td>
<td>(.44)</td>
<td>(.60)</td>
<td>(.57)</td>
<td>(.53)</td>
<td>(.61)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Harmful Effects</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.25**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>(.77)</td>
<td>(.61)</td>
<td>(.58)</td>
<td>(.75)</td>
<td>(.72)</td>
<td>(.65)</td>
<td>(.74)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S - R = Synchronous Retired; S - PR = Synchronous Pre-retired; AS - PR/R = Asynchronous – Pre-retired Participant / Retired Spouse; AS - R/PR = Asynchronous – Retired Participant / Pre-retired Spouse

* p < .01

** p < .001
Table 3

*Interaction between Gender and Family Type (by Employment Status): Harmful Effects of Voluntarism*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S – R = Synchronous Retired; S – PR = Synchronous Pre-retired; AS – PR/R = Asynchronous – Pre-retired Participant / Retired Spouse; AS – R/PR = Asynchronous – Retired Participant / Pre-retired Spouse

retired spouse) families, the participants felt that spousal accommodation is just as important as the beneficial effects of voluntarism. In contrast, members of the other two types of families differentiated between these two factors.

b. *Differences in Perceived Effects of Voluntarism, by Family Type (Volunteer Activity)*

One-way MANOVA revealed a significant effect for family type (by volunteer activity): $F(9, 1584) = 5.58, p < .001$. When separate univariate analysis was carried out for each factor, differences were found between the respective types of families for all three of the dimensions examined (beneficial effects, spousal accommodation, and harmful effects) (see Table 4).

Regarding perceived benefits of voluntarism, Scheffe tests indicated that congruent volunteer families differ significantly from congruent non-volunteer families and both types of incongruent families. Specifically, congruent-volunteer families showed a greater tendency to highlight the beneficial effects of voluntarism than did the other types of families. Regarding spousal accommodation, the findings revealed that congruent-volunteer
Table 4

Perceived Impact of Voluntarism on Marital Life, By Volunteer Family Type (Congruent vs. Incongruent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Type</th>
<th>CV</th>
<th>C - NV</th>
<th>IC - V/NV</th>
<th>IC - NV/V</th>
<th>F Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>6.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>(.50)</td>
<td>(.57)</td>
<td>(.54)</td>
<td>(.51)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>4.49*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>(.49)</td>
<td>(.59)</td>
<td>(.63)</td>
<td>(.49)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmful effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>7.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>(.62)</td>
<td>(.77)</td>
<td>(.75)</td>
<td>(.54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* p < .05
** p < .01

families differed from incongruent (volunteer participant / non-volunteer spouse) families. Specifically, the latter type of families showed less of a tendency to emphasize the need for spousal accommodation. With respect to perceived harmful effects of voluntarism, differences were found between congruent-volunteer families and the other three family types. Specifically, congruent-volunteer families showed less of a tendency to emphasize the harmful effects of voluntarism on the marital relationship. In general, it can be argued that congruent-volunteer families differ from the other types of families (by volunteer activity). Specifically, the congruent-volunteers placed more emphasis on the benefits of voluntarism, were less likely to perceive volunteer activity as harmful, and were more sensitive to the need for spousal accommodation.
c. Relationship between Perceived Effects of Voluntarism and Time Spent Volunteering

Pearson correlations revealed significant relationships between perceived beneficial effects of voluntarism and hours of volunteer activity spent by the participant and spouse. Specifically, the more the participants emphasized the beneficial effects of voluntarism, the more hours both partners devoted to volunteer work (see Table 5). At the same time, the more hours the participants and their partners spent volunteering, the less they emphasized the need for spousal accommodation. No correlation was found between hours of volunteer work per week and perceived harmful effects of voluntarism.

d. Background Variables and Perceived Effects of Voluntarism on Marital Life

Pearson correlations were conducted in order to examine the relationship between background variables and the perceived impact of voluntarism on marital life. The following background variables were examined for participants and their spouses: Age, religiosity, and education level. No correlations were found between perceived effects of voluntarism and any of the background variables, except for a low-significant negative correlation between participant's level of religiosity and perceived harmful effects of voluntarism ($r = -0.20, p < 0.001$). Consistent with

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HVA/ Perceived Benefits</th>
<th>HVA/ Spousal Accommodation</th>
<th>HVA/ Perceived Harmful Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>-0.18*</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>0.29**</td>
<td>-0.21*</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HAV—Hours of Volunteer Activity

* $p < 0.01$

** $p < 0.001$
these findings, a negative correlation was found between spouse’s religiosity and perceived harmful effects of voluntarism \( (r = -0.18, p < .01) \). This result suggests that the more religious the participants and their spouses, the lower the tendency to emphasize the harmful effects of voluntarism. In addition, MANOVA was conducted in order to examine the impact of participant’s and spouse’s ethnicity (Israeli, Asian-African, European-American) on the perceived effects of voluntarism. These analyses revealed no significant effect for participant’s ethnicity \( F(6, 1074) = 0.49, p > .05 \) or spouse’s ethnicity \( F(6, 1074) = 0.04, p > .05 \) on any of the attitudes examined.

Discussion

It is important to gain insight into perceptions regarding the impact of voluntarism on marital relations—particularly in late adulthood, which is characterized by a decline in social relations that largely centered around the workplace. At this life stage, the spouse is usually the main confidant and primary source of social support (Anderson & McCulloch, 1990). Thus, emphasis on the contribution of voluntarism toward marital life may encourage such activity. By contrast, new social contacts established in the volunteer setting may arouse feelings of jealousy in the non-volunteer spouse and discourage the volunteer spouse from engaging in such activity. These arguments further underscore the importance of investigating attitudes regarding the impact of voluntarism on marital life.

One of the main conclusions of the current study is that regardless of gender or family type, the beneficial effects of voluntarism in late adulthood were highlighted most. At the same time, spousal accommodation was also prevalent, whereas perceived harmful effects were least prevalent for all family types.

Family type (by employment status) only affected one dimension of the attitudes examined, i.e., spousal accommodation. Specifically, this dimension was highlighted by two types of families: synchronous-preretired, and asynchronous (pre-retired participant / retired spouse) families. In families, high scores were obtained for this dimension (following beneficial effects of voluntarism). When one or both spouses are employed, it can be assumed that volunteer activity may upset the non-volunteer
spouse and constitute a potential source of tension in the family. This would explain why members of these types of families emphasized the need for spousal accommodation. Regarding gender differences, men showed a greater tendency than women to emphasize the need for spousal accommodation. This tendency is consistent with earlier gender-specific patterns that prevail during the period of employment. Employed women typically bear the dual burden of work and household responsibilities, and are usually the ones that accommodate their work schedules to the demands of family life (Izraeli, 1994; Lewis, Izraeli, & Hootsman, 1992). This pattern may continue in late adulthood, when retired women who volunteer outside of the home are usually the ones to accommodate their activity to family demands. These gender differences were found to be consistent for all four types of families examined.

Gender differences were also found in both types of asynchronous families with respect to perceived harmful effects of voluntarism. Surprisingly, in these types of families women usually placed more emphasis than men on the harmful effects of volunteer activity. By contrast, no gender differences were found between the two types of synchronous families. In this connection, the study indicates that asynchronous families experience considerable marital tension because the differences in employment status orient partners toward divergent spheres of activity (home versus work) (Kulik, 2001). Thus, because women naturally emphasize harmonious relations (Gilligan, 1982), they are more likely to highlight the potential harmful effects of voluntarism in asynchronous families, out of fear that such activity will generate tension in the home. It should be mentioned that no relationships were found between background variables and perceived effects of voluntarism, except in the area of religiosity. In this case, it was found that the more religious the couple, the less they emphasized the harmful effects of voluntarism on marital relations, perhaps because religious families are influenced by the injunction to help the needy.

With respect to the relationship between actual volunteer activity and the perceived impact of voluntarism on marital relations, the findings support the research hypotheses. In congruent families (where both partners volunteer), the perceived benefits
Perceived Effects

of voluntarism for the marital relationship ranked high, whereas perceived harmful effects ranked low. It should also be noted that in incongruent (volunteer participant / non-volunteer) families, spousal accommodation ranked relatively low. This suggests that people who decide to volunteer outside of the home and leave the spouse behind are not sensitive enough to the need to accommodate such activity to the partner’s needs. In the same vein, it is worth mentioning that a relationship was found between the spouse’s hours of volunteer activity and the perceived benefit of voluntarism for the marital relationship. By contrast, the number of hours devoted to volunteer work was inversely related to emphasis on spousal accommodation. It should be mentioned that the correlative nature of the study made it difficult to arrive at definitive conclusions and clear explanations of these findings. On the one hand, emphasis on the beneficial effects of voluntarism may encourage spouses to devote more hours to such activity. On the other, the time investment in itself may provide an incentive to develop attitudes that justify voluntarism. In order to clarify these issues, it would be worthwhile to conduct studies based on longitudinal designs.

Finally, some limitations of the study should be mentioned. Since the study focused specifically on elderly Jewish couples in Israel, future research might examine voluntarism among other sectors of the Israeli population such as Arabs and Druze. Such research would shed light on how different cultural norms affect the attitudes of people living in a given social context. In addition, it would be worthwhile to expand the research population and include people who have been retired for over six years in order to explore the impact of length of retirement on attitudes toward voluntarism.

Practical Recommendations

The research findings elicit several practical recommendations for third sector organizations that offer training and preparation programs for senior citizens who wish to volunteer. Because congruent-volunteering couples were most likely to express positive perceptions of volunteering, it would be desirable to encourage both partners to engage in some form of voluntarism. Altogether, the shared experience of volunteer activity may enrich
marital relations at this stage of life. Moreover, the need for spousal accommodation was mentioned frequently—especially by members of synchronous-pre-retired families and asynchronous (pre-retired participant / retired spouse) families. In light of this finding, elderly couples might be encouraged to accommodate volunteer activity to the family context in order to prevent potential marital conflict. In this connection, special consideration should be given to "incongruent" families (where one spouse volunteers and the other does not), because these families appear to be less sensitive to the need for spousal accommodation to volunteering. Specifically, programs for volunteers might combine theoretical and practical courses, which could include a unit focusing on spousal accommodation of volunteer activity. This unit might cover topics such as time management or planning a joint schedule of activities. On the whole, proper planning and preparation of elderly couples for volunteer work may enrich their marital life and prevent spousal tensions, while also encouraging them to contribute to their communities and to needy populations.

References


Perceived Effects


Will Churches Respond to the Call? 
Religion, Civic Responsibility, 
and Social Service*

EMILY A. LEVENTHAL 
U.S. General Accounting Office

DANIEL P. MEARS 
The Urban Institute

Despite national calls for churches to become more involved in social 
service, many churches may not be willing or able to respond. Drawing 
on sociological theory, previous research, and interviews with pastors and 
parish social ministers from Catholic congregations in a large, urban city in 
Texas, we examine key factors linked to church-based social service efforts. 
Particular attention is given to church leadership, race/ethnicity, organiza-
tional characteristics, social and political networks, and the intersection of 
these factors in affecting service provision and advocacy. We then discuss 
the likely impacts of policies calling for religious organizations to increase 
their social service activities.

The challenge we face today, especially those that face our children, 
require something of all of us—parents, religious and community 
groups, business, labor organizations, schools, teachers, our great 
national civic and service organizations, every citizen.

— President William J. Clinton, January 24, 1997

* Direct correspondence to Emily A. Leventhal at the U.S. General Accounting 
Office, 441 G St. NW, Washington, DC 20548, work (202-512-6988), email (leven-
thale@gao.gov). Daniel P. Mears, The Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center, 2100 
M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037, work (202-261-5592), fax (202-659-8985), 
e-mail (dmears@urban.org). The authors thank the anonymous reviewers and 
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the participants in the study. The authors are solely responsible for all analyses 
and interpretations provided herein. The views expressed in this article do not 
necessarily reflect those of the GAO or The Urban Institute.

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During the past decade, several remarkable shifts in U.S. national policy emerged, including welfare reform and prominent calls for civic responsibility and faith-based social service. In 1996, for example, the U.S. Congress passed comprehensive welfare reform legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) (Cnaan, 1999). One year later, President Clinton held the so-called Philadelphia National Service Summit (Clinton, 1997). And recently, under President Bush’s administration, there have been calls to expand the participation of faith-based organizations in accessing federal funds targeted for social service programming (Bush, 2001). The underlying idea in each instance is that local and state autonomy, community-based efforts, and self-sufficiency are philosophically and pragmatically the most effective means by which to address social problems in America.

These different initiatives are striking because of the pronounced social service role anticipated for religious organizations and the attendant potential for blurring the boundaries between church and state (Rosen, 2000). The “charitable choice” provision of PRWORA mandates, for example, that religious organizations be included as eligible providers by states that contract with non-profit organizations for social services (Chaves, 1999). Similarly, and as reflected in President Clinton’s remarks at the Philadelphia Summit and President Bush’s inaugural speech, religious organizations increasingly are being asked to assume greater responsibilities for providing or promoting social services. A central question, though, is to what extent, how, and why religious organizations can or will respond to these calls.

Considerable research has focused on secularization processes (Chaves, 1994; Regnerus and Smith, 1998). Similarly, a large body of research has evolved around the issue of church involvement in social services (Cnaan, 1999; Demerath et al., 1998; Harris, 1999; McRoberts, 1999; Williams, 1999). Yet relatively little research has focused on factors affecting the capacity or willingness of religious organizations to respond to recent initiatives. Such research is needed because it can address simplified or incorrect assumptions about how churches will respond.

Taking these observations as a point of departure, this paper draws on previous theoretical and related empirical research to
identify the potential salience of several key factors on church responsiveness to calls for greater social service. Because of their theoretical importance and the emphasis given to them in previous research, we focus particular attention on the role of leadership, race/ethnicity, organizational characteristics, and social and political networks as they relate both to social service and advocacy. We also focus on the intersection of these factors to highlight that their influence frequently is contingent on one another. More generally, we emphasize the notion that church responsiveness, and how that responsiveness is manifest, is apt to vary considerably within and across different denominations.

To explore the relevance of these factors, we provide a case study analysis of social service activities of one denomination. In particular, we focus on a large, urban city in Texas and churches within a denomination, Catholicism, noted for its longstanding history of social service activity. Analyses center around in-person and in-depth interviews conducted with pastors and parish social ministers from these churches. The interviews occurred immediately after a concerted effort by the local diocese to promote greater church involvement in social service initiatives. In the remainder of the paper, we outline several broad theoretical issues, review the data used for this study, and then discuss the findings and their research and policy implications.

Theoretical Background

In this section, we outline a series of theoretical issues that will be explored in greater depth in the subsequent analyses. Our central thesis is that these issues affect church responsivity in complex ways, and that attempts to promote greater church involvement in social service initiatives thus requires greater attention to them.

Leadership

The leadership in any organization is central to the kind of activities the organization undertakes (Kalleberg et al., 1996). In organizations that are hierarchically structured and where decisionmaking authority is vested primarily in one person, leadership assumes a particularly salient role in affecting the kinds of
activities pursued. Of particular relevance for the present discussion is that in many denominations, even those such as the Catholic church, which is centralized and hierarchically structured, substantial decisionmaking authority rests with local church leadership (Cohn, 1993; Stark, 1998). This authority can be constrained or enhanced by the theological and political orientations of congregations (Ammerman, 1997; Wood, 1994). But the potential for church leadership to promote or inhibit certain activities is nonetheless considerable. We can anticipate, for example, that some church leaders are more aggressively committed than others to promoting social service, and some may be opposed to such efforts.

Race/ethnicity

Considerable research attests to the links between race/ethnicity, religious affiliation, and involvement in social service and justice-oriented activities (e.g., Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990; Pattiillo-McCoy, 1998; Cavendish, 2000). Some studies specifically attest to the role of race/ethnicity in whether a church pursues public funding for social service initiatives. Chaves (1999), for example, found that African-American congregations were much more likely than white congregations to apply for public funds, and argued that among African-Americans there are fewer cultural or institutional barriers between church and state and that clergy in African-American churches have more power and authority to pursue programming of their choice.

Building on such research requires, in part, exploring whether and how similar observations extend to other groups. For example, within the Catholic church, there have been prominent social service efforts within predominantly Latino parishes, efforts that differ markedly from those of non-Latino parishes (Pulido, 1991). This issue is especially relevant in the present context given the large number of Latino parishes in the study site. Latino Catholic parish identity may be associated with an expectation of active collaboration and involvement with government-sponsored initiatives. Consequently, there may be more responsiveness among Latino Catholic congregations to calls for such efforts. Furthermore, as a result of historical and cultural factors in the development of Latino Catholicism in the United States, Latino parish
identity also may be associated with an expectation that the church should—from a moral standpoint—be actively involved in advocating for the poor and oppressed (Skerry, 1993).

Organizational Characteristics

Two primary constraints on any organization achieving its goals are its membership size and resources (Ammerman, 1997, pp. 48–49). For example, for certain types of activities to be undertaken or sustained over time, a critical mass of members or a sufficient threshold of resources may be needed to go beyond simply maintaining an organization as an ongoing entity (Scott, 1998). Both of these dimensions are potentially relevant to but do not necessarily determine church action (Demerath et al., 1998). Proceeding from Ammerman’s (1997, p. 51) observation that “congregations vary greatly in the degree to which they are able to make decisions about how they will use the resources they have,” we explore whether and how dynamic leadership or congregants can result in social service initiatives even among churches of relatively smaller size or with limited resources. We contend that organizational characteristics indeed are relevant, but that these operate in conjunction with church leadership, congregational composition, and community context (McRoberts, 1999).

Social and Political Networks

Ties to social and political networks have long been established as factors critical to mobilizing community-based initiatives (Kling and Posner, 1990), no less for religious-based efforts (Williams, 1999; Wood, 1994). Indeed, many congregations are embedded within networks of diverse memberships and local and national organizations (Ammerman, 1997). These networks can serve to stimulate, enable, or enhance church-based social service and advocacy efforts, and, in turn, churches can serve as a vehicle through which other organizations pursue their specific agendas (Williams and Demerath, 1991). Here, we posit simply that the willingness and ability of specific Catholic congregations to respond to calls for social service will depend greatly on their involvement with other service and advocacy organizations.
Intersections of Leadership, Race/ethnicity, Organizational Characteristics, and Networks

There is reason to believe that the above-mentioned factors do not operate in isolation and, moreover, that frequently their influence is of a contingent nature (Ammerman, 1997; Demerath et al., 1998). Indeed, focusing on these factors independently may create a misleading image of whether, how, and why churches in particular social and historical contexts engage in social service efforts (Abbott, 1997). Several examples, relevant to the subsequent analyses, merit brief mention. Research suggests a coalescence between the activist ideologies espoused by Latino Catholic churches and the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). Both focus on grassroots, sometimes oppositional, community-based mobilization, service, and advocacy efforts (Marquez, 1990; Skerry, 1993). This merging of interests may lead Latino churches affiliated with IAF-like organizations to become more engaged in such efforts than they otherwise would or could. Similarly, Latino churches with leadership supportive of social service activities may be more likely to seek out or be targeted by activist organizations, in turn contributing to increased service or advocacy. Finally, Latino or non-Latino congregations with significant material resources may have little collective will to pursue social service and advocacy efforts without considerable mobilization by the congregational leadership (Demerath et al., 1998).

Data

To identify and explore the potential salience of the factors identified above—whether, how, and why they may be relevant—we first establish the level of social service activity among Catholic churches in a large, urban city in Texas and then examine in-depth interviews with pastors and parish social ministers from these churches. This approach is consonant with calls for closer, more nuanced analysis of church responsiveness to national calls for social service. Following previous research on the relationship between religion and social service (e.g., Harris, 1999; McRoberts, 1999), we employ a qualitative methodology to illustrate how church responsiveness may be linked to the specific factors outlined above.
Will Churches Respond

The selection of Catholic churches was based on several considerations. First, the Church has a history of emphasizing social service activity (Burns, 1996; Dillon, 1999). Second, the centralized and hierarchical nature of the Church contrasts markedly with the potential for local churches to be differentially involved in social services (Cavendish et al., 1998). Third, the range of smaller and larger as well as racially/ethnically diverse churches in the selected city provided an opportunity to explore the salience of organizational size as well as race/ethnicity. Fourth, and from a pragmatic standpoint, the study site provided access to a relatively large number of Catholic churches. Finally, in the diocese in which the study site is located, the local Bishop had issued a letter in 1995 to church leaders requesting them to hire a parish social minister to coordinate social service and advocacy efforts and to collaborate with the IAF. Catholic churches in this diocese thus were confronted with national and local calls to begin or expand their service initiatives. This situation in turn created a unique opportunity to employ a case study to examine factors affecting church responsiveness.

Before analyzing the interview data, we compiled church materials, along with church profiles (number of families, weekly church income, church activities) from a 1996 inventory conducted by the area's Catholic diocese. The inventories were based on self-administered surveys completed by priest and parish leaders. A simple count of the social service activities of each church was used to provide a crude quantitative estimate, supplemented with qualitative assessments by priests and parish leaders during interviews, of relative church responsiveness.

Specific activities in the diocesan inventory centered around four distinct categories and one advocacy category. The service categories include: basic needs (food, rent, clothes); special needs (assisting the deaf, blind, handicapped); helping ministries (assisting persons with terminal illnesses, AIDS, or the bereaved or homebound); support groups and outreach (assisting the elderly and drug abusers, providing marital and job counseling); housing and the homeless (working with Habitat for Humanity and local shelters); transitional support (assistance to immigrants/refugees); health ministries (running or supporting blood drives and nutrition classes); family issues (assisting with child
Table 1

Characteristics of Each Church in Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Total Service Activities (0–108)</th>
<th>Total Advocacy Activities (0–9)</th>
<th>Top Three Primary Social Service/Advocacy Activities</th>
<th>Leadership Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Groups/outreach (9) Basic needs (7) Ecumenical efforts (5) Helping ministries (5) Housing/homeless (5)</td>
<td>Serv./Adv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>47</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Basic needs (9) Groups/outreach (9) Advocacy (5) Helping ministries (5)</td>
<td>Admin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Basic needs (8) Groups/outreach (6) Advocacy (5)</td>
<td>Serv./Adv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>Groups/outreach (10) Basic needs (5) Family issues (5) Housing/homeless (5)</td>
<td>Serv./Adv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Groups/outreach (8) Advocacy (7) Basic needs (7)</td>
<td>Serv./Adv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Admin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Advocacy (4) Groups/outreach (4) Housing/homeless (4)</td>
<td>Admin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continued
Table 1

Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Total Service Activities (0–108)</th>
<th>Total Advocacy Activities (0–9)</th>
<th>Top Three Primary Social Service/Advocacy Activities</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Basic needs (5) Groups/outreach (5) Seasonal assistance (4)</td>
<td>Admin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Basic needs (4) Groups/outreach (4) Helping ministries (3)</td>
<td>Admin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Basic needs (5) Advocacy (2) Criminal justice (2) Seasonal assistance (2)</td>
<td>Serv./Adv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Basic needs (7) Groups/outreach (4) Advocacy (2) Helping ministries (2)</td>
<td>Serv./Adv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Advocacy (3) Basic needs (3) Family issues (2) Groups/outreach (2) Housing/homeless (2) Seasonal assistance (2) Transition support (2)</td>
<td>Serv./Adv.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

care, supporting youth-at-risk interventions); professional support (providing legal advice, mediation services, consumer credit counseling); respect-for-life activities (legislative lobbying for specific initiatives); criminal justice (supporting prison ministries and youth mentoring); ecumenical efforts (providing space for community activities and engaging in interfaith efforts); seasonal assistance (providing services needed during specific holidays);
and education about the church's social mission. Advocacy activities included initiatives that address hunger, poverty, prisoner's rights, etc.

For the different categories, there were between three and twenty possible activities from which to select. The number of possible activities across the fourteen service categories was 108; the number of possible advocacy activities was 9. Table 1 presents the count of total service activities (0 to 108) and advocacy activities (0 to 9) for each church, along with other church characteristics. Among all the congregations, the lowest and highest number of service activities was 14 and 55, respectively; the lowest and highest number of advocacy activities was 1 and 7, respectively. The priority given to specific activities varied across churches, with basic needs by far being the most commonly prioritized effort.

In-depth, in-person, semi-structured interviews were conducted with priests and parish leaders from Catholic churches in the selected city in 1997. Each interview lasted from one-half hour to two hours, and all were transcribed and coded for themes (Swift, 1996). The interviews themselves focused on the following topics: parish mission and factors affecting this mission (e.g., Diocesan or other dictates, racial/ethnic composition and identity of church, leadership philosophy); leadership views about the importance of social service, as well as topics covered in weekly sermons; and perceived barriers toward and facilitators of implementing social service activities (e.g., neighborhood context, church size and income level, affiliation and experiences with local advocacy organizations such as the local branch of the IAF).

Of the nineteen Catholic churches, thirteen elected to be interviewed and had completed the diocesan inventory. Despite repeated attempts to obtain interviews, pastors and parish leaders from six of the nineteen churches, one of which was African-American and the remainder of which were predominantly Anglo/non-Latino and relatively wealthy compared to the others, were unavailable, did not respond to calls, or declined to participate. In examining Latino versus non-Latino parishes, the racial/ethnic identity of the congregation was determined by whether a parish offered church services in Spanish and by whether the parish priests or leaders identified their church as
"being" "Latino." The latter designation usually corresponded to a predominance of Latino congregants, but this was not always the case. Finally, pastor leadership orientation was coded as "administrative" if the overriding concern expressed by the pastor was with internal church affairs and "service/advocacy" if it was with social service and advocacy.

In this study, there were six Latino, five Anglo, and two mixed congregations. The number of families at each church ranged from several hundred to several thousand, and weekly income ranged from between $3,000 and $25,000. (This information, analyzed below, is not presented more precisely or in the table to preserve the anonymity of the churches and the respondents.)

There are limitations to any case study, especially with respect to generalization of empirical patterns, and these apply equally to the present study (e.g., a focus on one denomination, one city, in one state, at one point in time, etc.). Recent research suggests, however, that there is a considerable need for greater understanding not only of whether but how and why the factors focused on in this study affect church social service activity, efforts for which qualitative methodologies are uniquely suited (Sjoberg et al., 1991). Such research can, for instance, generate greater theoretical insight into intra-denominational variation in social service activity.

Findings and Discussion

Our first step was to examine possible associations between church activities and leadership, race/ethnicity, organizational size, and IAF affiliation. Statistically, and here recognizing that the sample is small, we found little evidence that these factors directly affected service and advocacy activities (i.e., mean activity levels did not differ statistically). The two exceptions were for number of families and church income, each of which was modestly correlated with social service activities (.549, p = .052, and .424, p = .170, respectively). That is, churches with larger memberships and higher incomes were more likely to engage in service activities than were those with smaller memberships or lesser incomes. We also found evidence that service and advocacy activities were somewhat correlated with one another (.427, p = .145). With these analyses in mind, we draw on the interview data
to show that these factors can affect service and advocacy, and that they interact with one another in specific and identifiable ways.

Leadership

As church leaders, priests differ in their willingness to pursue or support social service or advocacy agendas, which in turn affects whether related activities are undertaken. For example, one priest at a large, predominantly Latino congregation, stated: "I'm very non-political when it comes to preaching." (3:1413) By contrast, a priest from a smaller, also Latino congregation saw his role as one of actively mobilizing church-based community services and advocacy:

My vision is for us to feel like this is our neighborhood, our barrio. The things that go on here that are detrimental to our children, families, elderly people, to human beings—we have to get rid of these. It's our responsibility to become active in achieving that goal.

Another priest, from another small and Latino, but less wealthy congregation, provided a somewhat similar view. However, he emphasized that provision of social services was itself inconsequential in the absence of initiatives aimed at social structural change and empowerment of disadvantaged populations: "I share some of [Saul Alinsky's disdain for social workers]. There's a need for social services and all that stuff, but that approach by itself is zero."

That Catholic priests seek to promote social service or advocacy activities should not be surprising, given the emphasis in Catholic theology and teachings on such activities (Stark, 2000). Yet it is evident that not all Catholic priests assume comparable leadership roles in pursuing or promoting these types of activities. Further comparison of the comments from two of the priests above illustrates the point. Despite coming from a large and relatively wealthier congregation, the non-political priest repeatedly emphasized the extent to which he was overwhelmed both by the daily administration of the church and by attempts to provide basic services. With little prompting, this priest energetically noted:

I have three priests now, but that's probably temporary; it's usually two. You barely keep up with performing the weddings and the
funerals and doing the Masses on the weekend, which may tie into your questions on "Why is the church not more interested in peace and justice and social activities."

Later, when the interview turned directly to the issue of social service activities and advocacy, the priest commented as energetically:

[Talk of] empowerment and all those kinds of political terms tends to turn me off. I'm a parish priest trying to take care of [thousands of] people. I don't have the funds to do it. Don't talk to me about peace and justice.

By contrast, the priest from the smaller and less wealthy congregation emphasized his attempts to "make every connection between liturgy and scripture and justice," an effort reflected in his approach to church activities: "The church is not sent to the church; the church is sent to the world, and we do try to do that."

The juxtaposition is striking: whereas the first priest focused on administrative concerns and demands, the latter focused on efforts to tie all church Masses and church-based activities to social service, justice, and advocacy initiatives. From these and similar comments made by the two priests, it appears that their respective orientations differentially impact church programming efforts. Indeed, this possibility was suggested later in the respective interviews by the hostile attitude of the first priest toward the local IAF, an organization widely known for its service and advocacy efforts, and by the highly receptive attitude of the second priest toward it.

It should be emphasized that leadership effects are not necessarily obvious or direct. For example, church 3, with the more administratively-focused pastor, was engaged in almost three times as many social service and advocacy activities as either church 12 or 13, which were similar in most respects to church 3 save that they were staffed by more service/advocacy-oriented pastors. Such patterns should not obscure, however, that the pastors' leadership orientations can and influence a church's level of activities. For example, in church 3 the level of activity arguably should have been considerably higher given that the congregation was wealthy, Latino, and affiliated with the local IAF, all of which
are factors that one would expect to enhance service and advocacy activities. As was clear from the comments of this church's priest, as well as other statements made throughout the interview, many of the activities at the church occurred despite his opposition to engaging in "extra" church activities, while other activities were effectively blocked by his lack of support. By contrast, church 4 was one of the most active congregations even though it was almost identical to the two least active churches (12 and 13). The reason, in large part, appears to be that this church had an activist priest and was able to support a parish social minister, who could help implement various activities.

The effect of church leadership also appears to be constrained and/or enhanced by receptivity to the inclinations of congregations as well as the willingness of congregations to push their leaders into action. As but one example, the parish social minister from one of the smaller, Latino Catholic congregations emphasized the critical role of the church priest in stimulating social service and advocacy among parishioners, yet stressed that the priest's actions reflected a willingness to act on the behalf of the wishes and needs of the congregation:

[The priest] realized, or we made him realize, that there was a flooding [problem in the area]. So he started to talk to the City Council. Then, a lot of our parishioners were employed at [Company X]. They were having problems—they weren't getting paid well and their working conditions were not good. So, [the priest] got out there, rounded [the parishioners] up; [then] they went to [the company] and fought—and things got better.

The priest himself echoed the social minister's comments about the parishioners pushing him, stating: "Whatever issues or areas of advocacy come up, it's really the people themselves that really take the issue there." Nonetheless, it is evident that with a less receptive priest, the congregation's efforts likely would not have had nearly the same impact, if any.

The idea that the influence of church pastors is influenced by their congregations is captured in part by Becker's (1998) distinction between community and leader congregations, similar to our distinction above between administrative versus service/advocacy-oriented leadership approaches. In Becker's (1998, p. 242) terms, "the role of the pastor in a community congregation
is largely that of a professional hired to perform certain ritual and administrative tasks, and to facilitate the process of congregational consensus seeking." Such leaders are apt to be more administratively-oriented and to support only those activities initiated by the congregation. By contrast, pastors of leader congregations "do not simply want to live their own values; they want to change the world" (p. 242). For this reason, they frequently are proactive about promoting specific issues that affect both the congregation and the community in which it resides. This characterization applies well to the two pastors discussed above, and the culture of the respective congregations as well. Leadership thus can be a critical aspect of service and advocacy but the types and success of efforts undertaken by church leaders, including those aimed at blocking certain activities, can depend significantly upon the views and actions of the congregation (Ammerman, 1997; Wood, 1994).

Race/ethnicity

In contrast to the Anglo and racially/ethnically mixed congregations, Latino congregations more consistently voiced concern about social service and advocacy as constituting central aspects of parish efforts and as being reflective of the quality of parish life generally. However, this concern is not directly reflected in actual levels or types of service and advocacy activities. One reason is that the two least active Latino congregations could not support even a part-time parish social minister. Yet, as church 4, similar in most respects to these two churches, attests, the presence of a parish social minister can dramatically elevate service and advocacy activities, even with few congregants and relatively little income. Thus, if churches 12 and 13 had been able to afford a full or part-time parish social minister and if their level of activity then rose to that of church 4, an apparent "Latino" effect would have become readily apparent; in fact, six of the most active churches then would have been comprised of predominantly Latino congregants.

In short, it is likely that Latino congregations are more responsive to calls for increased social service as well as advocacy, even when this responsiveness is not readily apparent. Because of such barriers as the ability to hire part-time staff, this greater responsiveness may in many instances not be actualized.
Yet the question arises as to why such a difference would be present at all. That is, why would Catholic Latino congregations be more focused than non-Latino ones on service and advocacy? The comments of a priest from the most active Latino congregation—indeed, the most active church in this study—are illustrative:

We’ve been fighting the erosion of our land [and] our people, the knocking down of our homes, the [proposed] mall, [a representative] on the City Council, for his greed and indifference to people’s feelings and the value of history. . . . We have advocated for a change in the minimum wage law, for the ten-dollar an hour starting wage for workers, against the tax abatement to companies who are making millions. . . . [And] we’ve been told to shut up by the mayor, to whom I said, “Go to hell.”

Such forceful, and generally quite specific, comments suggest a clear sense of oppression and discrimination, as well as a mandate to fight back.

By contrast, many of the non-Latino parish priests expressed much less of a sense of injustice or a need to promote greater provision of services by local or state government. The cautious statements of a priest from an Anglo church are illustrative:

I think there definitely should be a role [for the church in community development]. We certainly shouldn’t just kind of step aside and say, “Well, go your own way.” But there’s a delicacy in terms of how far. . . . Instead of saying, “The state government should be doing this [i.e., some type of activity],” I’d rather talk about influences in our society, then leave it up to people to decide.

This priest’s comments are telling in that they intimate that advocacy would be lower among Anglo congregations. And, indeed, advocacy was a primary activity for almost all (6 of 8) of the Latino and mixed congregations but only 1 of the 5 Anglo congregations.

In short, Latino and mixed congregations actively supported and pursued social service and advocacy activities, whereas Anglo congregations supported a range of service activities but were much more reserved about advocacy. This reservation, coupled with the fact that most of the Anglo churches (4 of the 5) were led by an administratively-oriented pastor, suggests that such congregations are less likely to be responsive to calls for increased
service, much less advocacy. Insofar as Anglo congregations are responsive, the motivation and energy are likely to come from specific congregants rather than the leadership or a concerted effort of the entire congregation.

Drawing on theories about symbolic resources and racial/ethnic identity helps to understand these racial/ethnic differences. Symbolic resources include discourses and the use of sacred symbols (Bruce, 1994), and provide a powerful means by which to promote social action and create solidarity (Williams and Alexander, 1994). Similarly, racial/ethnic identities can provide a strong basis for social action (Olzak and Nagel, 1986). Symbolic resources and racial/ethnic identity assume particular importance in the context of Latino populations and religiously-based activities, since the majority of American Latinos identify as Catholics. That is, a coalescence exists in which symbolic resources, racial/ethnic identity, and Catholic theology combine to infuse Latino Catholic congregations with the view that service and advocacy are central to being a congregant (Hwang and Murdock, 1991; Roof and Manning, 1994).

Apart from observing differences between Latino and Anglo congregations, it is notable that among Latino congregations there also was considerable variation with respect to each church’s specific racial/ethnic composition. For example, most members of predominantly Latino congregations were of Mexican heritage, but many were of Central American descent. There also were significant numbers of recent Spanish-speaking immigrants with no fluency in English.

Such variations suggest the need for exploring the relationship between race/ethnicity and the willingness or ability of a congregation to undertake service initiatives. It may be that focusing on racial/ethnic composition itself glosses over substantial differences in how specific sub-populations of a racial/ethnic group affect social service efforts. Consider the remarks of a priest at one of the predominantly Latino Catholic churches:

I heard a priest talk about the [five] levels of Spanish people. [First], those who have recently arrived from some other country and who speak no English and have no cultural ties to the United States. [Second], those whose children begin to speak English because
they’re in schools, but the parents don’t—they still speak only Spanish and have strong cultural ties to their home country of origin. [Third], those where both the parents and children are becoming bilingual, are beginning to have greater cultural ties to the United States, but they still know they’re really Latins. [Fourth, those] where the parents and children are bilingual but are losing their cultural connection to their country of origin. [And fifth], those who have Spanish last names and know neither the language nor the culture of the country in which [their parents] grew up. We have all of those people, but we are heavier at the first three levels than the other two. And so, in ministry, we have to keep in mind all of those things.

Regardless of whether this priest’s views are accurate, they raise a concern expressed by many church leaders during the interviews—namely, the importance of addressing the diverse needs of their congregants and of not viewing race/ethnicity as an all-encompassing category (Flores-Gonzalez, 1999). The issue is important because diversity of membership increasingly is a challenge confronting many congregations (Cnaan, 1999). It is important, too, because it suggests that attempts to categorize congregations as “African-American,” “Hispanic,” or “Anglo” may obscure more than they clarify (Olzak and Nagel, 1986).

Organizational Characteristics

Many priests interviewed in this study expressed the view, echoed by research (e.g., Ammerman, 1997), that church size and financial assets constrained the ability of the congregation to engage actively in various social service or advocacy efforts. As indicated above, in this study the association between these two factors and church service and advocacy levels is relatively strong. However, reliance on size and income to predict activity levels can be misleading. For example, two of the most active churches (2 and 4) had similar levels of service and advocacy activities, yet were quite different in composition and resources (church 2 was much larger and wealthier than church 4). Moreover, both were significantly less wealthy than the wealthiest church in this study but engaged in considerably more activities. Congregation size and income thus constrain “on average” the social service and advocacy activities of Catholic churches in this study, yet
some smaller, less wealthy congregations engage in high levels of activity and some larger, more wealthy congregations engage in relatively few activities.

Organizational and financial constraints—including the extent to which they are perceived as constraints—appear to be salient primarily when leaders adopt a bifurcated vision of church activities as involving administrative versus "extra," non-administrative tasks. In this way, leadership and organizational constraints appear to interact. Indeed, in churches where the priests strongly emphasized their administrative rather than social service responsibilities, organizational constraints were more consistently mentioned as barriers to service and advocacy. Conversely, in churches where such activities were viewed as intrinsically tied to church life, organizational constraints were less likely to be viewed as barriers. Why? In these churches, organizational factors appear to be less constraining because they are not viewed as necessary for action. The distinction that again emerges, then, is one between community/administrative versus leader/activist congregations (Becker, 1998), with the latter more likely to construe service and advocacy as a moral mandate to be lived. Even so, as discussed earlier, there is a minimal threshold below which involvement in these activities becomes difficult.

Social and Political Networks

We focus here on the potential relevance of social and political linkages, especially affiliation with the local branch of the IAF, for church social service initiatives. Although there is no evidence of a statistical association between IAF affiliation and service or advocacy activities, many priests, even those who disliked the local IAF, stated that IAF affiliation was critical to having a societal impact. One priest commented, for example, that even though the local IAF was not a consistent presence in his church's activities, there was a "need to be involved in some sort of coalition... because that's the only way churches can make an impact on society."

Any influence of IAF affiliation is, however, likely to be contextual and to depend on the needs and abilities of specific congregations. That is, for particular churches, IAF affiliation may be especially helpful in promoting specific service and advocacy
activities (Warren, 1995). For example, affiliation with the IAF appears to assist the poorest congregations in developing an ability to engage in more service activities than they otherwise could, and particularly advocacy initiatives that they otherwise might not consider pursuing. As the priest at one church noted: "There's been a real spill-over effect [of the association with the IAF]—it's helped to develop some leaders [within the parish] and given them confidence." (2:1019) Another priest, also from a relatively small and poor congregation stated: "The IAF came to me. They were very insistent. I totally agree with what they're doing, [and] now I'm getting to be part of the political system."

Clearly, however, affiliation with activist organizations like the IAF need not always involve a change in church activities, especially if the affiliation is primarily symbolic, as it was in several of congregations in this study. One priest wryly commented: "Yeah, we pay dues [for membership in the local IAF] because the Bishop says we should—to keep him off my back."

Several church leaders viewed affiliation with the IAF as mutually beneficial for their church and the IAF, but only if a particular issue was of equal interest to both. Otherwise, collaborations were viewed as unlikely or, if undertaken, unlikely to have an impact. One priest commented:

Have the [local IAF's] programs inspired ours? I don't think so. In Latin America, the word used for agitation is "toma de conciencia," as opposed to "concientizar." [The first means] to become aware of what's going on in your world, [the second] is to just tell people about something and get them to agree with you.

Here, the priest was noting that the IAF, while occasionally helpful to the church, was not essential for engaging in service or advocacy activities. Why? As revealed in his response, the priest believed that there is a cultural difference between his Latino congregation and the primarily African-American local IAF organization regarding what are viewed as accepted or legitimate approaches to addressing social problems or to undertaking social service initiatives. Thus, the affiliation was primarily symbolic rather than instrumental to this church's activities.
Conclusion

Given national calls for religious organizations to assume more civic responsibility for addressing social problems, there is a pressing need to understand whether, to what extent, and under what conditions they will be responsive. Furthermore, as the line between church and state becomes increasingly blurred—whether through statutory policies, legal decisions, or general social and political trends—the responsiveness of religious denominations to this call has emerged as an especially important phenomenon to understand. Although recent research has proven suggestive, there is much theoretical and empirical research that remains to be done. And there is, as this same research indicates, an especially pressing need for research that provides a more nuanced examination of potential intra-denominational variation in the willingness and ability of specific denominations to undertake social service and advocacy efforts.

The present study addressed this need through a case study of variation in Catholic church service and advocacy activity in a large urban city in Texas. The results indicate considerable variation in the types and levels of service and advocacy activities undertaken by different Catholic churches. This variation in part was attributable to differences in leadership among the churches, the racial/ethnic composition of the congregations, affiliation with the local IAF, and to the unique intersection of these factors in specific congregations.

These findings suggest that greater attention should be paid to assessing the impacts of existing and proposed legislation aimed at promoting greater faith-based involvement in social service. We should not assume, for example, that all denominations will respond or that within a given denomination all churches will respond equally (Harper and Schulte-Murray, 1998; Stark, 2000; Wineburg, 1992). Moreover, responsivity in one domain (e.g., homeless shelters) does not necessarily entail responsivity in others (e.g., job training or legal support, or advocacy).

Although the generalizability of these findings needs to be demonstrated, they suggest the need for greater attention to understanding Catholic church involvement in social service and
advocacy as well as that of other religious denominations. Research should focus not only on between-denomination variation, but also on intra-denomination variation. And particular attention should be given to the direct and interactive ways in which leadership, race/ethnicity, organizational factors, and social and political affiliations can influence church-based social service and advocacy. There also is a need for more systematic attention to the types of activities that constitute "responsiveness." For some studies, this may mean the willingness to apply for federal grants (Chaves, 1999), but clearly a much wider range of possibilities exists.

References

Will Churches Respond


The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the child support and visitation perspectives of nonresidential fathers and custodial mothers. The focus of the study was to present definitions of child support from both non-custodial fathers and custodial mothers, the barriers they experience that prevent child support and visitation, and suggestions the parents have for improvements in the child support system. The data suggest that although nonresidential fathers and custodial mothers have similar definitions of what characteristics define child support, they have vastly different views of what barriers prevent child support and visitation. Interparental hostility appeared to shape their perspectives about child support and visitation. Recommendations targeting the negative perceptions parents have of one another are presented.

The terms noncustodial father or nonresident father refer to men who do not live with their children due to separation from the mother, divorce or because the child was born out of wedlock (Fox & Blanton, 1995). Almost 30% of all children are currently being raised in single-parent homes and have a nonresident parent (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999). The separation of parents from their children has received attention from policy makers in recent years, partly due to its impact on children. Children raised in single-parent homes are more likely to experience poverty than those raised in two parent households (Bianchi, 1995; Bowen, Desimone, & McKay, 1995). Increased emphasis on child support enforcement has been viewed as a means of decreasing poverty.
rates for single-parent families and thereby lessening the negative effects of single-parenthood (Wolk, 1999). Thus, the reasons noncustodial parents pay child support and visit their children are important to understand. The predominant themes in the research literature for nonpayment of child support are insufficient income (Sorenson, 1997) and a poor relationship with the child's mother (Seltzer & Brandreth, 1994).

One of the primary reasons for the nonpayment of child support is the income level of the noncustodial parent. Studies focused on inner-city nonresident fathers have found that they have a limited ability to pay child support (Furstenburg, 1995; Kim & Mizell, 1997; Stier & Tienda, 1993). Young nonresident fathers have considerably lower earnings and higher poverty rates than other men in their age group (Lerman & Ooms, 1993; Pirog-Good & Good, 1995). Research conducted by Garfinkel and Oellerich (1989) found that never-married noncustodial fathers earn income that is less than half of divorced fathers.

In addition to low income levels, inconsistent child support has also been tied to the poor relationship between separated parents (Demo & Ganong, 1994). The nature of the relationship between the nonresident father and the custodial mother has been identified as the one factor that consistently hinders the relationship between the nonresident and his children (Fox & Blanton, 1995; Aldous, 1996). Since resident mothers act as gatekeepers who control access to their children, they have the power to dictate the child's relationship with the father (Fox & Blanton, 1995; Stier & Tienda, 1993). Unfortunately, the restricted access reduces the incentives for working fathers to invest in their children (Stier & Tienda, 1993).

Also to be considered is the remarriage of either parent. Since remarriage increases the complexity and strains of balancing old and new family relationships, parental involvement may decrease after the new union (Seltzer & Bianchi, 1988). The limited studies available concerning the attitudes of fathers toward parenting suggest that these attitudes depend on their current family arrangements, relationships with their former spouses or partners and children, social background and involvement, including visitation, with nonresident children (Seltzer & Brandreth, 1994). Poor parental interaction, restricted access to children, and new
romantic relationships may greatly affect child support payments and visitation, since research has shown that motivating young men to fulfill their financial responsibilities may be as important as providing job training (Lerman & Ooms, 1993).

The barriers to child support of low-income levels and hostile interparental relationships are important to understand, since there is an enormous gap between child support payment guidelines and what single-parent families receive. According to the Wisconsin child support guidelines, if all nonresident fathers fulfilled their child support obligations in the period from 1990 to 1996, an estimated $34 billion more in child support would have been paid (Sorenson, 1997). Kim and Mizell (1997) found fathers who do not encounter barriers to visitation are more likely to pay child support. Positive interaction and emotional support appear to have benefits for both the custodial mother and nonresidential father. Nonresident fathers seemed to gain confidence in their ability to provide for their children when they had social support, encouragement and assistance (Kim and Mizell, 1997). Moreover, when the nonresident father is more involved in child rearing, the resident mother has added support and is able to be a better mother (Aldous, 1996).

The cited research showing the benefits of visitation and supportive emotional relationships in the area of child support and parenting illustrates that policy makers and service providers would benefit from understanding what barriers prevent families from interacting supportively and thus receiving child support. Studies that included the perspectives of both nonresident fathers and resident mothers concerns over child support and visitation issues were not found in the literature. Previous research has been limited to definitions of fatherhood by parents, which included aspects of financial and emotional support for both mothers and fathers (Hamer, 1997).

In this study, both nonresident fathers and resident mothers specifically discuss their views about child support and visitation, which makes this investigation truly unique. The purpose of conducting these focus groups was to investigate attitudes and opinions of nonresident fathers and resident mothers in Georgia regarding child support, payments, visitation, and Child Support Enforcement. The scope of this study focuses exclusively on
the opinions of male noncustodial fathers and female custodial mothers, although it should be noted that parental custody in our society is not always restricted to a female parent. This study will outline areas in which noncustodial fathers and custodial mothers agree and disagree, and will show what problems emerge from their varying perspectives about child support and visitation. Possible solutions to bring parents' viewpoints together will be presented. The predominant themes are presented to inform future research and policymaking.

Method

Participants

Nonresident fathers. Participants were either current or former enrollees of the Georgia Fatherhood Program, a project designed to help unemployed or underemployed fathers find jobs. Group size ranged from three to 12 participants. All participants were African American with the exception of one rural group, which consisted of African American and White participants. An additional group of nonresident fathers not in the Georgia Fatherhood Program was conducted in Atlanta.

Resident mothers. Participants were recruited from names and addresses provided by the Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSE). Approximately 200 recruitment letters were mailed for each focus group site. A toll-free telephone number was set up for participants outside Atlanta to call if they planned to attend the group. Group size ranged from five to 12 participants. Similar to the nonresident fathers, all participants were African American with the exception of the rural group, which consisted of African American and White participants.

Eight focus groups were conducted by two research assistants in three locations in Georgia representing urban and rural areas. Each group was asked open-ended questions regarding the barriers to child support and child visitation. Three focus groups were conducted in Atlanta (nonresident fathers in the Georgia Fatherhood Program, nonresident fathers not participating in the Georgia Fatherhood Program, and resident mothers); three focus groups were conducted in Dublin (one group of nonresident
fathers in the Georgia Fatherhood Program and two groups of resident mothers), and two focus groups were conducted in Albany (nonresident fathers in the Georgia Fatherhood Program and resident mothers). Participants responded to a variety of questions regarding the payment of child support, nonresident parent visitation, and the impact of the parents' relationships on support and visitation.

Procedures

A list of questions was compiled by the principle investigator and the research staff. The group leaders asked the open-ended questions and allowed members of the groups to respond in a conversational style to issues raised by prompted questions. Each session lasted approximately two hours, and participants signed consent forms and were paid $20 for their time. Sessions were recorded via audiotape and an ethnographic model of data transcription, analysis, and presentation was employed. Analyses included a comparative analysis among fathers at each site and mothers at each site, comparisons between fathers and mothers across sites, and comparisons between nonresident fathers in the Fatherhood Initiative Program and nonresident fathers not in the Fatherhood Initiative Program.

Results

Several themes emerged for both male and female groups during the focus sessions. There were both gender differences and similarities in the areas of child support definitions, barriers to paying child support, ways to increase support, visitation rights, and child support laws and policy. Differences in perspective are illustrated in quotes and summary statements provided. There were no differences in perspective for participant fathers and fathers who were not participants in the Fatherhood Initiative Program.

Fathers and Child Support. Nonresident fathers defined child support as a role activity in which fathers provide for their children financially and emotionally. The following are typical responses from fathers in the focus groups regarding their definitions of child support. "For me? Supporting my child is providing for
em. Being there for em." "Being there for em every day. Helpin' them out at school. Going to PTA. You know, I do all of these but don't nobody consider it." "... I support child support. I also support a man being a man and taking care of his children and being a father. Being there, going to games. Going for walks." Fathers seemed to regard time spent with their children as the most important aspect of supporting their children.

Mothers and Child Support. Definitions of child support verbalized by mothers included aspects of child support cited by fathers, such as spending time with children and emotional support. One mother stated that child support was a father taking part in daily activities, such as taking the children to school and spending time with them. Another stated that child support involved helping the mother with her daily responsibilities of child rearing. A mother summarizing child support and its responsibilities stated the following: child support is "emotionally, socially, developing mentally, appropriate things for your children. It's not just money." The importance placed on spending time with children and supporting them was significant to these mothers, however, it did not negate the emphasis placed on financial support. When asked what came to mind when she thought about child support, one mother responded, "money, money, money."

Fathers' Perceptions of Child Support Barriers. Nonresident fathers gave numerous reasons why they failed to pay child support as ordered by the courts. Reasons included unemployment, physical disability, salary insufficient to pay child support and provide for self and current family, poor relationship with the resident mother, and a mistrust in the spending habits of the resident mother. Typical responses from nonresident fathers follow.

"... there ain't no job guaranteed you. You workin' on the job and then all of the sudden you may be working today and they lay you off..." "... you go to McDonald's and you make a hundred dollars and you've got to pay sixty." "... I've got five kids by this one lady and I ain't makin' but about $6.00 an hour. I can't, you know, I can't, every time I turn around somebody needs something and I can't afford to pay child support. That's why I try to be interested and get a better job so I can make the money to get these folks off my back." "... we would like it better is if
there was some kind of accountability to the noncustodial parent in terms of what, exactly, was being done with the money.”

**Mothers’ Perceptions of Child Support Barriers.** The most common response women cited as a barrier to child support was fathers’ new relationships. One woman stated, “I do not know where these men get these nerves at. They move in with more women with their children and leave us with they child.” Another woman described the effects of a noncustodial father’s new romantic relationship on child support. “When girls come in, they’re like relationships . . . I tell her (the girlfriend) you’ve got 2 or 3 children, you know how it is on me. Why you’re sucking up all the money, ask him nicely to buy his daughter some shoes or buy his daughter an outfit.” There were several other issues mothers identified as barriers to child support, such as child support withholding laws, payment of wages under the table, and drug addiction.

Some mothers viewed strict child support withholding laws similarly as the noncustodial fathers surveyed. They regarded wage withholding as a deterrent for men to work, thus preventing any type of financial support. “He does not want to work. ‘Cuz he knows that if he works, money will be taken from him.”

Another reason mothers found noncustodial fathers would not pay child support is related to the fathers’ wages being paid under the table. “He’s beating the system like that. He’s getting all these jobs which pay him cash money . . .” One mother described how payment under the table was a deliberate way to avoid child support payments. “ . . . he was working before I put him up for child support. He kept a job. The time I put him up for child support, he stopped working. He was being paid under the table.”

Drug addiction of the father was also cited as a barrier to child support for one of the mothers. She stated, “He has a lot of habits. He needs to put them down. If he could get rid of his habits then, I’m sure that he wants to take care of her [his daughter] and do for her. With all the habits he has, he cannot do that. He can not do his habits and want to take care of her too. It’s not going to work.”

**Fathers’ Suggestions to Improve Support.** Many nonresident fathers argued that fathers should do whatever is necessary to provide the child with support funds. Some fathers even stated
that they knew of noncustodial fathers who would engage in illegal activities to raise money for their child support payments, to avoid missing payments and going to jail. However, none saw this as a good solution. The possibility of jail time was viewed as motivating for one father, who stated that it made him focus on paying child support. He said, "the jail is a good deterrent now. It makes you tighten up maybe when you need to tighten up. You might need to speed it up a little bit harder to avoid jail."

Many of the fathers had suggestions for what should be changed about both their employment status and that of their children’s mothers in terms of improving child support levels. One suggestion was to work several jobs. One father stated, "...it’s our responsibility to take care of these children... You’ve got to do what you’ve got to do. I did it for three years... worked two jobs out there. You do that to survive.” Fathers were enthusiastic about participating in programs that would lead to better jobs. They described the current job training program they were enrolled in as one which "assist(s) you in bettering you skills. Getting over some barriers that’s keeping you from obtaining good jobs that you can pay child support." Fathers also argued for a change in current child support laws, where the government withholds all of the fathers’ tax returns when they are in arrears due to past unemployment. Many fathers felt the current policy was creating a large disincentive to work, that it created an environment in which "it’s not worth working."

Fathers were vocal about the working status of their children’s mothers and the accountability for paid child support. Many were in a position where they were paying child support and the mother was not working. This prompted many of the fathers to call for the end of welfare. More important to the fathers, however, was holding mothers accountable for the child support money they received. One father stated, "she’s [the mother] is going to Red Lobster or whatever and you can’t even go to Mickey D’s or Burger King and get a ninety-nine cent hamburger.” Another father said, “they should be able to show receipts once they get the check, what they spent our child’s, show the receipt what they gonna do. Show the receipt.”

Mothers’ Suggestions to Improve Support. Some mothers favored incarceration as a means of increasing support compliance from
fathers. They stated that Child Support Enforcement should stop taking excuses from fathers and make them serve jail terms. The following is a typical response from mothers who favored incarceration: “If you don’t pay, you got to jail . . . We have to sit here and suffer and take care of these kids by ourselves. They should get some of that suffering. As long as they’re on the street, they are happy.” One mother thought jail would appropriately punish fathers for working under the table. She stated, “lock them up when they do [receive wages under the table], lock them up.” Although many of the women favored incarceration, some mothers recognized that jail would not improve their financial situation, nor would it adequately punish the fathers. One mother stated, “When they get locked up, you’re still not going to get any money.” Another woman described incarceration in the following way, “jail is easy. Jail is a piece of cake for them.”

Another improvement in child support that mothers desire is more involvement by fathers in the daily activities of child rearing. One mother, who was in school, was frustrated that she had little assistance with the children from the father. “I go to school. He’s in child care. I have to pay somebody to pick my two boys up from school and get them home, by the time I get home. Why can’t he do that?” The barriers drug use created in paying child support was also something mothers felt could be addressed. One mother recommended that the state should send addicted fathers to drug rehabilitation. “Send them to rehab. If he don’t go to rehab, send him to jail.”

The viewpoints of fathers and mothers about child support are linked to their opinions on visitation and child support enforcement. In the next section, the perspectives of fathers and mothers regarding visitation and child support enforcement will be examined together.

Visitation conflicts and issues. The experiences of nonresident fathers in the area of visitation seemed dependent on the relationship they had with the child’s mother. Some fathers were able to see their children regardless of whether or not they paid child support. One father stated, “. . . I haven’t paid child support now in a while and she allows me, you know, to come and get my son or see him and spend time with him.” Other fathers found this was not the case. One father stated the following: “. . . it’s really
just the visitation part that [they] really, really control. I just want to see something better with the visitation. I ain't payin' all this money and I can't see him in all these months. You know, that's just not right." Too often, fathers found that even when a visitation schedule was established in court, it was left for the mother to decide whether or not the father would be allowed to see the child. One participant described his problems with visitation. "... we don't want you to see her nah, nah, we are busy tomorrow too. So what do you do? Even if the judge states like this visitation on Fridays at six o'clock until Sunday at six o'clock, 'if', and it says 'if', 'if' that's okay with time. She can always say nah, that ain't a good time. She can be difficult."

Mothers seemed to have equally varied experiences when it came to child visitation. Many mothers did not feel withholding visitation from fathers because they had not paid child support was the right thing to do. These mothers felt their children benefited from interaction with their fathers, and lack of financial support should not force these children to lose this benefit. One mother stated, "... my little, I let him go him daddy. Don't care if he don't give me any money. He gonna enjoy it. I let him." A few mothers viewed visitation as beneficial because it provided a break from the daily responsibilities they carried as the custodial parent.

However, the majority of the mothers had problems with the nonresident fathers and it influenced decisions about visitations. As indicated by the noncustodial fathers interviewed, many mothers directly tied visitation rights to child support payments. One mother stated, "No responsibilities, no visitation. If I put it where I am right now by myself, it would continue. If you don't hold up any responsibility, you're not seeing him." Overall, with the exception of the women who allowed their children to see their fathers, there was frustration that fathers could not or would not assist in the rearing of their children.

Ways to increase visitation. There were two primary suggestions made by fathers to increase visitation. The first suggestion was to mandate visitation rights for fathers who pay child support. One participant stated, "That's my thing, is child support without visitations. I think that the system should design if a man is made to pay child support, he should be able to visit or see
his child." Another father, who formerly had problems with his child’s mother in the area of visitation, spoke of how he overcame the problem through improved communication. "... at first, I had that problem [not being able to see my child], you know, hey you know. I sat down and talked to her..." The visitation improved. Other fathers described talking to the mothers as "brown nosing" or "kissing butt." Many felt it was worth it to see their children, whereas others were adamantly opposed. Interestingly, only those fathers who "brown-nosed" cited improvement in their relationships with the mothers and fewer problems regarding visitations.

Mothers did not offer many improvements to visitation. Those who felt visitation was beneficial to their children and/or themselves were positive about their interaction with the noncustodial parent. However, for those parents who did not receive any kind of assistance from the noncustodial parent, they were adamant that without some type of responsibility shown by the fathers, the fathers would not be allowed to see their children. However, this "responsibility" was not limited to financial payments. Mothers indicated that assistance in the day-to-day responsibility of raising children would be acceptable. One mother stated, "I would change the way the system is. Just like we check in every month, they should check in every month. I feel as though with that child support payment, they should have visitation rights in there. Where they have to get their child every weekend, or every day off, two days a week or whatever. That's to give us a break. I feel if they're not doing anything else, if we pay daycare, they should pay that. I feel they should make these fathers be more responsible fathers and being part of that child's life."

Child support laws and policy. Fathers had numerous suggestions about how to improve child support enforcement. Many fathers felt that mothers should be held accountable for the money they received. A few fathers felt that mother should also be forced to work. However, the motivation behind this suggestion was varied. Some fathers made this suggestion because they felt it was the mother's duty to share in the financial responsibility for the child, and these fathers stated they would want to continue to pay child support if their child’s mother was working. Other fathers were more self-serving in their motivation. One male
participant stated, “me, the first thing I would stop is welfare. With no welfare, she go to work. She go to work, she get a check and earn her money. And then you won’t have to worry about child support.”

Fathers were enthusiastic about the Fatherhood Initiative Program, and viewed it as a positive part of Child Support Enforcement. A typical response from one of the fathers is the following, “I’ve had good jobs before, but, you know, I think being here [in a job training program] and getting a good trade that’s going to help . . . is great. So I’m kind of thankful for child support. Maybe not the way it all happened, but it happened and I could be in a better position to handle that kind of problem . . .”

Mothers had numerous suggestions about child support enforcement policies and procedures. Some mothers felt that child support enforcement was too lenient when dealing with non-paying fathers. They felt that child support enforcement workers should try harder to find fathers who were not paying child support. After finding these men, the mothers then recommended that fathers should be held accountable. If fathers were not making a genuine effort to find work, they should be put into jail. Female participants’ feeling about programs such as the Fatherhood Initiative Program were mixed. A few mothers did not have information about the program. For those familiar with the work initiative, many were positive and felt that their families would benefit from the project. One mother said, “he tells me when he finishes this course and get these certificates, ‘they say I can get a job making $15 an hour. I can make $2500 a week.’ Okay, I can wait. I’m going to wait. March is coming. I can wait till then.” Other mothers were skeptical about the program and felt it simply gave fathers the opportunity to avoid or delay child support payments. One mother stated, “They’re not going to get no job. They’re sitting over there free. They don’t want to pay us anything.”

Discussion

The focus groups revealed that a diverse range of perspectives exists among custodial mothers and nonresident fathers in the areas of child support, visitation and child support enforcement.
Both sets of parents were in general agreement about which components defined child support. However, when obstacles to child support were discussed, mothers listed numerous problems that they experienced beyond the employment obstacles described by fathers. The barriers of drug addiction, payment of wages under the table to avoid child support, and the belief that fathers are spending money on new relationships rather than their families, illustrates that the nonpayment of child support can not be explained solely by the financial ability of nonresidential parents.

These focus groups revealed that interparental relationships can define nonresidential financial and emotional involvement with children. Support for this theory can be found in both mothers' and fathers' descriptions of how visitation is often determined by either a nonresidential parent's payment of child support or his willingness to shoulder the responsibility of daily child rearing. There was evidence that many men were not permitted to see their children. Although there were parents participating in these focus groups that had positive relationships, many held negative views about their child's mother or father. The interviewed men maintained that women should be held accountable for the money they received, whereas women felt men were trying to avoid their responsibilities as fathers. There was an undercurrent of mistrust and hostility among these parents, which shaped each gender groups opinions of one another and their views of child support and visitation. Encouragingly, issues surrounding child support were very important for these parents. Participants eagerly took part in the sessions, and often could not wait for the audiotape to start before they offered their opinions about this complicated area of family life.

Recommendations

The information collected in these focus groups shows that many parental opinions of child support and visitation are intertwined with levels of mistrust and hostility. It appears that barriers to paying child support and visitation may result from or cause these negative perspectives, which can only compound problems faced by low-income fathers who are required to pay child support. Since previous research has shown that parents
who participate in post-separation counseling are able to lower hostility levels (Gray, et al., 1997), the following recommendations are suggested.

First, both noncustodial fathers and custodial mothers could benefit from information about the financial status of their coparent. Detailed information about the costs of the custodial parent could help assure nonresidential fathers that the support payments they contribute are going towards their children. Similarly, mothers may benefit from a clearer understanding of the financial limitations of the wages that fathers receive and the financial burdens they face. Additionally, mothers appear to need more information on the job training programs in which some nonresidential fathers participate, so that they do not view these programs as simply a way to avoid paying child support. Secondly, child support enforcement policy makers may want to consider the benefits that parental counseling programs may provide. Parental counseling could help eliminate the misconceptions these parents have of one another, as well as promote positive ways to interact. Finally, more research is needed on low-income, single-parent families and their feelings about child support and visitation. This article offers a beginning to understand the challenges mothers and fathers face and the barriers they work against in parenting their children.

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For the full list of focus group questions or any other inquiries, please contact Theresa Ann Sipe at (404) 651-2973, tsipe@gsu.edu, Suite 870 UL, CHHS, Georgia State University, University Plaza, Atlanta, GA 30303.

References


This paper corrects the historical record on why and how school social work began in Hartford and who was instrumental in establishing the new service. The findings, based on a study of primary sources, revealed that a school principal, and not a psychologist as previously claimed, initiated the process that led the Hartford Charity Organization Society to appoint its Visitor, Winifred Singleton Bivin, a social caseworker, to also become the first social worker in the schools in January 1907. The social work profession, which owes its origin to the Charity Organization Movement, is also obligated to the Hartford Charity Organization Society for its cooperative work with the schools, which led to the inception and subsequent development of school social work by the schools and, in 1909, the appointment of Miss Sara Holbrook who subsequently became a national leader in the development of the fledgling profession.

This paper corrects the historical record on why and how school social work began in Hartford and who was instrumental in establishing the new service. The inception and early development of social work in a Hartford school, primarily based on an examination of primary source documents, is presented. The prevailing view, as reflected in the historical record or professional literature, is critically analyzed. Finally, the methodological and substantive implications for the profession are discussed.
Arthur Derrin Call (1907), contacted the Superintendent of the Hartford Charity Organization Society regarding a thirteen year old child, Nellie K., who “had been in the first grade for seven years and still she could not read a complete sentence” (Bivin, 1907, p. 1242). Call had observed a number of “extremely backward children” and believed “that the trouble in most cases was of a physical nature possibly needing medical treatment (1907, p. 12). It was Nellie, however, that “especially attracted [his] attention” that led to his request to contact the Society.

Winifred Singleton Bivin, a student at the Hartford School of Religious Pedagogy and the official visitor of the Hartford Charity Organization Society (1906, 1907), was sent to “investigate and assist” the Second North School (Call, 1907, p. 12) and began her work with Nellie (Bivin, 1907). After contacts with the home and parents, a visit to a specialist (who diagnosed “large adenoid growths”), and a subsequent operation, Nellie demonstrated dramatic improvement in hearing, weight gain, and improvement in school work (Bivin, 1907, p. 1242). Call’s (1907) enthusiastic reaction, as he noted Nellie’s remarkable improvements “was an incentive to the study of a large number of dull and backward children” (Bivin, p. 1243).

Four teachers, who were requested to refer children “they considered dull,” resulted in a referral of 32 boys and girls, from 9 to 14 years of age (Bivin, 1907, p. 1243). After tests and observations, it was determined that “eighty-four percent had defects of sight, defects of hearings, enlarged tonsils, adenoid growths or nervous disorders of a sufficiently serious nature to definitely hinder progress in school” (p. 1243). Seeking medical attention, the next step, involved home visits to secure parental cooperation and to assess the financial condition of the home, and to offer assistance to parents on behalf of their other children (Bivin, 1907). The assistance that was offered focused on obtaining needed medical attention and prevention of illness.

By May 21, 1907, “eighty children were examined by the visitor [Mrs. Bivin], of whom eighty-two percent were found to need medical treatment” and were treated by specialists (Bivin, 1907, p. 1244). The work included home visits; school, physician, and hospital contacts; medical treatment; examination of children for defective vision, throat diseases, and nervous disorders by
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specialists; surgical operations; provision of glasses; and commitment of two children (Call, 1907).

Call (1907), at the end of the school year, acknowledged the debt the Second North School owed to the Society and particularly to Mrs. Bivin. The Hartford Charity Organization Society (1907), in its annual report, quoted almost all of Call’s report on “Abnormal Children” and the work of Mrs. Bivin. The Society then concluded this portion of its report:

The excellent results of this work in the Second North School has led to a demand for a similar effort in other schools, and we greatly regret that the pressure of other work has made it impossible, for the present, to extend the service. In the Second North School, however, the importance of the work is so fully recognized that a special visitor is being employed at the expense of the school to work along these lines under the supervision of this Society. (p. 8)

The following school year, 1907–1908, work with “abnormal children” was continued by three women: Miss Carrie A. Gauthier, visitor for the Charity Organization Society (1907); Miss Mary E. Hutchinson, listed as “special visitor; and Miss Mary Fisher (Call, 1908). Call (1908) again addressed his concern that “physical abnormalities among the children” explains much of the delay in children who did not advance from grade to grade (p. 12). By June 1, 1908, over 500 families had been visited, and over 1000 calls had been made to the COS, Dispensary, doctors, the Hospital, and children in the school (Call, 1908). Almost 350 children “have been reported for medical treatment, 42 operations have been performed, 47 children have been specially treated otherwise, and 15 children have been furnished with glasses” (Call, 1908, p. 12). The focus continued to be on the physical and medical needs of the children.

Correcting the Historical Record: A Critical Analysis

According to Culbert (1921), Oppenheimer (1924/1925), and Reihl (1949), Dr. George E. Dawson, Director of either the Psychological Clinic or Psychological Laboratory, was responsible for initiating “school social work” in 1907 at the Henry Barnard School in Hartford. He was doing testing in 1906 and brought to the principal’s attention a child “who was abnormal and possibly
needed medical attention” (Reihl, p. 5). Dr. Dawson either privately maintained the work until it was taken over by the public schools, or, for two years, a group financed the visitor. The school social worker was first called a “special teacher” and “assisted [Dr. Dawson] in securing the history of children and in carrying out the recommendations of the clinic. . . .” (Oppenheimer, p. 4). Subsequently, numerous authors (e.g., Allen-Meares, Washington, & Welsh, 2000; Hancock, 1982) essentially have relied directly or indirectly on Oppenheimer’s understanding of Dr. Dawson’s role.

**Second North School**

While most authors (e.g., Culbert, 1921; Hancock, 1982) have not cited the school in Hartford where school social work began, Oppenheimer (1924/1925) specifically stated that the work began in the “Henry Barnard school in 1907” (p. 4). Confounding the school discrepancy, official sketches of Dr. Dawson (Cattell, 1932; “Who Was Who,” 1968), perhaps submitted by him, state that he was the director of the department of child study of the Henry Barnard School from 1908 to 1916. To clarify, Call (1909), principal of the Second North school, recommended that the school be named after the famed Henry Barnard. Within one year Second North was renamed the Henry Barnard school (Call, 1910). School social work thus began at the Second North school.

**George Ellsworth Dawson (1861–1936)**

Dr. Dawson, during the period relevant to this inquiry, was a professor of education at Mount Holyoke College in Western Massachusetts from 1903 to 1908. He was also a professor of psychology at the Hartford School of Religious Pedagogy from 1902 to 1919. From 1919 to 1925, Dr. Dawson was a professor at the International Y.M.C.A. College (now Springfield College), just 25 miles north of Hartford (Cattell, 1932; E. Towle, personal communication, July 6, 1999; “Who Was Who,” 1968).

**Beginnings at Second North.** The evidence that Dr. Dawson began his study of certain children at Second North no earlier than the fall 1908 is indisputable (Cattell, 1932; Call, 1909; Dawson, 1911; “Who Was Who,” 1968). Dr. Dawson stated that he began his study of “children backward in their studies” on November 1,
1908 (Dawson, 1911, p. 14). The purpose of his research "was to determine, as far as possible, the cause, or causes, of a pupil's failure to profit by the work of the public school" (Dawson, p. 14).

For the first time, Dawson is included in an annual report for Second North, 1908–1909, with a brief synopsis of his intended work (Call, 1909, p. 17). Annie Fisher, a teacher of "foreign children" at the Second North school since 1905 (Call, 1907, p. 11), may have been the catalyst for Dr. Dawson's association with Second North beginning in the fall 1908:

The most unusual endeavor Fisher instigated was the program for psychological investigation in the school. In the summer of 1908, Fisher traveled abroad. . . . [and] studied in Germany. There she was most interested in the programs for the development of retarded children. The next fall semester, Dr. George E. Dawson. . . . began conducting tests for mentally deficient students at Fisher's school. There is reason to believe that Fisher acted as ambassador in situating Dawson's study in her school [Second North]. (Rose, 1981, p. 6)

Work with the Visiting Teacher. A review of Dawson's publications, beginning with 1908, does not reflect the role attributed to him in regard to inception and support of and work with visiting teachers between 1906 and 1908 in Hartford (Dawson, 1908, 1909a, 1909b, 1910a, 1910b, 1912a, 1912b, 1912c). One of Dawson's publications, "A Psychological Classification of Public-School Pupils" (1912b), and the one in which he identified himself as the Director of the Department of Child Study at the Henry Barnard School, was perhaps a logical citation to acknowledge the assistance of the "school visitor" or visiting teacher. This study, which began in 1908, and "included a rather detailed investigation of the mental processes of some two hundred children and youth," did not mention the "school visitor" or "visiting teacher" (Dawson, 1912b, p. 1161). In 1912, however, at Dawson's request, Annie Fisher began working with Dr. Dawson. Fisher commented: "He asked me to assist in the testing and I grew quite interested because we had a number of problem cases in the school.' Out of this grew a special Child Study Department" ("Wesleyan Woman," 1965, p. 13).
Department of Child Study: Hartford. Culbert (1921) believed that Dr. Dawson, when in Hartford, initiated visiting teacher work as the "director of the Psychological Laboratory" (p. 85). Oppenheimer (1924/1925) thought Dawson was the "Director of the Psychological Clinic in Hartford" in 1907 (p. 4). Subsequently most other authors accepted Oppenheimer's view. Dawson, however, was not the director of either a psychological clinic nor laboratory when he was in Hartford.

From the 1911–12 school year until he left in 1917, Dr. Dawson was associated with a "department of special psychological and physical investigation" (Call, 1912, p. 6; Henry Barnard School, 1971). Dr. Dawson, however, beginning with the school year 1911–1912 through 1916–1917, when he submitted his final report, stated that his work was conducted in the Department of Child Study (Call, 1912, p. 17; Henry Barnard School, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917). Not until May 30, 1916, does he refer to himself as the "Director," whereas the Henry Barnard School (1917) listed him as "supervisor" one year later (p. 5).

Psychological Laboratory: Springfield. From 1913 until his death, Dr. Dawson was the "Director of the Psychological Laboratory" for the public schools in Springfield, Massachusetts (City of Springfield, 1913, p. 25; "Who Was Who," 1968). The National Committee on Visiting Teachers (1924) noted that the visiting teacher in Springfield, who began in September, 1913, "has always been associated with the psychological laboratory... One day a week is spent in giving tests to the children; the remainder of her time is given to the social service work connected with the laboratory and the carrying out of laboratory recommendations for psychological tests referred by school principals" (p. 13).

How was the School Visitor Financed?

Culbert (1921) believed that Dr. Dawson "developed and privately maintained the work" (p. 85). Phipps (1939), however, relying on a document of excerpts of a radio program by Batschelet, claimed that Dawson convinced citizens to finance a visiting teacher for two years. If Dr. Dawson had financed Mrs. Bivin, one might expect that he would have made a donation—perhaps a sizable donation—to the Hartford Charity Organization Society. Yet,
Dr. Dawson is not listed in the "memberships and subscriptions" category for the years ending on November 1, 1906 through 1908 (COS, 1906, 1907, 1908). The Society, also during this three year period, does not refer to Dr. Dawson or anyone for specifically contributing to the maintenance of a visitor at the Second North or any school in Hartford. Similarly, not one of the annual reports for the Second North and the Henry Barnard school acknowledge any contribution by Dr. Dawson nor anyone else for the support of a school visitor.

One may speculate that funds were contributed by Dr. Dawson or others to the Hartford School of Religious Pedagogy to support Mrs. Bivin's from the time she began working with the Second North School in January, 1907, until she left the city, upon her graduation in May 1907, but records are not available at the Hartford School to ascertain this speculation (C. Sperl, personal communication, November 19, 1999).

The arrangement, however, to work with the Second North school was with the Charity Organization Society (1907) and not with the Hartford School of Religious Pedagogy. Call (1907) acknowledged "the debt our school owes to the Charity Organization Society and to Mrs. G. D. Bivin in particular," but he did not mention the Hartford School of Religious Pedagogy nor Dr. Dawson (p. 14). The Society (1907) also reported in November 1907, that, in the Second North School, a "special visitor is being employed at the expense of the school" (p. 8). In December 1908, the Society again noted that the "Second North School and the Brown School have employed special visitors during the past year" (p. 8).

From Visitor to Visiting Teacher

Oppenheimer (1924/1925) believed that the visiting teacher "was first called a 'special teacher'" (p. 4). A "special teacher," Hattie Wolff, was first employed at Second North for the school year 1906–1907 to instruct "backward children" (Call, 1907, pp. 14–15), but it was Mrs. Bivin, the official COS visitor, who practiced social work. The following school year, 1907–1908, the term "special visitor" is used to refer to the work of Miss Hutchinson who, in part, replaced Mrs. Bivin (Call, 1908, p. 3). In 1908–1909, the worker is referred to as the "Friendly Visitor" (Call, 1909, p. 20;
During the school year 1910-1911, Sara M. Holbrook was submitting reports as the "visiting teacher" (Call, 1911, p. 26). Extant documents do not support "visiting teachers" being identified as "special teachers" in the Second North or Henry Barnard schools.

Discussion

No support was found for the long-standing belief that Dr. Dawson initiated visiting teacher work at the Second North school in Hartford. Dr. Dawson did not begin his psychological investigations at Second North until November, 1908, first mentioned the child study department in the school year 1911-1912, created the title of "Director" during the school year 1915-1916, and ended his work at the Henry Barnard school in 1917. Dr. Dawson, between 1913 and 1917, was also the Director of the Psychological Laboratory in Springfield. Some of the confusion related to his title and the duties of the visiting teacher may be due to Dawson's dual assignments. There is no evidence that in Hartford he ran a "clinic."

Other early statements by Culbert (1921) and Oppenheimer (1924/1925) cannot be accounted for, namely, that Dr. Dawson initiated the service, privately maintained the work, made efforts to obtain private support, or that the visitor assisted Dawson in securing histories in 1907. The visiting teacher was never called a "special teacher," and the service began at Second North and not the Henry Barnard school. Dr. Dawson did not begin his investigations of "children backward in their studies" at Second North until November 1908.

Significantly, Mrs. Bivin, who graduated from the Hartford School of Religious Pedagogy in May 1907, neither acknowledged nor credited Dr. Dawson for his presumed role in establishing and supporting a visiting teacher (Bivin, 1907). Principal Call (1909) also commented: "I look upon the work being done by Professor Dawson as the most vitally important of any similar labors in any American public school known to me" (p. 17). Call, notwithstanding his publicly stated enthusiasm for Dr. Dawson's research, never in any of his annual reports credited Dawson for his presumed influential role in starting the visiting teacher
program, including financial support directly or indirectly for a school visitor. Dr. Dawson also in his numerous published works did not mention any contribution to the establishment of visiting teacher work in Hartford.

Use of primary source documents, when available, have methodological and substantive implications for the social work profession. At a minimum, scholars should seek to access all available literature and especially primary sources to offer the most complete and accurate account of historical events relevant to the social work profession. The most critical primary sources used in this study (Bivin, 1907; Hartford Charity Organization Society, 1906-1909) were not cited by any author, and, all but one author, were also unaware of the relevant Second North and Henry Barnard annual reports.

Substantively, scholars should reexamine the belief that the beginnings of school social work in New York City, Boston, and Hartford “originated outside the school system itself” (Costin, 1969, p. 439), and that “[s]ettlements and civic organizations, rather than social caseworkers, developed the earliest form of school social work” (Lubove, 1971, p. 36). The evidence for Hartford’s inception of social work in the schools demonstrates the importance of the school principal and his positive relationship with the Hartford Charity Organization Society. The Society had an ongoing relationship with the Hartford public schools. In 1906, to illustrate, just over 125 referrals were made to the Society from the School Attendance Officer and the public schools (COS, 1906). Principal Call might not have contacted the Society for “help and advice” if the schools had not frequently relied on the Society to provide a range of services and assistance to needy children and families. The Society’s unique contribution, long neglected, obscures the relationship that existed between the public schools and the Society, the importance of its Visitor—an embryonic social worker, and the Society’s role as an incubator for a new professional service.

The work in Hartford continued with various workers until 1909 with the appointment of Sara Holbrook who served until 1921. In the fall 1922, upon receiving a Master of Arts from Yale, Holbrook, through the sponsorship of the Commonwealth Fund’s National Committee on Visiting Teachers, was appointed
Vermont's first visiting teacher, and also joined the faculty at the University of Vermont (McCullagh, 1995). Significantly, Holbrook was a founder, first vice president, and third president of the National Association of Visiting Teachers and Home and School Visitors (last named the National Association of School Social Workers). The Association, founded in 1919, merged in 1955 with other associations to create the National Association of Social Workers (McCullagh).

The social work profession, which owes its origin to the Charity Organization Society Movement (Popple, 1995), is also obligated to the Hartford Society for the embryonic development of school social work. Without the positive relationship that existed between the school and the Society, school social work may not have begun in Hartford nor may Sara Holbrook have had the opportunity to become a leader in the creation of a national professional association.

References


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Discrimination and Human Capital: 
A Challenge to Economic 
Theory & Social Justice

RICHARD K. CAPUTO
Yeshiva University
Wurzweiler School of Social Work

This article reports findings of a study using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79) to test the rational choice theory that discrimination discourages investments in human capital. Nearly 60% of the study sample (N=5585) reported job-hiring discrimination (race, nationality, sex, or age) between 1979 and 1982 and they were found to invest more in job training programs and additional schooling between 1983 and 1998 than those reporting no such discrimination. White males were found to have the greatest advantage over black males and females in regard to job training and over black females in regard to additional schooling. Findings suggest that appeals to affirmative action policies and programs based on race and sex remain warranted.

This article assesses the effects of perceived discrimination on investments in human capital. It uses a nationally representative sample of youth ages 14–22 in 1979 to test the theory that in job markets containing discrimination, blacks and women will invest relatively less in programs designed to augment human capital, such as education and training. At issue is how market mechanisms or transactions of their own accord affect the stock of human capital upon which the country’s productive capacity depends. To the extent blacks and women in general and blacks and women who experience job-hiring discrimination in particular invest less in education and training than whites in general and white males in particular, as this rational choice theory predicts, then a case can be made for non-market mechanisms such as
affirmative action to ensure greater access to programs designed to increase human capital and thereby level the playing field.

In the preceding scenario, markets fail to stop discrimination and may result in a vicious circle. Because of discrimination, members of the relevant groups perceive that their investments in human capital do not pay relative to others and they are less likely to invest in human capital; because of this lower investment, discrimination persists or increases because its statistical rationality increases; and because of this effect, investments decrease, and so on. There is a total net loss to society since less investment in human capital results in lower productivity. Intervention into the market is necessary to break the circle or end the spiral. Social justice makes economic sense to the extent affirmative action policies and programs or other such non-market interventions increase opportunities for investments in human capital that in turn enhance the productive capacity of the nation (Arrow, 1972; Lundberg & Startz, 1983; Sunstein, 1997).

Method

Data and Sample

Data for the study were obtained from the 1979 cohort of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79) which comprised a representative sample of 12,686 noninstitutionalized youth in the U.S. aged 14 to 22 in 1979 when first interviewed. Respondents were interviewed annually through 1994 and in 1996 and 1998 and asked a range of questions regarding labor market experiences and family characteristics. The NLSY79 sample was deemed particularly suitable for this study because employment-related discrimination questions were included in the 1979 and 1982 surveys, while the cohort was still relatively young. It thereby afforded an opportunity to assess the effects of discrimination on human capital investment as the cohort matured and careers developed.

For the 1998 survey, 8,399 respondents were interviewed, a 66.2% unweighted retention rate (79% weighted). Respondents in 1998 differed on some sociodemographic measures from those in 1979, with the major difference in annual family income ($16,726 vs. $10,195). In 1979 they were also slightly younger (17.6 vs.
Discrimination and Human Capital

17.9 years old), less educated (10.3 vs. 10.5 years of schooling), from larger families (4.70 vs. 4.26 members), with proportionately more blacks (14.3% vs. 13.6%, weighted) and proportionately more women (51.4% vs. 49.2%, weighted). Differences in part reflected cessation of interviews with the 1643 members of the economically disadvantaged, non-black, non-Hispanic supplemental sample beginning in 1991. Documentation about the national sample was found in the NLS Handbook 1999 (Center for Human Resource Research, 1999a) and the NLSY79 User's Guide 1999 (Center for Human Resource Research, 1999b).

The study sample (n=5585) included respondents who participated in the survey between 1979 and 1998 and for whom all relevant information, except as noted, was reported in each survey year. Omitted from the population sample eligible for the study were a small number of respondents (n=110) who in 1979 reported their race/ethnicity as other than black, white, or Hispanic (non-black, non-white). In 1998, the study sample differed from the eligible population sample (n=8341). Proportionately, there were fewer females (46.7% vs. 50.3%, weighted), fewer blacks (13.6% vs. 14.8%, weighted), and fewer Hispanics (05.0% vs. 06.9%, weighted). In addition, study participants were more highly educated (11.0 vs. 8.90 years of completed schooling) than those in the eligible population sample. Hence, the study sample data were somewhat biased toward more highly educated, white, and male respondents. Results and recommendations were made with this sample bias in mind.

Measures

The two dependent measures are job training (JOBTR83+) and years of additional schooling (ADDSCH) after 1982. JOBTR83+ comprised two groups, namely respondents who reported participation in any one of a variety of job training programs (including federally funded employment and training programs, on-the-job or OJT programs, formal military job training programs, and the like) after 1982 (coded 1) and others (coded 0). ADDSCH was determined as the difference in the highest grade of school respondents completed between 1982, the last year relevant employment-related discrimination questions were asked, and 1998, the last year of available data at the time of the study.
Discrimination status (ANYDISC) is the independent variable of main concern. It captures responses of respondents to questions about their experiences with hiring-related discrimination as they sought good jobs. It is coded such that 1 = working-age respondents (i.e., 16 and over) who reported that they believed specific types of discrimination (race, nationality, sex, or age) had caused them problems in getting a good job in 1979 and 1982 and 0 = Other, i.e., no reports of such discrimination. Hence, ANYDISC is a measure of perceived discrimination. Inverse relations are expected between ANYDISC and JOBTR83+ and between ANYDISC and ADDSCH.

Sex and race/ethnicity are paired, creating six mutually exclusive categories that are treated as dummy variables in the regression analyses described below, with White Males (WM) as the missing category. The other categories are Black Males (BM), Hispanic Males (HM), White Females (WF), Black Females (BF), and Hispanic Females (HF). Given the decreased likelihood of white males experiencing job-hiring discrimination in the U.S. relative to other sex and race/ethnicity groups, it is expected that they will have the greatest increased investments in human capital regardless of discrimination status (ANYDISC). Given the history of race relations in general and labor market discrimination in particular in the U.S., it is expected that black males and females will have the least investments (Higham, 1997; Holt, 2001; McWhorter, 2001; Pascal, 1972).

There are two psychological variables that comprise scores of commonly used measures for individual initiative and self-esteem. The Rotter locus-of-control scale (LOCUS) captures individual initiative, measuring the extent to which one perceives a causal relationship between one's own behavior and subsequent events (Boor, 1974; Rotter 1966, 1975; Watson, 1981). Scores range between 4 and 16. Higher scores signify belief in more external control, and hence weak belief in self-determination or individual initiative. It is hypothesized here that LOCUS will be inversely related to human capital investments, that is, individuals having a greater degree of internal control will be more likely to pursue job training programs and increase their education regardless of their perceptions of discrimination in finding a good job. It should be noted that the internal consistency of the scale for the whole
cohort is low (alpha: .36), with roughly comparable estimates by race and sex (Center for Human Resource Research, 1999b).

The second psychological measure, the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (SELF-EST), captures the degree of approval or disapproval toward oneself (Rosenberg, 1965). Ambiguity surrounds the role of self-esteem in regard to economic well-being and, by extension, indirectly to investments in human capital that affect economic well-being (Wilson, Ellwood, & Brooks-Gunn 1995). The scale used here, however, demonstrates high internal consistency with reliability coefficients ranging from .84 (Strocchia-Rivera, 1988) to .87 (Menaghan, 1990), depending on the nature of the NLSY sample selected. The measure is a 4-point Likert scale containing ten statements of self-approval or disapproval. Higher scores signify greater self-esteem. It is hypothesized that SELF-EST will be positively related to investments in human capital regardless of their perceptions of discrimination in finding a good job.

Finally, there are three control measures: Highest Grade Completed '79 (HGC79), Previous Job Training (JOBTR79-82), and Years Employed (YRSEMP). JOBTR79-82 comprises respondents who reported participation in job training programs between 1979 and 1982 (coded 1) and others (coded 0). HGC79 is the highest grade of schooling respondents completed at the time of the 1979 survey. YRSEMP represents the number of years respondents were employed at the time of interview between 1983 and 1998.

**Procedures**

T-tests, Chi-square, and the general linear model (GLM) procedure are used to determine and show differences among respondents by major characteristics. Duncan’s multiple-range test for post hoc comparisons is used when GLM results are found significant.

Logistic regression analysis is used to determine if Discrimination Status (ANYDISC) adds to the capacity of other measures to predict the likelihood of Job Training (JOBTR83+) and also to affect the influence of the other measures. Correlates are grouped into two models. The first or Main Effects Model comprises the independent (except ANYDISC) and control measures. The second or Expanded Model adds Discrimination Status (ANYDISC) to the main effects model. The residual chi-square statistic, $Q_{RS}$, of
logistic regression is used (Breslow & Day, 1980; Stokes, Davis, & Koch, 1995) to determine the overall effect and the goodness of fit of the Main Effects Model. The Main Effects Model fits more adequately when the $Q_{RS}$ has non-significant $p$ values ($p \geq .05$). The Odds Ratios are used to show respectively what if any effects ANYDISC has on the overall effect of the Main Effects Model as well as on the individual measures. The Hosmer and Lemeshow Goodness-of-Fit test is used as an additional support for the Expanded Model's adequacy for the data. In this case, we do not want to reject the null hypothesis that the data fit the specified model, so the higher the $p$-value the better.

Multiple regression analysis is used to determine the relative contribution of each of the independent and control measures or predictors to the explained variance in Additional Schooling (ADDSCH). Standardized coefficients ($B$s) are reported. To determine whether or not Discrimination Status (ANYDISC) affected ADDSCH beyond other measures, the Uniqueness Indicator (UI) and its accompanying $F$ ratio are calculated. The UI and its accompanying $F$ ratio indicate whether the $R^2$, or percentage of variance, in ADDSCH accounted for by the reduced regression model containing all measures except ANYDISC differs statistically from that of the full model including all predictors (Hatcher & Stepanski, 1994).

Results

As noted, the study sample comprised 5,585 respondents. Of these, 3,453 (57.8%, weighted; 61.8%, unweighted, Chi-sq = 14.15, $p < .001$) reported discrimination in obtaining a good job in either 1979 or 1982. Those reporting job-hiring discrimination were 1.3 times as likely to have job training compared to those who reported no discrimination (76.9% vs. 71.8%, weighted; 75.6% vs. 71.0% unweighted) and they reported more years of additional schooling (1.00 vs. 0.88, $t = -2.7$, $p < .01$).

The first three columns under Measures in Table 1 show the percentages of respondents who reported discrimination in finding a good job and who had job training between 1979 and 1982 and after 1982 by race/ethnicity and sex groups. More than half of each group reported discrimination, ranging from highs
Table 1

Differences in Study Measures by Race/Ethnicity and Sex Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity &amp; Sex Groups</th>
<th>ANYDISC</th>
<th>JOBTR83+</th>
<th>JOBTR79-82</th>
<th>ADDSCH Mean</th>
<th>HGC79 Mean</th>
<th>LOCUS Mean</th>
<th>SELF-EST Mean</th>
<th>YRSEMP Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BM (N=768)</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>10.78</td>
<td>13.90</td>
<td>32.73</td>
<td>09.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WM (N=1460)</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>11.20</td>
<td>14.02</td>
<td>33.16</td>
<td>11.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM (N=390)</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>10.51</td>
<td>13.98</td>
<td>31.87</td>
<td>11.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BF (N=890)</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>11.07</td>
<td>13.92</td>
<td>32.36</td>
<td>08.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WF (N=1631)</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>11.28</td>
<td>14.01</td>
<td>32.53</td>
<td>10.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HF (N=446)</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>10.33</td>
<td>13.96</td>
<td>31.39</td>
<td>08.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics

\( \chi^2 = 98.4 \)  \( p > .001 \)
\( \chi^2 = 38.5 \)  \( p > .001 \)
\( \chi^2 = 10.6 \)  \( p > .06 \)
\( F = 5.9 \)  \( F = 37.5 \)
\( F = 1.9 \)  \( F = 16.6 \)
\( F = 107.1 \)  \( p > .001 \)

Post Hoc Comparisons (alpha = .05):

ADDSCH:  WM, WF, HF > BF, HM, BM
HGC79:   WF, WM, BF > HM > HF; WF > BF
OLCUS:   WM, WF, HM, HF, BF, BM
SELF-EST: WM > BM, WF, BF > HM > HF
YRSEMP:  WM > HM > WF > BM > BF, HF

Note: Definitions of measures appear in the text. The degrees of freedom for each GLM Main Effects F value are 5, 5579.
of 70.6% for black males and 69.0% for black females to lows of 53.1% for white males and 59.9% for white women. Between two-thirds and four-fifths of each group reported job training after 1982, ranging from highs of 78.9% for black females and 75.3% for white females to lows of 67.2% for black males and 68.7% for Hispanic males. Between 40% and 50% of all groups reported job training between 1979 and 1982.

The last five columns in Table 1 show means and their respective F values of additional schooling, highest grade completed in 1979, Rotter locus of control scores, Rosenberg self-esteem scores, and years of employment between 1983 and 1998 by race/ethnicity and sex groups. Between-group differences of these measures appear in the lower half of Table 1. In 1979 white females and males and black females had the highest levels of education, over 11 years of completed schooling each, although white females had a significantly higher level than did black females (11.28 vs. 11.07) and Hispanic females had the least (10.33). White males and white and Hispanic females completed one year or more of additional schooling, while black females and males and Hispanic males completed less than .85 years. White males scored highest on the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (33.16), while the scores of black males (32.73) and white and black females (32.53 and 32.36 respectively) were higher than that of Hispanic males (31.87), who in turn had higher scores than Hispanic females (31.39). White males reported significantly more years of employment (11.9) than any other group, followed by Hispanic males (11.3), white females (10.1), black men (9.7), and black and Hispanic females (8.9 and 8.7 respectively). No differences were found on Rotter locus of control scores.

Table 2 shows the results of the logistic regression analysis on the job training measure JOBTR83+. The $Q_{RS}$ statistics ($\chi^2 = 21.2, df = 1, p < .001$) indicate that the Main Effects Model failed to fit the data adequately and suggest that Discrimination Status, ANYDISC, adds to the predictive capacity of the model. The Hosmer & Lemeshow Goodness-of-Fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 4.8, df = 8, p = .77$) corroborate these findings, reaffirming that the Expanded Model adequately fits the data. On the whole, the addition of ANYDISC to the model barely changed the influence of other measures found significant in the Main Effects Model to affect
Table 2
Logistic Regression Results on Job Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Measures</th>
<th>Main Effects Model</th>
<th>Expanded Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Odds Ratio (CI)</td>
<td>Odds Ratio (CI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination Status (ANYDISC)</td>
<td>1.35 (1.19 1.53)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control (LOCUS)</td>
<td>0.95 (0.90 1.00)</td>
<td>0.95 (0.90 1.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Sex—Dummy Variables(^1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Male (BM)</td>
<td>0.85 (0.70 1.04)</td>
<td>0.81 (0.66 0.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Male (HM)</td>
<td>0.87 (0.68 1.12)</td>
<td>0.84 (0.65 1.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Female (BF)</td>
<td>1.86 (1.36 2.08)</td>
<td>1.62 (1.31 2.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Female (WF)</td>
<td>1.22 (1.03 1.45)</td>
<td>1.20 (1.01 1.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Female (HF)</td>
<td>1.28 (1.00 1.65)</td>
<td>1.26 (0.98 1.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem (SELF-EST)</td>
<td>1.04 (1.03 1.06)</td>
<td>1.04 (1.03 1.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Measures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Grade Completed '79 (HGC79)</td>
<td>1.09 (1.04 1.13)</td>
<td>1.09 (1.05 1.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Job Training (JOBTR79-82)</td>
<td>1.49 (1.31 1.69)</td>
<td>1.47 (1.30 1.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Employed (YRSEMP)</td>
<td>1.07 (1.06 1.09)</td>
<td>1.07 (1.06 1.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max-rescaled R(^2)</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>0.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q(rs)</td>
<td>(\chi^2 = 21.2\ df = 1,)   (p &lt; .001)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosmer &amp; Lemeshow Goodness-of-Fit</td>
<td>(\chi^2 = 4.8\ df = 8,)   (p = 0.77)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Omitted category is White Males (WM).

Note: Confidence Intervals (CI) not containing the value 1.00 are significant at the .05 level.
the likelihood of job training. The Odds Ratios of most measures, including self-esteem (SELF-EST), white females (WF), and Hispanic females (HF) which were found to be significant, remained about the same. The major exceptions were black males (BM) and females (BF). In the Main Effects Model, women, regardless of race/ethnicity, were more likely than white males (WM) to participate in job training programs, while in the Expanded Model the likelihood of black women (BF) decreased from 1.86 to 1.62 times than that of WM and the likelihood of black males (BM) not participating in job training programs increased from a statistically insignificant 1.18 (1 / .85) to a significant 1.23 (1 / .81) times. In addition, discrimination increased the likelihood of job training. That is, youth who reported discrimination in their attempts to get good jobs were 1.35 times as likely than not subsequently to participate in job training programs. Locus of control (LOCUS) had no effect in either model.

Table 3 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis on the additional schooling measure ADDSCH. The Uniqueness Index (UI = .0013, p < .01) and Beta weight (B = .04) indicate that Discrimination Status (ANYDISC) explains variation in ADDSCH beyond that of other measures in the Main Model. Discrimination in getting a good job during one's youth increases the likelihood of additional schooling, when controlling for previous level of education level (HGC79) and job training experience (JOBTR79-82) and for subsequent employment (YRSEMP). Discrimination, however, has little appreciable effect on the relative influence of most other significant measures on variation in ADDSCH. For the most part, the Beta weights (Bs) are roughly comparable. That is, compared to white males (WM), being a black male (BM) or Hispanic male (HM) decreased the level of additional education when accounting for other measures to roughly similar degrees in the Main and Expanded Models, while self-esteem (SELF-EST) was positively related to ADDSCH. Black females (BF) comprise the only exception (UI = .0015, p < .01). That is, compared to white males, being a black woman added to the explained variation of ADDSCH beyond that of other factors, including ANYDISC, and it did so in a negative direction, signifying a relatively decreased level of additional education.
Table 3
Multiple Regression Results on Additional Schooling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Measures</th>
<th>Main Model Beta Weights</th>
<th>Expanded Model Beta Weights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination Status (ANYDISC)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.0076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control (LOCUS)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Sex—Dummy Variables</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.0311**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Male (BM)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.0272**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Male (HM)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Female (BF)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem (SELF-EST)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>10.98***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Measures</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>12.35***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Grade Completed '79 (HGC79)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.451***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Job Training (JOBTR79-82)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Employed (YRSEMP)</td>
<td>0.0081</td>
<td>0.0494</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Uniqueness Index obtained for Discrimination Status (ANYDISC) in the Expanded Model is .0013, F = 7.62(1,5573), p < .01, while for Black Female (BM) the UI is .0015, F = 8.79(1,5573), p < .01.

1 Omitted category is White Males (WM).

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

Results of this study show that perceived discrimination when seeking a good job is a fairly common experience among young labor force participants. It thereby supports a variety of formal and anecdotal evidence of labor market discrimination in general (Economic Report, 1998, chapter 4). The study also shows that perceived discrimination affects subsequent investments in human capital. Sunstein (1997) theorizes that in job markets containing discrimination, blacks and women invest relatively less in programs designed to augment human capital. By extension, any group experiencing discrimination can be expected to invest less in human capital. In the aggregate, findings of this study suggest otherwise. That is, young labor force participants reporting discrimination in their efforts to obtain good jobs are more likely than those who do not experience discrimination to increase their educational levels and to participate in job training programs. Rather than depress investment in human capital, discrimination increases the likelihood of future investments.

This finding is consistent with the supply-side neoclassical model of human capital. This theory holds that discriminated groups such as African-Americans will maximize their utility by investing aggressively in education and training and thereby increase the likelihood of moving into high-opportunity labor markets. Tomaskovic-Dovey (1993) contends, however, that the neoclassic theory is weakest at this very point. His study of the general working population in North Carolina shows that blacks and women experience job segregation in low-opportunity labor markets, suggesting that the structure of the labor market does not reward and hence discourages aggressive investments in human capital. The determination of whether or not those who reported job-hiring discrimination and subsequently invested in education and job training moved into high-opportunity labor markets more so than other subjects lay beyond the scope of the study. Findings of the study, however, suggest that they did, a subject for future research.

Paradoxically, in light of the positive relationship between human capital and economic well-being, aggregate findings of this study suggest that labor market discrimination, at least in
the hiring process of relatively young labor force participants, "benefits" both society at large and those directly affected by it. To the extent discrimination actually increases the likelihood of investing in human capital, as both supply-side neoclassical theory and classical utilitarian theory would predict, society as a whole benefits (Nathanson, 1998; Roemer, 1996). Additional investments in human capital increase productive capacity that in turn theoretically leads to greater levels of aggregated material well-being. This would be the case even in a segmented labor market. Over-trained or over-educated workers in less valued or lower-opportunity occupations would bring their increased productive capacity with them and would likely be more productive than others and rewarded accordingly by commanding higher salaried or more prestigious positions within these occupations.

In addition, discrimination may also "benefit" those who directly experience it, not in the short run since they bear the cost of being denied desirable employment, but in the longer term to the extent additional human capital investment leads to greater levels of income and/or more prestigious occupations that might not have been the case otherwise. These individuals may rise up in the face of discrimination and more successfully challenge the barriers they face than might be the case otherwise. Whether or not those who experience labor market discrimination do in fact command higher paying or more prestigious jobs within lower-opportunity occupations or move into high-opportunity occupations are empirical questions that can be subjected to future research. Regardless, findings pit two rival views of social justice against one another and present a formidable challenge regarding the grounds on which to base policies and programs aimed at social betterment.

The two longstanding views of social justice that findings of this study pit against each other are the classical utilitarian tradition of maximizing the greatest good and the liberal utilitarian tradition of maximizing good without making the most disadvantaged even worse off (Marshall, 1972; Rawls, 2000; Sterba, 1999). In the classical utilitarian tradition, justice is based on merit, contingent on one's contribution to the aggregate welfare. In the liberal utilitarian tradition, one's market value cannot be the measure of one's right to welfare. Reduction in the aggregate
welfare can be justified to the extent welfare measures ensure that the life opportunities or conditions of the most disadvantaged are maintained or advanced. On-going debates about affirmative action are exemplary, often pitting justice claims of blacks and women for preferential treatment on liberal utilitarian grounds against those of white males for merit-based decisions on classical utilitarian grounds (Curry, 1996; Rosenfeld, 1991).

Proponents of affirmative action contend that underrepresented minorities and women deserve preferential treatment because of pervasive racism or sexism that is directed against people of color of every class or against women in general. Everyone who benefits from white privilege or male privilege should share the cost of preference programs, but this cannot be arranged. Consequently, a few whites or males pay a high price, for example by being denied admission to prestigious law or medical schools so that people of color or women can be admitted, while the majority of whites or males emerge untouched. Despite the injustice and associated costs borne by the few in the non-preferred groups and by extension by society at large (to the extent there is a net loss of aggregate productivity due to the more talented or skilled going into lower-opportunity occupations than they originally sought), adherents of affirmative action judge that preferences should be continued, given the importance of racism or sexism in society (Isbister, 2001). Opponents of affirmative action who prefer to rely on market mechanisms to remedy the effects of discrimination argue otherwise (Powelson, 1998; Sowell, 1990 & 1981), while those who straddle the issue alter the target of who should benefit from such programs, say from an exclusive focus on race to targeting areas based on economic deprivation (Gibelman, 2000) or broadening eligibility so as to renew the nation's commitment to enable everyone to achieve the highest levels that their abilities admit (Wilson, 1999) and thereby change the criteria by which claims for preferences are to be grounded in social justice.

Given the portended "benefits" to society at large and to discriminated against individuals found in this study, neither market mechanisms nor government interventions are likely to eradicate such labor market "injustices" and social justice appeals to do so may have little or no net fruitful effect. In classical utilitarian terms, justice demands maximizing the social welfare, while in
supply-side neoclassical terms discrimination contributes to the overall common good by increasing the productive capacity of those discriminated against. This is not to say that those who experience job-hiring discrimination have no claim to social justice to correct the injustice on a case-by-case basis or that efforts of social transformation should cease or that oppression in the form of discrimination is an acceptable means of establishing priorities for policies conducive to the social good. It only suggests that those bearing the brunt of such injustice are capable victims and that portended long-run advantages might mitigate some of the practical vis-à-vis theoretical grounds or merits of their case.

Appeals to social justice may be on firmer footing pragmatically to the extent they advance public policies and private initiatives ensuring access to educational institutions and job training programs in the broadest possible sense affirming opportunity as Wilson (1999) and others (e.g., Loury, 1997; Swain, 1998) recommend. Such programs enhance the capacity and capability of individuals to enjoy a higher quality of life in a pragmatic way that also meets the aims of those advocating more structurally oriented or socially transforming means to achieve social justice (Gil, 1990 & 1998; Nussbaum, 1999; Saleebey, 1990; Sen, 1992). The unavailability or denial of such access would lead to diminished human capital investment, lower income for those discriminated in the job-hiring process, and decreased productive capacity and aggregate economic well-being, as supply-side neoclassical human capital theory, classical utilitarian theory, and some existing evidence suggest (Caputo & Cianni, 1997; Economic Report, 1998).

Aggregate findings of the study, nonetheless, mask race/ethnicity and sex group differences in regard to type of investment, differences that are in part more consonant with the initially theorized inverse relationship between discrimination and human capital investment (Sunstein, 1997). This rational choice theory suggests a hierarchy of advantage based on race/ethnicity and sex, with white males at the apex and black females at the nadir. Caputo (1999) reports a similar hierarchical outcome in his study of economic mobility and well-being among the same cohort of youth used in the study reported here. Corcoran (1995) also reports the significant effects of race on the economic prospects of children as they mature into wage earners and parents, with
those born into black families faring worse than others. To the extent women and minorities can be shown to participate in job training programs and/or to complete less additional schooling than white males do in the face of higher rates of discrimination, then appeals to social justice to retain affirmative action policies and programs as currently understood and implemented can be further strengthened.

Bivariate findings of the present study indicate that whites in general and white males in particular experience the least job-hiring discrimination but they subsequently achieve higher levels of additional schooling than do almost all other groups. Whites in general and white males in particular retain an advantage over other groups. These findings go against the aggregate finding that discrimination increases the likelihood of human capital investment and they provide some support for the hypothesized negative relationship between discrimination and human capital investment based on rational choice theory. Paradoxically consistent with aggregate findings of the study, black females comprise the notable exception to white male advantage, reporting the second highest level of discrimination (next to black males) and the highest rate of job training. This finding lends support to the supply-side neoclassical theory. Some of the multivariate findings nonetheless suggest how white males retain their advantage over black females even in job training, thereby eroding support for the supply-side neoclassical theory and further corroborating the initially hypothesized rational choice theory. Other findings, however, suggest otherwise, lending partial support to supply-side neoclassical theory. Implications for policies and programs based on social justice vary accordingly.

Study findings show that women in general and black women in particular are more likely than white males to participate in job training programs when accounting for other factors, thereby supporting the supply-side neoclassical theory of human capital. The likelihood of doing so, however, decreases when discrimination is also taken into account, as the rational choice theory predicts. Since discrimination results in a decreased rate of participation in job training programs among black females, white males thereby retain a privileged position relative to them. Black males, however, are less likely than white males to participate
in job training programs when accounting for other factors, but the likelihood of doing so decreases even further when discrimination is also taken into account. The former finding in regard to black males and job training is consistent with the supply-side neoclassical theory of human capital while the latter finding is predicted by rational choice theory as initially hypothesized. In the case of black males and job training, the evidence again suggests that being a white male had its advantages.

In regard to achieving higher levels of education, multivariate findings show that discrimination accounts for greater variation than would be accounted for otherwise and, as supply-side neoclassical theory predicts, the relationship is positive. Taking discrimination into account, the relative influence of race/ethnicity and sex on additional schooling also increases in importance for black females relative to white males. As rational choice theory predicts, black women who experience job-hiring discrimination achieve lower levels of additional education than do their white male counterparts. Also consistent with rational choice theory, when not accounting for discrimination, black and Hispanic males complete less years of additional schooling than do white males to a statistically significant degree. However, the increased relative influence of race/ethnicity and sex on additional schooling is negligible when accounting for experiences with discrimination, thereby partially disconfirming rational choice theory.

Further, as the supply-side neoclassical theory of human capital would predict, though not statistically significant, white and Hispanic females complete more additional schooling than do white males when discrimination is taken into account beyond other factors. Hence, whatever advantages white males are able to generate as a result of discrimination in job hiring are somewhat mitigated in regard to additional educational attainment. Such is not the case with black females. Unlike black and Hispanic males who complete less education but not to a statistically significant degree when such discrimination is taken into account beyond other factors, black women complete less education than do white men to a statistically significant degree. In regard to educational attainment in the aftermath of job-hiring discrimination, the advantage clearly goes to white males and the disadvantage to black females.
On the whole, multivariate findings suggest that affirmative action policies and programs based on race and sex remain warranted. Social justice aims might be most effectively targeted to ensuring that black males have opportunities for and access to job training programs and that black women have opportunities for and access to educational institutions. Additional research is needed to adjudicate claims of rational choice and supply-side neoclassical theories regarding the effects of job-hiring discrimination in light of findings of this study. Such research should account for occupational status and income over the course of one's working history.

References


Discrimination and Human Capital


The Disease Model of Alcoholism: A Kuhnian Paradigm

BRIAN E. BRIDE
University of Tennessee
College of Social Work

LARRY NACKERUD
University of Georgia
School of Social Work

Despite the fact that the disease model of alcoholism has lost its status as paradigm in international circles, the alcoholism research and treatment community in the United States maintains steadfast allegiance to the tenets of the disease model. The disease model and the related treatment goal of abstinence continue to overwhelmingly dominate the treatment of alcoholism in the U.S. Critics have suggested that financial and political motives have served to maintain the dominance of the disease model, despite findings that violate its basic tenets. This paper presents an alternative explanation of the reluctance of the alcoholism treatment community to relinquish the disease model by utilizing Kuhn's (1996) model of scientific progress in an historical analysis of the disease model. To support this position, evidence of the emergence of the disease model as a paradigm, alcoholism research as normal science, and the appearance of anomaly followed by crisis in the alcoholism research and treatment community are presented.

The disease model of alcoholism has a history dating back more than two hundred years, and is considered by many to be the dominant paradigm guiding scientific inquiry and treatment approaches for much of the 20th century. However, as early as the 1960s, the disease model came under attack due to the emergence of anomalous scientific and clinical findings. Outside of the United States, the disease model is considered by many to
have been discredited, and has long been abandoned in favor of alternative models, such as social-learning theory (Heather & Robertson, 1997). Yet, in the United States, the disease model and its primary treatment goal of abstinence continue to overwhelmingly dominate the treatment of alcoholism (Rosenberg & Davis, 1994; Rosenberg, Devine, & Rothrock, 1995; Weisner, 1996). Among other explanations, the financial and political motives of the U.S. alcoholism treatment community have been offered to explain why the U.S. continues to lag behind other countries in moving beyond the disease model (Fingarette, 1988; Peele, 1989; Sobell & Sobell, 1995). However, an alternative reason for the reluctance of the alcoholism treatment community to relinquish the disease model is revealed by utilizing Kuhn's (1996) model of scientific progress in an historical analysis of the disease model.

In his widely read and highly influential book, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, first published in 1962 and now in its third edition, Kuhn (1996) explores the role of paradigms in the cyclical process of scientific discovery. Kuhn defines paradigms as "universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners" (p. x). In his view, paradigms structure scientific communities by defining group commitments and shared examples. Paradigms represent a constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on, shared by the members of a given community of scientists and practitioners. In a period of "normal science," scientists tend to agree about what phenomena are relevant, what constitutes an explanation of these phenomena, what problems are worth solving, and what constitutes a solution of a problem. Despite the structure provided by a paradigm, inevitably new and unsuspected "anomalies" are repeatedly uncovered by scientific research. Recurrent anomalies lead the scientific and professional community to a "crisis" which may be resolved in one of three ways: (1) a new candidate for paradigm may emerge, (2) the problem may be set aside for a future generation to contend with, or (3) the paradigm may prove successful in resolving the anomalies.

Although the "science" in Kuhn's title refers almost exclusively to the physical sciences, the applicability of his model to the social sciences has been addressed by authors in social work
Emergence of the Disease Model as a Paradigm

According to Kuhn (1996), the early developmental stages of most scientific disciplines are characterized by continual competition between a number of distinct views of nature. This pre-paradigm period is marked by the existence of competing schools, each of which may make significant contributions to the body of knowledge and experience from which the accepted paradigm emerges. However, in order to be accepted as a paradigm, a theory must seem better than its competitors. In the study of alcoholism, this pre-paradigm period was seen in the competition between the moral and disease views of alcoholism, during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The origin of the disease concept of alcoholism is credited to Benjamin Rush in the United States and Thomas Trotter in Great Britain. In the late 18th century, these two physicians independently offered the earliest clinical descriptions of alcoholism as a disease in which the alcoholic suffered a gradual and progressive addiction leading to loss of control over the consumption...
of alcohol (Gregoire, 1995). Abstinence was considered to be the only effective treatment for this diseased state (Burman, 1994; Jellinek, 1960; Lender, 1979; Meyer, 1996). Through the first half of the 19th century, the disease concept gained acceptance in the medical community despite the absence of a systematic empirical foundation. This uncritical acceptance of the disease concept paved the way for the establishment of numerous "inebriate asylums" for the treatment of alcoholics, providing the opportunity for the scientific study of alcoholism (Lender, 1979). During this time, the progressive nature of alcoholism, with its symptomatic course from moderate drinking to addiction to craving gained wide recognition (Lender, 1979). By the end of the 19th century, views of alcoholism as a disease began to build empirical support from findings in the fields of pathology and microbiology (Meyer, 1996).

At the same time that empirical support for the disease concept began to build, the temperance movement reached the height of its influence. The movement was committed to a moral interpretation of chronic drunkenness in which the alcoholic was seen as weak-willed (Lender, 1979). The growing influence of temperance ideology around the turn of the century shifted concern about addiction to the role of alcohol in social problems such as crime, accidental injury, and labor unrest (Meyer, 1996). Temperance workers, however, had no scientific evidence for their claims, relying instead on an emotional appeal to support their position (Fingarette, 1988). Paradoxically, the temperance movement co-opted the disease concept of addiction, claiming that alcohol in any form would lead to habitual drunkenness in anyone who drank, thereby justifying the goal of national prohibition (Fingarette, 1988). The temperance movement's success in outlawing the production, distribution, and consumption of alcohol in the United States shifted public perception of alcoholism from a medical problem to one of law enforcement. Alcoholism as a disease became less a scientific hypothesis than a powerful political and social construct (Gregoire, 1995).

Following the repeal of prohibition, the theoretical and scientific contributions of Jellinek (1952, 1960) and his colleagues are considered by many to be the most credible and influential in renewing interest in and defining the disease concept. In The
Disease Concept of Alcoholism, Jellinek (1960) used letters of the Greek alphabet to explicate five “species” of alcoholism, although he felt there could be more (Lender, 1979). Alpha alcoholism represents an undisciplined use of alcoholic beverages, often in order to relieve emotional disturbance. This type of alcoholism may result in relationship problems, however no progression is seen. Beta alcoholism involves heavy drinking which results in physical complications such as cirrhosis of the liver, but does not result in physical or physiological dependence. Gamma alcoholism, is characterized by increased tissue tolerance, adaptive cell metabolism, withdrawal symptoms and craving, and loss of control. Gamma alcoholism is marked by a definite progression from psychological to physical dependence and marked behavior changes, and interpersonal relations. Delta alcoholism, manifests the first three characteristics of the gamma type, but instead of loss of control, there is an inability to abstain for even one day. The delta alcoholic is able to control the amount of intake on any given occasion, but is unable to abstain for even short-periods of time without the manifestation of withdrawal symptoms. However, there is little impairment in interpersonal relations. Epsilon alcoholism is periodic alcoholism, otherwise known as binge drinking. This type of alcoholism results in a great deal of physical and emotional damage during periods of consumption, but there may be few consequences during non-drinking periods. For Jellinek, only the gamma and delta types of alcoholism could be classified as disease, although he was careful to caution that his theory was a working hypothesis in need of empirical testing and refinement (Lender, 1979; Miller, 1982).

Kuhn (1996) suggests that the establishment of a new paradigm is marked by a number of occurrences. First, a new and more rigid definition of the field emerges. Second, when a paradigm can be taken for granted, the scientist need no longer attempt to build the field anew with each work. Jellinek’s work accomplished both. The concept of alcoholism as a disease that is “progressive, transmitted through heredity, and characterized by loss of control over consumption once drinking begins” (Gregoire, 1995, p. 342) became firmly established following the publication of Jellinek’s The Disease Concept of Alcoholism (1960). In addition, the manuscript “became the canonical scientific text for the classical disease
concept" (Fingarette, 1988, p. 20) to which later authors began to refer. Third, the formation of specialized journals and specialist societies are associated with the reception of a single paradigm. Dozens of academic journals are dedicated to the study of alcoholism, such as the Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol, Alcohol & Alcoholism, and Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly. The American Society of Addiction Medicine, the National Association of Social Workers’ subsection on Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drugs, and Division 50 of the American Psychological Association are just a few of the specialist societies.

Alcoholism Research as Normal Science

Kuhn (1996) notes that paradigms gain their status because they are more successful than their competitors in solving particular problems. Once established, an emergent paradigm requires further articulation and specification under more stringent conditions. The success of that paradigm, at its start, is a promise of success discoverable in select and still incomplete examples. The goal of normal science is the actualization of that promise achieved by: (1) extending the knowledge of those facts that the paradigm displays as particularly revealing; (2) increasing the extent of the match between those facts and the paradigm’s predictions; and (3) further articulation of the paradigm itself. In summary, normal science is directed to the articulation of those phenomena and theories that the paradigm already supplies (Kuhn, 1996).

The scientific community’s response to Jellinek’s call for testing and refinement of the disease concept heralded the advent of normal science in the field of alcoholism. Once a paradigm becomes established, research can concentrate exclusively upon the subtlest and most esoteric aspects of the phenomena with which the group is concerned (Kuhn, 1996). With the emergence of the disease paradigm, researchers began to do just that. Jellinek’s seminal work was followed by a period of intense “puzzle-solving” activity aimed at further articulation and specification of the paradigm, leading the scientist to scrutinize some aspect of nature in great detail (Kuhn, 1996).

Investigation into the genetic correlates of alcoholism is but one example of this detailed scrutiny in alcoholism research
Disease Model of Alcoholism

(for an understandable and illustrative review, see Anthenelli & Schuckit, 1998). Studies of adoptees (Cloninger, Bohman, & Sigvardsson, 1981; Goodwin, Schulsinger, Hermanson, Guze, & Winokur, 1973) have led to the general acceptance that there is a genetic component to alcoholism (Jurd, 1992). The study completed by Goodwin et al. (1973) followed 55 adoptees whose parents were alcoholic. They were found to have four times the rate of alcoholism of control adoptees. Furthermore, even if the adoptive parents were alcoholic, the adoptees without an alcoholic biological parent did not become alcoholic. These results were largely confirmed by Cloninger et al. (1981) who followed 962 male and 813 female adoptees into adulthood. More recently, a group of researchers found an association between blind diagnoses of alcoholism and the presence of the A1 allele of the dopamine D2 receptor gene (Blum et al., 1990). Two years following the study by Blum et al. (1990) it had been replicated with statistical significance no less than five times (Jurd, 1992).

Anomaly and Crisis

Kuhn (1996) states that normal science “is a highly cumulative enterprise, eminently successful in its aim, the steady extension of the scope and precision of scientific knowledge” (p. 52). Discoveries are not isolated events, but extended episodes with a regularly recurrent structure. Discovery initially commences with the awareness of anomaly in which nature has violated the paradigm-induced expectations that govern normal science and continues with an extended exploration of the area of anomaly. The process of discovery closes when the paradigm theory has been adjusted so that the anomalous has become expected. Anomalies, though not necessarily prohibited by established theory, violate deeply entrenched expectations. The perception of anomaly plays an essential role in preparing the way for perception of novelty (Kuhn, 1996).

Perhaps the most persistent anomaly of the disease paradigm is the repeated finding, in violation of the entrenched expectations of irreversibility and loss of control, that persons diagnosed as alcoholic can sometimes return to normal, controlled patterns of drinking (Heather & Robertson, 1997). Attention was first drawn
to this anomaly by the results of a study reported by Davies (1962) in which the records of 93 individuals treated between seven and eleven years prior were reviewed for evidence of a return to harm-free drinking. The subjects had been routinely followed up through outpatient attendance, contact by a social worker, and correspondence with relatives. Based on these records, Davies visited each of the subjects at home and sometimes at work, and made specific inquiries with relatives regarding drinking history since discharge. Davies found that 7 of the 93 individuals whose records were reviewed had returned to normal, harm-free drinking of at least five years duration. Each of these individuals had been previously diagnosed as an "alcohol addict" with the cardinal symptom of loss of control over drinking (Heather & Robertson, 1981).

This anomalous finding by Davies was replicated when Sobell and Sobell (1976) conducted a second-year follow-up to an experimental trial of controlled drinking treatment with 70 male "gamma" alcoholics. Subjects were assigned by staff decision to one of two treatment goals, abstinence or controlled drinking. Within these two groups, subjects were randomly assigned to a controlled drinking treatment or standard abstinence based treatment. First year follow-up data suggested that both controlled drinking groups had functioned significantly better than the abstinence groups. The investigators concluded that controlled drinking can be considered as an alternative treatment goal to abstinence for some alcoholics. A third-year, independent follow-up in which interviewers were kept blind as to the treatment group confirmed the results of the earlier study (Caddy, Addington, & Perkins, 1978).

The third major study to highlight anomalous findings is known as the Rand Report (Armor, Polich, & Stanbul, 1976), by far the largest follow-up of treated problem drinkers ever completed (Heather & Robertson, 1997). Between 1970 and 1974 the Rand Corporation collated and analyzed data from the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's (NIAAA) network of Alcoholism Treatment Centers (ATCs). Basic changes in the client outcomes from admission to six (n = 2371) and eighteen months (n = 1340) after intake were evaluated. The authors concluded that for some alcoholics, moderate drinking is not necessarily a
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prelude to a full relapse and that some alcoholics can return to moderate drinking with no greater chance of relapse than if they abstained. Four years later, the same researchers reported a four-year follow-up of the same treatment population (Polich, Armor, & Braiker, 1981). This second study sought to correct faults and answer criticisms of the previous report. Based on their sample of 922 alcoholics contacted four years following their initial contact with an ATC, the researchers concluded that some persons labeled as alcoholic may engage in drinking behavior without adverse consequences.

Each of these examples conforms to Kuhn’s (1996) thesis that “novelty emerges only with difficulty, manifested by resistance, against a background provided by expectation” (p. 64). In each case, intense resistance followed presentation of the findings. The publication of Davies (1962) findings in the Quarterly Journal of Alcohol Studies was followed by the journal’s publication of an unprecedented 18 commentaries from experts around the world, the majority of which were critical of Davies and his research. Following the report of their findings, the Sobells were accused of fraud. The controversy surrounding their findings was to such an extent that it was reported in a New York Times article and the subject of a special report on 60 Minutes. Similarly, the Rand Report was condemned as dangerous and unscientific. The conclusion regarding normal drinking was described as unethical, unprincipled, and likened to playing Russian roulette with the lives of human beings. It was even suggested that the report should have been suppressed (Heather & Robertson, 1997).

The Davies study (1962) also illustrates Kuhn’s (1996) observation that “initially, only the anticipated and usual are experienced even under circumstances where anomaly is later to be observed” (p. 64). Prior to Davies, a number of published studies (DeMorsier & Feldman, 1952; Harper & Hickson, 1951; Lemere, 1953; Moore, & Ramseur, 1960; Selzer & Holloway, 1957; Shea, 1954) reported the occurrence of resumed normal drinking in diagnosed alcoholics, however, the earlier studies were not accompanied by controversy. Perhaps, this was because Davies was the first to draw attention to the phenomena as an anomaly (Heather & Robertson, 1981).
Each of the three controversies is also consistent with Kuhn's (1996) observation that it is scientists, either very young or new to the field who, being little committed to the paradigm's rules of normal science, conceive of another set which can replace them. At the time of Davies' discovery, he was not particularly interested in alcoholism, other than as one component of general psychiatry (Heather & Robertson, 1997). It was perhaps this lack of specialization in treating alcoholism that allowed him to see beyond paradigm-induced expectations. In the case of the Sobells, at the time that they became interested in experimenting with controlled drinking treatment he was just completing his Ph.D. in experimental psychology and she was an undergraduate. Both were neophytes in the alcoholism research and treatment community. Similarly, the Rand Report was a product of the Rand Corporation, a private organization specializing in broad social science research to improve public policy, not specifically, alcoholism research.

The Response to Crisis

Kuhn (1996) states that just as the awareness of anomaly plays a role in the emergence of new sorts of phenomena, it is also a prerequisite to all acceptable changes in theory. The anomalous discovery is both destructive and constructive. Sometimes anomaly will call into question explicit and fundamental generalizations of the paradigm. Early attacks on the resistant problem will have followed the paradigm closely. With continuing resistance, however, more and more of the attacks upon it will have involved modified articulations of the paradigm, no two of them exactly alike. Though there is still a paradigm, few practitioners prove to be entirely agreed upon what it is. The awareness of anomaly opens a period in which conceptual categories are adjusted until the initially anomalous has become the anticipated. Assimilation of anomalous findings permits a wider range of natural phenomena to be accounted for. But this only occurs by discarding some previously standard beliefs, and simultaneously replacing those components of the previous paradigm with others. Kuhn (1996) further notes that a scientific theory is declared invalid only if an alternate candidate is available to take its place. When confronted by anomaly, scientists devise numerous ad hoc
modifications of their theory in order to eliminate any apparent conflict. By proliferating versions of the paradigm, crisis loosens the rules of normal science in ways that ultimately permit a new paradigm to emerge. That proliferation of versions of a theory is a characteristic symptom of crisis.

In the decades since the first awareness of anomaly, numerous modifications have resulted in a proliferation of definitions of alcoholism (American Psychiatric Association, 1987, 1994; Criteria Committee, National Council on Alcoholism, 1972; Edwards & Gross, 1976; Morse & Flavin, 1992; Seixas, Blume, Cloud, Lieber, & Simpson, 1976; World Health Organization, 1981). A number of studies have even examined the impact of the differential use of these definitions (Bjurulf, Sternby, & Wistedt, 1971; Boyd, Derr, Grossman, Lee, Sturgeon, Lacock, & Bruder, 1983; Boyd, Weissman, Thompson, & Myers, 1983; Meyer, 1986; Rollnick, 1982).

In response to this proliferation of versions of the paradigm, the Joint Committee of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence and the American Society of Addiction Medicine undertook a two-year study of the definition of alcoholism in light of contemporary scientific knowledge (Morse & Flavin, 1992). The result was the creation of a consensual definition of alcoholism that was deemed to be "scientifically valid, clinically useful, and understandable by the general public" (p. 1012). The following is the 23-member multidisciplinary committee’s definition:

"Alcoholism is a primary, chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is often progressive and fatal. It is characterized by impaired control over drinking, preoccupation with the drug alcohol, use of alcohol despite adverse consequences, and distortions in thinking, most notably denial. Each of these symptoms may be continuous or periodic" (Morse & Flavin, 1992, p. 1013).

While this new definition does not suggest radical revision of the disease paradigm, it does incorporate modifications that permit the paradigm's assimilation of the previously anomalous findings. As previously stated, two of the pillars of the original disease paradigm, that alcoholism is progressive and characterized by loss of control over drinking behavior, have been called into question due to anomalous findings (Armor et al., 1976; Davies, 1963; Sobell & Sobell, 1976). By stating that the...
disease is "often progressive and fatal" and that the symptoms of alcoholism may be "continuous or periodic," the new definition allows for the possibility that the progression of the disease may be abated and that some persons with alcoholism may return to drinking without adverse consequences. Additionally, the original disease paradigm emphasized the physiologic and genetic sequelae of alcoholism, failing to recognize the spectrum of biopsychosocial factors that influence its development (Morse & Flavin, 1992). By stating that alcoholism is a disease with "genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations," the new definition acknowledges the multidimensional origin of alcoholism.

Resolution of Crisis

According to Kuhn, all crises begin with the blurring of a paradigm and the consequent loosening of rules for normal research and close in one of three ways. First, normal science may prove ultimately able to handle the crisis-provoking problem, despite the despair of those who have seen it as the end of an existing paradigm. Second, the problem may resist new approaches and be set aside for a future generation. Third, a crisis may end with the emergence of a new candidate for paradigm. The consensus definition suggests that it is the first option that has occurred in the United States. Modifications to the disease paradigm's structure have permitted the U.S. treatment community to maintain the disease model as paradigm by allowing the formerly anomalous to be expected. Regardless of the outcome, when confronted with anomaly or crisis, scientists take a different attitude toward the existing paradigm, and the nature of their work changes accordingly. A paradigmatic crisis results in a proliferation of modifications and competing theories, a willingness to try anything, expression of discontent, recourse to philosophy and debate over fundamentals of the paradigm, each of which has occurred in the course of the disease model's paradigmatic crisis. Kuhn (1996) states that each of these responses to crisis is a symptom of transition from normal to extraordinary science.

The paradigmatic crisis experienced in the alcoholism research and treatment community has had a number of beneficial
impacts on the field. First, it has strengthened the view that
a dichotomy between alcoholic and not alcoholic is no longer
valid. Instead, alcoholism should be viewed on a continuum of
severity (Anderson, 1995). Second, there has been a shift from
seeing alcoholism as a unitary, biological disease to viewing it
as a multidimensional phenomenon in which biological, psy-
chological, and sociocultural factors interact to produce illness
(Kahler, 1995; Wallace, 1990). Third, as a result of the previous
two impacts, a broadening of the base of treatment, including
prevention and primary care approaches, has occurred, although
the dominant approach to treatment continues to be abstinence
oriented (Weisner, 1995).

Summary

This paper provides evidence that the disease model of alco-
holism conforms to Kuhn’s conception of a paradigm in crisis,
the purpose of which is to provide insight regarding the U.S.
treatment community’s reluctance to relinquish the disease model
in favor of alternative conceptualizations of alcoholism. With
the work of Jellinek, (1952, 1960), the disease model emerged
as a paradigm, providing the field of alcoholism research and
treatment with shared beliefs and expectations regarding the
nature of alcoholism. The anomalous discovery made by Davies
(1962) and replicated by others seriously challenged these shared
beliefs and expectations resulting in a crisis marked by consider-
able resistance. Numerous ad hoc modifications have permitted
the alcoholism research and treatment community in the United
States to assimilate the anomalous findings, permitting a wider
range of anticipated findings, and maintaining the disease model
as paradigm. Given the priority of paradigms and the hold that
they have on the community of scientists and practitioners whose
work they guide, the steadfast allegiance to the disease model
within the U.S. is not as surprising nor sinister as some critics
propose.

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The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) shifted responsibility for public assistance from the federal government to the states. This study examined early impacts of this devolution and related program reductions on local service authorities in Illinois. Based on surveys from 101 large townships responsible for administering General Assistance, medical assistance, and emergency needs programs, we found that 60 percent of these localities experienced increased service demands. These demands not only placed pressure on limited local programming funds, but also transformed local service populations in subtle and unintended ways. Reports of bureaucratic mistreatment and confusion also were common as states implemented PRWORA changes. Local responses to increased service demands were variable, with many localities increasing expenditures but expressing reservations about longer term funding given local tax limits. Follow-up surveys with 40 township officials two years later found that a declining economy and impending Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) five-year time limits were intensifying township program concerns. The implications of these findings for the development and monitoring of state and local public assistance systems are discussed.
The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) not only substantially reduced benefit entitlements for disadvantaged citizens, but also provided states with unprecedented latitude to design their own public welfare systems. Proponents of this intergovernmental transfer of responsibilities argued that states would be more sensitive to local conditions, and that state program experimentation could result in innovative program development. Critics countered that service devolution stripped the poor of minimal income protections, and that states might engage in a "race to the bottom" to cut benefits (Ellwood, 1996; Greenburg, 1996).

The impact on existing local service systems as federal entitlements were eliminated received minimal attention in these service devolution debates. Yet, local governments traditionally have been the service provider of last resort for poor persons through General Assistance programs (Lav, Lazere, Greenstein, & Gold, 1993), which raises the specter that disentitled persons may increasingly turn to local governmental programs for assistance. General Assistance coverage has been cut back in recent years and varies widely across states, but 40 states still provided programs in 1998 (Gallagher, Uccello, Pierce, & Reidy, 1999). A related issue concerns the impact of welfare reforms on local voluntary providers as the public sector decreases program commitments.

Mayors in large cities recognized these issues, and argued that social service devolution could result in unfunded mandates for local governments (Goshko, 1995). This prospect was particularly daunting given that welfare recipients often reside in large urban areas facing ongoing fiscal crises (Fuchs, 1998; Kahn & Kamerman, 1998). Nonetheless, these concerns were subsumed as governors argued for the shifting of program control from the federal to the state level (Weir, 1998).

Local social services issues similarly have received limited empirical research attention since PRWORA changes were implemented. Yet, the capability and willingness of local governments and providers to meet service demands will be critical to the well-being of poor persons, particularly as they encounter TANF time limits and other PRWORA service restrictions. Issues related to the appropriate roles of local governments in providing services
for the indigent also will become more pronounced in this chang-
ing public welfare environment.

Local governmental officials thus can provide important and overlook perspectives on welfare reform impacts. Based on a survey of township officials who administer General Assistance and related social services in Illinois, this study examines how early welfare reform implementation affected local service delivery systems in one state. In addition to analyzing whether PRWORA and other program restrictions increased caseload pressures among different client groups, we explore local officials' views on the specific policy changes that may have affected local programs. We also demonstrate how discretionary administrative actions associated with social service devolution may have subtle but significant program effects. The implications of these findings for low-income persons, local social service programs, and state-local intergovernmental relations then are discussed.

Potential PRWORA Impacts on Local Service Delivery Systems

General Assistance programs often serve clientele similar to those affected by PRWORA changes (Karger & Stoesz, 1998). Generally operated by counties, townships, or other local governmental units, these programs not only provide limited cash assistance to persons without other means, but also sometimes include medical, emergency, and other services (Gallagher, Uccello, Pierce, & Reidy, 1999). Consequently, benefit reductions mandated by PRWORA and other 1990's federal and state program changes may affect General Assistance and related local programs in several ways. Four groups of service recipients are especially likely to be affected: food stamp recipients, immigrants, SSI recipients, and TANF recipients.

PRWORA reduced food stamp benefits in several ways. The per person per meal costs were cut from 80 to 66 cents, which will result in food stamp expenditure reductions of almost 20 percent by 2002 (Karger & Stoesz, 1998). In addition, food stamp program benefits were limited to three months every three years for unemployed able-bodied single adults between the ages of 18 to 50, with three month extensions for those laid off from their jobs. These single adults traditionally have been the primary General Assistance recipient group (Karger & Stoesz, 1998).
In addition to being affected by general food stamp and TANF reductions, immigrants were targeted for specific cuts under PRWORA. Most legal immigrants were prohibited from receiving SSI and food stamps until they became citizens. In 1997, SSI benefits were restored for most legal immigrants who were in the country when PRWORA was passed, and 1998 changes restored food stamp benefits for immigrant children, older immigrants, and disabled immigrants who entered the country before August 1996. Nonetheless, most immigrants admitted to the United States after PRWORA passage remain ineligible for both food stamps and SSI.

Those awaiting determinations of SSI eligibility historically have been a substantial component of the General Assistance caseload (DiNitto, 2000). Such persons not only receive General Assistance while awaiting SSI decisions, but also may remain on General Assistance and utilize other local services if SSI is denied. While not directly impacted by PRWORA, other changes in the SSI program could increase local service demands. For example, 1996 federal legislative changes have eliminated SSI eligibility for persons with alcohol or other substance abuse problems (Zelenske & Yates, 1996). Further, Illinois eliminated a state program in 1995 that had provided cash and medical assistance for persons awaiting SSI eligibility determinations (State of Illinois, 1995).

TANF program implementation may affect local social service programs in several ways. General Assistance programs traditionally have provided limited services to families with children, but such families may turn to local service programs after leaving TANF because of time limits or sanctions (Karger & Stoesz, 1998). In addition, many states are requiring applicants to engage in job search programs before becoming eligible for TANF (Nathan & Gais, 1999), which may result in the increased use of local emergency needs programs during these waiting periods.

The economic circumstances experienced by persons who leave TANF also may affect local services demand. Studies of leavers have found that most persons who leave TANF find jobs (Loprest, 1999; Acs & Loprest, 2001). However, earnings generally are below the poverty level, and the jobs often are unstable (Acs & Loprest, 2001; Anderson & Gryzlak, in press; Anderson, Halter, Julnes, & Schuldt, 2000). Given these circumstances, TANF leavers
may turn to local services to supplement marginal incomes or to obtain transitional assistance after losing jobs.

The program restructuring accompanying service devolution also may have more general service impacts. Based on PRWORA implementation studies in twenty states, Nathan and Gais (1999) have argued that the major devolution of services has been to local entities, because state human service bureaucracies have granted discretion to local organizations to develop new service arrangements. This has created wide variations in local programming within states. Other implementation studies have found major deviations from intended policies as local providers struggle with new rules, expectations, and staffing needs (Brodkin, 1997; Iverson, 2000). Recipients may be confused as they negotiate these decentralized service networks, and may turn to local governments to test service possibilities.

The Illinois Program Context

In Illinois, all townships are required to establish General Assistance programs, which include both cash assistance and limited medical services (Illinois Compiled Statutes, 1998). General Assistance recipients must participate in workfare, job search, and job training programs to receive assistance unless exempted. Townships also have the option of delivering emergency assistance to indigent persons, typically by providing goods or service vouchers to those in need.

Although a small percentage of townships with high poverty levels and low property values receive state funding assistance (Johnson & Walzer, 1996), most township General Assistance programs are funded almost exclusively through local property taxes. Townships establish their own program rules and regulations within broad parameters established in the law. Substantial differences in eligibility standards, payment levels, service options, and administrative service structures result in this decentralized system. This is typical of the wide variations in General Assistance programs found in other states (Gallagher, et al., 1999)

Methodology

To determine whether PRWORA changes were affecting Illinois township programs, the authors developed a mail ques-
In designing the questionnaire, the authors examined the PRWORA legislation, background information on the Illinois General Assistance program, and related research studies to determine program relationships between PRWORA and General Assistance programs. We also met with TOI members to assure that questioning reflected issues of importance to township officials. The resulting questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions detailing what types of programs were available in each township, how PRWORA changes may have affected local programs and target populations, and how townships had responded to any resulting changes in service demands.

Only the largest 200 townships were included in the study, because most of the over 1,400 Illinois townships have small populations and little social services programming. The City of Chicago was excluded from the sample, because the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) administers the General Assistance program in Chicago without local governmental involvement. However, all of the townships in the densely settled metropolitan area surrounding Chicago were included, so the sample contained both the outlying Chicago metropolitan area and all other large urban areas in the state. The sample townships comprise about 81 percent of the total Illinois population outside Chicago.

The questionnaires were distributed to the selected townships through two methods. First, one of the authors attended regional meetings of the township officials, made a brief presentation on the purpose and importance of the study, and personally delivered the questionnaire to township officials in attendance. For the remaining townships, the questionnaire was sent to the township supervisor with a letter from TOI introducing the study and soliciting cooperation. Project staff then conducted extensive telephone follow-ups both to encourage questionnaire completion and to answer technical questions. Township social services staff members generally completed the questionnaires.

The surveying was conducted during the first six months of 1999, and so reflects early local experiences related to PRWORA implementation. A total of 101 townships returned surveys, rep-
resenting a response rate of 51 percent. The mean population size for responding townships was 43,000. In addition to basic General Assistance cash and medical assistance provided by all townships, respondents were asked if they included emergency assistance or other services in their programs. Seventy percent of respondents provided emergency assistance, while 55 percent provided other services such as food pantries, help with heating assistance applications, and shelter assistance.

The following presentation relies primarily on qualitative analysis of responses to the open-ended survey questions. The authors coded and organized all open-ended question responses according to thematic content (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Quotes then were selected from these thematic categories to illustrate the most commonly cited issues. To maintain the integrity of respondent comments, these quotes are presented verbatim.

To explore whether these initial local perceptions may have changed as program experience accumulated, we conducted a more limited follow-up survey with 40 township officials from the sample in late 2001. These surveys again questioned officials about TANF impacts on local programming. In addition, the follow-up questions focused on whether impending TANF time limits and the economic downturn were creating new problems.

Findings Based on Initial Survey

This section presents results from the initial surveys. We first describe the township officials' perceptions of welfare reform impacts on local caseloads, as well as whether the characteristics of persons who apply for services are changing. Then, we explore how administrative practices and confusion over new program rules may affect local service demands. Finally, respondent views are presented on how local governments are responding to these changes, as well as on the possibilities and limitations of such responses as welfare reform initiatives are implemented more fully.

New Demands from a Changing Client Population

Officials first were asked if federal and state program changes had led to increases in local service demands. Sixty percent of respondents indicated that services demands had increased. Of those who indicated that service demands had increased, nearly
92 percent cited changes in SSI eligibility requirements as a contributing factor, which was closely followed by 85 percent citing TANF changes and 72 percent indicating Food Stamp requirements (Table 1).

Respondents generally viewed SSI eligibility requirements as having the greatest impacts on local caseloads. This is not surprising, given General Assistance's predominance in serving single persons with disabilities (Halter, 1996). A series of SSI-related federal and state program changes and administrative actions were seen as causing these increased caseload pressures. The state elimination of cash and medical assistance for persons awaiting processing of their SSI applications was mentioned most often. Some local officials viewed this as a direct cost shift from the

Table 1

| Township Officials Perceptions of Changing Local Caseload Pressures Related to PRWORA |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
|                                       | Percent of those responding that federal/state program changes had led to increased local service demands |
| Federal/state program changes led to increased local service demands | Number (n=101) | Percent of sample (n=61) |
| Demand increased because of:          | 61 | 60.4% | NA |
| SSI eligibility requirements          | 56 | 55.4% | 91.8% |
| Food Stamp eligibility Requirements   | 44 | 43.6% | 72.1% |
| TANF eligibility requirements         | 52 | 51.5% | 85.2% |
| State administrative changes          | 26 | 25.7% | 42.6% |
| Other                                 | 12 | 11.9% | 19.7% |
Social Program Responsibilities

state to local governments. As one respondent stated: “Previously, the state would give them a medical card and money while they were applying for SSI—now the townships must take care of these cases.” Another added: “We saw a 166% increase in 1997–98 over the previous fiscal year in township General Assistance pending SSI recipients... It is evident the increases by this township in dollars and recipients is due to SSI and emergency assistance cases which used to be carried by the state programs.”

Several respondents also complained of increasing time frames for processing federal SSI applications. These processing delays probably resulted from case review backlogs related to changing federal eligibility requirements (Zelenski & Yates, 1996), as well as attempts by new client groups to obtain SSI given the more restricted TANF program environment. Because such “pending” SSI claimants received General Assistance, respondents indicated that SSI processing backlogs caused longer lengths of time on General Assistance and related increases in township medical expenditures.

While respondents most often mentioned caseload or expenditure impacts of federal and state changes, they also referred to subtler effects. For example, several officials discussed how the SSI and related medical changes had transformed the character of their local General Assistance program:

*The elimination of interim assistance at the state level to individuals pending SSI has had the highest impact on our General Assistance caseload. The inability of these clients to cooperate with our community work program has shifted the focus of General Assistance from a welfare to work program to a disability payment system. The elimination of SSI recipients with diagnoses related to substance and alcohol addiction from the federal rolls has had the same effect.*

*The revised eligibility [requirements] for SSI and Medicaid have changed our caseload from “temporarily unemployed” to unemployed and needing medical assistance, denied SSI, denied Medicaid, as well as temporarily unemployed.*

*The aggressive state implementation of TANF and Food Stamp employment and training requirements also affected local caseloads. Most directly, persons cut off from TANF or Food Stamps for non-compliance with education and training requirements*
subsequently applied for General Assistance. In other cases, the prospect of tougher requirements discouraged persons from applying for state assistance. For example, one respondent stated, “The more recent changes that IDHS TANF applicants must seek employment for 30 days prior to any assistance has increased the recent load”.

Less direct local program effects resulted from the creation of an expanded working poor population that labored for low wages in unstable jobs. Several respondents noted that IDHS quickly removed recipients from the TANF and Food Stamp rolls when they found work, but that these jobs often did not last. Respondents contended that such persons often turned to General Assistance and emergency assistance programs for help as they transitioned to new employment, because they faced delays in re-applying for state assistance or else were too discouraged to apply. As one respondent summarized: “I see the biggest gap is the time delay in receiving benefits when people are in between jobs.”

Administrative Practices and Policy Confusion

Over one-quarter of respondents indicated that changing state administrative practices, as opposed to formal policy changes, had increased local caseload pressures (Table 1). Two sets of administrative issues were prominent. First, several respondents suggested that the IDHS offices discouraged potential recipients from applying for state benefits, or else made the process of applying unnecessarily difficult. The alleged disincentives included increasing waiting times for eligibility determination appointments and application processing, requesting excessive information from clients, and closing cases due to single missed appointments or questionable failures to meet verification requirements. Several respondents also spoke of rude bureaucratic treatment as conveying a signal that service applications were unwelcome. Collectively, these practices were seen as leading some persons to turn instead to local programs for help.

*From the feedback we’ve been getting from clients, it seems that IDHS is discouraging people from applying. It seems that they aren’t being told what help might be available, but only what demands will be placed on them, without discussing much about how IDHS can help them overcome obstacles.*
Social Program Responsibilities

It appears that the delivery of services is the change that is having the biggest impact. The preaching of the party line that 'There's no free lunch anymore—you'll have to get out and work like the rest of us' is fine to an extent, but it seems that clients are sometimes treated rudely, and that obstacles are being placed in their way at times, rather than being helped to cope with obstacles to self-sufficiency.

The state sits on some cases, treats people rudely, and loses applications, and some people give up and come to the township food pantry or emergency assistance program.

Other respondents indicated that program confusion and complexity discouraged applications for state services. This confusion was seen partially as inherent in the major systems changes that were occurring, but also as resulting from inadequate IDHS caseworker training on new procedures, requirements, and benefits. As one respondent said in questioning the knowledge of caseworkers: “Clients are being told erroneous information regarding initial eligibility or continued eligibility”. Another added that “Mass confusion between caseworkers and new policies creates misunderstandings among applicants and recipients—correct information is hard to come by”.

Variations In and Limits to Local Responsiveness

Given that local governments have limited available funding and are restricted in raising revenues by tax limits or caps, there is no assurance that those townships experiencing increased demands will provide additional services. Other options include revising program rules to reduce service eligibility, or developing waiting lists for service receipt. Consequently, we questioned respondents about how their townships had responded to increased demands.

Table 2 shows that 45 percent of respondents indicated that increased service demands had resulted in greater General Assistance expenditures. In 16 percent of responding townships, and 33 percent of those that had experienced General Assistance expenditure increases, townships either had raised local taxes or borrowed funds as a result. Other townships were able to meet new expenditure pressures by using fiscal reserves, carry forward funding, or other slack resources. However, this was considered a viable option only in the short run. As one said, “The increased
Table 2

*Township Responses to Increasing Service Demand Pressures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increasing demands led to:</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent of sample (n=101)</th>
<th>Percent of those responding that general assistance expenditures had increased (n=45)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased General Assistance expenditures</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to raise local taxes or borrow funds</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to reduce services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer time periods to process requests</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

demand for all services is making our cash on hand disappear at a much faster pace, meaning eventually more taxes.”

Only 5 percent of respondents said that their townships had reduced services. However, 16 percent cited longer service application processing times, and changing administrative practices also appeared to restrict service access in some jurisdictions. One respondent neatly summarized how the problems of increased demand, limited funding, and resulting staffing constraints interacted: “Staff was reduced due to budgetary constraints caused by increased applicants. Due to these reductions in staff, processing time is longer”. Processing delays were exacerbated by the fact that, due to the new federal and state program restrictions, many ineligible persons presented themselves at township offices because they lacked other options. As one respondent pointed out: “We have seen more intake time regarding these people. High percentages are not eligible, but it [still] takes time for the intake”.

Social Program Responsibilities

Administrative reactions to increased demands also resulted in service reductions that, while real from the client perspective, would be unnoticed if only formal policy was scrutinized. "They [client applications] have been handled with stricter guidelines, and [we are] enforcing all requirements".

Several respondents noted that the strong economy had mitigated against short-term local program impacts, or that local pressures might increase when TANF five-year time limits later were implemented. As a result, concerns were expressed about the longer-term effects, and how service deficiencies may be created given local financial limitations. As one respondent said when discussing the possibility of local tax increases to meet rising service demands: "We find this not feasible due to the poor resources in our community and the lack of jobs". Another added, "Our ability to increase taxes is limited due to tax caps and the fact that we have been close to the rate limit for some time".

Follow-up Survey Issues

The follow-up surveys were conducted two to two and one-half years after the initial surveys. They were designed to determine if the basic policy and program themes described in the previous section were changing, or if new issues were emerging. Like other states, Illinois was beginning to experience the effects of an economic recession at this time, as evidenced by budget cuts at the state level and increasing unemployment rates. In addition, TANF five-year time limits were to be implemented for the first time within six to nine months of the interviews.

Analysis of the 40 responses indicates that service demands had continued to increase. The declining economy was most often cited as the reason for more recent caseload increases. In addition, nearly all respondents anticipated increasing demand in the next year if the economy did not improve. Such delayed effects are common in General Assistance programs, as unemployed workers exhaust unemployment insurance or other benefits before turning to local programs for help. One respondent also spoke of a bumping process that may affect workers with poor skills who were pressured to enter the work force because of welfare reform:
We are seeing an increase in people who worked for the temporary agencies. It is kind of a bumping down process. As family workers have gotten laid off, they have gone to temporary agencies for work. This has led to an increase in demand for temporary jobs, which has forced the less skilled temporary workers to turn to General Assistance. Our caseloads have nearly doubled in the last year or so.

Economic downturns always have impacted General Assistance programs. However, the fact that this more recent recession was the first to occur in the context of constrained state public welfare eligibility clearly had township officials worried about the interactive effects of a poor economy when coupled with welfare reform. As one respondent said: “The situation is some combination of a downturn in the economy and welfare reform... If the economy is bad and people can’t find jobs, where do they get the money to get by in this welfare reform environment?” Several respondents similarly indicated that economic conditions will shape the impact that time limits have on their townships. As one official noted: “There is a relationship between what is happening with the economy and those who will be leaving TANF. If the economy stays stable there will not be a problem.”

While concerns about the economy were most common, some respondents also noted that township pressures resulting from welfare reform had increased since the initial period of TANF implementation. Time delays in local IDHS offices in implementing new TANF requirements were seen as contributing to these later demands.

It took a year or two before things were really enforced. Now it is picking up a lot.

It took a while for both the TANF and the Food Stamp programs to strictly enforce their work requirements. However, when they did, many people failed to comply and turned to the township for help. We would send them back to IDHS if they were out of compliance, but it still took us time to process their applications.

One official also suggested that IDHS administrative practices resulted in many unsuccessful TANF exits, with these persons then turning to the townships for help: “IDHS caseworkers are pushed to make quotas, whether they have a real opportunity for the TANF recipient or not. They have admitted this to us... the
TANF people then come to the townships as a last resort after they have been kicked off."

The other dominant theme in the follow-up interviews concerned how welfare reform was continuing to affect the caseload mix, the services sought, and the nature of inquiries at township General Assistance offices. The many respondent complaints about the increased staff time required to explain service availability to persons arriving at the township offices were most notable in this respect. We had hypothesized that our initial findings of confusion about available services might abate as clients adjusted to new program rules and as the state and local social service agencies shared program knowledge and refined their intergovernmental working relationships. This had not occurred by the time that follow-up interviews were conducted.

I have also found that there are more and more people coming here asking questions, wanting to know about where to turn.

We have found there are many more people who are confused about where they can find help. Also, we have found that there are some private agencies who do not have a clear understanding about what is going on.

There is much more traffic—more coming to us. People come here confused. Now they may not be eligible, but they come here because we are the last organization they seek out.

Such increases in confused clients, as well as associated information demands, led a few respondents to think more systematically about incorporating information and referral activities into the office's basic mission. As one respondent stated: "We have become more of a resource center. More people have questions and it seems there are many who don't know where to turn". Another saw that such a role may also require townships to follow through more aggressively with other agencies on behalf of clients: "We might become more inclined to become information providers...we also may have to become more advocacy oriented."

Given the confused and last resort nature of many client interactions noted by township officials, it is not surprising that several respondents also spoke of increasing pressures on township emergency services. "We are seeing more use of township food pantries and school supplies than ever before—the emergency
needs programs are starting to be really pressed," said one official. These increasing emergency needs could result in both program cutbacks and shifts in program emphases.

I have had to cut back on our Emergency Assistance program, because the funding was going to run out.

We are hard-pressed to do what is needed . . . there is more emergency assistance being given than General Assistance.

The concern that we have here is that when time limits really occur we may have to re-think what we are doing. Normally, we are helping singles. Do we change and provide service to families first and do so more on an emergency basis?

Both the caseload pressures and the programmatic responses appeared to vary substantially across responding townships. Nonetheless, the combined effects of welfare reform, service devolution, and the declining economy were frustrating many officials and leading them to question the direction of welfare reform.

The federal government and the state government say the locals can do it. We can’t. This problem is growing, particularly in townships to urban areas. We will have to do something . . . we need money from somewhere.

I really think the strategy should be called the trickle-down dump theory. They tell us to do it, they dump it on us, but they don’t give us the tools to do it. Maybe we should become religious organizations and get some funds. That way we don’t have to ask taxpayers to increase their property taxes.

Discussion

The findings from this study provide several insights into the potential impacts of human service devolution on local governments and other local service providers, and also point to areas where additional research would be valuable. Most local governments in our survey were experiencing increased service demands as a result of federal and state program changes. This may have been due partially to temporary adjustments as both poor people and agency staff learned about changing program rules. However, the follow-up interviews suggest more lasting impacts, particularly in times of economic downturn and with the impending implementation of TANF time limits.
Some respondents viewed local caseload increases as a straightforward funding shift resulting from state implementation of new service restrictions. This ironically parallels state complaints about unfunded federal service mandates that stimulated PRWORA devolution debates. The major difference is that the state generally did not legally impose new requirements on localities, as the federal government often did with states in the 1980’s and early 1990’s. Nonetheless, as the providers of last resort, townships were faced with the choice of increasing expenditures or cutting back services to local citizens in need. Given that expenditure increases are severely constrained by property tax limits and general anti-tax sentiments, this often has left community services staffs in the position of being the ultimate bearers of bad news about more limited resource availability. It also has led many agencies to become more aware of other services as they seek to find whatever help may be available.

Analyses often focus solely on aggregate caseload or expenditure changes that result from new policies, or else on examining program effects only on the groups for whom benefits are targeted. However, our findings illustrate how programs may be transformed in unintended and subtle ways. Federal and state service restrictions set in motion a chain reaction through which disentitled service recipients turned to local units of government that operated related programs. If townships served these new service applicants, program populations sometimes were altered fundamentally. For example, the arrival of new applicants with borderline disabilities re-oriented some township General Assistance programs from work programs for the temporarily unemployed to disability assistance programs. Communities thus may be faced with difficult choices about the service mix they will offer. Devolution proponents would argue that this will encourage increased sensitivity to local service needs. Nonetheless, this local decision-making context of increased service demands coupled with limited resources rarely was emphasized in pre-PRWORA devolution debates.

As was expected, the devolution of services to local governmental units led to differing local service responses. These variations may encourage useful program experimentation, but also may create important equity issues as poor persons are
treated differently depending on geographic location (Nathan & Gais, 1999). In addition, continuing devolution may result in a perverse competition in which localities limit services for fear of attracting poor persons from neighboring communities. While respondents generally did not speak of such a “race to the bottom”, one reminded us that this issue requires rigorous monitoring as devolving service systems mature.

"We used to have an excellent and very humane Transient Assistance program, but we began getting referral business from homeless people hailing from other counties. Since the purpose of Transitional Assistance was to assist people who’d been stranded, not to invite people into our township to get a free night’s lodging or whatever, we cancelled the program. Service demands plummeted very quickly, and so did our expenditures as a result."

Comments concerning discouragement of service applications, processing delays and excessive paperwork, and rude treatment by caseworkers were troubling. During the debates preceding PRWORA, reform advocates argued that the organizational culture of public assistance offices must change. Public assistance caseworkers were viewed as critical in communicating new expectations about education, training, and work requirements, as well as in informing clients about support services (Bane & Ellwood, 1994; Bloom & Butler, 1995). Yet, PRWORA did nothing to assure that caseworker qualifications and standards meshed with these more substantial case management roles. Previous studies have documented similar inconsistent and unprofessional caseworker and local agency performance during welfare reform implementation (Anderson, 2001; Brodkin, 1997; Iverson, 2000). Additional research on caseworker performance and caseworker-client interactions in TANF and related service bureaucracies is needed to clarify the extent to which such practices are occurring.

The shifting of clients from the federal and state to the local level also suggests an interesting parallel to Halter’s (1989) finding that persons eliminated from state General Assistance programs initially turned to relatives for help. However, the willingness or capability of relatives to provide assistance was time-limited, and former General Assistance recipients soon ended up without help or in local shelters and food pantries. In our
study, many persons facing new service restrictions at the state level turned to local programs for assistance, and pressures on emergency assistance programs increased. However, tax caps and conflicting pressures from traditional service groups collectively produce tenuous long-term local service prospects for these persons, particularly if demand increases further due to TANF time limits or a declining economy.

Implications

Although PRWORA will undergo scrutiny during 2002 reauthorization discussions, it is unlikely that either devolution or the other major program thrusts of welfare reform will be reversed. Therefore, monitoring and refining decentralized public welfare service systems present important challenges for researchers and human services professionals. As Schneider and Netting (1999) have argued, this requires that human services organizations refocus advocacy efforts at the state, and sometimes local, levels of government. Because state programs are still in a developmental phase and many states have not expended all available TANF funds (National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support, 2000), it may be possible to gain support for TANF program improvements if effective advocacy efforts are launched.

The study findings suggest substantive areas in which such efforts would be useful. The de-skilling of caseworkers has plagued public welfare bureaucracies (Fabricant & Burghardt, 1992), and in a restricted and time-limited program environment the consequences of poor performance have grown. Human services professionals should lobby state and local governments and service bureaucracies for adequate training, qualifications, and caseload sizes that recognize the increased case management responsibilities envisioned under PRWORA. The redefinition and refinement of public welfare case management responsibilities in the new TANF program environment also is needed (Hagen, 1999). The goal should be to assure that the helping components of these new roles are adequately developed, rather than being mere subsidiaries to a case sanctioning emphasis.

Problems of intergovernmental coordination also require careful scrutiny. Workers in various state and local programs often
have limited understanding of the services available from other providers. Human services professionals can play important roles in their localities by mapping service networks that cross governmental boundaries, and then working within organizational settings to encourage service referrals and the sharing of information that link clients across otherwise fragmented systems. In addition, continued experimentation is needed with coordinative approaches such as one-stop service centers and more consistent eligibility procedures between programs (Holcomb, Pavetti, Ratcliffe, & Riedinger, 1998).

Limitations of the current study point to additional research needs. First, the study was conducted in only one state program environment. Governmental structures and programs differ considerably between states, so similar research in other states would establish whether the issues elaborated here are widespread. Additional research also is needed on the impacts of devolution on large cities, given their tenuous governmental finances and large concentrations of poor persons. Likewise, it would be useful to systematically examine impacts on shelters, food pantries, and emergency services, as oftentimes these are nonprofit entities not operated by a single governmental authority.

Our follow-up surveys demonstrate the importance of continued monitoring of local program effects over time. Both the declining economy and the impending implementation of time limits had heightened concerns among officials about local devolution impacts. The interaction between these factors in different localities is an especially useful area for study. In addition, later cohorts of TANF leavers may be more disadvantaged than early leavers, and may be more likely to turn to local service providers.

Finally, the characteristics and experiences of persons who leave TANF and other federal and state programs should be systematically compared across localities. In a restricted service environment with little federal oversight, independent evaluations of bureaucratic treatment and functioning are critical. Questions such as whether those who leave TANF are employable, whether they have been provided with options in meeting work and training requirements, and whether they are informed about service supports need to be assessed in diverse local settings. Because of their close interactions with current and former TANF clients
in a variety of service settings, human services professionals are uniquely positioned to contribute to the development of information on these questions.

References


This book adds to the growing number of social welfare policy texts addressed to social work students. I think it is suitable for introductory social welfare policy courses at the undergraduate or graduate level. A quick look at the title made me think that the book was primarily about policymaking by legislative bodies, courts, and executive departments of government. It probably gives more equal attention to each of the three branches than many other texts do, but it also contains a great deal of descriptive information about social welfare policies and programs, including historical and contemporary information.

The book's 18 chapters are divided into five parts. In Part 1, Stein's purpose is to "identify the ways in which the practice of social work is inextricably connected to social policy" (p. 1). Since textbooks generally cover many topics, it can be difficult to decide which to include and how to organize them. The introductory material in Chapters 1 through 3 addresses a wide range of topics. Among them are social values, the goals of social policy, history of the early years of social work and social welfare, and the legal auspices under which social welfare organizations operate. Chapter 3 also includes discussion of social work credentialing, confidentiality, and the duty to warn. Though these latter policies are specific to many social workers' practice functions, it is not entirely clear why they make up the bulk of Chapter 3. Instructors may be expecting more focus on social welfare policies that affect disadvantaged groups and citizens in general.

Part II contains more historical information, including information on Colonial America, abolition, immigration, and Native Americans. Stein then proceeds to discuss agenda setting and policymaking and the federal budget process. Once again the topics chosen for inclusion are an interesting assortment, and they may be an attempt to mix historical and contemporary information in a way that will be more appealing to readers rather than letting all the historical material in the text stand alone.
Part III covers poverty, including definitions and incidence, followed by programs that address poverty, both social insurance and public assistance. Stein also addresses health care policy and civil rights policy in this section. Section IV covers social services and includes various block grant programs that address problems such as mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, and child maltreatment, as well as services for the elderly. There is a chapter on education which includes educational services for homeless and other poor children and children with disabilities. The final section of the book is comprised of two chapters, one on implementation and the other on policy practice.

The book covers a wealth of topics that would certainly fill a semester-long course on social welfare policy. For social work education programs that may have only one course entirely directed at social welfare policy, this book contains a decent amount of material on the history of social welfare as well as a description of current social welfare policies and programs. The book is clearly written and easy to read. One of the nicest features of the book is that Stein uses a wealth of examples to illustrate his points. The examples cover many policies and programs of interest to social workers. When it comes to many of the topics, the book’s strength is in its breadth rather than depth of coverage, as is typical for an introductory or survey text.

No textbook does everything an instructor hopes it will do. This one does not include a framework or frameworks for policy analysis. An instructor wishing to include this material would have to look to other sources. Although Stein includes a chapter on policy implementation, the book is obviously not meant to teach policy evaluation, again requiring an instructor who wishes to include this material to look elsewhere.

I have long thought that textbook writers are disadvantaged because their books have no plot. It is, therefore, much more difficult to write a book that the reader just can’t put down. This textbook may be short on excitement. Despite its emphasis on policymaking, it does not do sufficient justice to the highly contentious debates that permeate social welfare policy. Perhaps the book’s breadth of information and easy-to-read style will compensate for that. The author has certainly taken great care in writing this substantial work. Though the book might have done
more to inspire prospective social workers to take up policy prac-
tice, it has many qualities to recommend it for use in introductory
social welfare policy courses.

Diana M. DiNitto
The University of Texas at Austin

Giuseppe Bertola, Tito Boeri and Giuseppe Nicoleti (Eds.), *Welfare
and Employment in a United Europe.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
2001. $32.95

This is an important and timely book that analyses some of
the macro-economic arguments about European welfare states.
The authors are European economists and they are mostly con-
cerned with the interconnecting effects of economic and monetary
integration in the European Union on social protection systems,
labour and product markets. The book is in two main parts. The
first looks at European “welfare systems” as a whole and their
relationship to labour markets; the second looks more specifically
at product and labour markets. For readers of this journal, the
primary interest will lie in the first half of the book and it is there
that I concentrate in this review.

The first point for an international readership is that the book
is primarily aimed at other Europeans. Terminology, especially
the use of the term “welfare” to describe states, systems of social
protection, and other social interventions could leave American
readers somewhat confused. But this terminological difficulty
also obscures more fundamental assumptions about what is being
analysed. Essentially, the authors focus on cash transfers through
social insurance and social assistance—with references to em-
ployment protection legislation and taxation—but there is little
emphasis on services in kind—especially education and training
provision, and also, crucially, childcare. The emphasis on cash
transfers, combined with the economic theoretical emphasis, rep-
resent both the book’s major strength and weakness.

The strengths of the book are in the quantitative analysis of
cross-national profiles and trends in social policy. Boeri in the
opening chapter takes some of the simplistic theories put forward
about the effects of European integration and then demonstrates
that they are not substantiated by the facts. This introductory
chapter is followed by a huge and ambitious analysis of the current performance of EU welfare states and of their actual and potential influence on economic performance. This one hundred-page chapter is the heart of the book for social policy readers. The analysis is clearly hypothesised and rigorously done and sets a benchmark for all future comparative work of this type. There is much to admire and the breadth of analysis—of income inequality and poverty rates before and after transfers, of changes in composition and growth in spending, and of changes in employment rates—that comprehensively covers the ground set by the theoretical agenda.

The authors then address the question of how policy should change and the role for super-national policy at the EU level. They argue for a EU wide means-tested social assistance safety net with national and regional variation in rates to reflect costs of living. They also argue for social insurance benefits to be based on actuarially fair calculations. Their third argument is that policy design and responsibility for service-based provision should remain at the national level.

The book then contains two responses to the chapter by macro-economist Charles Bean and from political sociologist Gøsta Esping-Anderson. The first is four pages and the latter is sixteen pages long. These comments help the reader focus on some of the most important contributions and weaknesses of the main authors' analysis, but they also point to a real problem in the overall structure of the book because there is little overarching thematic structure to help the reader refer to and from the arguments. What we have is an economist who broadly agrees with the approach but has reservations about some of the methodology and interpretation of results, followed by a much longer contribution from an opposing viewpoint that exposes some of the fundamental weaknesses of the analysis and puts counter arguments against the proposals—in particular the proposal for a EU-wide social assistance programme of last resort. Esping Anderson also puts forward different proposals that focus on family and female labour participation issues, which he quite correctly sees as crucially absent from the analysis. The fact that a commentator from a different discipline sees the problems of social policy differently is not surprising, but there is nowhere in

Periodically during the history of the United States, policymakers, charitable foundations and universities have attempted to address the problems plaguing urban neighborhoods through community-based initiatives. For instance, the settlement house movement, which began during the latter part of the nineteenth century, focused on strengthening poor neighborhoods and linking them to outside resources. During the 1960s, the focus on neighborhoods reemerged with the Gray Areas and Mobilization for Youth initiatives early in the decade and the Community Action and Model Cities programs later in the decade. The focus on neighborhoods reemerged during the 1990's with 'comprehensive' community interventions that attempted to 'build community capacity'. *Building Community Capacity* focuses on the most recent version of community-based intervention.

Chaskin and his colleagues explicitly define "community capacity" and identify its' primary components. They view community capacity as the "interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital" (p. 7) in a community that can be
used to promote community interests. This includes both the assets and relationships within the community and those that link the community to outside research. The book discusses four strategies for building community capacity: leadership development, organizational development, community organizing and fostering collaboration among organizations. The authors distill lessons from a vast literatures on these topics. They summarize different approaches within each strategy and discuss the relative advantages and disadvantages of each. In addition, they present challenges and issues related to each strategy.

Leadership building, the first strategy presented, includes both formal training and on the job training. Each has advantages and disadvantages. While formal approaches are well-defined and structured, on the job training approaches are linked to an organization's operations. This allows participants to learn skills needed immediately by their organization and motivates them to remain involved when they see the results of their actions. Also addressed here are important issues related to leadership development. These include selecting individuals to participate in leadership development activities and institutionalizing leadership development.

The second strategy presented, organizational development, refers to strengthening existing organizations and developing new organizations. The decision of whether to work with existing organizations or start a new organization depends on numerous factors including the willingness and ability of existing organizations to change to meet community needs. In cases where organizations are willing to change, technical assistance and funding linked to it can help organizations acquire the skills required to undertake new roles in the community. When working with existing organizations is not a viable option, new organizations can be developed to enhance community capacity. Key considerations before undertaking new organizational development include the vast amount of time and resources required to do so and the turf issues that may emerge if existing organizations feel their funding or constituent base is threatened by the new organization.

A third component of community capacity building is community organizing. Chaskin and his colleagues present conflict and consensus organizing approaches as both alternative and
complementary organizing strategies. Conflict strategies such as protest, boycotts, and sit-ins are useful when one's goal is to publicize an issue or when individuals or organizations in power are unwilling to respond to community needs. Consensus strategies, such as promoting mutual respect and identifying opportunities for mutual benefit, are useful when those in power are willing to make changes. Most important in this discussion is the recognition that both approaches may be used at different times by the same organization, depending on the immediate circumstances.

Finally, collaboration among community organizations is essential for building community capacity. The authors present several mechanisms for fostering collaboration. Broker organizations can be formed to bring organizations together, to service as a clearinghouse for information or even to assume community governance responsibilities. Coalitions of organizations can also foster collaboration, as can specific partnerships between a small number of organizations. In order for collaboration to succeed over time, constituent organizations must receive more benefit than cost. Choosing participants who represent all segments of the community and who are seen by community members as legitimate is also important, as is being sensitive to the political, racial and historic dynamics of the community.

The discussion above is only a brief prelude to the many words of wisdom contained in this book. *Building Community Capacity* makes a major contribution to the community development literature in a variety of ways. First, it presents an amazing synthesis of literature related to leadership development, organizational development, community organizing and organizational collaboration while managing to be both accessible and critical. Second, treatment of the typically controversial topic of 'conflict versus consensus' organizing is pragmatic and insightful. Finally, the most compelling feature of the book is the thorough integration of examples into the conceptual discussion. For each point made, an illustrative, real-world example follows. In addition, detailed case examples of three organizations and brief synopses of the work of more than twenty other organizations appear in the appendices. My main criticism of the book is that additional material regarding strategies for linking community leaders and organizations to outside resources is needed since access to external resources
is such a vital element of community capacity building. On a more banal note, the excessive use of acronyms when referring to community organizations becomes monotonous and is sometimes confusing. Neither of these minor points, however, prevents me from recommending that every academic, practitioner and student interested in community practice read this book.

Michelle Livermore
The Ohio State University


The *Handbook of Social Work Research Methods* is a research text written by social work researchers, most with social work practice experience, for a social work audience. The focus is on applied social work research, and most of the contributors to this edited book are well-known social work scholars. This book illustrates the breadth of research methods used by social workers.

The *Handbook* will be most useful as a primary text for MSW foundation research courses, although there also are things here for more advanced students and experienced researchers (e.g., Corcoran's chapter on locating existing measurement instruments). The *Handbook* is organized into four major parts, it provides comprehensive coverage of topics typically covered in such courses, and in general the chapters are well organized and written at an appropriate level for the intended audience.

The first six chapters in Part I cover fundamentals of quantitative research such as sampling, principles of measurement, and statistics. It is surprising that this section does not include a chapter on the computer analysis of data, and that the chapter on statistics barely mentions this important topic. Also, somewhat surprisingly, there is not a chapter on basic principles of research design. However, following the six chapters on fundamentals of quantitative approaches there are seven chapters on particular types of quantitative research designs such as surveys, randomized controlled trials, and single-system designs, among others. Basic principles of research design are covered throughout many of these chapters (e.g., external validity is discussed in the chapter
on sampling, internal and external validity are discussed in the chapter on randomized controlled trials.

Part II of the *Handbook* covers qualitative approaches to research. Like Part I, this part first provides chapters detailing the basic fundamentals of this approach, followed by chapters discussing particular types of studies associated with this approach such as narrative case studies and ethnographic methods.

Part III covers "Conceptual Research," and includes chapters on theory development, historical research, literature reviews, and critical analysis. I'm not sure that "conceptual research" is the best way to characterize the material covered in this part, but the topics covered in these chapters are all very useful and germane to teaching and understanding social work research, and are topics that oftentimes have been ignored in research texts.

Part IV contains chapters that cover a range of general issues in research. These include chapters on ethical issues, gender, ethnicity, and race, comparative international research, integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods, applying for research grants, and disseminating research findings.

No single research text can possibly cover or do justice to every area of importance. Indeed, as I argue below, we try to cover too much in the traditional MSW foundation research course. Nevertheless, in addition to a chapter on the computer analysis of data (quantitative and qualitative) the *Handbook* might benefit from a chapter on the critical use of the Internet. However, several chapters do provide discussion of relevant Internet sources.

This book does an admirable job covering the material typically required in MSW foundation research courses. Unfortunately, such courses, and consequently books designed for such courses, suffer from some common problems. First, we try to do too much in MSW foundation research courses, and in many other MSW courses, and depth of understanding gives way to breadth. Second, there is a lack of clarity or perhaps agreement about educational goals, and thus the focus of our educational efforts. Do we want to train MSW students to be entry-level researchers? Critical consumers of research? Empirically-based practitioners? All of the above, and perhaps more? Third, although most would agree that one goal of the MSW foundation research course is to train students to be critical consumers of research, too often, we
try to do this indirectly. Teaching students how to do research will not necessarily teach them how to be critical consumers of research. Finally, teaching students how researchers do research will not necessarily teach students how to use research methods to evaluate their practice or, more generally, how to conduct empirically-based practice. Again, we need to be more direct in our efforts to achieve these goals. However, the above are not so much limitations of this book as they are criticisms of how we teach foundation research in social work.

John G. Orme
University of Tennessee


In addressing Chicago’s poverty, the *Color of Opportunity* opens with an articulate elaboration of its theoretical models. In providing readable interplay of “life-course,” “human capital” and “structural” perspectives, the authors clearly hit most of the mainstream theories on poverty (the lit review relies heavily on the works of William Julius Wilson, David Ellwood, Charles Murray and Sarah McLanahan). Sensibly, this lit review included many concise definitions and later chapters provides 40 pages of meticulous methodological notes (in being pretty candid, the authors acknowledge some of the limitations in their “Urban Poverty and Family Life Study” samples). Most impressively, the rest of the manuscript is inundated with data. In triangulating three samples, the analysis generated some 65 tables, 37 charts and 10 maps.

This abundance of data yielded some interesting insights. As a whole, the “culture of poverty thesis” garnered little empirical support. That is, the data did not identify any “ghetto-specific” subcultures since all social classes stigmatized welfare and poor racial minorities were more willing to take low paying jobs. Likewise, poor parents wanted their children to be educated and the determinants of welfare consumption were identical in the inner-city and suburbs.
In refuting some underclass arguments, the data also highlighted the structural causes of unemployment. Through bivariate maps and tables, it is clear that employment opportunities were unequally distributed throughout the metropolitan area (i.e., in the last 30 years the City of Chicago lost 56% of it manufacturing jobs while its outer suburbs showed a 25% increase in such jobs). Moreover, several multivariate regressions showed that the spatial allocation of jobs was a leading cause of inequality. More precisely, the geographical dispersion of jobs was the best predictor of poverty since racial minorities were segregated into job deprived areas.

As the book scrutinized economic racism, other discernments materialized. On the sense of economic vulnerability, black men seemed to fear unemployment much more than white men. Moreover, this fear was reasonable since blacks and Puerto Ricans were more likely to be discharged during mass layoffs. Finally, the book advances some familiar but important understandings—single moms experienced more poverty, welfare spells averaged 2.2 years and the middle class was oblivious to issues of structural unemployment.

As the book offers these and other observations, it was also afflicted by some methodological weaknesses. Some vital claims lacked empirical evidence. For example, an important independent variable was racist "housing policy, historic and contemporary segregation." However, the authors forgot to include any evidence on the racial biases of landlords, relators, bankers or politicians. Likewise, the authors argue that researchers should explore the intergenerationally of welfare attitudes, but they failed to ask any adults about their parent's work, school or welfare attitudes.

There were other crucial omissions. In the education and family chapters, the authors ignored subjective processes (most of their measures dealt with demographic or behavioral attributes). Subsequently, the significant association between teenage pregnancies and the frequency of parental supervision may disappear if the researchers controlled for the child's impressions of parental practices (the quality of familial interactions may be more important than the quantity of such exchanges). Likewise,
all educational indicators were fixed to a person's "educational attainment." And while school completion seems connected to income, this measure decontextualized the educational process. That is, a student's economic plight was seen purely as a result of personal attributes while environmental factors were overlooked. Thus, a shrewder analysis would see if class locations were reproduced through the means of inequitable school financing, paternalistic teaching pedagogies, insufficient sex-education programs or racist tracking systems.

The book also ignored the gendered nature of poverty. Subsequently, sections on teenage pregnancy disregarded the impact of gender roles on sexual mores and familial responsibilities (i.e., boys want to have unprotected sex but they do not want to pay child support). Moreover, the deliberations on welfare and divorce glossed over the reasons for favoring AFDC over marriage (i.e., many mothers are fleeing violent, drunk or callous spouses). Likewise no attention was given to the sexism in social policies. That is, the authors never explored the gender biases of Social Security and welfare reforms (i.e., men have greater access to social insurance programs and do not have Norplants inserted).

Some sampling decisions are equally detrimental. The use of cross-sectional data to gather life histories seems problematic (issues of incomplete or selective recall). Moreover, single people were excluded from the study and the researchers over-sampled people from poor neighborhoods (making the representativeness of the descriptive findings suspect). Finally, the 1980's samples are a bit dated and cannot examine the impact of recent welfare reforms.

In the end, this review should sound somewhat ambivalent. The book wisely explored the worth of several mainstream paradigms (i.e., human capital, life-course perspective and Wilson's formulations on poverty concentration). Moreover, the emphasis on racial discrimination and spatial matters seem prudent. Additionally, the frank discussion on methodological limitations is quite refreshing. Nevertheless, the book's theoretical premises seem a bit narrow. In effect, the authors missed the subjective and contextual cues of educational and family settings. Moreover, the
authors avoided the ramifications of gender norms. Thus, this book supplies a promising beginning. However, this beginning must be augmented by future projects that test these assertions within a wider range of feminist and educational theories.

Eric Swank
Morehead State University
Book Notes


Social policy scholars in the United States may be aware that the notion of social exclusion has been popularized in European social welfare circles but few are fully conversant with its meaning and its relation to wider debates on poverty, inequality and welfare. Certainly, there is little evidence that the concept has been widely incorporated in social policy discourse in the United States. American scholars have not, it seems, embraced it with the same enthusiasm as Europeans have. Eventually perhaps, social policy writers in the United States will make more frequent use of the term and apply its insights to social policy analysis.

However, this book should serve as a caution to those who would use the concept without carefully considering its meaning and implications. Originating in social policy circles in France to refer to the fact that some citizens were not protected by the country’s many social insurance funds, the concept referred to the role of the State in ensuring that all were included in social security coverage. The term was then adopted by officials in the European Community and in turn by the Blair government in Britain which has promoted its use by funding research into the subject at British Universities and creating government programs designed to address the problem. It is in the context of British social policy that Askonas and Stewart have compiled this collection of papers on the subject. Their book shows that the notion of social exclusion remains an ambiguous and ideologically controversial one.

Unfortunately, the book does not offer a helpful introduction to the concept or the way it has evolved historically. Nor does it summarize the debates attending the notion of social exclusion. While these are deficiencies, it does contain some very interesting and important material which engages the reader in a thoughtful review of the concepts more problematic implications. For example, the chapter by John Gray shows how revisionist social democrats have promoted the concept of social exclusion to foster the workfare agenda. For them, the concept is not about the
exclusionary consequences of poverty or deprivation but rather of a lack of workforce engagement and the inability of the poor to participate effectively in society through engaging in regular employment. Workfare and job training social policies are advocated as the means of combating social exclusion, enhancing participation and promoting social solidarity. Gray suggests that the emphasis on social exclusion offers an alternative to the traditional commitment to egalitarianism in social democratic thought and that its imputation of cohesion does not give an authentic expression to the social democratic ideal of social solidarity. He also questions the idea that social investments can replace social transfers through income benefits and services. A welfare state based on investment principles, he insists, is a mirage.

Other contributors to the volume take a different position arguing for the concept's utility while yet others address some of the complex issues which accompany the debate on social exclusion. Some of the contributions are very abstract and discursive while others are practical and concrete. For example, Ruth Lister offers a set of proposals for promoting social inclusion which are helpful irrespective of whether the notion of social exclusion is considered congenial or not. Peter Robinson examines the problem of unemployment in relation to the notion of social exclusion and finds that the problem has less to do with technological change and globalization than with economic mismanagement. To promote a truly inclusive society in which the social democratic ideal of full employment is realized, a commitment to effective and efficient economic management will be needed.

The book contains many more interesting and informative contributions which address diverse aspects of the concept of social exclusion. While it is not a book for those who require a basic elucidation of the concept, its examination of the many issues which arise out of recent European debates about social exclusion will be of value to American scholars. It raises many issues that will counter the tendency to use the term because it has become fashionable. Instead, it will be of value to anyone concerned about the way traditional notions of poverty, inequality and deprivation are being reconceptualized and employed in social policy circles today.

Many social work historians have stressed the contribution the profession has made to political advocacy. Some of the profession founders such as Jane Addams in the United States and Beatrice Webb in Britain were tireless in their efforts to promote positive social change through political engagement. The creation of public social services in both countries owed much to their work and to other social work advocates. In both countries, statutory child welfare, social assistance, mental health and other social programs were created, expanded and eventually regarded as the proper purview of professional social work intervention.

Today the situation has changed dramatically. Child welfare services are increasingly being assigned to law enforcement agencies, social work has little involvement in administering social assistance and even in mental health, new professions such as family therapy are playing a greater role than ever before. Although this change is the consequence of various factors, including the shortage of professionally qualified staff, budget cuts, declassification and the emergence of other professional and para-professional groups, social work's declining involvement in advocacy is a significant factor. Of course, disengagement from the political process has not only affected the profession's status but has weakened its ability to promote government programs that positively affect the welfare of clients. Although professional associations such as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) do seek to lobby on social issues, their influence has been limited.

There is an urgent need for social work to revitalize its commitment to political advocacy. In addition to greater efforts by NASW and other professional social work associations, students need to be exposed to the issues. Opportunities for their involvement in political action should also be enhanced. It is this context that Mark Ezell's book should be viewed as an extremely useful tool. The book is well structured, easy to read and very informative. It will be particularly appreciated by students for setting out many different aspects of advocacy practice in a clear and succinct
way. Although the book appear to be written for students, it will also be of value to practitioners who will be interested in Ezell's argument that advocacy is a pervasive endeavor in social work and the human services. Advocacy is not, the author contends, a separate, peripheral field of social work practice for specialists who devote their professional lives to political work but an integral component of all social work practice. Edzell presents this argument in a way that will make sense to mainstream practitioners who have tended to view advocacy as a rabble rousing activity divorced from their everyday interests. His clear and eloquent presentation of the issues, and his insistence on ethical behavior will convince readers that advocacy is an integral component of all social work practice.

The book is divided into three sections. The first deals with general issues of advocacy and includes a discussion of definitions, the need for advocacy and a very useful chapter on the ethics of advocacy. Part two is concerned with advocacy practice setting out the strategies and tactics that are routinely used in the field. The final section offers a discussion of the issues, dilemmas and challenges of advocacy. Part two of the book is particularly useful covering a wide range of advocacy activities. In addition to legislative advocacy, it contains chapters on legal advocacy, community advocacy and agency advocacy. Although Edzell regards political advocacy as just one of several forms of activism, his discussion is particularly appropriate to the political arena. Irrespective of the setting, the authors offers an in depth discussion of the importance of needs assessment, problem formulation, mapping decision systems and selecting strategies and tactics. These strategic issues many apply to all forms of advocacy but they are especially relevant to the social work profession which needs to engage in political action with greater force and commitment. Hopefully this excellent book will help the profession to do so in effective ways.


Racial oppression and institutional discrimination in modern-day America is a real and all too tangible aspect of the social
fabric. Examples abound—the voting fiasco in Florida; the disparity of resources in the Oakland School District; the environmental racism of East St. Louis; the growing number of welfare clients who are being 'timed out' of welfare; the disproportionately higher rates of illness and death for minority children; the high risk of African-Americans experiencing impoverishment in their lifetime. The litany goes on and the need for effective change is urgent.

Many Americans do not see or choose not to believe that racism festers at the heart of society. Led by savvy neo-conservative Republicans who gained the political grandstand in the mid-1980s, the national agenda has turned away from eradicating racial inequality and back to blaming individuals for their lack of success. In the view of many Americans, to make racism an issue of inequality is, in this era of individualism, un-American. And yet, racism thrives just below the social surface in so many aspects of social life. The political trumpet calls Americans to arms of individual responsibility and civil commitment. Any citizen who is in need is seen as deviant. In this spirit of individual responsibility, many of the programs and policies intended to reduce disparity of opportunity have been derailed. Recent legislative action to end Affirmative Action is one example; the so-called welfare reform legislation of 1996 is another.

Congressman John Lewis, in his opening remarks for Chester Hartman's compilation of essays on race and inequality in America, writes poignantly that America is a single family, living in the same house comprised of many different rooms, and sharing one roof. Should one section of the house fall, the roof comes down on all. Thus begins a necessary discussion on racism in America. The question is not whether racism and inequality exist in America, but rather, how can racism and inequality be eradicated in the 21st Century?

This book is a conversation about racism. Hartman has gathered some of the most prominent thinkers of the time and allowed them space to debate the policies of the day in the areas of racial integration, poverty, education, democratic participation, and environmental justice. The result is a lively, informative discussion on the path the United States needs to take in order to effectively end racism and eliminate inequality. The essays provide a focused
perspective on salient issues, not only depicting the reality of what is, but dreaming of what could be. Rather than merely decrying society's lack of response to racial inequality, the essays are replete with potential solutions. Whether these solutions will be implemented, remains to be seen.

Hartman's book is a 'must-read' for social scientists, academicians, policy makers and students alike. The edited collection is informative, provocative, and engaging. Perhaps the only shortcoming of the work is lack of coherence across the essays. A concluding section that weaves the ideas of the different authors into an American response to racial inequality would strengthen the overarching message of the book, that America divided will never enjoy national security or tranquility.


During the past century, unprecedented social and economic shifts have irrevocably altered social institutions. Specifically, demographic transitions, industrialization and economic activities have contributed to a fundamental change in the composition of the workforce. The dramatic increase in the numbers of employed women into the labor market, combined with the rise of dual earner families, has led researchers to closely examine the changing roles of work, family, and community. Extant research in this area has focused on the individual decisions made in the context of work, workplace equality issues and the challenges faced by women in maintaining work and family. Recent census data reveals that the complex relationship between work and family is still evolving, with the latest figures demonstrating that the proportion of working mothers has significantly declined for the first time since 1976.

Hertz and Marshall have compiled this collection of chapters from the perspective that work and family are not distinct and autonomous domains, nor should research attempt to separate them. The editors argue that although the workforce composition has changed, the workplace has not changed. The first section of the book outlines the fundamental changes that have occurred within the family over the last 40 years, including the
rise in dual earner families emphasizing racial group differences and gendered career patterns from a life course perspective. In a poignant qualitative analysis, Rubin reveals the challenges and rewards of raising children later in life, in conjunction with caring for aging parents and maintaining a career. Other chapters document the changing role of men in family household tasks. Section two of this book focuses on changes that have occurred in the world of work, including Gross's analysis of family and globalization. An analysis of small businesses and family-based policies is included as is Kropf's assessment of the rise in part-time and contingent labor.

The third section of this book follows the recent trend in family-work literature by examining decisions from the vantage point of dual earner couples, not simply individual female workers. Gerson and Jacobs (Chapter 10) provide compelling findings about the perceived costs of utilizing family friendly policies in the workplace. Other chapters in this section examine work-family experiences in a variety of employment settings. The final section of the book provides insight into children's experiences and understanding of their parent's work lives. Rarely has research into work and the family included the voices of children. This was one of the most engaging sections of the book.

The editors have complied an outstanding array of renowned researchers, diverse theoretical perspectives and methodologies in this volume. A premise of this book is that paid work and family are dynamic and interrelated, and this book sheds light on the complexities of this relationship. Both students and experienced family researchers will find fresh and provocative ideas in this work. It will also provide an excellent basis for any course on family and work. A summary chapter would have been useful to point the reader toward the future issues in this area of research and policy. Nonetheless, this minor point does not detract from the book's substantial contribution.


Although social welfare programs have historically been based on a conceptual approach which stressed the importance of altruism and social rights in meeting the needs of those experiencing
difficulties, many social policy scholars believe that this approach no longer provides an effective normative basis for legitimating social provision. Today, they argue, the notion of welfare has been replaced by notions of reciprocal obligation, responsibility and work. Some commentators even contend that the ‘welfare state’ has been replaced by a new social policy formation known as the ‘workfare state’. They point out that welfare to work programs, which are at the core of the new workfare state, are not only to be found in the United States where they are prominent, but in other countries as well. Most European nations, including the most generous welfare states of Scandinavia, now promote programs of this kind.

Lodemal and Trickey have assembled an extremely useful collection of papers on the nature of workfare programs in Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the United States. The chapter on the United States by Michael Wise-man contains specific examples of how these programs have been implemented in New York, Wisconsin and California. These country case studies are augmented by three excellent chapters by the editors that provide a framework for the book and secondly summarize trends and draw conclusions. The collection provides important insights into the role of welfare to work programs in social policy today.

In their introductory and summary chapters, the editors show that the notion of workfare is a complex one and that its adoption around the world is not a simple matter in which, as was suggested earlier, the dominant welfare approach to social policy has been replaced by a workfare approach. They also suggest that the importance accorded to workfare in social policy circles is not, as many believe, an inevitable consequence of globalization, the demands of new technology, demographic change and other wider impersonal forces, but that ideology continues to play a vital role in shaping the way social policies are formulated and implemented.

The editors also point out that although widely used, the term ‘workfare’ fails to capture the complex ways in which social policies have engaged labor market issues in recent years. They show that the term ‘workfare’ has various meanings and that it has been used, on the one hand, to refer to any labor market
policy designed to promote employment and, on the other to very specific public works programs for those who receive social assistance. They show that the notion of workfare is not a recent innovation in social policy. While it is true that it now features more prominently in social policy welfare than before, the idea that it is a recent invention is not historically accurate. Putting the poor to work was a key element in the Poor Laws and welfare-to-work programs were prominent during the New Deal in the United States. In many European countries, employment and training have been integral to social policy for many decades.

Nevertheless, it is clear that welfare to work is now an obsession with policy makers in the industrial countries and that compulsion is being more widely used to promote work among welfare clients and the poor. This is particularly true in the United States where the 'work first model' has been adopted. The book suggests that this trend will continue and remain a dominant feature of social policy. In addition to summarizing general trends, the country case studies provide a wealth of information about the implementation of workfare. The book will be an essential resource for students and others in social policy. Despite its depressing prognostications about the centrality of workfare in social policy, the book suggests that employment programs need not be an instrument of coercion but can be effectively linked to wider social policy initiatives that are less concerned with promoting work than with promoting welfare for all.
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(Revised June, 2000)

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Founding Editors
Norman Goroff and Ralph Segalman