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The Roles of Buddhist Temples in the Treatment of HIV/AIDS in Thailand

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Although efforts are being made to decrease the number of new HIV infections in Thailand, less support is given to the growing population that is already affected by the disease. This qualitative study explores the roles of Buddhist temples in the treatment of AIDS in Thailand, specifically the perspectives of both Buddhist monks and persons who are living with AIDS on HIV/AIDS and the care provided at the temples. Three major themes were derived from the interviews: (1) temple as a last choice; (2) temple as a support group; and (3) the role of Buddhism and monks at the temple.

Keywords: Thailand, HIV/AIDS/ Buddhist and Buddhist Temples

Introduction

Among the Southeast Asian countries, Thailand is considered proactive in HIV/AIDS education and prevention. However, Thailand still faces a serious HIV/AIDS problem. An estimated 670,000 Thais are living with HIV/AIDS and 55,000 people died from the disease in 2001 (UNAIDS, 2002a). Although the government’s efforts regarding HIV prevention and education have reduced the number of new HIV infections, the number of AIDS cases is still increasing significantly. Between 1994 and 1997, the number of reported AIDS cases nearly doubled, from 13,923 to 26,713 (UNAIDS, 2002a).

Thailand’s emphasis has been more on education and prevention and less on providing care for those who are in the terminal
stages of AIDS. Hospitals and clinics are used only for short visits or to receive basic medical care. Most persons who are living with HIV/AIDS are unable to afford the medical care required, for either control of an HIV infection or treatment of AIDS. The Thai government has established no hospice programs (World Bank, 2000) to response to the increase of AIDS cases. Filling a need, several Buddhist temples have begun to provide terminal care for those with AIDS. However, the number of AIDS cases is too extensive for a few temples to handle and they are filled with patients, who come from all over Thailand.

The purpose of this qualitative and exploratory study is to describe Buddhist temple-based HIV/AIDS treatment in Thailand. The viewpoint of Buddhist monks who provide care for persons living with AIDS is explored, as are the perceptions of the persons who receive the care. Their approach to the treatment of persons with HIV/AIDS is unique and different from the approaches used in many other countries.

Literature Review

Because the AIDS epidemic has affected many working-age males, financial problems are plaguing many families. According to a research study conducted in Chiang Mai in 1994, most persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLHAs) in the research population spent about $974 on average on medical treatment (Kongsin, 1997). The treatment cost was about half of their salaries. In addition to the expensive medical care, both PLHAs and their caregivers lost income: the PLHAs could no longer work, and caregivers were forced to take time off from work to care for individuals in the terminal stages of AIDS.

The majority of PLHAs in Thailand spend their last stage of life at home, cared for by family members with the support of NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). According to Family Health International (2003), there are 465 groups for persons living with HIV/AIDS, with roughly 23,000 members in Thailand. These groups can provide only limited access to information about prevention, treatment, and care. Currently, many NGOs and CBOs in Thailand are collaborating with UNAIDS,
WHO, and the Thai Ministry of Public Health to help PLHAs get access to information, treatment, and care and to help them develop networks within their communities.

Despite the efforts of NGOs, PLHAs, and the government regarding education and prevention of HIV/AIDS, HIV/AIDS is still seen as a dirty, dangerous, fearsome, and shameful disease. According to the research conducted by Kongsin (1997), more than half of the caregivers he interviewed reported that not only PLHAs but also caregivers became targets of social discrimination. Their neighbors avoided associating with them, and often they were actually forced to move out of their home communities. Songwathana and Manderson (1998) found similar indications from their research on perception of HIV/AIDS in southern Thailand. “AIDS was perceived as a disease associated with dirt, danger and death, although it was also considered to be a disease of Karma (rok khong khon mee kam) and a ‘women’s disease’ (rok phu ying) associated with prostitution” (Songwathana & Manderson, 1998, p. 155).

Modern health programs and practices serve as an interesting counterpoint to the age-old tradition of Buddhism in Thailand, where the Buddhist religion and philosophy play a very significant role in the daily life of the Thai people. The vast majority of the Thai population is Buddhist (CIA, 2002). The teachings and principles of Buddhism were and still are a major component of Thai culture and are inseparable from Thai values and behavior.

In Thailand, a temple traditionally was “a school, a welfare institution for the poor, a hospital, a traveler’s lodge, a social center, a creation and preservation of artworks, a store for jointly owned property, an ancillary institution of the administrative system, and a forum for ceremony” (Ishii, 1986, p. 26). In addition to education, Buddhist temples in Thailand provide various types of medical care. In fact, the headquarters of the Association for Traditional Thai Medicine is located in the temple of Wat Po in Bangkok (Grady, 1995; Ishii, 1986). Many Buddhist temples teach both monks and laymen the techniques of making traditional herbal medicines, and give those medicines to the community. Most of the temples in Thailand can supply herbal medicines compounded by a monk. Buddhist temples in Thailand provide
not only treatment of physical illnesses and ailments, but also psychological and emotional support for those “who feel unhappy, suffer nervous disorder or undergo mental breakdowns” (Mahidol University, 1996). Many Buddhist monks work as counselors providing spiritual and psychological guidance to those who come to the temple seeking assistance.

Today, many elderly use Buddhist temples as a place to live when they are unable to find family members or relatives to take care of them. Wat Tungsammakeedhamm, a Buddhist temple in Suphanburi province, provides 40 spaces for elderly persons, whether couples or singles. In addition to the elderly, Buddhist temples in Thailand provide living space for children whose parents are unable to take care of them, persons with mental or physical disabilities, and those who are unable to live comfortably in lay society for any reason.

In light of the temples’ traditions of social and medical service provision, it should not come as a surprise that Buddhist monks were among the first responders to the growing HIV/AIDS problem in Thailand. One such was Dr. Alongkot Dikkapanyo, who founded Thailand’s first hospice for AIDS patients in the temple of Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu in 1992 (Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu, n.d.). Presently, there are at least three other temples associated with hospice type care for AIDS patients in Thailand. However, that is not the only role that Buddhist temples play in the fight against HIV/AIDS. With the support of UNICEF (UNICEF, n.d.), the Sangha Metta (compassionate monks) Project, was established in 1998 to engage monks in HIV/AIDS education and prevention. The Sanga Metta Project travels all around the country, giving seminars on HIV/AIDS prevention and care to monks and community leaders. By 2001, the Sangha Metta Project had educated 1,500 monks and nuns in AIDS prevention and care (UNICEF, n.d.).

Methodology

This qualitative and exploratory study describes the roles of Thailand’s Buddhist temples in the treatment of HIV/AIDS. An exploratory approach was selected for this study, because little research has been done on the roles of Buddhist temples
in the treatment of HIV/AIDS. The researcher conducted qualitative interviews and assumed a role as an observer-participant. The researcher visited temples where care was provided to persons living with HIV/AIDS and observed the study setting. The study identified how Buddhist monks understand and accept HIV/AIDS and treat persons with AIDS. Also, the study identified how persons living with HIV/AIDS accept and understand their illness and perceive the treatment provided by the Buddhist monks.

The temples Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu in Lopburi and Wat Thep Charoen in Chumporn were selected with the help of the Thailand Ministry of Public Health. The prerequisite for selection for this study was that the temple provides housing and other life necessities exclusively for persons who are living with HIV/AIDS. Persons with HIV/AIDS who were under the age of 18 and/or were physically or emotionally incapable of handling the interview process were excluded from the study. The subjects who participated in the study were (1) Buddhist monks who provide care for persons living with HIV/AIDS, and (2) persons living with HIV/AIDS who receive care from these monks. The interviews were performed with a total of four monks, including two monks who were living with AIDS; seven residents (three males and four females) who were living with AIDS; and one volunteer doctor. Three monks (including the two monks who were living with AIDS) and three PLHAs (one male and two females) were selected from Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu. One monk and four PLHAs (two males and two females) were selected from Wat Thep Charoen.

The researcher collected data by means of in-depth, semi-structured interviews, which consisted of broad, open-ended questions. Data were also collected by observation of nonverbal behavior during the interview process. A research assistant took notes during the interviews. A translator and cultural interpreter, a nurse who worked at the Ministry of Public Health, was used to conduct interviews with subjects who were unable to understand English. The interviews were conducted in a quiet, private place of the subjects' choice. Each interview took between 40 minutes to one hour. The interviews recorded in Thailand were taken back to the United States and retranslated by a native-Thai speaker to assure the accuracy and content of the interviews.
The collected data for this study were subjected to cross-case or cross-interview analysis. The answers from different subjects were grouped by topics or common questions from the interview guide. The collected data were analyzed word for word and each concept was coded. Coding consists of creating a symbol or abbreviation to be applied to a group of words or answers from the subjects. As coded data are compared, patterns, themes, and categories emerge from the data (Patton, 2000).

Findings and Discussions

More than half of the subjects (8) were male, primarily because the monks who were interviewed for this study were perforce all males. At this time, females are unable to become monks in Thailand. All subjects except two monks and the one volunteer doctor had been diagnosed with AIDS. The ages of subjects who were living with AIDS ranged from 24 to 41 years, with a mean of 31 years. Heterosexual contact was the major mode of transmission among the subjects. Of the nine subjects who were living with AIDS, seven were infected through heterosexual contact. A majority of the heterosexual contact occurred within marriage and/or consensual relationships. Only one subject identified a sexual relationship with a prostitute as the source of his infection. The length of time during which the subjects had been living with HIV/AIDS ranged from 2 months to 8 years. Most of the subjects stated that they did not get tested until their partners' or their own symptoms appeared.

Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu is located on the outskirts of Lopburi, a small rural town 75 miles north of Bangkok in Thailand and is surrounded by cornfields and small mountains covered with tropical trees. A large Buddha image stands on the crest of one mountain. Many smaller Buddha images are placed all over the temple.

Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu has one main building with about 40 beds for terminal AIDS patients who are no longer capable of taking care of themselves due to the complications of AIDS (Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu, n.d.). That building was filled to capacity when the study was conducted. The terminal AIDS patients, who wore only diapers, were observed from the open glass windows
and sliding door. The smell of disinfectant and medicine leaked from the open windows.

The Wat also provides single- and double-occupancy bungalows for about 250 persons with AIDS who are less critically ill and are capable of self-care. The bungalows were built all over the temple grounds surrounding the main administrative building. Each bungalow has a bathroom and a couple of small windows. A bed is provided for each resident. The temple also provides larger bungalows in which a family can live together. Male and female residents are not allowed to live in the same bungalow unless they are legally married. A coordinator for the temple mentioned that it is not uncommon for residents to meet and marry at the temple. The bungalows for monks are separated from those of the other residents. A kitchen and cafeteria in the center of the temple are where the residents receive meals three times a day. A little store, which sells snacks, candies, and sodas, is also located in the center of the temple. Around the cafeteria and store, many tables and chairs are placed for the residents to sit and eat.

In addition to the PLHA housing, Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu offers educational opportunities. Two large meeting rooms in the temple are used for HIV/AIDS education for school-age children and any interested visitors. A big parking space was built near the entrance gate to accommodate large groups of visitors. The temple also has two museums that are open to visitors, the After Death Room and the Bone Museum. In the After Death Room, bodies of persons who died of AIDS at the temple are preserved in formaldehyde and displayed. Cremated remains of persons who died of AIDS are preserved in the Bone Museum and await family members to come to pick them up. All the museums, meeting rooms, and the store are located in the center of the temple, along with the administration building. All the administrative work, such as the financial dealings of the temple, is done in the administration building.

There are about 20 volunteers at Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu, including one-full time nurse and one volunteer doctor from Belgium, who help to provide basic medical care to the residents. A nurse from the local hospital comes to the temple every day to assist the doctor and bring necessary medical supplies. There are about 17 monks at the temple who perform funeral ceremonies.
Most of the monks, 14 or 15 out of 17, are infected with HIV. There are no nuns at Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu. About three to nine people die from AIDS every day at the temple. A total of about 7,000 people have died at the temple since 1992.

The temple provides care and support for outpatients as well as inpatients. Currently, more than 10,000 persons who are living with AIDS are on the waiting list to move into Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu. Family situations and financial issues, as well as the individual's stage of AIDS, are considered in determining eligibility for admission.

Wat Thep Charoen is a small temple located in the southeast region of Thailand, 20 miles north of the center of the city of Chumphorn. A Buddhist monk, Pra Kruu Wilard, founded the Wat Thep Charoen hospice program in 1996. About nine years ago, Pra Kruu Wilard was stunned to find a person who was dying of AIDS on the street, abandoned by his family and dying alone. Though recognizing his lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS, Pra Kruu Wilard decided to take the lead on providing care for persons with AIDS. The following year, he went to a meeting held by the Department of Religion and was offered 20,000 baht to built a hospice program for AIDS patients. The hospice is isolated from the other temple areas and is surrounded by many lush tropical trees and flowers, which can be viewed from inside the building.

The hospice provides 10 beds in the main building for individuals in the last stages of the illness. There is also a small office space in the building, which is used to store medical supplies. The temple offers two concrete buildings, which contain about 20 single-occupancy bungalows for those whose illness has not progressed too far and are capable of self-care. Each bungalow has a bathroom and a couple of small windows. The two buildings with bungalows and the main building for terminal AIDS patients are sited next to each other. Next to the bungalows, there is a large sitting Buddha image and open floor space for residents to meditate and pray. There is a small kitchen, where meals for all residents are prepared.

When the interviews were conducted, there were a total of 15 PLHAs (9 males and 6 females) at the Wat Thep Charoen hospice program. They were between the ages of 20 and 38 except for 2 children, who were 2 and 9 years old. Most of the persons who
were in the terminal stages of illness lay on their beds and did not move much. During lunchtime, meals prepared by other residents were carried to their beds. Residents assisted those who were unable to feed themselves.

There are seven monks and three nuns at Wat Thep Charoen. However, Pra Kruu Wilard is the only monk who visits the hospice program and provides care for persons living with AIDS. Pra Kruu Wilard stated that rest of the monks and nuns are not interested in providing AIDS care. There are six workers who provide basic care for the persons living with AIDS at the hospice, but there are no doctors or nurses onsite. Workers take the residents to the local hospital if medical attention is required. A diagnosis of AIDS is a prerequisite to being admitted to either temple’s hospice program. Applicants are required to show a medical record issued by a medical doctor.

Three main themes emerged from analysis of the interviews conducted at the temples. Despite the different geographic locations of the hospice programs, it appeared that the subjects had had many similar experiences and reactions personally, from family members, and in their home communities.

More than half of the subjects who were living with AIDS identified their primary reason for coming to live at the temple as discriminatory acts and attitudes of their neighbors and communities. Despite the efforts of the government and NGOs regarding HIV/AIDS education, many people in Thailand still have misconceptions about HIV/AIDS. In Thailand “people still think it is taboo to talk about. People think it is a shamed disease. It is not transmitted easily, but people are scared of HIV/AIDS,” stated a 24-year-old monk with AIDS. HIV/AIDS is perceived as a disease associated with prostitution and injecting drug use. “Some of the patients are innocent. They did not do anything wrong. They have got AIDS from their husband, not from prostitution or IDU,” stated a 24-year-old female subject with AIDS.

Members of the general public avoid associating with persons who have HIV/AIDS. “People who know about my AIDS, they look at me differently and give me strange look,” said a 26-year-old male subject. People avoid patronizing a restaurant or food vendor stall that is owned by the family of a person with HIV/AIDS. Persons with HIV/AIDS are usually unwelcome as
restaurant or food vending workers, because of the misconception that HIV can be transmitted through sharing food. "I went back to work with my friends at the market, but my friends did not like me working there," said a female subject, who had formerly cooked and sold noodles at the market. A volunteer doctor echoed that point when he observed:

Suppose there is a patient with very bad skin disease. Family and hospital take care of him. Of course, it is skin disease and everybody can see it. So in the village, everyone understands that he is a HIV positive. Suppose his mother and father make kap kao (rice meal), nobody would go to eat there, because all the village people know and they are afraid. So he has to come here [temple] and help his father and family to survive. He has a good family and hospital, but still has to come here.

The respondents' statements indicated that the decision to leave their families and live at the temple is a complex one for persons with HIV/AIDS. Many subjects expressed their concerns about the possible effect on their family if they stayed with the family in the community. One 32-year-old male subject expressed concern about his neighbor's discriminatory attitude, which was directed not only toward him but also at his brother and his family:

When I was staying with my family, some of the neighbors did not like me staying there. I did not want to cause any trouble for my family. One of my brothers offered me to stay with his family and I thought about it. But my brother has wife and children and I did not want to cause any trouble for them.

Even when the subjects had a family to take care of them, many expressed unwillingness to depend on family members. "My family took care of me very well. They did everything for me. I did not like it. I wanted to take care of myself. It is too much for them. I have AIDS and they don't and I belong here," stated a monk with AIDS. This monk also expressed his concern about being a burden on his family. Another subject said, "I don't have a choice. Good or bad, I have to stay here. If I have a choice, I rather want to live with my family."

Many communities in Thailand do not have the appropriate resources, and are neither ready nor able to provide support
systems for persons with HIV/AIDS. As a result, some PLHAs are pushed out of their communities and left without any place to go except these temples. One subject with AIDS called the temple "heaven for AIDS patients."

Being able to share one's thoughts and feelings with other persons who have AIDS was another major reason identified by the subjects for their coming to live in the temple. Many subjects expressed how difficult it was to live in the community, because they were "different" from others. The subjects noted that being the "same" as others helps one to live comfortably, free of shame and worry. As a 26-year-old female subject put it, "The most important factor is that everyone is same. Outside [the temple], I am not happy. Here everyone is same. I am not accepted outside by society, but here I feel happy." Another subject said, "Every morning, I get together with my friends who are in the same situation as I am." Yet another subject even mentioned that he was uncomfortable around his family, because they did not have AIDS. He stated:

I worry and think about my family. Sometime, I feel that I don't want my family to come to see me. It is not fair for them that they have to see me like this. I don't want to worry about what they think when they see me. Whatever I am right now, I feel normal when I am surrounded by people with AIDS. But I feel not normal when they come to see me.

Most of the subjects had developed some close friendships with other PLHAs in the temple. They told the researchers that having friends in the same situation helped to process their difficult feelings. "When we talk about each other's feelings, it makes both of us feel better," a subject said. "I have many friends here. I have three very close friends in my ward. We cook and eat together."

The volunteer doctor expressed how amazing it was to see persons with AIDS help one another and cheer each other up. He described one instance when all the residents gathered and sang a birthday song for a resident who was dying in the sick ward. It became clear that the Buddhist temple in Thailand provides a place where PLHAs can form informal support groups. Being able to live with others, who are in the same situation, and being
able to share difficult feelings and moments, are crucial support mechanisms for persons who are living with HIV/AIDS.

All but the volunteer doctor and one of the subjects identified themselves as Buddhist. Both temples in the study had an arranged time for the residents to pray in front of a Buddha statue. Participation was not mandatory, but most of the subjects attended and prayed with a monk. Most of the subjects mentioned that they had not prayed or meditated before they came to the temple. All the subjects who attended the prayer sessions stated that prayer made them feel better. “Praying and listening to the Buddhist teaching make me calm and accept the situation. Make me think that this the way of life,” stated a 32-year-old male subject. Another 32-year-old male subject said, “It makes me feel better. It relaxes me and I don’t think about pain when I am praying.”

Two subjects reported that they did not pray. One subject, who identified herself as both Christian and Buddhist, said:

Teacher from Australia introduced me Christianity and told me not to worry about death and God will take care of me. I am Buddhist, but also have Christian belief. It is not something that everyone here has to meditate or pray or practice religious activities.

Both temples admit anyone who otherwise qualifies, regardless of religious affiliation or lack thereof. The temple hospice programs do not require admittees to be Buddhist, nor do they mandate participation in Buddhist activities. One subject who identified as non-Buddhist mentioned, “I don’t have time for that [practicing Buddhism]. In the morning, I have to work at the store and I have to welcome visitors. So I don’t have time.”

In the temples, however, the teachings of the Buddha are used to address the mental health needs of persons who are living with AIDS. The monks often apply the concepts of the Buddhist teachings to explain the pain, suffering, and death associated with AIDS. Death and birth are considered natural phenomena and part of the life cycle in Thai Buddhism. “People are born, get old, suffer, and die. It is natural thing,” a monk stated. “I am not scared [of dying]. People who do not have AIDS could die too. Nothing could stop that. When you are born, you die,” a subject said.

Although some subjects were able to perceive suffering and death as a part of life, others had a difficult time accepting their
situations. A few subjects disclosed suicidal ideation. One monk who was living with AIDS said that being a monk and learning the teachings of Buddhism had stopped him from proceeding with his ideation:

*Researcher:* Have you thought about suicide?

*Subject:* Yes. I think about suicide all the time. It is easy to die.

*R:* How many times did you think about suicide?

*S:* Many times.

*R:* Do you still think about suicide?

*S:* Right now, I don't think about.

*R:* Why you don't think about suicide?

*S:* I learned to be a monk and I know what is bad and what is good. I read and learn from other monks about the teachings of Buddha.

The majority of the subjects comprehended that the suffering from AIDS was the result of Karma. The subjects believed that AIDS was caused by their bad behavior in past lives. "In Buddhism, we believe that people who do good things deserve good life. When people die, people who did good things will deserve good life. If you did bad things, you go to bad place," a monk who was living with AIDS stated. The chief monk at Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu talked about how AIDS was caused by Karma:

Most of the Thai people believe in luck and they consider themselves unlucky to have AIDS. So questions they ask is "why me?" "Why I have bad luck?" What I explain to them is that it is nothing to do with bad luck or good luck. But it is Karma and what you do. They don't want to blame themselves and they want to blame something else. It is very easy to explain Karma. What they do affect their family lives and children.

Believing in the concept of Karma helped some patients to accept their illness as part of life, which is considered as suffering in the teachings of the Buddha. Karma means that they are not the only ones suffering; all who live in this life are suffering. The only way to escape from Karma is to practice the teachings of the Buddha.

Although most believe that their AIDS was caused by bad behavior in their past lives, many subjects also identified their behavior in their present lives as a cause of AIDS. One monk observed, "Maybe, I did not do anything in my past life. But
maybe, I did something bad in this life and came back to me quickly.” A subject who had been infected through injecting drug use stated, “Before I was born, I don’t know anything about my past life. But I know what I did in this life.”

The teachings of the Buddha are used as a tool to assist persons who are living with HIV/AIDS to understand and make sense of what AIDS is and how to cope. However, the effects of AIDS are extraordinarily large and pervasive. Each person goes through different stages of understanding and acceptance of AIDS. Some take longer than others to process their feelings.

In Thailand, a Buddhist monk is highly respected and admired, not only as a religious figure, but also as a teacher, an advisor, a leader, a healer, and a counselor. Both monks who founded hospice programs—Alongkot Dikkapanyo at the Wat Phra Baht Nam and Pra Kruu Wilard at Wat Thep Charoen—stay at the temples and interact with persons with AIDS as much as they can. The study subjects said that the frequency of their talks with a monk ranged from two to three times a week to once a week.

Since the Thai financial crisis in 1996, both temples have encountered financial difficulties, and the monks are often busy engaging in fund-raising activities. Although the monks are currently unable to spend as much time as they used to with the residents in the temple, their effort and hard work for the temple are appreciated. A female subject stated that one of the reasons she was able to process her difficult feelings about accepting her illness was the monk. She said, “I saw a chief monk who works very hard to provide us food and place to stay. He works hard for us. He provides us food, medical care, and things we need. He is tired, because of us.” A 32-year-old male subject also said, “I feel sorry for the chief monk who works very hard to collect donation to take care of us.” Many subjects were encouraged by the monk's dedication to providing care for persons with AIDS.

If he has time, he goes to the sick ward and walks bed to bed. Right now he is pretty busy so he cannot do as much as he used to. But when he has time, he mixes the nutritional drink for the patients and gives to them and talks to them.

The chief monk at Wat Phra Baht Nam Phu, Alongkot Dikkapanyo, does not separate monks who have AIDS from other
monks. He expects everyone in the temple to work and live together. Although the monks who are living with AIDS are treated the same way as the other monks, it is difficult for them to perform the same duties. To protect themselves from getting various AIDS-related infections and opportunistic infections such as tuberculosis, most of the monks with AIDS avoid going into the sick ward and interacting with persons who are in the last stages of AIDS. One monk who participated in this study was unable to perform any monastic duties, such as praying, because of his illnesses associated with AIDS.

Many subjects stated that they talk to the monks about everything, including their symptoms and the teachings of the Buddha. The chief monk, Alongkot, said, "I focus on the present time and not past or future. Each case is different, so what I talk and how I talk is different depends on the patients." The monks' encouragement has helped many subjects to process difficult feelings and accept their disease. A 24-year-old monk with AIDS stated:

At first, I was scared and could not think about anything else. I thought that there is no future anymore. Right now, the chief monk encouraged me that I am still valuable person that I can work and have something to do. I can help other AIDS patients when I am healthy and strong.

Despite the fact that most of the subjects said that talking to a monk makes them feel better, many subjects claimed that there was no difference between talking to a monk and talking to other people. Many PLHAs come to the temple looking for a place where they can express their feelings without fear or shame. It is not necessary to be a monk to provide such an environment. "Patients do not care whom they talk to. They want to talk to anyone," the chief monk noted. One subject stated, "Both talking to you and talking to a monk makes me feel better. When I talk to you or a monk, I enjoy and forget about my pain." "One of my best mental supports is a visitor," said the subject, who enjoys dancing for visitors.

Conclusion

In Thailand the focus on HIV/AIDS has largely been on prevention and education. Much less is known about the social
supports for PLHA and the difficulties they and their families face in providing care, especially at the end-stage of the disease. This study has described how several Buddhist temples have become hospice-centers for PLHA and have created an environment of tolerance and support for PLHA. It is clear that the PLHA find solace not only from the monks who care for them but also from their peers. While these temples cannot alter the ultimate course of the disease, they do provide a sanctuary for PLHA to die with some dignity and not alone.

Finally, the approach to care provided by the Buddhist temples in Thailand demonstrate alternative and viable models of treatment and terminal care for PLHA that do not conform to general western approaches such as hospice. The Thai temples are evidence of a local, grass roots service model that is adopted to accommodate the unique culture and tradition. Grounded in the interplay of culture and religion, the temples provided PLHA meaning and support. Other alternative models of care no doubt exist globally and it is important to identify what other culturally appropriate models of care exist that can allow PLHA to remain in their communities and with their families. In the battle against this terrible disease we need a diversity of approaches to treatment and care.

References


Quantifying Social Entities:
An Historical-Sociological Critique

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In formulating social policy the administrative arm of government relies heavily on number-based significations of knowledge, such as needs indicators and performance measures. Relying on numbers increases administrators’ confidence in their decisions and shifts responsibility for error away from the decision-maker and towards the numbers. A close examination of the technology of social quantification reveals instability in many of the definitions and codes that needs analysts and program evaluators adopt when numerically inscribing social entities. To deal with these risks, bureaucracies must establish ways of explicitly assessing the uncertainty, imprecision and social construction that often lies behind the evidence presented as numbers, evidence that can easily be accepted on face value and be turned uncritically into decision-making rationales.

Keywords: numbers, policy, social quantification, needs indicators, evidence, decision-making, statistics

The modern western state applies most public funds to its social programs. The objectives of social programs are determined by the social policy of the state, formulated ideally on sound evidence. In recent years there has been a growing call for policy to be evidence-based. The fundamental elements of this evidence are meaningful descriptions of the characteristics of social entities that represent the needs of the citizens and the priorities of the state concerning those needs, as determined through the political process. Typically these social entities describe the population’s health and welfare needs. For example, the state’s health administrators seek to know the population’s priority needs in health care and how these are likely to change, while regional
and social planners seek forecasts of the socio-economic status of sub-populations. This knowledge is invariably captured through numbers, as quantitative significations of one or more social entities.\(^1\) As such it is numbers that are commonly used to signify the social within the welfare policies of the modern western state.

The morphology of the social entity does not sit comfortably with the concept of number. Numbers are ideally constructed from systematic measurement processes that capture predictable properties. Social entities generally are not of this character. As the product of human behaviour, social entities are often unpredictable and possess little of the repeatable, systematic nature of a physical entity such as distance or weight. They can be transient in definition and variable in incidence. Even so, we find that the most common way of signifying social entities is through numbers.

**Why Bureaucrats are Attracted to Numbers**

Administrative bureaucracies of the modern western state fully embrace the technology of quantification to formulate and implement their governments' welfare policies. Five distinct reasons for this are proposed.

1. **The inevitable avalanche of numbers that arises from government action**

   The state has evolved with a reliance on a series of technical apparatus that enable governments to govern. These techniques are exercised by the administrative bureaucracy as agent of government. In the exegesis of the 'grand narrative' of the history of modern society, historians and sociologists have developed a range of themes to explain the nature and purpose of administrative bureaucracies, such as Weber's iron cage (1992), Latour's centres of calculation (1987) and Foucault's art of governmentality (1991). A defining role of the bureaucracy is the practice of surveillance. This generates large banks of official statistics about the state and its citizens which, along with other technical apparatus of governmentality, facilitate the purpose of systematisation and control of the state (Dandeker 1990, Dean 1994, Giddens 1990).

Foucault describes the rise of statistics, or knowledge of the state, as a key apparatus of the expanding state in post-Renaissance Europe. Statistics made it possible to quantify masses of population
characteristics with which to plan, manage and control. This avalanche of numbers also enabled patterns to be identified which revealed the population's: 'own regularities, its own rate of deaths and diseases, its cycles of scarcity, etc' (Foucault 1991:99). One outcome of these central surveillance activities was that governments' administrative control became inseparable from its routine monitoring of official statistics (Giddens 1990:42). Today this is facilitated by a network of bureaucratic specialists who, armed with the latest computer technology, engage in quantification, calculation and codification to assist the development of social policies. Hunt & Wickham point out that these enumeration activities 'generate social policies that operate both to constitute the 'social problems' at which government action is directed and actively to regulate, control and coordinate the targets thus created' (1994:53). Hence government action and the language of quantification have become inextricably linked.

(2) The growing call for policy to be evidence-based

An important element of the push for social entities to be signified through number is the institutional trend towards social policy and practice that is evidence-based (Stoker 1999). This is underpinned by a prevailing view that 'good policy' is founded on empirical evidence constituted within a rational model of policy formulation. This in turn presumes that policy is formed through a cycle of investigative, analytical and consultative activities that systematically injects 'evidence' at pre-determined stages in the cycle (Keynes, 1971). This view takes a positivist approach to what constitutes evidence, preferring the numerical outputs of research such as statistical data, over non-numerical knowledge such as values, intuition and practical know-how (Brownson Baker Leet & Gillespie 2003, Leicester 1999). Hence, institutional action in support of policy formulation is commonly geared to the production of the bureaucracy's preferred form of evidence, i.e. numbers.

Studies of policy-making in action reveal significant and regular variations to the Keynesian ideal. For example, Doherty (2001) cites the case of social housing policy in the United Kingdom and identifies a paradox in the evidence-policy nexus where, despite a strong research program, research evidence rarely impacts directly on housing policy formulation. Critics of the rationalist approach argue that policy-making practice usually falls short of
this idealised model. Alternative approaches recognise the role of power, culture and language in shaping the direction of policy setting. For example a Foulcauldian alternative would frame the key drivers in terms of power and knowledge (Gibson 2003:27). Other alternatives include 'disjointed incrementalism' (Braybrooke & Lindblom 1963) and 'mixed scanning' (Etzioni 1967). They all emphasise the incomplete nature of what the rational model assumes to be a valid relationship between positivist evidence and policy formulation.

(3) The bureaucrat's need for impersonality of decision-making

In systems of modern state governance the bureaucracy is expected to have a sense of neutrality and objectivity and a commitment to the agency's purpose (Jaensch 1991:278-9). This is consistent with the Weberian-derived model, in that politics decides the strategic goals and priorities of the state as dictated by the will of the people, and the bureaucracy merely computes the means in an impartial and apolitical fashion. Bureaucrats' greatest vulnerability is the public perception they have acted partially. This ensures that neutrality is generally among their foremost motivations. Bureaucratic communications that feature numbers and the language of quantification are more likely to convey neutrality than other significations, such as the vernacular language. This is partly because discourses that rely on quantification are characterised by a high degree of structure, in that their users have an assumed knowledge of the rules or codes of conduct for their use. This enables the language of numbers to remove an appearance of imprecision and value-ladeness from administrative action and replace it with one of objectivity and disinterestedness. These characteristics are regarded as advantageous for honest government and the fair allocation of resources. But as Porter contends, quantification can also be: 'a way of making decisions without seeming to decide' (1995:8). Because the bureaucracy is not elected and has no democratic legitimacy, any decision that can be made 'by the numbers' will have the necessary appearance of impartiality.

Governing by numbers, at least in certain western economies, has become the dominant managerial rationale. . . . according objectivity, neutrality, and legitimacy to decisions that otherwise appear to be subjective. (Miller 1994:250)
(4) The power of the ‘single figure’ and the role of standardisation

To be most effective the instruments of government control and systematisation need to be spatially portable. In this regard quantitative measures have a natural advantage over qualitative measures. This, plus the success with which signifying social entities through number has been accepted, allows the language of quantification to dominate technical discourses on social measurement. For the modern bureaucracy to exert control over social actions, such as the processes and decisions involved in administering a social welfare program, the actions must be standardised. This is dependent on the associated social entities being stable.

The success of social mathematics is largely due to the success with which researchers and bureaucrats have stabilised concepts of social entities and developed methods for measuring them. Examples are poverty, need and well-being, entities that are transient in nature, difficult to categorise and therefore unsuited to being quantified. By turning them into forms that are easily signified and collected, social action can be stabilised for the purpose of counting, packaging and distribution throughout the state. Standardisation is a key technique in this process, enabling the bureaucracy to produce summary single figures that bring an appearance of stability and objectivity to highly subjective social entities.

The neutrality and social authority accorded to the single figure is one that is set above the fray, apart from disputes and political interests, and endowed with a legitimacy that seems difficult to contest or dispute (Miller 1994:246)

However the inherent lack of stability of social entities means that the elemental codes for their standardisation are always subject to revision. This is the paradox of standardisation. For numerical inscriptions to remain stable the agents of quantification must agree on what conventions to adopt. Because these agreements rely inherently on negotiation there is always a risk of dissent from one or more agents. Therefore the quest to standardise social entities is never closed.

(5) The pre-conditioning of bureaucrats as agents of calculation

Calculative technologies rely on two related constructs. One is the calculator’s willing participation as compliant and self-interested user of the language and techniques of enumeration.
The other is the bureaucratic facility to support and enable the calculator to calculate. Each relies on the language of numbers and utilises the tools of calculation, such as algebraic methods and computers. As Rose observes: ‘turning the objects of government into numericised inscriptions . . . enables a machinery of government to operate from centres that calculate’ (1991:676). The success of quantification in measuring the social is therefore a product of the ability of researchers, policy analysts and administrators to link-up as a calculative network. A key feature of this network is that those who count and that which is counted are equally subjected to the process of codification and standardisation. Not only does the network act to package and distribute social numbers, it also perpetuates a culture that regards numbers as essential for formulating policy. In this way numbers enable the boundary between politics and objectivity to be redrawn: ‘by purporting to act as automatic technical mechanisms for making judgments, prioritising problems and allocating scarce resources’ (Rose 1991:674). Surrounded by this calculative culture, bureaucrats are conditioned agents of calculation.

The Thing About Numbers

The construction and use of quantification in social policy-making occurs within the context of a broad culture of quantification present in everyday life. This culture arises from our psychosocio propensity to approach the objects of existence, the matter and ideas of everyday life, in terms of quantities. In our private lives we have a propensity to quantify all manner of everyday activities (Cohen 1968). In our public lives we expect and depend on a world that runs on numbers—from distances, to timetables, to consumer decisions, to financial transactions.

In many everyday settings the generation and use of numbers is uncontroversial. This is particularly so with numbers that describe physical entities. For example, how many different types of letters are on this page? Provided we agree on what a letter is and we can see and count, then little else is problematic; a number is an accurate and efficient device for signifying this physical entity. But what of the use of numbers to signify social entities? These have more transient cultural definitions than physical entities.
Examples include the health of the environment, the success of social services, the relative value of consumer choices, and the quality of life. When the same quantification process that so successfully signifies a non-social entity is transferred with little critique to a social entity, problems of false objectification can arise.

The use of numbers in everyday settings has been theorised from several perspectives. Crosby (1997) identifies this culture as a new model of reality that emerged in Europe during the late Middle Ages and Renaissance to replace the ancient qualitative model. It was aided by visualisation and, in particular, by map-making. This enabled space to be conceptualised in geometric terms. By linking visualisation with quantification, reality could be rendered measurable. Potter, Wetherell and Chitty (1991) use discourse theory to analyse ordinary dialogues that rely on numbers. They highlight how the logic and devices of quantification, such as percentages, tables and charts, are marshalled in persuasive ways to support an argument, and conclude that mathematics and other forms of quantification operate only as part of broader social practices from which they gain their sense. Lave (1986) observes the extent to which the language and rationality of quantification has penetrated everyday culture. She examines the situational specificity of calculation and measurement procedures through ethnographic research in ordinary settings, such as the supermarket, and observes how people customise numerical devices for use in their everyday settings for the purpose of persuasive argument or to assist in their decision-making.

Underlying each of these analyses is the particular appeal that the exactness of number as sign holds for its users, compared to other ways of signifying knowledge, such as qualitative descriptions. Qualitative descriptions, particularly when expressed through the vernacular language, have more potential for misinterpretation or conveying unintended meanings. This could be due, for example, to one party's lack of prior knowledge of concepts, events or cultural norms otherwise presumed to be known. This subjectivity of word as sign sits in contrast to the apparent objectivity of number as sign. For the number 5 (say) is always the number 5, cannot be mistaken as the number 4 or 6, or any other number. As such, it is discrete, exact and universal in its ability to be understood with a singular meaning.
How Good are Social Numbers?

A critical analysis of the actions, processes and motives of the calculative enterprise that is typically applied to the quantification of social entities, reveals a range of measurement problems that challenge the rigour of the resulting numbers. The following two examples of the calculative enterprise demonstrate some of these problems. These concern the state population census and the measurement of housing need.

*Example 1: The state population census*

Governments' reliance on social statistics for policy-making is founded on an assumption that officially-sanctioned statistical surveys, such as the national census, produce reliable results. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics claims that: 'high quality data are obtained from the census' (ABS 1996:19). The state census survey is generally of higher statistical reliability than other datasets held by governments. This is due to their investment of intensive survey and data processing infrastructure to limit the margin for technical error. However on close analysis of this diverse calculative enterprise a series of reliability questions arises.

Like all bureaucratically-administered statistical collections, the state census contains two broad types of error: technical and non-technical error. The technical integrity of census counts cannot be achieved in isolation of their non-technical integrity. While the latter is rarely acknowledged, the final census counts are only accurate to the extent that the census-taking agency deals accountably with both types of error. Examples of non-technical error are the extent to which the counts rely on qualitative judgments, the different interests of the participants in these judgments, how specific meanings are assigned to census data items to enable quantification and how these are re-interpreted over time.

Before conducting any social survey the statistician must design and construct the appropriate data categories. While this may seem an uncontroversial technical responsibility, historical sociologists argue that its effects are far-reaching:

There is a sense in which many of the facts presented by the bureaucracies did not even exist ahead of time. Categories had to be
invented into which people should conveniently fall in order to be counted. (Hacking 1990:3)

The transient nature of category labeling and category meanings is exemplified when measuring social behaviours that are governed by cultural norms. For example, McGuire refers to imperialist data surveys in early twentieth century India and the colonial administration's measurement of workforce participation on the basis of discrete occupational categories borrowed from the United Kingdom. These categories assumed a stage of economic development incommensurate with the reality of Indian society at that time. Rather, a working Indian's livelihood was commonly gained in many different ways over a year, especially in the agricultural populations of central and southern India. The publication *Census of India 1921* comments that 'the occupational statistics collected in the population schedule give at best only a general sketch of the functional distribution of people and are too vague and imperfect to afford the detailed information required for public and administrative purposes' (McGuire 1992: 14). That is, the theoretical underpinnings of the colonialists' data categories ignored the norms of the society they were enumerating:

... the ideological parameters are established by the statistical categories employed in the classificatory system devised by the Colonial state to collect data. ... these categories do not necessarily mirror the social reality they are endeavouring to describe. ... when employed as a conceptual instrument to collect data they can distort that reality. (McGuire 1992:13-4)

The history of census category definitions reveals much about the interests and power relations of the counter and the counted, and of the systemic influences of the counting process itself. Compounding this is the transient nature of the culture that shapes the social behaviours of the population to be enumerated. Tait investigates the socio-political nature of the label 'family' in the history of the Australian census. He identifies ambiguities in the different meanings that have been attached, which at different times have been defined as a group of related persons living together, a respectable centre of reproduction and a network of persons connected through blood ties. That is, they have ranged
from cohabitation to fertility to kinship. As well, the orderly inheritance of property required an official system for recording births, deaths and marriages which: 'provided evidence of legitimacy and therefore rights of succession' (Tait 1985:95). In these ways government-sponsored statistical collections can assist in legitimising power and confirming status among favoured population groups.

If the intention of the census is to capture the size and diversity of the state's social characteristics, its ability to depict that character is constrained by the need to be highly selective in the number and type of questions it asks. What questions are asked, how they are asked and what answers are permissible, are open to the interests of any advocacy group that can successfully negotiate its case, including the government of the day, as exemplified in Australia:

The 1981 census will be different from 1976 not because the government of Malcolm Fraser has a different view of Australia from that of the Whitlam Labor government. It does not see the census as a vehicle for social change, as did Labour. (Hywood 1981:37)

The 1981 census reduced the number of questions asked from 53 questions in 1976 to 35. The questions eliminated included one's need for child-minding facilities, one's racial origins, whether one has life assurance or pays into a superannuation fund and whether one receives some form of statutory income or benefits. With the political transition at that time from an Australian government emphasising larger government and an expanded social welfare program (Whitlam-led) to one emphasising small government and encouragement of market-based responses to social and economic needs (Fraser-led), the political overtones of these census topics is clear.

The political arm of other modern states display similar interestedness. For example, during planning for USA's 2000 census, Republican members of congress objected to how the Bureau of the Census was using statistical sampling methods to correct its upcoming survey of the population (Kleiner 1997:12). Members feared that the resulting corrections would give higher counts of Hispanics and blacks, favouring the Democrats when congressional district boundaries were redrawn. One Republican
Congressman advised his constituents not to complete the questionnaire, stating that the 2000 USA census was: 'another onerous sign of the Federal government expanding without regard to personal freedom' (Alcorn 2001:28). In 2002 the government of Russia conducted its first national population census for 13 years. In the lead up, opinion polls showed that a quarter of the population was wary about the government's motives, fearing it would be used by the tax authorities or the police for ulterior motives. This was fuelled by past leaders' manipulation of census counts:

Residents of the remote eastern Siberian town of Belogorsk offered to co-operate if the Government switched the electricity back on, but they fear that it will be disconnected after the count. (Paton Walsh 2002:20)

In summary, a strong element of social control has accompanied the technical apparatus of population measurement in the evolution of the modern state. A census survey of population characteristics is far from a technical enterprise concerned with disinterested social measurement. It reflects the interests of advocacy groups, the expertise of the administrative bureaucracy and the priorities of political utility. As Alterman concludes: 'the reason for the failure of a Census to be completely inclusive lies in the fact that it is a social enterprise' (Alterman 1969:65). One consequence is that the planning and funding decisions of government and business that are made on the basis of census counts, may be distorted by an exclusive, subjective and utilitarian profile of the state's population.

Example 2: Measuring housing need

Housing assistance programs in the modern state operate in a context of scarcity that is generally not mediated through market surpluses. This requires judgments based on non-market criteria about the size of program resources and their fair allocation. The problem of scarcity creates an environment of uncertainty for program administrators. They must make difficult decisions about who should be assisted, in what priority order and with what housing products or services. In this respect their greatest vulnerability is the risk of decisions that lead to an ineffective, inequitable or wasteful use of public resources, or that lead to
accusations of bias or incompetence. To manage these pressures, administrators are attracted to number-based significations of housing need, or needs indicators. These are commonly quantified by applying technical processes according to tightly specified normative criteria. The normative criteria for measuring housing need are a series of pre-determined social, economic and demographic factors considered to be critical for housing well-being. For example:

rental affordability for low-income households is based on the second quintile household income (fortieth percentile) calculated each quarter from total (full and part-time) average weekly earnings for NSW. Paying up to 30% of income in rent is considered affordable. This amount is compared with rents in each area to determine the proportion of available housing which a low-income household can afford to rent. (DOH 1999:31)

Once specified, the normative criteria are applied to data collections that describe the circumstances of individual households. In this way the number of households that fit the category ‘in housing need’ can be determined. While this approach holds in theory there is much debate and difference among housing researchers and policy practitioners about which combination of normative criteria, and the attendant thresholds for each of these criterion, are the most suitable for conducting large-scale needs analysis (King 1994, Nicol 2002). The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare cautions:

while estimates of numbers of families in housing need provide important information when debating policy on housing assistance, it should be realised that there are many different ways in which these estimates can be derived... the housing problems to be included in an analysis, and how they are defined can affect greatly the results that are obtained. (AIHW 1998:26)

For example, a 1997 study of housing need by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling demonstrated how the number of income units measured as ‘in housing stress’ changed significantly according to the chosen normative criteria. The figure rose from 167,000 using a ‘net equivalent affordability measure’ to 225,000 using a ‘net affordability measure’ to 300,400 using a ‘gross measure’ (NATSEM 1997:12).
Apart from the difficulties of choosing a set of needs characteristics that reflect normative housing conditions, there are a series of more fundamental enumeration decisions of a non-technical nature that bear just as heavily on the size of the final needs numbers. The most fundamental of these is what counting unit should represent 'housing need'. This cannot be decided on technical grounds, rather on socio-political grounds such as:

- what choice of counting unit will support what government priority? or
- what aspect of the program should the needs measure reflect?

To measure housing need there are three possible counting units. Each has meaning, each is logical and each is measurable, yet each gives very different counts:

1. the types of assistance required (e.g. number of dwellings or amount of grant funds)
2. the recipients of assistance (e.g. number of persons assisted)
3. the assistance activities (e.g. number of lettings).

Having chosen one of these, there are more non-technical problems to resolve. If for example the second option is chosen (number in need of assistance) a choice is required between whether to count people assisted, income units assisted, families assisted or households assisted. Many housing assistance programs differ on this basis, such as Australia's private rent assistance program (counts demand by number of income units) and social rental housing program (counts demand by number of households). Because people can be multiple to income units, which can be multiple to families, which can be multiple to households, the choice of counting unit has a multiplier effect on the count.

This exemplifies a fundamental limitation of housing needs measurement, as follows: 'meeting housing need' presumes that a unit of supply will house a unit of demand, however the nature of housing supply and housing demand are a conceptual mismatch. The unit of demand is characterised by people who live alone or combine with other people in family or household arrangements. These arrangements are not static since people move from one living arrangement to another, giving a profile of demand that is constantly dynamic. This dynamism is generally greater for people in housing need. The unit of supply is just as variable. It
may be conceptualised as a physical dwelling structure, as some part of that structure (e.g., boarders occupying part of a private dwelling) or as a form of tenure, such as a lease, ownership or short-term commercial room hire. These different demand units may be combined with the different supply units in many ways, most of which are quantifiable. However each combination describes a different aspect of the concept 'housing need' and each yields a different count. Choosing which combination to measure cannot be decided on technical grounds.

In summary, defining housing need for the purpose of quantifying it begins with an uncertain process of subjective decisions about methodology, such as what counting unit should be used and which aspects of need should be included. These uncertainties prevent the construction of a stable, reliable standard for defining and measuring need. In spite of these limitations the technical agents of the bureaucracy engage in elaborate processes of analysis and enumeration on the basis of these non-technical and often arbitrary decisions. The result is a series of needs indicators that seek to capture the nature of both housing need and allocative priority. These numbers are attractive to the bureaucracy because they appear to reconcile the myriad of non-technical questions that arise when deciding how to ration scarce public funds. They also appear to introduce accuracy and objectivity into these decisions. As such a significant degree of authority is conferred on these numbers. This is exemplary of Miller's general identification of the neutrality and social authority associated with the 'single figure' (1994:246).

Demystifying the Certainty Image

The difficulty of legitimating quantitative measures of social entities supports the argument that social numbers be treated as highly-qualified significations. They are a consequence of the technical as well as non-technical factors necessarily involved throughout the quantification process, from defining the component measures, to collecting the data for each component and generating the final numbers. They come, therefore, with conditions attached, of which some are explicit and some are not. Though single figures provide the look of certainty, as all numbers do, they
may mislead the policy development process or falsely indicate the success or failure of social performance. Their uninformed use as persuasive instruments of decision-making reinforces the standardisation practices of the calculative network that produces them and may also mask an ulterior purpose. As Porter (1995) observes, in quests for objectivity quantification becomes most important where elites are weak, private negotiation is suspect and trust is lacking.

This is not the case in all settings. Many social researchers and bureaucrats are careful to avoid these pitfalls of interpretation and inference, based on what they know of the non-technical errors and qualitative assumptions of their data or on what they have taken the trouble to investigate. Often the problem lies downstream, where a politician or journalist may knowingly or carelessly pervert the meaning or context of the researcher’s carefully documented single figures.

Regardless of these risks, governments’ social programs must rely on the measurement of social entities. Indicators of social need must be constructed and the performance of welfare programs needs to be evaluated if responsible and accountable government is to proceed. Social measures that are signified as numbers will not necessarily help in these endeavours. While the best quantitative methods may yield accurate information in some policy or program aspects, they will not yield this in other aspects. In either case the degree of accuracy or inaccuracy may itself be immeasurable. Rather, social measurements yielding information regarded as accurate will be known as such because the stakeholders will agree that useful ‘facts’ have been produced. In this search for social facts, analysts and administrators should not assume that numbers are necessarily their ally. They are rarely neutral, are poor substitutes for facts if used without care and can be as inherently unstable as non-numeric ways of signifying knowledge.

To deal with these risks, bureaucracies must establish ways of explicitly assessing the social construction embedded in positivist forms of evidence. Efforts to improve the presentation and use of social numbers would be informed by a broad-ranging debate on the fundamental question: how do we conduct a discourse about quality using the language of quantity?
Were social numbers presented with accompanying statements that listed their known and unknown limitations, much of this concern would dissipate through the forces of self-regulation, ie peer review and scrutiny. Of course such a development would require a significant cultural shift in the sociology of quantitative measurement. But assuming it came to pass, the scenario emerges of bureaucrats and politicians armed with the requisite social numbers and their explicit qualifications, along with other forms of evidence. The final piece in the jigsaw is a set of transparent processes to enable this information to instruct social policy decision-making. One element of this set is proper processes of participatory public consultation. Another element is a risk management framework that encourages decision-makers to exercise their professional judgment by applying their expertise, powers of reasoning and discernment to all of the available evidence, empirical and non-empirical. As Fisher contends: 'the concept of ‘expertise’ in risk regulation should not be understood narrowly as simply referring to . . . someone only skilled in applying a certain methodology to the facts . . . [rather] . . . it refers to professional judgment . . . [which] . . . requires intuition, creativity, and a sensitive grasp of the issues' (Fisher 2000:116).

Having institutional processes in place that can evaluate these ‘facts’ and then establish a rationale for subjective judgments, would not lessen the credibility of the judgments. Nor would it necessarily produce less accurate judgments than occurs in the current climate, where an artificial authority is conferred on many social numbers and other empirical evidence. If nothing else it would infuse more credibility into these decisions through improved accountability. This can only heighten the public trust placed in the political and administrative arms of government.

References


**Notes**

1. The state census of population is a common source of these numbers.
2. Doherty offers two explanations for this: ‘the changing nature of housing policy and its increasing complexity as it is implicated in a multitude of social, economic and political problems beyond the mere provision of shelter; . . . [and] . . . the filtering role played by political ideology in determining the relationship between evidence and the shaping of policy agendas’ (2001:168).
3. Miller calls these concepts calculative selves and calculative spaces. Calculative selves refers to the distinctive social way in which the language and processes of calculation, such as financial accounting, bear upon the actions of others, installing forms of individualised calculability into the workplace. Calculative spaces are created through the compartmentalisation of structures into divisions of bureaucratic accountability, such as cost centres and business units (Miller 1994:243).
4. Maier observes that a society: ‘chooses what to measure—or better stated, groups within society struggle about what will be measured’ (1995:238).
5. In 1976 there was a change of national government in Australia with a Liberal/National coalition government lead by Malcolm Fraser replacing the Labor government lead by Gough Whitlam.
Lone Mothers and Welfare-to-Work Policies in Japan and the United States: Towards an Alternative Perspective

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This paper compares recent efforts to reduce lone mothers' reliance on cash assistance and support their increased participation in the workforce and economic independence in Japan and the United States. Similar to reforms introduced in the U.S. in 1996, lone mother policies in Japan have been subject to a series of cuts leading to the introduction of time limits and work-related programs in 2002. In this paper, we examine the character of recent welfare reforms in both countries and their implications for lone mothers' welfare and economic independence. Based on Japan's experience and recent lessons from the U.S., we show the limitations of a focus on caseload reduction and work participation rates, and instead highlight the importance of addressing lone mothers' low wages in form of policies for the working poor.

Keywords: Japan, single mothers, employment, welfare reform, TANF

Welfare support for lone mother families has become a major concern of policy makers in most advanced industrialized countries. Due to a significant increase in the number of divorced and never-married mothers, as well as their frequent reliance on public support, welfare expenditure on lone mothers has been subject to controversy and reform in a number of countries. Reforms introduced in the United States in 1996 have responded to criticisms...
of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with policies which emphasize independence through work rather than 'dependence on welfare,' dramatically reducing reliance on cash assistance. Similarly, in Japan, the major source of support for divorced and never-married mothers, the dependent children’s allowance (*jidō fuyō teate*), has recently been subject to restructuring. Responding to an increasing demand, policy makers have restricted its conditions of eligibility and significantly reduced the amount of support in a series of cuts in the 1980s and 1990s. Policy revisions in 2002, moreover, have introduced a five year time limit and an increased emphasis on income from work. Similar to welfare-to-work policies in the U.S., also in Japan, new programs and services for lone mothers are now aiming to reinforce their self-sufficiency through work (Fujiwara, 2003).

In this paper, we closely examine recent reforms of lone mother policies in Japan and the United States and assess their implications for lone mothers’ welfare and independence. How can welfare-to-work policies enable lone mothers to become economically self-sufficient and independent from state support? Based on an analysis of lone mother policies and work patterns in Japan and the United States, we illuminate the challenges of facilitating a shift from 'welfare to work' as anticipated by welfare reform. We show that even though lone mothers in Japan have the highest workforce participation rate among advanced industrialized nations, engagement in paid work in itself does not necessarily move them out of poverty or beyond public support. Implementing welfare-to-work policies, therefore, not only involves moving lone mothers into the workforce but ensuring a living wage. In comparing the Japanese case with recent trends in post-reform United States, our paper explores key issues which need to be taken into consideration in facilitating lone mothers’ welfare and independence after reform.

Welfare-to-work policies, by aiming for lone mothers’ economic independence from the state through wage work, address issues that have long been at the center of discussions of the gendered character of welfare regimes. In general, lone mothers have been seen as a ‘litmus test,’ which illuminates the gendered character of a welfare state regime (Hobson, 1994; Kilkey & Bradshaw, 1999; Lewis, 1997). As comparative research has shown, lone mothers’ living conditions vary considerably across welfare
regimes. Whereas lone mothers tend to receive protection as mothers in some welfare regimes, they are primarily treated as workers in others (Duncan & Edwards, 1997). The degree to which welfare regimes reinforce a male breadwinner model of family, and women's dependence on husbands or support women's dual role as workers and caregivers has significant implications for the welfare of lone mothers (cf. Lewis, 1997).

Welfare policies have the most direct implications for lone mothers but they also shape the options and lifestyles of other women. Whether or not lone mothers have access to the labor market and a living wage affects the economic independence of other women as well. The general welfare of lone mothers, whether supported through paid work or government allowances, has also a significant impact on women's independence from marriage and family support. As Ann Orloff (1993) has argued, social citizenship (defined as basic right to a minimum level of welfare), viewed from the perspective of gender, not only depends on the extent of state compensations for failures of the market (as in form of unemployment insurance, disability or old age pensions), but also women's access to work and income and their ability to maintain an autonomous household outside of marriage and family support. Lone mothers' welfare after the introduction of welfare-to-work reforms therefore serves as an important indicator of women's economic autonomy and independence in the labor market and the welfare state.

Our analysis addresses welfare-to-work policies and their ability to foster economic independence from several angles. First, we introduce the general situation of lone mothers in Japan and major policies supporting their welfare. As most readers will be familiar with the U.S. context, the first two parts focus mostly on Japan. We then examine recent policy changes in the United States in light of Japan's experience. We conclude with observations on the consequences of welfare-to-work policies and areas that will require policy attention in order to foster lone mothers' welfare and independence.

1. Situating Lone Mothers in Japan

Before examining the character of lone mother policies in Japan, it is necessary to get a general sense of the population they aim to support. Even though policy rhetoric in Japan has used the
United States as a model for reform, lone motherhood remains a comparatively marginal phenomenon in Japan. Whereas lone parent families accounted for 27.3% of family households with children under 18 in the U.S. in 1998 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1998), in Japan, they accounted for only 6.4% (Nihon rodo kenkyu kiko, 2003). Also, whereas public discourse in the United States centers on never-married teenage mothers, it was an increase of divorcees that placed lone mothers on the policy agenda in Japan. As indicated in figure 1, Japan’s divorce rate increased significantly from a postwar low of 0.73 per thousand population in 1963 to 1.26 in 1988, and has experienced a steady rise in the 1990s reaching a high of 2.27 in 2000. Whereas widows predominated in early postwar Japan, in 1998, divorcees accounted for 68.4% of lone mothers in Japan.

Never-married motherhood, while increasing, remains at only 7.6% (table 1). In the United States by contrast, never-married
### Table 1

*Trends in lone motherhood in postwar Japan and composition of lone mothers in the United States (number and percentage of households)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Widows</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Never-married</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>694,700</td>
<td>590,900</td>
<td>52,400</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>40,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>85.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1,029,000</td>
<td>793,000</td>
<td>173,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>43,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>626,200</td>
<td>387,300</td>
<td>165,100</td>
<td>15,300</td>
<td>58,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>633,700</td>
<td>316,100</td>
<td>240,100</td>
<td>30,300</td>
<td>47,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>718,100</td>
<td>259,300</td>
<td>352,500</td>
<td>38,300</td>
<td>67,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>849,200</td>
<td>252,300</td>
<td>529,100</td>
<td>30,400</td>
<td>37,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>789,900</td>
<td>194,500</td>
<td>507,600</td>
<td>37,500</td>
<td>33,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>954,900</td>
<td>178,800</td>
<td>653,600</td>
<td>69,300</td>
<td>40,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. 1998</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,828,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>431,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,416,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,148,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,833,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Note:* Japanese data on lone mothers include family groups with their own children under age 20. U.S. data include family groups with their own children under age 18.

Lone mothers predominate (42.2%) followed by divorcees (34.8%), and only 4.4% widows (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Since most lone mothers in Japan have become single parents only after marriage, childbirth and divorce, they are generally older than their U.S. counterparts and in their 30's and 40's (Koseirodosho, 2001). Lone motherhood in Japan is thus largely associated with divorced
mothers in middle age rather than teenage mothers. Overall, even though demand for support has been increasing persistently in the past thirty years, policies in Japan address the needs of less than 800,000 households, which may seem negligible in comparison to a caseload of five million recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) targeted by reforms in the United States.

Public discourse, meanwhile, has mostly focused on economic consequences of becoming a lone mother rather than moral issues; they are neither associated with a discourse of dependency (Fraser & Gordon, 1994) or sexuality as in the United States (Luker, 1996). In the early postwar years, widows, who had lost their spouses during the war, were pitied for their misfortune of losing their breadwinner and living in poverty. Similarly, until the 1970's, divorce was often associated with desertion, and divorcees received sympathy for their economic struggles and failed marriage. Since the 1980's and 1990's, social movements have begun to step into the public arena and change this image (cf. Single Mothers' Forum, 1993). Their efforts have contributed to the emergence of a more cheerful image of lone motherhood, which has however also been met with criticism of women who abandon family values and selfishly pursue new lifestyles of their own. Rather than being portrayed as 'welfare queens,' however, in Japan, they have made headlines for failing to claim public support leading to several cases of starvation (Bokensha henshubu, 1999; Mizushima, 1990). In short, even today, lone motherhood continues to be thought of as a situation of harsh economic realities and social isolation.

One of the reasons why lone mothers in Japan have not been associated with welfare dependency is that their work participation rate is significantly higher than in other advanced industrialized nations. Uzuhashi's analysis of the early 1990s shows that whereas fewer lone mothers (60%) than married mothers (64%) worked in the United States, in Japan, they worked substantially more than married mothers (87% as opposed to 54%). Moreover, their work participation rate exceeds that of women in France and Sweden, who generally have among the highest work participation rates among industrialized countries (Uzuhashi, 1997, 138). Even more striking is the fact that their work participation
rate has been over 80% for the entire postwar period (table 2). The tendency not to work among married mothers with small children, by contrast, remains remarkably persistent. As the well-known M-shaped labor force participation rate of women in Japan indicates, it is common for married women to retire from work with childbirth and return only as part-time workers in middle-age (Iwai & Manabe, 2000). Thus, in addition to being pitied for their economic struggles, lone mothers are seen as deprived of the capability of taking care of their children, as prescribed by the normative middle-class ideal of the full-time housewife and mother.

Despite such high work participation rate, poverty and low incomes are central problems facing lone mothers in Japan. Their income packaging shows that public support accounts only for a minor (yet important) share of their overall income. According to a survey of the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, in 2000, wages accounted for 78.8% of their income, 7.2% came from social security/allowances, 5.9% from pensions and only 2.6% from family contributions and child support (Koseirodosho,
2002). Even though almost all lone mothers are engaged in paid work, earn on average higher incomes than married mothers, and have a greater tendency to work in full-time jobs and as permanent employees, it remains difficult for them to make ends meet on their incomes from work (Fujiwara, 2005).

In the 1990s, lone mothers' average annual income was less than 40% of the average household income, a ratio that has fallen from 50% in the 1970's (Yuzawa, 1993). This increasing disparity can be related to an overall increase in the income of other households and an increasing number of dual-earner families. Lone mothers' low income also illustrates persisting differences in women's and men's average income: as of the year 2002, women's average wage remained at 64.9% of that of men (Koseirodosho, 2003). There are no data available in Japan that can assess the degree to which their incomes are below the poverty line. It can however be generally stated that 50% of lone mothers have an income that is lower than the amount they would receive if they were receiving public assistance (seikatsu hogo). Similar observations have been made about working lone mothers in post-reform United States. Even though an increasing number of lone mothers are working, the majority earn an income below the poverty line (Brauner & Loprest, 1999; Loprest, 2001). Although the demographic characteristics of lone mothers differ quite significantly in Japan and the United States, it seems that in both countries they share the difficulties of making ends meet between public support and income from wages.

2. Lone Mothers and Japan's Welfare-to-Work Regime

The high work participation rate of lone mothers makes Japan appear as an ideal scenario for policy makers in the United States, who have made a greater work participation rate a primary goal of reform. Lone mothers in the United States had long been criticized for their limited engagement in work, and it was argued that the provision of cash assistance reinforces 'dependency' (see Katz, 1993; Murray, 1984). To reduce reliance on AFDC, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996 introduced (among others) a five year time limit to receiving cash assistance, as well as work requirements to increase participation in paid work. Cash assistance,
now renamed TANF, was reduced from a social right to a temporary measure aimed to assist mothers in leaving 'welfare' and entering the workforce. Viewed from this perspective, Japan’s reform slogan to move lone mothers from welfare to work seems puzzling. If 87% of lone mothers are already working, what are the goals of Japanese welfare-to-work reforms?

On the surface, there are several parallels between policy concerns in the United States and Japan. In both countries, an increase in the number of lone mothers and their reliance on cash assistance has caused concern with rising public expenditure on lone mothers’ welfare. In the United States, the number of welfare recipients rose significantly in the early 1970s and reached a new peak of 14 million recipients in the mid 1990s. Although initially hailed as a progressive program (Mink, 1995), AFDC began to attract widespread disapproval with an increase of unmarried African American mothers among recipients (Heclo, 2001). Similarly, in Japan, an increase in the divorce rate and a shift from widowed to divorced lone mothers set the beginning of a series of cuts and the restructuring of support for lone mothers. The number of recipients of the dependent children’s allowance—the main source of cash assistance for lone mothers—increased from 154,387 in 1962 (the year of the creation of the program) to 759,197 in 2001 (see Figure 1). Even though the overall numbers are comparatively small, Japan, like the United States has been faced with increasing demand for public support due to demographic changes, making divorced mothers’ reliance on cash assistance a primary target of reform.

A primary difference between the two countries however is that whereas few lone mothers receiving AFDC were working, in Japan, reforms have targeted cash assistance for working lone mothers. In other words, rather than entry into the work force per se, policy makers have targeted income supplements that have added to income from wages. Even though Japanese lone mothers are working in 1993, approximately 80% of them qualified for the dependent children’s allowance due to a low income. As their incomes tend not to increase significantly over time, many receive support until their children come of age. In 1998, only 7.1% of lone mothers reported having lost eligibility due to an increase in income (Nihon rodo kenkyu kiko, 2003). 'Welfare-to-
work,' in the case of Japan is thus not associated with moving lone mothers into the workforce but rather to move them beyond cash assistance. To get a better sense of this scenario, let us review the main elements of lone mothers policies in Japan and how they support lone mothers’ welfare and independence.

The dependent children’s allowance (jidō fuyō teate) has been the major source of support for lone mothers since its establishment in 1962. In early postwar years, the large presence of widowed mothers who had lost their spouses during the war became a public issue. Young in age, with small children, and little to no work experience or education, lone mothers were facing harsh living conditions at the time. Having nothing else to rely on, many received public assistance (seikatsu hogo), a general program established in 1946 to support anyone in need. As public assistance carried a high stigma and public funding was limited during the period of reconstruction, policy makers looked for alternative programs, which would ease the weight on public expenditure. In conjunction with the establishment of a public pension system, widowed mothers’ pensions (boshi nenkin) were introduced in 1959, and the dependent children’s allowance was introduced as a complementing measure for divorced and otherwise separated mothers. Rather than covering all needs of mothers and children, the program was aimed to contribute to their welfare by adding to mothers’ income from work.

More specifically, the dependent children’s allowance is an income-limited cash grant which supports mothers with dependent children below age 18 who do not have a husband or other sources of support such as widowed mothers’ pensions. At the time of establishment, the allowance was paid at a flat rate to mothers with no or a low income. With an increase in the number of divorcees among lone mothers and the increasing demand for the dependent children’s allowance in the 1970s, revisions narrowed conditions of eligibility considerably. In a major step, in 1985, the amount of the dependent children’s allowance was significantly reduced, and the income ceiling lowered from ¥3.6 million to ¥3.0 million (which could be compared to an annual income of $30,000 in the United States). As the number of recipients continued to increase, the income ceiling for the dependent children’s allowance was further lowered in 1998. In addition,
the 1985 revisions divided eligibility for the allowance into a full amount for mothers with an income below ¥1.7 million, and a partial amount for mothers with a moderate income below ¥3.0 million (Fujiwara, 1997). In other words, only lone mothers with no or very little income now received the full amount, while the cash benefits for those with a moderate level of income were significantly reduced.

Although the number of lone mothers who received the allowance initially declined (figure 1), it began to increase again by the early 1990's. Faced with an burgeoning annual increase in expenditure on the dependent children's allowance, reforms introduced in 2002 set the beginning for a more radical set of changes. First of all, the amount of the dependent children's allowance was changed from a full and a partial amount to a sliding scale, ranging from ¥42,360 to ¥10,000 a month (approximately $400-$100). That is, the amount of the allowance now slowly declined with increase in income, whereas previously it was dispensed in form of two flat rates. In addition, mothers receiving the allowance after 2003 are now subject to a five-year time limit. Originally intended to 'end welfare' like in the U.S., the new scheme will reduce the allowance up to 50% for those who have received the allowance for more than five years. It should be added that lone mothers will only be able to rely on the dependent children's allowance in one consecutive time period up to five years, and will have no possibility to 'save' time for future emergencies as is the case in the United States.

In principle, the dependent children's allowance functions somewhat like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a refundable tax credit that adds to the income of low-income families in the United States. Like the EITC, the dependent children's allowance has an income ceiling of approximately $30,000 and in most cases adds to mothers' income from work. Of course, whereas benefits increase until a certain income in the case of the EITC, they decline with increase in income in the case of the dependent children's allowance. Unlike the EITC, the dependent children's allowance can however also be received by those without an income—in this case, it might be better compared to AFDC or TANF. With the introduction of recent reforms, the dependent children's allowance is now also subject to a time limit, like TANF. In essence, Japan has
placed a time limit on the income-supplement approximating the EITC and TANF, leaving no alternative source of support such as Food Stamps or the EITC after reaching the time limit.

Beyond the dependent children’s allowance, lone mothers in Japan have had few alternative sources of support. In the year 2000, only 10.6% of lone mothers relied on means-tested public assistance (seikatsu hogo) in Japan, a ratio that has remained relatively constant throughout the postwar period (Seikatsu hogo no doko henshu iinkai, 2002). A rigorously means-tested program which allows few assets and savings, and which is associated with a high social stigma, few lone mothers consider public assistance as an option. Although public assistance is officially available for all Japanese in need, in practice, it resembles the Supplementary Security Income (SSI) in the United States. Although applicants do not need to have a disability, its rigorous screening process and strict conditions of eligibility make it primarily a source of support for those with injuries, disabilities or other barriers to work.

In addition, although most lone mothers in Japan are divorced, reliance on child support payments is limited. One particularity about Japan is that 90% of divorces in Japan are processed by ‘mutual agreement’ (kyōgi rikon), that is, out of court. Since child support payments are required by the Japan’s Civil Code but are not enforced, only those who go to court have the possibility of laying claims on child support payments. Even then, however, women have no effective means to enforce child support payments (Shimoebisu, 1993). In 1998, only 20.8% of divorced mothers reported receiving child support payments at the time of the survey; 60.1% answered that they had never received any child support payments (Koseirodosho, 2001).

In line with the main goals of reforms introduced in 2002, the government has recently begun a campaign to foster a greater enforcement of child support payments. Revisions have proposed regulations which make it possible for lone mothers to lay claim on past unpaid child support payments, and a new system where payments will be taken directly out of fathers’ paychecks. Child support enforcement of this kind is however only possible if child support payments have been officially agreed on in the divorce settlements. It should also be added that the new regulations, 80% of child support payments are counted toward lone mothers’
income. Since child support payments even now are not guaranteed, and a higher overall income will lower the amount of the dependent children’s allowance, the new rules come with a significant disincentive to pursue child support payments.

Beyond cash assistance, policies dating back to the early post-war period have aimed to support lone mothers’ economic self-sufficiency and welfare through various programs and services. One of the oldest programs for lone mothers, established in 1953, is a low or no-interest loan program (boshi fukushi shikin). These loans can be used for various purposes, such as to pay for children’s education, vocational training, and the establishment of a small business such as a dry cleaning shop or tobacco store. Also, all lone mothers are covered by the national health insurance (generally referred to as kokumin kenkō hoken) which covers all residents of Japan regardless of employment status. As insurance payments depend on income and size of household they can be quite substantial. Nevertheless, medical coverage does not constitute a major concern for lone mothers since all families are covered, fees are lower for low-income households and some localities waive co-payments for lone mothers with a low income.

In addition, a number of services not limited to lone mothers support their employment. In the late 1960s, lone mothers were defined as a group that is ‘hard to employ’ (shūshoku kon’nansha, this also includes a number of other groups including the elderly, disabled, minority groups and ex-coal mine workers), and became eligible for a range of special work-related programs. They can also access job centers, which are available nation-wide and serve all types of job seekers as well as the unemployed. The centers provide information on job openings as well as consultation. Current policies place further emphasis on a program directed at employers, which subsidizes the wages of lone mothers under the condition that they will be employed as full-time workers after six months. Lone mothers can also attend job training programs run by local governments at no cost. For specific qualifications, such as nurses or elderly care providers, they can also receive a small monthly allowance during the period of training. Such programs are very similar to the job centers, training programs and wage subsidies recently introduced in the US but notably were established at a much earlier stage.
Finally, to allow mothers to enter the workforce, lone mothers are given preference in placing their children in public day care centers, whose fees are subsidized and calculated based on income. According to a 1998 survey with multiple answers, the majority of lone mothers used, among others, day care centers to care for their children (60.6%) or sent them to kindergartens (13.0%). In contrast to the U.S. where informal and in-home care is common, only 12.0% of lone mothers in Japan reported relying on family members or relatives (2.1%) at any time for child care (Koseirodosho, 2001). More generally, the presence of a strong network of subsidized public day care centers points to the fact that state policies have seen lone mothers (as well as working class mothers) as workers rather than mothers. Day care services and programs have recently been extended to accommodate the needs of working mothers. To ease the balance between work and family needs, day care services were expanded from subsidized daytime public day care to evening and overnight services to cover for parents’ illness and overtime work.

Together, Japanese policies provide a quite comprehensive set of allowances and services, that possibly make Japan the ‘oldest’ welfare-to-work regime. Conceived at a time when public funding was scarce, the dependent children’s allowance has been aimed to supplement rather than substitute lone mothers’ wages, and has been backed by various work-supporting programs and services. Public assistance, meanwhile, has only supported those with major barriers to work, but has never attracted much attention in terms of caseloads. Yet, although Japan has achieved an astonishingly high work participation rate among lone mothers, the continuing demand for the dependent children’s allowance shows that participation in the workforce in itself does not increase mothers’ incomes beyond the poverty line. Consequently, policy makers in Japan face the challenge not merely to move lone mothers into the workforce, but allow them to earn an income that will make them independent from public support.


Our analysis of lone mother policies in Japan has important implications for our understanding of welfare-to-work policies in the United States. Even though Japanese policies have already
achieved the major goals of U.S. reforms—a low reliance on public assistance and a high work participation rate—they have not eliminated lone mothers’ need for public support because of their continued low incomes. Thus, in considering U.S. reforms, we need to examine not only the extent to which policies have moved mothers away from cash assistance and into the workforce, but rather how they have addressed the needs of the working poor.

The rapid decline in the TANF cash assistance load has been central to many discussions of the U.S. welfare reform. Between 1993 (when some states began to implement new rules under state waivers) and 2000, caseloads declined by an astonishing 56% (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999). While these figures are striking, they also raise concerns about the welfare of those who have left the welfare system. Although there is evidence that the majority of welfare leavers work, there is also reason to suggest that lone mothers often experience unstable employment, largely remain in low wage jobs, and continue to rely on some type of government assistance (Brauner & Loprest, 1999; Miller, 2002).

In Wisconsin, where policies have made a distinctive effort to move welfare recipients into the work force, job retention rates were strikingly low. According to one survey, the majority of surveyed employers had retained less than half of the welfare leavers they had hired two years earlier (Martin & Alfred, 2002). Similarly, a study of current and former recipients in Illinois indicates that 52.8% of those who left welfare currently held a different job than at the time of exit (University Consortium on Welfare Reform, 2002). Also studies of other states indicate that the average duration of welfare leavers’ employment is short, from 3–4 months to 8 months (Martin & Alfred, 2002). Even more worrisome is the fact that despite employment, most mothers earn an income below the poverty line although they tend to work more than 30 hours a week (Brauner & Loprest, 1999). According to Loprest’s study, 52% of recipients who left welfare recently had an income below the poverty line (Loprest, 2001). As a consequence, many lone mothers remain eligible and receive support as low-income families, although not in form of full cash grants. Similar to Japan, therefore, U.S. policy makers continue to face the challenge of fostering economic independence among
lone mothers. How have U.S. policies tried to address the needs of lone mothers after welfare reform?

Even after reforms, a number of measures continue to support lone mothers' livelihood. Although TANF cash grants are no longer an option in the long term, Supplementary Security Income (SSI) is available to lone mothers who have mental or physical disabilities. As many TANF recipients have impairments (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2002b), the program provides a sanctuary for those with documented barriers to work, as it has (as yet) no time limits or work requirements. Recent research suggests that some recipients of AFDC may have shifted to the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) caseload after 1996 (Karoly, Klerman, & Rogowski, 2001; Schmidt & Sevak, 2000), as time limits and work requirements created incentives for families, which previously relied on AFDC, to apply for SSI. Particularly in states with more aggressive reform policies, it appears that women with particular disabilities are now more likely to receive SSI than TANF (Schmidt & Sevak, 2000). It can therefore be estimated that welfare reforms not merely shifted TANF recipients into the workforce, but possibly also to other welfare caseloads.

While fewer lone mothers are now relying exclusively on TANF cash assistance, an increasing number of them now qualify and receive support and services based on their low incomes. Medicaid, although tied to receiving AFDC in the past, has become available to low-income families. In some states, families can extend their coverage during their transition to work, up to one year (Greenstein & Guyer, 2001). Moreover, a significant proportion of welfare leavers continue to receive Medicaid, from 53% in Indiana to 83% of continuous leavers in Wisconsin (Brauner & Loprest, 1999). In short, although TANF caseloads have been declining, many families continue to rely on Medicaid to assure their well-being. Similarly, Food Stamps remain a valuable source of support for low-income families after reform. In fact, the ratio of households with an employed adult who receive Food Stamps has been increasing (Greenstein & Guyer, 2001). Brauner and Loprest's survey (Brauner & Loprest, 1999) further shows that 30–60% of families in the states surveyed continued to receive Food Stamps after leaving welfare. Similar to Japan, therefore, there are now an increasing number of families who do not receive a
full cash grant but get Food Stamps in addition to their income from work.

Beyond welfare policies, the EITC has become an important source of support for the working poor, including lone mothers. Since its establishment in 1975, the EITC has expanded into a sizable refundable tax credit, which allows low-income mothers with dependents to almost double their income. Whereas a never-married non-working mother would receive $7,717 of welfare benefits in 1998, a never-married working mother with a salary of $10,000 could increase her disposable income to $14,593 with the credit (Ellwood, 2000). Under the condition of employment, therefore, lone mothers are eligible to substantial cash assistance in form of the EITC.

Adding to existing programs, many states have also invested in new childcare assistance programs and job centers to facilitate TANF recipients' employment. Although these programs do not dispense cash, they have added to the workload of social workers in charge of TANF programs. Needless to say, since these programs are not limited to recipients of TANF cash grants, the caseload welfare offices and job centers handle is larger than the TANF caseload alone. According to calculations of the General Accounting Office, at least 46% more families than were in the TANF caseload received services paid for by TANF dollars in 2002 (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2002a).

A recent study of Wisconsin illustrates the magnitude of caseloads not counted towards the official TANF caseload that has been focus of so much attention in the aftermath of reform. Wisconsin is known for its rigorous welfare-to-work program, which introduced reforms at an early stage and drastically reduced caseloads with the introduction of TANF. Wisconsin's AFDC/TANF caseload fell by 93% within 13 years, from nearly 100,000 in 1987 to 6,500 in 2000. Yet, if we include cash assistance, child care, Food Stamps, Medicaid, assistance to care for a related or disabled child, and case management into the definition of 'caseload,' the total number of cases receiving any one of these services declined only by 3% between 1995 and 2000 (Swartz, 2001).

Rather than the size of the caseload, it is its composition, which has significantly changed with the introduction of reforms. Among 118,585 families who received Medicaid, Food Stamps, or
AFDC in Wisconsin in 1995 for instance, 62% of families received AFDC (which includes those who also received Medicaid and Food Stamps), and 38% of cases received only Medicaid and Food Stamps. In 2000 however, of 111,830 cases, only 9.5% received TANF cash assistance and 90.5% received Medicaid and Food Stamps only (Swartz, 2001). Although the composition of cases administered has experienced dramatic changes, the number of cases receiving some form of support has not changed as dramatically as presented in discussions of the declining welfare caseload.

Viewed from this perspective, in the U.S. as in Japan, policy makers continue to face the question of how to facilitate working lone mothers' economic independence. Welfare reforms have enforced a higher work participation rate and eliminated cash assistance as an entitlement. In visibly reducing cash assistance caseloads, reforms have been able to respond to criticism, which sees cash assistance to non-working mothers as inadequate. Yet, with the introduction of new programs and the expansion of old ones to support the working poor, they have also added to other caseloads. In the U.S. as in Japan, it appears that reforms have curtailed women's access to cash assistance and ability to make claims as mothers, but have hardly eliminated lone mothers' need for public support. In recognition of this problem, U.S. policies have shifted their focus to programs and measures, which support the working poor. Such policies, in light of Japan's experience, will be crucial in order to facilitate not merely mothers' entrance into the labor market but help them to attain a living wage.

4. Conclusion

Our comparison of Japan and the United States provides a number of lessons for our understanding of welfare-to-work policies. First, whereas discussions of welfare reform in the United States have been preoccupied with moving lone mothers from cash assistance into the workforce, the Japanese experience shows that work in of itself does not necessarily facilitate independence from state assistance. Even though Japanese policies have lead to a work participation rate as high as 87%, they have, in the course of forty years, not been able to raise lone mothers' incomes much beyond the poverty line. Welfare leaver studies in the United
States illustrate similar trends. Even though cash assistance loads have been declining, and work participation rates among lone mothers have been increasing, they have only increased demand for support for the working poor. Thus, even though rising work participation rates have been held up as a sign of success of welfare reforms, they have also generated new areas of concern which are likely to preoccupy policy makers for some time.

Furthermore, the situation of lone mothers in Japan, rather than an ideal scenario, is highly precarious. The dependent children’s allowance has from the beginning, constituted an income supplement rather than full cash grant. Reforms introduced in 2002 have introduced time limits to the dependent children’s allowance, which, in the absence of Food Stamps, sufficient enforcement of child support and policies equivalent to the EITC, constitutes a removal of the only source of income support beyond wage work. To be sure, also in Japan, lone mothers have public assistance (seikatsu hogo) as a safety net to rely on. Yet in light of the significant disincentives associated with the program, it is unlikely that caseloads will shift toward public assistance in Japan. Given that engagement in full-time work has not allowed mothers to move beyond the income limit of the dependent children’s allowance in the past, it also seems unlikely that removal of this income supplement will increase their income. Instead of removing cash assistance, it appears imperative to address the reasons for lone mothers’ continued low income. The now almost yearly occurrence of deaths of mothers with children because of poverty only illustrates the desperation, isolation, and lack of a sense of entitlement to support among lone mothers, which is only reinforced by current reforms.

Our observations on lone mother policies in Japan provide important lessons for welfare-to-work policies in the United States. Welfare reforms have set rigid limits on lone mothers’ entitlement, and those who do not or cannot work are likely to be in great difficulties. In comparison to Japan, however, it appears that at least a certain safety net has been maintained with the expansion of the EITC, and the maintenance of Food Stamps and SSI. Whereas Japanese reforms have reduced access to income supplements, the EITC was expanded supplements for lone mothers
with low wages, to support the idea that 'work pays.' Those who left welfare but have low incomes thus remain eligible and, as we have seen, continue to receive other forms of government support. In paying particular attention to policies, which support the working poor, U.S. policies have made important steps toward supporting lone mothers' economic independence despite low incomes. Maintenance of a strong safety net and income supplements, in light of the discussion in this paper, will be crucial for the welfare of lone mothers and their children even when lone mothers are working.

Finally, our comparison provides important insights into the gender dynamics of welfare-to-work policies in Japan and the United States. As in the United States, also in Japan, work-centered policies have eliminated full-time care-giving as an option for poor mothers (cf. Abramowitz, 1988; Orloff, 2001). Yet, even though lone mothers are working, access to work alone does not seem to allow them to become economically self-sufficient. Viewed from this perspective, one of the major problems with welfare-to-work policies seems to be that they presume an idea of economic self-sufficiency that is modeled on a male worker: the problem of mothers' welfare reliance is to be solved by making them into full-time workers. Yet, as Orloff (1993) has shown, the dynamics of social citizenship are quite different when viewed from a gender perspective. Although welfare-to-work policies allow lone mothers to make claims as workers (as in the case of the EITC), policies have yet to address inequalities resulting from lone mothers' dual role as workers and as caregivers (cf. Orloff, 2001). As Japan's postwar experience has shown, the establishment of day care centers and mothers' participation in the labor market alone does not allow mothers to move beyond state support. Rather, state interventions will need to address gender inequalities in the labor market, and extend services and regulations, which allow women in general to balance work and motherhood and attain a living wage.

References

Lone Mothers and Welfare-to-Work Policies in Japan and the U.S.


Workfare in Toronto: More of the Same?

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This paper uses a recent survey of welfare leavers in Toronto to examine Workfare, a uniquely American initiative introduced into Canada, with its different welfare state history and traditions. When classic American workfare was imported by an enthusiastic government in Ontario, its application led to employment outcomes remarkably similar to those in the US (reduced caseloads, insecure and contingent employment, high recidivism). Yet, Canada's earlier commitment to community and collective responsibility have not been entirely subsumed below the overarching American umbrella. Welfare programs in Canada—specifically, workfare—reflect both the difficulties of maintaining great difference, and also the possibilities of following an alternate path.

Keywords: workforce, welfare, Canada, community, recidivism

In the immediate aftermath of the 2004 election, many Americans looked enviously northwards, to Canada, a country that seemed to be marching to the beat of a different drummer. Though the stories of mass migration to Canada in reaction to the Bush re-election have thus far proven apocryphal, Americans nevertheless tend to see Canada as a gentler, more caring society, a place where the rugged individualism of free market economics is constrained by a greater sense of community and of collective concern for the disadvantaged.

Undoubtedly there is some historical truth in this perception. In this Research Note we look at Workfare, a uniquely American approach towards welfare, that has been introduced
into Canada, particularly in the province of Ontario: we shall examine whether the generally glowing portrayal of the Canadian experience retains validity against a backdrop of workfare, and to what extent welfare initiatives in Canada and the United States have converged in recent years. The short answer is that while workfare in Canada, and most especially in Ontario (Gorlick, 2002) has been remarkably similar to that of the United States, recent events suggest that perhaps the American model does not after all fit quite so comfortably in the Canadian context.

The Context

Canada's welfare state development was based in large part on the post-World War II model of Britain, combining the economics of Keynes with the social innovations of Beveridge. By the mid-1960's, Canada had developed a set of social programs that, while modest and fully compatible with a market economy, nevertheless offered a reasonable range of protections to a large portion of its population. Standing high in this landscape, alongside public health insurance, was the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), 1966. This piece of federal legislation offered the provinces open-ended 50/50 cost-sharing for the provision of welfare (i.e., Ottawa paid half the costs as incurred by the provinces, without upper limit). Perhaps the most important feature of CAP was an outright prohibition on attaching any conditions, other than being "in need", to the receipt of benefits. What this meant was that the provinces could not impose any work-related requirements—what we today call workfare—to eligibility for the assistance cheque. The provinces, lured by the attraction of what was referred to as the 'fifty cent dollar' rapidly expanded their welfare services.

The global economic recession of the 1970's was experienced in Canada, and its impact continued through the 1980's. Social programs were tightened and downsized, though somewhat imperceptibly (Gray, 1990). The process was accelerated by the passage of the 1988 Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States, which over time brought the economic and social systems of the two countries dramatically closer. The FTA added
pressure on Canadian industry to lower its cost to compete successfully in the new enlarged common economic market: Lower costs for manufacturers entailed lower taxes, and lower taxes in turn implied less social spending. Surprisingly perhaps the Canada Assistance Plan remained essentially unscathed through this process, though the federal government did impose an upper ceiling on its aggregate financial contribution in three wealthy provinces (Graham and Lightman, 1992): entitlement to welfare remained absolute and unconditional, provided only that the ‘in need’ condition was satisfied.

The election of a federal Liberal government in 1993 marked a fundamental change in the landscape, as the new Finance Minister undertook a full, frontal assault on social spending. The Canada Assistance Plan was replaced with the Canada Health and Social Transfer, 1996, which replaced the former 50/50 cost-sharing with block grants to the provinces, similar in some ways to PRWORA in the US. More fundamentally, the new legislation eliminated the prohibition on conditionality, and thereby opened the door to workfare experimentation. The election of a neo-liberal provincial government in Ontario a year earlier led to enthusiastic embrace of both the value base and practice of workfare.

Workfare in Ontario, introduced in 1997 and known as Ontario Works, consciously copied the classic American approach, emphasizing caseload reduction, minimal if any investment in human capital, and “the shortest route to a job”. Such ‘work-first’ programs are based on the premise that individual deficiencies (and/or personal moral failings) are at the root of poverty and unemployment, rather than inadequate labour demand or the structure of employment opportunities. The language talks of ‘incentives’ towards employability, rather than ‘barriers’ to employment.

Since the program philosophy of Ontario Works was essentially the same as in the US, the important policy question is whether the outcomes would be similar; or, alternatively, whether there might remain residues of the earlier, less punitive pre-1996 approach. Through the 1990’s, welfare caseloads dropped dramatically across Canada, due to a combination of tightened eligibility rules, rate cuts and a booming economy (Sceviour and
Finnie, 2004). Nevertheless, research on the outcomes of welfare reform in Canada, particularly in Ontario, is extremely limited. Though research in the US has consistently shown high job insecurity, high recidivism back onto welfare, and low working wages and incomes, there has been little comparable research in Canada (Cancian et al. 2002; Hamilton, 2002; Loprest, 2002). One recent national study by Statistics Canada found that on average family incomes rose after leaving welfare, but, for approximately one-third of leavers, income declined (Frenette and Picot, 2003). After five years, those who had fared worst originally upon leaving welfare increased their incomes “substantially”, but this only returned them to the very low incomes they had received earlier while on welfare. In Ontario, government research on the outcomes of welfare programs is limited to two province-wide telephone surveys of people who had left the welfare rolls, conducted in 1996 and 1998 (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1998). A 1996 City of Toronto welfare leavers study found that 37 percent of respondents had jobs that paid less than $300 per week; 36 percent were part-time; 36 percent of those employed had jobs that were temporary, contract, casual or seasonal and 72 percent of the jobs provided no benefits (Mitchell, 2001).

Recidivism rates in Canada also appear to follow those of the US experience: Frenette and Picot (2003), for example, found that returns to welfare were common, with approximately 33 percent returning within one year and fifty percent within five. Michalopoulos et al. (2002) reported that approximately 60 percent of study participants were not working after five years. Finally, analysing recent Canadian welfare trends, Sceviour and Finnie (2004: 10) found that welfare entry rates had declined strongly across all family types, in part the result of increased difficulty to access welfare, particularly in Ontario and Alberta. As a consequence the “stock” of cases changed and there were “more of the sort of recipient who would have greater difficulties leaving welfare in any given year, thus driving exit rates down.”

In 2001, the Social Services Department in Toronto commissioned a special telephone survey of those who had left the Ontario Works caseload between January and March of that year. A total of 804 surveys, drawn from a random sample of 3,335 potential respondents, was completed in November and December
2001. The respondent profiles were not fully representative of the population of all social assistance recipients, and so a weighting procedure was employed which reduced, but did not entirely eliminate, the problem of sample bias (Toronto, Community and Neighbourhood Services, 2002). It is this survey that provides the empirical basis for the analysis that follows.

The Reasons for Leaving Assistance

As shown in Table 1, just over half (56% or 435 out of 773 usable responses) indicated that they left Ontario Works for 'employment-related' reasons, such as beginning a new job or returning to a previous job, obtaining a better job, or getting a raise, promotion or more hours of work. Of this group, thirty percent had either changed jobs or lost the initial job or were not working at the same job at the date of the survey, a relatively clear indicator of high job instability, particularly given that all 435 had originally left welfare for 'employment-related' reasons; the remainder (69%) were still working at the same job for which they had left welfare.

Table 1
Current employment status and reason for leaving assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for leaving assistance</th>
<th>Employment (n=435)</th>
<th>Non-employment (n=338)</th>
<th>Total (n=773)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current employment status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently employed:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same job</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different job</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not currently employed, but have worked since leaving assistance</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have not worked since leaving assistance</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just under half (48%) of the respondents gave a reason for leaving their first job: these primarily reflected involuntary departure, most commonly the end of a contract, a layoff or a firing. A minority (16% of the total) indicated they had quit their first job. Of those who left assistance for non-employment related reasons, just over half (51%) had not worked since leaving the system. Of the remainder, some 40% were currently employed, while the remaining nine percent had worked since leaving assistance, but were not currently employed.

Job Characteristics of Leavers

Table 2 reports on a number of other aspects of the employment experience of the welfare leavers, alongside comparable information for the broader adult labour force (aged 25+) in Ontario. In every dimension, welfare leavers fared worse than the labour force at large.

Thirty percent of respondents were in non-permanent jobs (temporary, casual, seasonal or contract), compared to seven percent for the labour force as a whole. Nearly thirty percent of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job characteristic</th>
<th>Toronto OW leavers</th>
<th>Ontario (2001 25+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job permanence:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time/part-time:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average usual hours</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average hourly wages</td>
<td>$12.69</td>
<td>$19.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median hourly wages</td>
<td>$10.17</td>
<td>$18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weekly earnings</td>
<td>$442</td>
<td>$758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median weekly earnings</td>
<td>$385</td>
<td>$692</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Toronto Survey (2001) and Statistics Canada (2003).
employed respondents were in part-time work, a rate more than double that of the total adult labour force (13%).

While the average weekly hours for the respondents were only slightly less than those of the provincial labour force (36, compared to 38), 23% of our sample worked less than 30 hours, compared to 13% for the reference group. Thus the incidence of extreme short-time was much more pronounced in the respondent group, while the overall labour force reflected considerably more people putting in full-time work (35 to 40 hours).

Perhaps the most dramatic differences between the two groups were in hourly wages and weekly earnings. On an hourly basis, the average and median wages for respondents were, respectively, two-thirds (64%) and just over half (56%) of those found in the adult labour force. Disaggregating these data, 37% of respondents earned less than $10 an hour, an informal but widely accepted benchmark for categorization as “working poor” in Ontario (Maxwell, 2002): the corresponding rate for the overall labour force was 13%. The average and median weekly earnings of respondents were 58% and 55%, respectively, of the corresponding figures for the provincial adult labour force. Over half the respondents (51%) earned less than $400 a week, compared to just under a quarter (24%) of the reference group.

Recidivism

There was a substantial amount of recidivism among those leaving assistance, suggesting that for many respondents the labour market experience was less than successful. Seventeen percent of the original sample had returned to assistance by the time of the survey, eight to ten months after leaving the system. The major reasons given were illness or disability (31 percent of the recidivists), job loss (20 percent), inability to find a job (12 percent), financial difficulties (10 percent) and changes in family circumstances (8 percent). These findings raise the possibility of churning, the process by which people repeatedly cycle on and off assistance, unable to ever make a permanent break. However, the degree of recidivism in Toronto is less that that found nationally by Frenette and Picot (2003) who reported that for recipients who had received social assistance in 1992, but not in 1994, 35 percent
had returned by 1995: this lower recidivism in Toronto is presumably attributable to the city’s status as the major economic engine of Canada, with its accompanying higher levels of employment.

Commentary

A direct comparison of the post-workfare labour market experience in Canada and the United States is beyond the scope of this Research Note, and would properly have to encompass considerations of relative human capital (labour supply) as well as employment barriers and structural constraints (labour demand). Nevertheless, the findings reported here are fully compatible with the expectation of great similarity in the two settings. When the classic American workfare model was imported by an enthusiastic government in Ontario, its application led to remarkably similar employment outcomes compared to those of the US. The transfer of both welfare ideology and practice appears unhindered by the border between Canada and the United States.

These findings return us to the original question about welfare state convergence between the two countries: when Esping-Andersen (1990) presented his analysis labelling Canada as an “archetypical example” of the liberal model of welfare, alongside the US, he was correct only by process of elimination, in that neither country fit into either of the two other models he developed; but a disaggregated look at Canada alongside the US, suggests that at least with respect to welfare, his analysis was deficient at the time (Lightman, 1991). (And welfare, as the program of last resort, stands as a litmus test for the kind of society we have, how we treat the poorest and most vulnerable amongst us). However, the intervening years since 1990 have mitigated, or perhaps substantially eliminated, the differences in welfare philosophy and practice between the United States and the province of Ontario. Under the influence of the original US-Canada Free Trade Agreement, supplemented by NAFTA and the WTO, Canada has become ever more absorbed and integrated into the US sphere of influence, economically, socially and even ideologically. The implementation of classic workfare in Ontario, has produced outcomes for welfare leavers remarkably similar to those of the United States.
What then of those Canadian social initiatives that are so attractive to many Americans? How to explain Canada’s enlightened system of public health insurance that covers virtually the entire population, cheap prescription drugs, or same-sex marriage?

Though there is no simple and single explanation, it appears that Canada’s absorption into the US empire has not been complete. Though economic integration is highly advanced, ideologies and values have not followed unquestioningly. Traces of Canada’s earlier commitment to community and collective responsibility have not been entirely subsumed below the overarching American umbrella.

Indeed, even in welfare programming, resistance to the worst excesses of workfare have begun to surface: in the autumn of 2003, a provincial election was held in Ontario, and the neo-liberal government was ignominiously defeated. The incoming regime had been publicly rather silent in their election manifesto about their plans for workfare, but they had privately committed to reform. Upon taking office, they began, slowly and cautiously, to chip away at the most egregious corners of workfare and of the rest of the welfare program: the meanness and heavy punitive tone associated with the previous government’s approach to workfare began to dissipate quickly. The Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Social Services was appointed to investigate welfare in the province, in and of itself a repudiation of the previous government’s hard ‘work-first’ principles. The key recommendations of her report, which had been produced within a matter of months, were immediately acted upon. Most notably, a cumbersome two-stage application process—which many argued was designed to keep people off the system rather than to facilitate their entry (Herd et al, 2005)—was eliminated and certain other minor changes were also implemented. A new community coalition, heavy with the corporate elite of the city, sprung up in Toronto to aid (and perhaps pressure) the new government to move rapidly in the direction of welfare reform. The long process of ‘reforming’ welfare back towards a more humane system of help had at last begun.

In short, Canadians have learned that when living next door to an elephant, there may not be much room to manoeuvre.
But there are occasions and opportunities to assert difference, to retain the legacy of community caring and to reject the worst excesses of unbridled market economics. Welfare programs—in particular, workfare—reflect both the difficulties of maintaining great difference, and also the possibilities of following an alternate path. Whether workfare ultimately proves to be an anomaly or a precursor of broader social differences between the US and Canada, remains, as yet, uncertain.

References


Current social policy that affects welfare recipients focuses on the concept of "self-sufficiency" where leaving welfare for work is the goal. While this approach has reduced welfare rolls, it has not necessarily helped low-income people improve their economic, educational, or social outlook. This paper suggests that the concept of Personal and Family Sustainability (PFS) may be a better way to evaluate and direct social policy. A definition of PFS is developed from the environmental and community development roots of sustainability and four domains for creating PFS indicators are introduced.

Keywords: Self-sufficiency, sustainability, social policy, poverty, welfare, TANF

The notion of "self-sufficiency"—and its related terms, "independence," "self-reliance," and "self-supporting"—have become the embodiment of poverty reduction policy. On its face, self-sufficiency appears to be an appropriate goal for social policy. However, this paper asserts that using self-sufficiency as a social welfare policy goal results in programs and evaluations that are unclear, inequitable, dichotomous, and limited in scope.

Self-sufficiency has become so ingrained in American society that the media, policy makers, researchers, and the general public no longer question the legitimacy of this goal. Examples are abundant in federal social policy. For example, one of the four federal goals for welfare reform (called Transitional Aid to Needy Families or TANF) is to "end the dependence of needy parents
on government benefits . . . “ (House Committee on Ways and Means, 2004, sections 7-4). Indeed, the Congressional publication, *Background Material and Data on the Programs Within the Jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means*, commonly known as the Green Book, explicitly states that reducing welfare and promoting “self-sufficiency” has been a Congressional focus since the 1960s.

While this paper focuses primarily on welfare, TANF is not the only entitlement program that sets self-sufficiency as its goal. Title XX of the Social Security Act, which created the Social Services Block Grant, sets out to: (1) achieve or maintain economic self-support to prevent, reduce, or eliminate dependency; and (2) achieve or maintain self-sufficiency, including reduction or prevention of dependency (House Committee on Ways and Means, 2003, section 10-6).

Using TANF as an example, this paper introduces and examines how a broader concept, Personal and Family Sustainability (PFS), may be a more effective way to define, evaluate, and direct poverty reduction. Although the emphasis on self-sufficiency in TANF has reduced welfare rolls, the larger societal goal of helping low-income people—especially single mothers—enter stable jobs or improve their economic, educational, and social situation has not been met. This paper suggests a new paradigm for considering the goals of social welfare policy. It introduces and examines how a broader concept, Personal and Family Sustainability (PFS), may be a more effective way to define, evaluate, and direct poverty reduction.

Current and past U.S. presidents have used the concepts of self-sufficiency and independence to define social welfare policies. In its welfare reauthorization proposal, for instance, the Bush Administration described helping “each family reach its highest degree of self-sufficiency” (Office of the President, 2003, p. 13) as a fundamental goal of TANF. In the same vein, former President Clinton, who signed the 1996 welfare reform bill into law, said, “We want a welfare system which emphasizes getting people to work, self-sufficiency, and welfare as a transition, not as a way of life” (Federal News Service, 1995).

The media has also adopted the self-sufficiency mantra without questioning or defining the term. Months before the signing of the welfare reform bill, the *Washington Post* described a
Virginia welfare-to-work program as "a shift from dependency to self-sufficiency" (Benning, 1996). Similarly, the Columbus Dispatch (Candisky & Johnson, 2004) defined self-sufficiency as non-reliance on public assistance. The article describing the impact of welfare reform on the life of a 38-year-old single mother of three teenagers concluded that "steady work has not brought self-sufficiency" (p. 1A).

Researchers and the general public also accept self-sufficiency as an appropriate policy and programmatic goal. Research centers, policy-related articles, and websites commonly link self-sufficiency to ending or reducing welfare-use and poverty. A search using the terms "self-sufficiency and poverty" on the popular Internet search engine Google brings up more than 165,000 "hits" from conservative, liberal, and bipartisan research centers, as well as from academic, religious, secular, political and apolitical organizations and individuals. A cursory glance at these websites suggests that many people and institutions accept self-sufficiency as a legitimate goal of social welfare policy.

Self-Sufficiency: A Problematic Term

Despite widespread acceptance of self-sufficiency as a defined social welfare policy goal for decades by policy makers, researchers, and the general public, both the term and the concept are problematic. In the literature critiques focus primarily on two overlapping areas: (1) self-sufficiency is difficult to define and thus even more difficult to evaluate and (2) the term is itself limited, unattainable, and insufficient for policymaking.

Despite its frequent use there is no agreed-upon definition of self-sufficiency. Long (2001) reverts to what is described as the generally accepted public definition: "a financially self-sufficient family . . . has enough resources to meet its needs without public support" (p. 390). The specifics of such a definition are still unclear. As a result, according to Long, it is "virtually impossible" to evaluate the effectiveness of those policies and programs that espouse self-sufficiency.

Others use the term self-sufficiency in conjunction or interchangeably with the terms independence, self-reliance, or well-being (Cancian & Meyer, 2004; Braun, Olson, & Bauer, 2002;
Daugherty & Barber, 2001). The term is often defined broadly as holding a paying job or being in a state of well-being, with limited reliance on welfare benefits (Cancian & Meyer, 2004; Parker, 1994). Some researchers also distinguish between work-related benefits and benefits paid to individuals involved in TANF-mandated community service jobs. A study by Sandfort and Hill (1996) operationalized self-sufficiency as income from labor, child support, and assistance from relatives in one model, while another model included income from a husband’s labor in addition to other variables.

Generally speaking, however, definitions of self-sufficiency usually assume paid work and lack of “dependency” on income-based government benefits, especially welfare or TANF (Johnson & Corcoran, 2004; Caputo, 1997; Bowen, Desimone, & McKay, 1995; Gowdy & Pearlmutter, 1993). This view of self-sufficiency continues to be used in research and policymaking, but many argue that it belies how people of any income bracket actually live, and it should be redefined.

Bratt and Keyes (1997) add that the term and its concomitant policy approach suggests that people who are not “self-sufficient” are somehow “insufficient.” They also note that the term implies that individuals who receive government assistance need no support once they leave the welfare system. Further, Bratt and Keyes argue that nearly all American citizens, regardless of income, receive some form of government assistance, be it tax deductions for mortgages and interest payments, Social Security and Medicare benefits to the elderly, GI Bill and VA services to veterans, tax withholdings for pensions, or others. Indeed, in their Ford Foundation study of nonprofit housing organizations, Bratt and Keyes struggle both with defining self-sufficiency and with determining the point at which a family becomes self-sufficient. They offer, instead, a “continuum of self-sufficiency” (p. x), with different levels representing varying degrees of public assistance. Such notions suggest that the focus on self-sufficiency, independence, and dependence should be reframed as interdependence. Even the most rugged individualist likely benefits from a number of governmental and non-governmental resources from public housing subsidies to tax-deferred college loans to tax deductions on vacation homes and primary residences.
Gowdy and Pearlmutter (1993) also oppose the dichotomous nature of the term, which suggests that one is either self-sufficient or one is not. Other researchers describe self-sufficiency and dependency as a "myth" when applied to low-income people. Edin (1995) believes that the focus on this dichotomy ignores what it actually costs to raise a family in the United States. She argues that welfare does not provide enough money to create a state of total dependency, and similarly, that low-wage jobs do not pay enough to move a family to a state of economic well-being. Low-income people may depend on welfare benefits for survival, but they cannot survive on welfare alone. Indeed, low-income women use several means to "make ends meet" and increase their human capital by receiving welfare benefits, engaging in paid work (both reported and unreported), accepting help from families, friends, and their children's fathers, and implementing other survival strategies (Edin & Lein, 1997).

Daugherty and Barber (2001), Gowdy and Pearlmutter (1993), and Braun, Olson, and Bauer (2002) propose redefining self-sufficiency so that it better represents the realities of people's lives. Daugherty and Barber (2001) focus on an "ecology to work" perspective that would change the philosophical and empirical definition to specific achievable actions. These researchers suggest that the term self-sufficiency, as well as independence, misrepresents and oversimplifies the power and meaning of human agency. The term, they propose, is based on a moral American myth of self-reliance and individuality, when the reality of women's lives is more of an ongoing process affected by social policies and daily events.

Using a client-centered perspective to develop a new scale of economic self-sufficiency (ESS), Gowdy and Pearlmutter (1993) note that self-sufficiency appeared to be more of a process than a goal for the 244 women in their study. They used factor analysis to determine that self-sufficiency should reflect four dimensions: 1) autonomy and responsibility, 2) financial security and responsibility, 3) family and self well-being, and 4) basic assets for living in the community.

In their study of teenage mothers receiving AFDC, Lie and Morney (1992) do not try to redefine self-sufficiency but instead attempt to operationalize it by developing 16 indicators that cover
arenas ranging from economic to social to educational and from career to day-to-day situations. Braun, Olson, and Bauer (2002) build on Lie and Moroney’s work by connecting self-sufficiency to well-being and sustainability to promote “sustainable well-being” for low-income individuals and families. Despite these efforts to develop a definition of self-sufficiency that carries greater relevance for welfare and poverty reduction, the term continues to lack clarity and remains difficult to evaluate.

Developing a Conceptual Model of Sustainability

Perhaps the term self-sufficiency, with its multiple vague and misleading definitions, is simply the wrong goal for social policy. The causes of poverty are very complex and any public policy designed to tackle this social issue must reflect this reality. The literature shows that families need a combination of factors that go well beyond an hourly job or job training. These include financial factors, social support, neighborhood quality, logistical help, psychological well-being, and even the welfare system itself (Hogan, Solheim, Wolfgram, Nkosi, & Rodrigues, 2004; Harris, 1996; Blalock, Tiller, & Monroe, 2004; Cancian, Haveman, Meyer, & Wolfe, 2002; Cheng, 2002). The Personal and Family Sustainability (PFS) model addresses these concerns.

Personal and Family Sustainability is based on the premise that society can more effectively reduce poverty using a model that is multi-faceted, culturally appropriate, and reflective of the reality of poverty and welfare use. PFS builds on the concept of sustainability, which has its origins in the environmental movement, urban studies, and in community and global economic development (Agyeman, Bullard, & Evans, 2003; Fernando, 2003; Rogers & Ryan, 2001). Sustainability is, in fact, widely used as a concept and goal for environmental and global economic issues, and has recently made leeway into the community and social development arenas in the United States.

The United Nations defines economic sustainability in global terms, referring to the extent to which a country has achieved lasting economic transformation. In this context, sustainability focuses on how a country makes changes that lead to enduring individual and collective well-being for its citizens (Agyeman,
Bullard, & Evans, 2003; World Commission on Economic Development, 1987). Usually, those “changes” address large structural issues such as environmental factors, technologies, and health care (Prugh & Assadourian, 2003).

At the community level, the terms ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable development’ are often used interchangeably (Fernando, 2003; Hempel, 1999). Both concentrate on community development that is future-oriented and focuses on renewal and replenishing resources. Whether environmentally or community-based, sustainability has come to mean development and resource use that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43).

Others extend the term ‘sustainability’ to include environmental justice and human rights, emphasizing that environmental problems disproportionally affect those living in poverty (Agyeman, Bullard, & Evans, 2002; 2003). This view calls for a “just society” where all citizens enjoy material, social, economic, and political equity. This concept speaks to the need for sound and safe transportation, plentiful jobs, and meeting all human and environmental needs. Fernando (2003) points out that this notion is a social justice perspective and requires an understanding of the relationship between nature, society, and the political world.

The ecological/environmental framework, the community development focus, and the social justice perspectives all share an understanding of sustainability as a holistic examination of the human condition, focusing on creating unified solutions rather than incremental and patchwork policies (Agyeman, 2004). Agyeman states that “Achieving sustainable development requires an emphasis on quality of life, on present and future generations, on justice and equity in resource allocation, and on living within ecological limits,” (p. 674). In this view, the concept of sustainability involves development, renewal, redevelopment, and maintenance of resources. Similarly, after considering the ecological nature of the concept, Pearce, Atkinson, and Dubourg (1994) offer a simple definition and emphasize that “[sustainability] is nondeclining human well-being over time” (p. 470).

Ecological economists discuss the need to enhance and conserve our “natural capital” (i.e., natural resources such as fish
supply, energy, forests; all renewable and replenishable) (Hinterberger, Luks, Schmidt-Bleek, 1997; Agyeman, 2004). A people-focused parallel to this notion is human capital for individuals and families. Often defined as education, training, and skills that facilitate productive activity (Becker, 1964), human capital is an individual resource that meets the primary criteria for sustainability: it is both renewable and replenishable. It is, indeed, arguably the only human renewable and replenishable asset.

It is, however, the social justice perspective that offers a useful connection between sustainability and social welfare policy, though few researchers have made this connection. Braun, Olson, and Bauer (2002), for instance, address this topic by stating that current policy focuses on well-being for the few rather than long-term sustainability for many. Similarly, Garces (2003) espouses the development of a sustainable health care system for older adults in Europe by focusing on social sustainability that has legal, administrative, cultural, economic, and quality of life factors that are universal to all citizens. Likewise, Glasmeier and Farrigan (2003) examine poverty in Appalachia, linking sustainable community development to asset building in the community, which leads to improved jobs and human capital development.

The implied and explicit understanding of the interdependence of humans and their natural, social, and cultural environment makes sustainability a useful concept for individuals and families. If a goal of American social welfare policy is to enhance the well-being of its citizens (Blau & Abramovitz, 2004), then policymakers must consider the issue within a holistic sustainability framework.

To understand the notion of Personal and Family Sustainability, it is necessary to use a combination of relevant and generally accepted "self-sufficiency" factors from the literature in accordance with sustainability indicators suggested by the United Nations and the United Kingdom. The PFS approach presents an opportunity for policymakers and researchers to reach beyond the limits of the self-sufficiency paradigm to a perspective that is simultaneously present- and future-oriented.
Defining Personal and Family Sustainability

To avoid repeating the confusion and inequity associated with the notion of self-sufficiency, it is critical to clearly define the concept of Personal and Family Sustainability. To begin with, PFS must address the complexity of poverty and welfare use. Often explanations for poverty and welfare use focus on behavioral/cultural and structural factors (Iceland, 2003; Rank; 1994). The behavioral/cultural perspective places the onus of poverty and getting out of poverty on the individual and on her/his behaviors or actions (Mead, 1996; Auletta, 1983; Wilson, 1996), which are sometimes linked to mental health issues (Danziger, Kalil, & Anderson, 2000; Jayakody, Danziger, & Pollack, 2000). This approach creates unintended roadblocks and makes it more difficult for the individual to leave poverty.

The structural perspective maintains that poverty and welfare use are the result of larger shortcomings found in the structure of society: too few jobs, limited public transportation, and social and economic issues such as changes in the labor market, falling real wages, and jobs leaving the inner-cities (Wilson, 1996; 1987; Massey & Denton, 1993; Blank, 1997).

Research suggests, however, that long-term poverty and welfare use are likely the result of a combination of several factors: human capital development, work and employment, family structure and family issues, psychological and physical health, social networks and relationships, and housing and physical environment. Although the literature in this area is vast, there are some notable explorations by Wilson and Aponte (1985), Wilson (1996), Popkin (1990), Massey and Denton (1993), Edin and Lein (1997), Blank (1997), Iceland, (2003), and Henly, Danziger, and Offer (2005).

The PFS approach reflects the complexity of poverty and is consistent with the community development idea of sustainable communities: it encompasses long-term health and vitality for the community and its citizens, including education, economic well-being, resilience and continued renewal (U.N. Division of Sustainable Development, 2003; Hempel, 1999). From this perspective, Personal and Family Sustainability can be seen as maxi-
mizing full human potential to establish long-term economic, physical, psychological, and social well-being for individuals and their families.

This definition addresses one of the key criticisms of recent welfare reform: that it reduces the number of welfare recipients but increases the number of working poor (Lichter, & Jayakody, 2002; Perry-Burney, & Jennings, 2003). PFS also addresses one of the main reasons welfare was reformed in the first place: the common stereotype that welfare recipients lack motivation to work and leave the system on their own (Seccombe, 1999). By aiming to "maximize full human potential" rather than simply reduce the number of recipients, an ecological and lasting impact emerges.

PFS moves social policy away from the idea of social control (Cowger & Atherton, 1974) to a strengths-based (Poulin, 2005) or resiliency perspective (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000) by setting as its goal the idea of maximizing human potential. The notion that individuals have inner strengths that interact with environmental factors is now common in academic fields such as psychology, sociology, social work, and family studies. Reconceptualizing self-sufficiency as PFS allows policymakers to use a broader ecological perspective and focus on more expansive goals than simply leaving welfare for a job, any job.

Developing PFS Indicators

Any new concept requires a way to operationalize its components. In the environmental and community development movements, it has been crucial to develop sustainability indicators in order to move the concept beyond theory to practice (Bell & Morse, 2001). The United Kingdom, for example, developed 50 indicators from a list of 190 quality-of-life domains and determined that human capital (education and health status), social connections that increase chances for productivity, and equality issues are important measures of social or human sustainability (Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, 2004).

Personal and Family Sustainability fits within a similar framework, especially considering those elements that research has shown to be consistent with long-term economic success: structural and cultural/behavioral factors. These factors, however, are
not as dichotomous as they first appear, but are actually interrelated. In considering their interrelatedness, the human ecology perspective is particularly useful.

PFS indicators are best thought of as a set of interlocking domains at the individual, social, and environmental levels, rather than strict indicators of a particular outcome. Researchers and practitioners commonly consider social indicators for children and families by assessing the health, education, and social well-being of children in families (Brown & Moore, 2003; Jacobs, 1994). Looking through the lens of PFS, these indicators could be used at the public policy level as well as at the practitioner level. While there are several "indicators" available, one common group of indicators is derived from the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (2004). Since the Forum and many other indicators focus primarily on children, some further conceptualization is needed to appropriately fit PFS indicators to families.

The Forum uses four domains for considering key national indicators of well-being: economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education. The first domain is economic security, which encompasses a family's financial situation and other indicators related to economic security such as income, secure employment, housing issues, nutrition, and health care. A second domain is general health/healthcare access, which could be expanded to reflect mental health and overall psychological well-being. Research suggests, indeed, that psychological well-being, including depression, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, are relevant to low-income families (Brown & Moran, 1997; Popkin, 1990; Dolinsky, Caputo, & O'Kane, 1989) and should be included within the indicators.

A third domain that can foster indicators is behavior and social environment. Focusing on children, the Forum on Child and Family Statistics looks at safety issues and risk behaviors such as substance abuse and physical safety. For PFS, this domain might be expanded to embrace safety from domestic violence as well as family's social environment and/or social capital. Coleman (1988) defines social capital as the personal relationships and connections that exist within a family and in the larger community. These relationships and connections can be both positive and negative. Negative connections can hamper positive well-
being, but positive social capital can connect families to resources, services, and even job or education opportunities (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Antonucci, Akiyama, & Lansford, 1998).

Education is the fourth domain identified by the Forum. Since the Forum's indicators focus on children, these indicators examine education and school enrollment. Expanding this area might involve a broader understanding of education, viewing it as human capital development. Here the linkages between the fourth and first domains are apparent, as education and work are essential to improving economic well-being: considering long-term career development instead of job-placement or academic education instead of job-readiness programs.

The clear connection between the fourth domain and the first highlights the interrelatedness of all four domains and specific indicators within each. Human capital development may be essential for lasting economic security, but it cannot be developed without education. Poor health or lack of access to health care can hinder the ability to work as can domestic violence or insecure housing. All of these indicators affect psychological well-being just as depression, low self-esteem, and low self-efficacy can limit desire for, access to, and success in health status, employment, and education.

Conclusion

Self-sufficiency and its related terms—indepedence, self-reliant, and self-supportive—have long been the goals of many, if not most, social welfare policies. Unfortunately, these concepts have been defined in ways that are inconsistent, dichotomous, and limited in scope. To have a lasting positive effect on social welfare, governments and practitioners should take a longer, more complex look at psychological well-being and economic success, preferably from an ecological perspective. The main goal of this paper was to introduce and develop the concept of Personal and Family Sustainability, which stems from the notion of sustainability as used in the arenas of environmental justice and community development.

Future research should further explore alternatives to self-sufficiency as the goal of social welfare policy. The conceptual
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model of Personal and Family Sustainability should also be further explored. While this paper considers social indicators espoused by the Forum for Child and Family Statistics as possible domains from which to develop social welfare indicators, specific PFS indicators should be created to further clarify the concept and test its usefulness as a means to promote more comprehensive and far-reaching goals in social welfare policy.

References


Self-Sufficiency to Personal and Family Sustainability


An Exploratory Study of Neighborhood Choices Among Moving to Opportunity Participants in Baltimore, Maryland: The Influence of Housing Search Assistance

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This study examined the neighborhood choices of 150 families who participated in the Moving To Opportunity Program (MTO) in Baltimore, Maryland. The MTO program, utilizing an experimental design, provided intensive housing search and counseling services to the experimental subjects. This study found that the counseling services were instrumental in altering the subject's cognitive maps, and they were more likely to move to neighborhoods that were more racially integrated, safer, and, also, had higher levels of satisfaction with their new neighborhood. The authors conclude that the MTO program in Baltimore represents a clear case of public policy that, at least in the short term, worked.

Keywords: Moving To Opportunity, housing policy, public housing, low income housing, mobility

Pendall (2000) has noted that since the 1970's the dominant model for U.S. federal housing policy has shifted from unit-based programs to tenant-based vouchers and certificates. The theory behind this shift is that vouchers and certificates should allow those who receive this assistance to live in better neighborhoods. Theoretically, these neighborhoods would provide access to better schools and employment opportunities, and less exposure
to crime and violence, as well as other social benefits. By the early 1990's these mixed-income and dispersal strategies predominated federal housing policy (Popkin, et al., 2000).

This dispersal strategy was influenced, in large part, by the Gautreaux Program. In the late 1960's, a group of fair housing advocates filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of Chicago public housing residents against the Chicago Housing authority and HUD, charging that these agencies had employed racially discriminatory policies in the administration of the Chicago low-rent housing program. Ten years later, a Supreme Court decree ordered the formulation of a racial dispersal strategy, including the placement of 7,100 Black public housing residents or applicants in racially desegregated neighborhoods throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. The Gautreaux Program was intended primarily as a desegregation remedy. However, research by James Rosenbaum (1996) and others at Northwestern University on the families that moved through the Gautreaux Program has suggested that a move out of the central city can have positive employment, earning, and education effects.

The Gautreaux studies show that moving to the suburbs had significant positive effects on the educational attainment of the children. Not only were they less likely to drop out of school, but they were also more likely to take college-track courses, compared to those who moved within the city. After graduating from high-school, children of suburban movers were also likely to attend a four-year college or become employed full-time at a job with fringe benefits. Popkin, et al., (2000) notes that "thirty years after the initial decision, the philosophy behind Gautreaux, that public and assisted housing should be scattered throughout a range of communities or deconcentrated, has become the driving force behind the current transformation" (p. 912).

Pendall (2000) observes that these voucher and certificate programs, however, do not always "live up to their promise as mechanisms that foster mobility" (p. 882). He notes that tenants, in particular blacks and Hispanics still, often, resettle into poor, segregated neighborhoods.

South and Crowder (1997) came to a similar conclusion when they examined the mobility experiences of poor blacks and whites.
They reported that blacks who moved out of poor neighborhoods were more likely than whites to move into another poor neighborhood (13.6% of black had this experience compared to 5.2% of whites). In fact, 11% of blacks moved from nonpoor neighborhoods into poor neighborhoods as compared to only 1.4% of whites. More recently, Rosenbaum and Harris (2001) cite a number of studies which conclude that among assisted households, blacks are more likely than whites to relocate to areas with higher concentrations of poverty and black residents.

A considerable body of scholarship exists concerning population mobility and residential choice, and a variety of theories have been used to explain these behaviors. In an historical overview of why people move, Shumaker and Stokols (1982) traced theories of mobility. One of the earliest theories, referred to as the “Gravity Law of Mobility”, argued that people moved because they were drawn to other people. Later theorists developed models that explained that people were not necessarily drawn to other people, but instead were drawn to opportunities available within a new locale and were influenced by perceived obstacles to moving and perceived benefits within the current locale. Additionally, recent theorists assume that a rational, cost-benefit analysis underlies the relocation decision making process (Shumaker and Stokols, 1982).

Other researchers have argued that mobility is a response to stress. These “stress theorists” suggest that an environment which fails to provide the resources essential to meeting one’s needs produces a lack of fit between needs and environment. When the stress level reaches a critical threshold, the person seeks to relocate. Speare (1974) emphasizes a “threshold of dissatisfaction” rather than a stress response. Once individuals reach their threshold, they employ a cost-benefit analysis that includes an evaluation of their current locale compared to the cost and benefits of changing their locale.

Shumaker and Stokols (1982) note that there are some significant weaknesses in all of these theories. The first major weakness is that they assume that mobility is an alternative for all Americans. Yet, as noted earlier, the data show that mobility is not readily available to certain major subgroups in American society, particularly African-Americans. Shumaker and Stokols
argue that across income groups African-Americans are restricted in their residential options.

Researchers (Clark, 1992; South and Deane, 1993; South and Crowder, 1997) have offered various explanations for the limited mobility choices of African-Americans. Prominent among them at the political/structural level are inequities such as segregation and discrimination experienced by blacks in our society. These political/structural inequities include: local zoning practices and land use regulations (Rossi and Shlay, 1982) which were designed to regulate socioeconomic spatial arrangements and indirectly influenced racially segregated spatial arrangements; the gerrymandering of school boundaries which also helped to establish segregated spatial environments; and decisions regarding highway and freeway construction that kept neighborhoods racially separate (Fairchild and Tucker, 1982).

At the individual level possible explanations may include the socio-cultural influences among poor blacks which include: having more extensive social ties in poorer neighborhoods; a greater familiarity with them; and a preference for racial homogeneity. Another way to understand these socio-cultural influences is through the concept of "cognitive maps."

Golledge (1999) defines cognitive maps as "the internal representation of perceived environmental features or objects and the spatial relations among them" (p. 5). Downs and Stea (1973) expand on this definition by stating:

Cognitive mapping is a process composed of a series of psychological transformations by which and individual acquires, codes, stores, recalls, and decodes information about the relative locations and attributes of phenomena in his everyday spatial environment (p. 9).

In a later work Downs and Stea (1977) provide a definition that fits most closely the purposes of this paper. They state that cognitive mapping is an activity that we engage in rather than an object that we possess. Our cognitive maps represent a cross section of the world, a community, or a neighborhood at one instant in time. It reflects the world as some person believes it to be. It need not be correct. In fact, distortions are highly likely. Whether distorted or not cognitive mapping is a basic component
of human adaptation necessary for human survival and everyday environmental behavior.

Our information about the world comes from both direct and vicarious sources (Downs and Stea, 1973). Direct sources involve face-to-face contact between the individual and, for example, a neighborhood; and information literally floods the person from all of this sensory modes. Vicarious information is by definition secondhand. It is literally and metaphorically seen through someone else's eyes. In either case, the information is selected and transmitted through a set of filters that necessarily distort the information, generally in a way useful to the individual in his present context.

We cannot absorb and retain the virtually infinite amount of information that impinges upon us on a daily basis. Instead, we develop perceptual filters that screen out most information in a highly selective fashion. Our views of the world, and about people and places in it, are formed from a highly filtered set of impressions, and our images are strongly affected by the information we receive through our filters (Gould and White, 1986). These filters, which are at the core of our cognitive maps, are the basis which help us decide upon and implement any strategy of spatial behavior such as neighborhood choice.

The poor often have little or no direct experience with non-poor neighborhoods and the private housing market, and have little contact with people who can give them accurate information about them. Therefore, their mobility decisions are made through distorted filters, which limits their choices, and renders their search process ineffective. Thus, through a combination of political/structural factors and socio-cultural influences, the poor, when they do make mobility decisions, often find themselves in impoverished neighborhoods much like the ones they left.

Hartung and Henig (1997) and Turner, Popkin, and Feins, (2003) among others have suggested that in addition to vouchers, residents of public housing may need "considerable support to find and keep housing in the private market" (p. 29). This support would address both the political/structural factors and socio-cultural influences affecting these residents. The MTO program attempted to provide this support through its counseling and housing search assistance.
The Moving To Opportunity (MTO) Program

MTO is a demonstration program and research study, utilizing an experimental design, authorized by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992, which combines Section 8 rental assistance with intensive housing search and counseling services. The demonstration is testing whether, after finding private housing in low-poverty communities, MTO treatment group families will become increasingly self-sufficient, compared to those who did not make such moves and to others who made similar moves without counseling and support.

MTO provides Section 8 rental assistance to roughly 1,600 families, to learn whether the differences in neighborhood conditions affect the social and economic future of parents and children. Congress restricted the demonstration to very large cities with populations of at least 400,000, in metropolitan areas of at least 1.5 million people. From sixteen cities submitting applications, five cities were selected in March 1994 for MTO: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City.

The five local MTO programs were created via grants from the Secretary of HUD to nonprofit organizations (NPOs) to provide counseling and services in connection with the demonstration. HUD also entered into contracts with the public housing agencies to administer the Section 8 rental assistance to members of the MTO experimental group. The NPOs received funding to help pay for the costs associated with counseling the experimental group families, assisting them in finding appropriate units, and working with landlords to encourage their cooperation with Section 8 and the MTO program.

In Baltimore, the counseling and housing search assistance consisted of many components, and was designed to a) address the political/structural factors and socio-cultural influences that could potentially impair the mobility decision-making process of the MTO participants. These components included:

- the recruitment of owners and managers of property in low-poverty census tracts;
- work with landlords to obtain family tenancy history and letters of reference;
- visit MTO experimental group families in their homes and
assess their strengths and weaknesses in terms of their preparedness to move and conduct credit checks;
• discuss the goals the family wants to achieve;
• provide budget and employment counseling to the families;
• provide referrals for the families to appropriate resources regarding issues such as: substance abuse problems, day care options, and parenting skills;
• provide transportation for the families to low poverty areas and inspection of potential rental units;
• coordinate discussions between landlords/property owners and participants;
• followup with individual participants and groups of participants located in the same area;
• and conduct semi-annual inspections of the rental units.

The research component of MTO utilized an experimental design that randomly assigned MTO families into three groups. From 1994 to 1998, 4,608 families in the five sites volunteered for MTO and were randomly assigned. The experimental group received Section 8 certificates or vouchers that they could use for housing in low-poverty census tracts (under 10 percent poverty in 1990). They also received counseling and housing search assistance. The comparison group received Section 8 certificates or vouchers that could be used to move anywhere. They did not receive counseling or housing search assistance. A control group received no Section 8 assistance, but continued to receive assistance in the public housing or assisted housing development where they lived. This group provided a benchmark against which outcomes for the other two groups would be measured (Turner, Popkin, & Feins, 2003).

Methodology

The questions that we asked in this study concerned how successful the experimental and comparison group participants were in obtaining housing, and whether the counseling affected their locational decisions. Two data sources were utilized for this study. The first source was the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) participant baseline surveys which were
administered at intake to the MTO program. We used the baseline data only to examine how families felt about the neighborhoods they were moving from. The second data source consisted of structured interviews with the participants conducted by the authors of this paper after the families had moved. Interviews were not conducted with members of the control group as we were only interested in comparing participants who had moved.

There were 339 MTO participants in the city of Baltimore. The experimental group included 139 (41%), the comparison group 93 (27%), and the control group had 107 (32%) participants. The authors and trained interviewers conducted interviews with 150 of 232 participants (87 from the experimental group and 63 from the comparison group), for a completion rate of 65%. The primary reasons the other participants were not interviewed were failure to show up for the designated interview times (two appointments were scheduled), and moved and left no address.

The city of Baltimore offers an excellent locale to explore the latter question concerning socio-cultural influences. Baltimore is known as a “City of Neighborhoods.” Neighborhoods are a major tradition, foundation and resource for the city’s civic culture (Henderson, 1993). More than 700 neighborhood associations are registered with the Baltimore City Department of Planning. These neighborhoods are mostly divided between East and West Baltimore, which are the primary geographic demarcations for the city. There are many similarities between them. For instance, the population for both is 91% African-American. The percentage of families in poverty is 49% on the East side and 47% on the West, and the percentage of dwellings occupied by renters is 81% on the East and 82% on the West. While, the overall vacancy rate for the city of Baltimore is 9% the rates for the East and West are 16.6 and 17.9, respectively. However, while similar in many ways East and West is not only geographic divide, in many ways they are also a social and psychological divides. It is very common for residents of both sides to remain “on their side” for their entire lives. This pattern is even more pronounced among poor African-American residents.

Results

In the baseline survey approximately 95% of all participants indicated that they wanted to live in a different neighborhood in
Neighborhood Choices of MTO Participants

Table 1

Area of Origin/Destination

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<th>Area of Origin</th>
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<th>West</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>East</td>
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<td>43 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>18 46.2</td>
<td>21 53.8</td>
<td>39 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>25 69.4</td>
<td>11 30.6</td>
<td>36 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>7 31.8</td>
<td>15 68.2</td>
<td>22 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p = <.01; Cramer’s V = .37.

Baltimore city, the suburbs, or a different city. One indicator of the effectiveness of the counseling in expanding the cognitive maps of the experimental families would be the extent of movement among experimental and comparison families from one side of town to the other. As Table 1 indicates approximately 50% of experimental families moved to the other side of town, as compared to approximately 30% of the comparison families (p = <.01, and a Cramer’s V of .37).

Another indicator of the counseling’s impact on socio-cultural influences would be how important it was for both groups to remain close to their old neighborhoods, friends and family members. As Table 2 indicates, there was a statistically significant

Table 2

How important was it that the neighborhood or area the apartment (or house) was located in not be too far away from your old apartment (or house) and neighborhood?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.  %</td>
<td>No.  %</td>
<td>No.  %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>23 26.4</td>
<td>27 42.9</td>
<td>50 33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>64 73.6</td>
<td>36 57.1</td>
<td>100 66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>87 58.0</td>
<td>63 42.0</td>
<td>150 100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p = <.04; Cramer’s V = .18.
Table 3

*How important was it that the apartment (or house) not be too far away from your family?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th></th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( p = .03; \text{Cramer's } V = .19. \)

difference in the responses between the experimental and comparison groups on the question of moving too far from their old neighborhoods (\( p = .04, \) and a Cramer's V of .18). There was also a statistically significant difference, (see Table 3), between the groups in regards to the importance of not being too far away from family members (\( p = .03, \) and a Cramer's V of .19).

The next question examined how successful the experimental and comparison group families were in attaining housing with which they were satisfied. Table 4 indicates that experimental group families were significantly more satisfied with their new residences (\( p = .03, \) Cramer's V of .22).

They also were able to move to more racially integrated neighborhoods than the comparison group participants, as well as

Table 4

*How satisfied are you with your new apartment or house?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th></th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Middle</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( p = .03; \text{Cramer's } V = .22. \)
to neighborhoods they considered safer. Nearly three and one-half times as many comparison group members (47.6%) moved to mostly African-American neighborhoods than experimental group families (13.8%). About half as many more experimental group members moved to neighborhoods that were a mix of African-American and white than comparison group members. Similarly, more members of the experimental group (32.2%) moved to neighborhoods that were a mix of either Hispanic and white or African-American, Hispanic and white than had members of the comparison group (15.9%). Very few of the respondents moved to mostly white neighborhoods (4.6% of the experimental group and 1.6% of the comparison group). See Table 5.

Experimental group members were also better able to move to neighborhoods where they felt a higher degree of personal safety. Over twice as many members of the comparison group (60.8%) than members of the experimental (27.8%) indicated that they felt their new neighborhoods had problems with drugs and violence. This difference was statistically significant (p = <.00, with a Cramer’s V of .33). For those respondents who indicated that their new neighborhoods had a problem with drugs and violence, we asked how serious they considered this problem. Here again the difference was statistically significant (p = <.05, and a Cramer’s V of .27). Predictably, more members of the comparison group (86.7%) than of the experimental group (63.2%) felt that the problem was serious.
Table 6
In your opinion, does the neighborhood you moved into (the one you live in now) have a problem with drugs and violence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th></th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td></td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20 27.8</td>
<td>31 60.8</td>
<td>51 41.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>52 72.2</td>
<td>20 39.2</td>
<td>72 58.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72 58.5</td>
<td>51 41.5</td>
<td>123 100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p = <.00; Cramer's V = .33.

Discussion
Housing policy, in many respects, is much more than simply housing policy. It is also education policy, health policy, work force policy, criminal justice policy, even environmental policy. Where we live determines almost everything about how we live (Hill, 2004; Marriott, 2004). All of the participants in the MTO program, by their participation in a voluntary program, demonstrated a desire to move to better neighborhoods. Their responses to survey questions was further evidence of this desire. The main reasons they gave for wanting to move were to escape drugs and violence, find a better house or apartment, and to find better schools for their children.

Table 7
In your opinion, how serious is the problem with drugs and violence in your new neighborhood?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th></th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td></td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Problem</td>
<td>12 63.2</td>
<td>26 86.7</td>
<td>38 77.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a Problem</td>
<td>7 36.8</td>
<td>4 13.3</td>
<td>11 22.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19 38.8</td>
<td>30 61.2</td>
<td>49 100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p = <.05; Cramer’s V = .27.
Although families in both the experimental and comparison groups were equally motivated to move, families in the experimental group were more successful than those in the comparison group. Our findings strongly suggest that without counseling and other assistance families employed a housing search strategy we have labeled, “Go where you know,” which is influenced, to a large extent by an individual’s cognitive map. The comparison group families were more likely to employ this strategy, while the experimental families moved to better (e.g. low poverty) neighborhoods that were further away from friends and family, and prior residences, and to neighborhoods that were outside of their cognitive maps. This is not to imply that there is anything inherently wrong with living in a poor or all-black neighborhoods. However, decades of overt and covert support for segregation in housing policy has left many of these neighborhoods devastated, and it is these neighborhoods which public housing residents are most familiar.

The lack of economic resources and opportunity are largely responsible for poor families being unable to attain a satisfactory level of residential mobility. The MTO program provided economic resources and opportunity to both the experimental and comparison group families to move into better neighborhoods. Without counseling support and the requirement to move to low poverty neighborhoods, however, comparison group families moved into primarily high poverty neighborhoods, where they felt drugs and violence were serious problems, and expressed more dissatisfaction with these new neighborhoods when compared to the experimental group families.

As Varady and Walker (2003) have noted, providing housing search and counseling assistance is expensive, and may not be needed by all users of Section 8. However, the Baltimore experience demonstrates that market forces and opportunity were not enough to substantially change the residential circumstances of poor families. This study shows that these alone only tend to steer poor residents into areas where other poor residents already live. In conclusion, this study tells the story of very poor families, living in conditions that most Americans would agree are intolerable, who were given the opportunity under an innovative federal program to move to better neighborhoods. One group of movers
was, on the face of things, more successful in their moves than the other. As measured by such criteria as the extent to which their new neighborhoods were free from crime and drugs, the members of the experimental group were more successful. It must be noted that because MTO participants volunteered for the program self-selection bias cannot be ruled out, and these participants may differ in unknown ways from the larger population (Popkin, et al., 2000). However, MTO in Baltimore represents a clear case of public policy that, at least over the short term, worked. Further analysis of the MTO participants over the next several years will be needed to provide answers about the long-term impact of the program.

References


Language Barriers & Perceptions of Bias: 
Ethnic Differences in Immigrant 
Encounters with the Welfare System

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University of Massachusetts–Boston
Department of Sociology

This article demonstrates why research on immigrant language barriers should account for local variations in the way these barriers are experienced by different immigrant groups. It makes the argument that variations in language barriers experienced by immigrant groups are often reflective of differences in the local migration histories and socio-economic status of these groups. These themes are illustrated by discussing the findings of a comparative survey of welfare service barriers experienced by Haitian and Hispanic welfare clients in Miami-Dade county. Secondary data on South Florida migration patterns is also used to explain disparities in the bilingual fluency of welfare caseworkers, which had a significant impact on the service barriers experienced by both groups.

Keywords: language barriers, immigrant, socio-economic status, welfare service, Hispanic, Haitian, English fluency

Prior research has shown that language barriers pose a formidable obstacle for immigrant welfare clients. Immigrants with poor English-language proficiency are more likely to go without health and childcare services (Kirkman-Liff and Mondragon 1991; Ku and Matani 2001; Schur and Albers 1996; Solis, Marks, Garcia, Shelton 1990; Suarez 1994) and are more likely to experience employment barriers which contribute to persistent recidivism (Aparicio 2004; Caceri and Quiroz 2004; Ng 2001). Tumlin and Zimmerman (2003) note, for example, that language barriers are one of the primary obstacles facing immigrant welfare leavers today and, as a result, are partly responsible for the fact that
immigrants have been leaving the welfare rolls at a slower rate than native-born welfare clients.

These studies have played an invaluable role in placing the issue of immigrant language barriers at the center of research and policy debates on welfare-to-work issues. They have been especially effective in demonstrating that language barriers are among the most prominent barriers to self-sufficiency for the national welfare caseload. Despite these achievements, this research has tended to treat language barriers as an obstacle that is experienced the same way by most immigrant groups. It is also significant that, with few exceptions, the empirical research on this subject has focused on the experiences of Spanish-speaking welfare clients engaging welfare service centers that are managed and staffed by white, English-speaking government workers.

In this article, I point out that research on immigrant language barriers should begin to account for local variations in the way that language barriers are experienced by different immigrant groups. I also note that it is important to consider how language barriers can effect interactions between immigrant welfare clients and caseworkers who may also be racial or ethno-linguistic minorities. These issues are of special significance for urban centers that contain large, linguistically diverse immigrant populations.

Researching Language Barriers in Miami-Dade County

The observations offered here are drawn from a series of research studies that were conducted as part of a multi-state comparison of racial-ethnic disparities in welfare reform outcomes, conducted under the aegis of the Scholar-Practitioner Program of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. I was the research director for several studies that focused on welfare reform outcomes for Haitian migrants in Miami-Dade. I coordinated these studies with the supervision of the lead researchers of the Florida Scholar-Practitioner team, who were stationed at the Psychology Department of Florida International University.

This discussion draws, specifically, on two of the studies conducted under this program. The first was a series of field interviews that I conducted with twenty social service professionals (including welfare case workers, non-profit workers, and com-
munity advocates) about service barriers and service trends for Haitian immigrants. The second study was a comparative survey of welfare clients at two One Stop Centers that were regularly visited by Haitian, Hispanic, and African American welfare clients. A total of thirty four (34) Haitian clients, fifty eight (58) Hispanic clients, and fifty six (56) African American clients were interviewed on the premises of these One Step Centers over a four day period. The survey was carried out by a team of ten interviewers, who were organized into two groups, each of which included at least one bilingual person who was fluent in English /Spanish and English /Haitian Creole. Each of the interviewers was responsible for initiating interviews without the direct supervision of the center’s personnel and were required to inform the interviewees that the survey was being conducted by an independent research team that was not obligated to report its findings to the administration of the county welfare system.

Because of the emphasis on language barriers, the study focused primarily on the reports of Hispanic and Haitian clients. The reports of African American clients help to clarify the nature of the barriers encountered by these two immigrant groups.

It is also important to note that the One Stop Centers chosen for this study catered to distinct, ethnic segments of the Miami-Dade welfare caseload. The Miami Beach Center catered to a predominantly Hispanic client group whereas the Little River Center catered to a predominantly African American and Haitian client group. According to many of the service professionals whom I interviewed, this ethnic segmentation was typical of the environments in which most immigrants encounter the Miami-Dade welfare system (Fleurine, 2001; Guirand 2001; Laurenceau, 2001). At the time of the study, there were a total of twenty four One Stop Centers in Miami-Dade and Greater Miami area. Of this collection of twenty four centers, eight were located in Spanish-speaking enclaves (most notably in the Hialeah, Little Havana, and downtown Miami areas) and two were located in the Little Haiti enclave.

It also bears noting that there were significant disparities in the bilingual fluency of the staff at these One Stop Centers. Whereas all of the staff at the Miami Beach Center were fluent in Spanish and English, the staff of the Little River Center (at
the time of this study) contained no more than two caseworkers who were fluent in Haitian Creole and English. The manager of the Little River Center acknowledged that most of his staff were not fluent in Creole but did not provide a precise estimate of the number of Creole speaking caseworkers on staff (Brown, 2001). The estimate provided here was given by a Haitian non-profit worker who regularly routes Haitian clients to the Little River Center (Laurenceau, 2001). The estimate of the Spanish fluency of the Miami Beach Center staff was provided by the center’s manager (Menendez, 2001). As I explain later on, these disparities in the bilingual fluency of frontline staff are consistent with general disparities in the socio-economic position of the Haitian and Hispanic populations in South Florida.

Comparing Service Barriers for Haitian, Hispanic and African American Welfare Recipients

The survey findings revealed consistent variations by ethnicity in both the quality of service delivery and in client perceptions of caseworker bias. For Haitian and Hispanic clients, in particular, these differences are underscored by the fact that both groups reported very similar levels of English fluency. Sixty nine percent of Haitian clients and 68 percent Hispanic clients reported that they could not fluently speak, write, read or understand English. There was some variation in the demographic and socio-economic status of both groups, but none of these differences were statistically significant. For example, Haitian clients were more likely to be women (by a margin of 18 percent) caring for larger numbers of children than Hispanic clients (averaging 2.3 children as opposed to 1.5 children for Hispanic clients). Hispanic clients were also more likely to have a college education (by a margin of 9 percent) and were more likely to be under the age of 40 than Haitian clients (by a margin of 13 percent). There were no significant variations in the kinds of welfare services accessed by both groups.

This is contrasted by significant differences in the way these groups experienced the service delivery process. Over one third of Haitian clients (37 percent) waited more than 2 months or longer before beginning to receive services as opposed to 8 percent of
Hispanic clients (Chi Square 10.346, p < .01). Furthermore, thirty percent of Haitian clients had to visit their One Stop Centers more than three times before their application for service was accepted as opposed to only 8 percent of Hispanic clients (Chi Square 7.592 p < .05). These Chi Square figures focus specifically on Haitian/Hispanic comparisons. ANOVA tests which included responses for all three client groups (including African American clients) also showed that there were significant variations by ethnicity. These tests revealed that there statistically significant variations by ethnicity for the questions “How long did it take you start receiving services?” (F = 3.756 p < .01) and “How many times did you have to visit the One Stop Center before your application was accepted?” (F = 3.089 p < .05).

Descriptive data also showed that although African American clients experienced more delays than Hispanic clients, Haitian clients consistently reported experiencing more service delays than African American clients (by a margin of at least 10 percent in all cases).

Haitian clients were also much more likely to have been in a situation where they needed translation services but none were available. Twenty six percent of Haitian clients reported this problem as opposed to 9 percent of Hispanic clients (Chi Square 4.956, p > .05, comparing Hispanic and Haitian responses only). This finding was not surprising, given the anecdotal information we had obtained about the dearth of Creole-speaking case workers.

The survey data also showed that Haitian clients were much more likely to view their caseworkers as acting in a biased manner. On each of the five questions used to measure perceptions of bias, Haitian clients reported much higher levels of sensitivity. On average, Haitians were twice as likely as Hispanic clients to respond “yes” to every item on the five question scale (Chi Square 21.797, p < .001). Again, this Chi Square finding is based exclusively on a comparison of Haitian and Hispanic responses, but ANOVA results which include African American responses also revealed significant variations by ethnicity (F = 4.571, p < .01).

Descriptive data showed that African American clients reported higher levels of caseworker bias than Hispanic clients but they did not report caseworker bias as frequently as Haitian
clients. For example, 5 percent of Hispanic clients ranked in the upper end of the perceptions of bias scale (scoring higher than "3" on the 5 point scale) compared to approximately 10 percent of African American clients and 15 percent of Haitian clients. Following a similar pattern, less than 10 percent of Haitian clients believed that welfare clients "were treated all the same" by case-workers, as opposed to 25 percent of African American clients, and over 55 percent of Hispanic clients.

These findings show that Haitian immigrants had an experience of the Miami-Dade welfare system that was distinctly different from both Hispanic and African American clients. Just as significant, these findings give some indication of the wide variation in the impact that language barriers had for both migrant groups. Haitian migrants, for example, gave more frequent reports of bias and experienced more service delays than African Americans. In contrast, Hispanic migrants—who were, on average, no more fluent in English than Haitian migrants—seemed to experience minimal service problems and actually fared better than the African American client group which was completely fluent in English.

Language Barriers for Haitian and Hispanic Clients: A Closer Look

A closer look at the data provides more insights into the ways that language barriers effected Haitian and Hispanic clients. As noted earlier, 26 percent of Haitian clients and 9 percent of Hispanic clients reported difficulties accessing adequate translation services. For both of these groups, there was a statistically significant relationship between their problems accessing adequate translation services and the tendency to view their caseworkers as being biased against them. For Haitian clients, Spearman's Rho statistics revealed a correlation of .422 (p < .01) and for Hispanic clients .317 (p < .05).

The Haitian client group is distinguished by the fact that perceptions of bias reported by the minority who could not access adequate translation services were also shared by the broader group of Haitian clients. In contrast, for Hispanic clients, sensitivities to caseworker bias drop considerably when one steps outside the small minority of Hispanic clients who had prob-
lems accessing adequate translation services. This highlights the possibility that language barriers were distorting communication between welfare clients and caseworkers in two distinct ways. The first kind of distortion was experienced by both Hispanic and Haitian clients who could not access translation assistance. In this case, welfare recipients with poor English fluency found themselves in situations where they literally could not understand what their caseworkers were saying. As a result, language barriers obstructed the transmission of information between the caseworker and welfare recipient.

Outside of this group, there was a larger segment of the sample (69 percent of the Haitian group and 68 percent of the Hispanic group) who reported having poor English-fluency but who did not necessarily experience problems accessing adequate translation services. In this case, it appears that Haitian clients who felt they could understand "enough" of what their caseworkers were telling them still did not trust their caseworkers. For example, one Haitian-American caseworker explained that he is regularly contacted by Haitian welfare recipients who are being helped by workers at other One Stop Centers. He noted that, although many of these persons have basic English-fluency skills, they still feel the need to cross-check what their caseworker is telling them by talking to him. As a result, his bilingual fluency enhanced the client's trust-level by improving the quality of their social relationship. He goes on to explain that, "... they [Haitian clients] will ask for someone who knows Creole ... they want to work with a person who they feel knows their situation. They are sensitive to strangers inquiring into their private business, especially if [government caseworkers] are not sensitive communicators." (Montfort, 2001).

Again, it is significant that the staff at the Little River Center, where all of the Haitian clients were interviewed, were composed entirely of African American and Afro-Caribbean (but not necessarily Haitian) caseworkers. In contrast, the staff at the Miami Beach Center, where all of the Hispanic clients were interviewed, were composed entirely of Spanish-speaking, Hispanic caseworkers. When considering these differences in staff composition in conjunction with the survey findings, it appears that Haitian clients saw themselves as being treated differently specifically
because their cultural-linguistic difference with their caseworkers (rather than, for example, their racial difference). In this context, it is likely that the presence or absence of Creole-speaking case workers could become important indicators of the "friendliness" of the One Stop Center for Haitian clients, regardless of their level of English fluency.

Placing Ethnic Disparities in Context

As I have already suggested, the disparate experiences of Haitian and Hispanic welfare recipients are symptomatic of broader differences in the socio-economic position and migration experiences of both groups. The South Florida Hispanic population occupies a relatively privileged position not only in relation to other local, minority groups but also in relation to Hispanic populations in other parts of the country. For example, the statewide research that was conducted just prior to this survey revealed that Hispanic welfare leavers in Miami-Dade earn incomes that are approximately 13 percent higher than non-Hispanic black welfare leavers and 7 percent higher than non-Hispanic white welfare-leavers. (Beneckson, 2000).

On the other hand, studies of Hispanic welfare use in other parts of the U.S. have documented the same translation problems and sensitivities to caseworker bias that were reported by Haitian clients in this study. Ana Aparicio (2004) has noted, for example, that Dominican immigrants in New York City frequently visit welfare agencies that are understaffed with Spanish-speaking workers. Unlike the Hispanic welfare clients included in this study, many Dominican immigrants also encountered caseworkers who are reluctant to refer them to other government agencies and aggressively discouraged them from applying for government services. Doris Ng (2001) has also found that in Santa Clara California, language barriers impacted service outcomes for Mexican and Vietnamese immigrant women in very similar ways. In this case, Mexican immigrants were not more likely to encounter a caseworker who was fluent in their primary language and they did not fare any better than Vietnamese welfare-leavers once they entered the local labor market.
The unique situation of Hispanic welfare recipients in South Florida is, in many respects, a reflection of the success of the Hispanic middle and upper class in creating an economic and political sphere that accommodates the interests of Spanish-speaking minorities. As Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick (1993) have explained, the first major flow of Hispanic migrants was composed of middle and upper class Cubans ex-patriates who arrived in the early 1960s and transformed the ethnic stratification of South Florida. In addition to their own resources, Cuban refugees received re-settlement assistance from the U.S. federal government that allowed them to carve out their own niche in the South Florida economy (Dunn and Stepick 1992). The attractiveness and vitality of this enclave economy is best illustrated by trends in intra-national Cuban migration since the 1960s. As Boswell and Curtis (1991) have pointed out, a significant amount of the growth of the Miami, Cuban population since the 1960s is due to the “return flow” of Cuban immigrants to Miami from other parts of the United States. Whereas the Miami-Dade Cuban population represented only 26 percent of the U.S. Cuban population in the early 1960s, it composed 56 percent of the U.S. Cuban population by the 1990s. During this same time, however, the Miami-Dade Cuban population shrank from 83 percent to 66 percent of Miami-Dade’s total Hispanic population due to new surges in migration from other Hispanic groups (Boswell and Curtis 1991; Gale 1999; Portes and Stepick 1993).

Despite Miami-Dade’s relatively high poverty rate, the average income of Hispanic households in the county exceeds the national average for Hispanic households (Portes and Bach 1985). Furthermore, Miami-Dade contains a disproportionately large share of Hispanic owned firms, although it only contains little more five percent of the U.S. Hispanic population (Perez 1992). The strength of the Miami-Dade, Hispanic business sector can be largely attributed to the expatriate Cuban middle class (Gale 1991; Portes and Stepick 1993). Although the wealth and political clout of the Cuban middle class has not necessarily “trickled down” to all low-income Hispanic households, the economic and civic institutions established by this group have provided
critical support for the settlement of later cohorts of Hispanic and Spanish-speaking immigrants.

This situation stands in stark contrast to the migration experience of South Florida's Haitian population. Whereas Hispanic households in Miami-Dade are wealthier, on average, than Hispanic households nationwide, the Miami-Dade Haitian enclave contains the largest concentration of Haitian poverty in North America (Stepick 1998). Unlike recent Hispanic immigrants, Haitians have not been able to rely on labor market opportunities or networks established by an earlier migrant cohort. Portes and Stepick (1993) have also noted that the entrance of Haitian migrants to South Florida was a cause of concern for some African American community leaders who believed their community was already being subjected to a "double subordination" by the Anglo and Hispanic communities. The poverty and cultural-linguistic differences of these two black minority groups contributed toward their mutual isolation.

In contrast to the Hispanic population, South Florida has historically been viewed as a refuge of last resort for Haitian migrants. The earliest concentrations of Haitian settlement in North America were in the cities of Boston, New York, and Montreal—which were all perceived as holding more opportunities for social mobility (Stepick 1998). The first major episode of Haitian immigration to South Florida occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s, during the same time as the Cuban, Mariel boatlift (Stepick and Portes 1986). The vast majority of these persons were refugees fleeing the Duvalier regime who did not have the resources or connections to find a different port of entry. Haitians were also subjected to policies that were expressly designed to discourage their entry—leading to gross disparities in the criteria for granting asylum to Haitian and Cuban refugees. In recent years, the U.S. government has tightened the criteria for granting legal status to Haitian refugees. Under current policy, all Haitian refugees will be detained by the U.S. government regardless of whether they are apprehended at land or sea. Furthermore, Haitian refugees will be held, without possibility of being released on bond or parole, until they are brought before a judge. As policy analysts have noted, the stringent guidelines of the new Haitian-specific policy have been designed for the expressed purpose
of discouraging Haitian asylum seekers (PBS News Hour with Jim Lehrer, 2002). The Department of Homeland Security has also increased its efforts to deport thousands of Haitian families who were granted temporary protected status in the early 1990s (Kretsedemas, 2004).

Not surprisingly, this difficult policy climate combined with a general climate of ethnic competition over scarce resources has not helped the economic status of Haitian households in Miami-Dade. Haitian service professionals have estimated that the average annual income of many households in Little Haiti (the "heart" of Miami's Haitian enclave) is little more the U.S. $6000 (LaFortune, 2001). A household survey, conducted during a different phase of this project, found that approximately one third of Haitians who reported their household income fell into this income bracket (Kretsedemas 2004).

Haitian workers also tend to be concentrated in the lowest paying and most informalized segments of the local labor market, including the restaurant industry, domestic care, and many forms of unskilled labor. Portes and Stepick's (1985) comparative study also demonstrated that the income and occupational achievement of Haitians is significantly lower than Hispanic immigrants. In his ethnographic research, Stepick (1998) has also noted that Haitian immigrants tend to experience a greater degree of social isolation than other minorities due to the intersecting effects of racial inequities, anti-immigrant attitudes, and their status as a linguistic minority that is marginalized from both the English and Spanish-speaking communities.

These conditions help to explain disparities in the representation of Haitian-Creole and Spanish-speaking caseworkers in the Miami-Dade welfare system. They also explain why many Haitians fear being singled out for exclusion, specifically because they are Haitian.

Concluding Discussion: Policy Implications

These research findings carry some novel implications for policy debates on the problem of immigrant language barriers. Most important, they indicate that there are limitations to policy proposals—raised by most of the researchers who have addressed
this issue—that are focused solely on increasing federal funding for ESL courses. Although the expansion of ESL training would undoubtedly improve the employability of many immigrant welfare recipients, this study indicates that access to this support could vary widely because of pre-existing disparities between migrant groups.

For example, the survey findings showed that Haitian clients experienced greater service delays, despite the fact that their English-fluency was comparable to that of Hispanic clients. Furthermore, less than 10 percent of Hispanic welfare clients faced problems due to unavailable translation services as opposed to over 25 percent of Haitian clients. This indicates that, even in the current climate of substandard funding for language training courses, English-fluency seems to have relatively little impact on the quality of service that many Hispanic clients receive from the Miami-Dade welfare system. On the other hand, even if funding was expanded for ESL courses, it is likely that Haitian clients would experience difficulties accessing these courses (referring to the finding that 30 percent of Haitian clients had to visit their One Stop Center more than three times before their applications for assistance were accepted). This points toward the need for solutions at the level of policy implementation and service delivery. Primarily, this would entail administrative liaison work with local governments and the county welfare system that would focus on correcting imbalances in the bilingual fluency of frontline staff and sensitivity training that focuses on the distinct needs of specific subgroups within the welfare caseload.

Another key observation stemming from this research is the local/regional specificity of the disparities it has documented. As I have emphasized throughout this article, the disparities between Hispanic and Haitian clients in Miami-Dade should be viewed in light of migration histories and patterns of racial-ethnic stratification that are somewhat unique to South Florida. As a result, it cannot be assumed that a comparative study of Haitian and Hispanic welfare clients in Boston, Massachusetts or Montreal, Canada would produce similar findings.

Although these findings cannot be easily generalized, they provide an indication of the kinds of ethnic disparities that are likely to be emerging in other areas with large, linguistically
diverse, minority populations. For example, the Minneapolis-St.Paul area contains one of the largest East African migrant and urban, American Indian populations in the U.S. alongside a historic African American community, a re-settled Laotian/Hmong community and a fast growing Hispanic population. The migrant diversity of Toronto, Canada on the other hand, is defined by a very large group of first generation South-Asian and (English-speaking) Afro-Caribbean migrants combined with smaller but sizeable Middle Eastern and African migrant populations. Meanwhile, traditional immigration hubs like Chicago and New York are likely to contain disparities, not only between different ethnic groups, but between different cohorts within the same ethnic group whose migration flows span a half century or more.

As I have suggested, local disparities between minority groups have the potential to undermine the impact of one-size-fits-all policy solutions that are being advanced at the federal level. It is also likely that forms of discrimination tied to local histories of inequality and inter-group competition may have a greater impact on the subjective worldview of some minorities than forms of discrimination which are tied to identity categories that are broader and more abstract. This also means that researchers who are interested in documenting racial-ethnic disparities should challenge themselves to consider how conventional notions of white/non-white or immigrant/native-born inequities are being transformed by the local history and politics of ethnic stratification.

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How Has the Violence Against Women Act
Affected the Response of the Criminal
Justice System to Domestic Violence?

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This study uses an interrupted time series design to examine the association
between the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA) and several dif-
ferent dimensions of the criminal justice system's involvement in violence
against women. These include examining the domestic violence incidence
rate, and rates of police notification, arrest, and judicial authorities' in-
volve ment. Data from the National Crime Victimization Survey from 1992
to 2003 is used. Results suggest that overall the incidence of domestic
violence has decreased while police notification and perpetrator arrest have
increased over time. Further, victim involvement with judicial authorities
significantly increased after enactment of the VAWA. Interpretations and
potential explanations of the results are discussed.

Keywords: domestic violence, National Crime Victimization Survey,
Violence Against Women Act, incidence rate, arrest, police notification

Introduction

Since the 1970s when public awareness of violence against
women increased largely due to the dedicated efforts of advocates
for battered women, society has responded to violence occurring
in intimate relationships. Supportive services for victims such
as emergency shelters and legal consultation, aggressive batterer
interventions such as pro-arrest policies and treatment programs
for the batterer, and legislation to institutionally address vio-

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Beginning in the 1980s, many individual states actively addressed domestic violence through legal reforms including defining domestic violence as crime, pro- or mandated arrest policies, expanding the definition of intimate partners to include cohabiting couples and same sex couples, and introducing civil protection orders (Burt, Dyer, Newmark, Norris, & Harrell, 1996). Legal reforms at the state level led to federal legislation, the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, which was designed to improve interstate criminal justice enforcement and provide adequate funding for criminal justice interventions and social services for victims.

The VAWA focuses on six distinct areas: safe streets for women (e.g., grants to combat violence against women in public), safe homes for women (e.g., grants for domestic violence hotlines and battered women's shelters), equal justice for women in the courts (e.g., grants to develop education and training programs for judges), stalker and domestic violence reduction (e.g., grants to improve processes for data collection regarding stalking and domestic violence into crime information databases), protection for battered immigrant women and children (e.g., rights for battered immigrant women to file legal petitions), and provisions for strengthening existing laws. The VAWA consolidates almost all of states' legal reforms responding to domestic violence and was expected to effectively facilitate and strengthen existing state policies to reduce and intervene in domestic violence. The VAWA does this through grants, education and training programs, and pro-arrest policies.

Given the scope of the VAWA, it is natural to expect positive changes in the criminal justice response following its enactment. This study is interested in whether, and how, the VAWA has affected domestic violence, specifically with regard to the incidence of violence between intimate partners, and interactions between victims and criminal justice system.

Review of the Literature

The rate of domestic violence appears to be declining. From 1993 to 1997 the domestic violence incidence rate fell from 9.8
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to 7.5 per 1,000 women (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). Increased legal services for victims and improvements in women’s economic status seem to have contributed to the decline (Farmer & Tiefenthaler, 2003), although the results of studies on the effect of arrest have been inconclusive (e.g., Schmidt & Sherman, 1993; Sherman & Berk, 1984; Sherman, Schmidt, & Rogan, 1992). For example, Sherman and colleagues (1984) significantly contributed to nation-wide adoption of pro-arrest policies by arguing that arrest and incarceration were effective ways to deter domestic violence, but then subsequently questioned their effectiveness (Schmidt & Sherman, 1993).

Some studies have reported economic outcomes associated with the VAWA. Burt et al. (1996) evaluated federal and state implementation of a variety of federal programs and found that more than $23.5 million had been provided to states through federal grants during the first year of the implementation in 1995. The Violence Against Women Office reports that federal funds for domestic violence programs have dramatically increased to $1.6 billion in the 5 years since passage of the VAWA (as cited in Clark, Biddle, & Martin, 2002). Clark et al. (2002) conducted a cost-effectiveness evaluation of the VAWA comparing implementation costs with potential benefits such as reductions in costs associated with direct property loss, health care, police response, services for victims, productivity, reduced quality of life, and mortality. Having estimated the economic benefits associated with the VAWA to be approximately $16.4 billion in the 5 years since its inception, the authors concluded that its provisions are a cost-effective and beneficial public policy.

Many studies have been conducted to describe the nature and characteristics of domestic violence using the National Crime Victimization Survey, or NCVS, including changes in victims’ reports to law enforcement. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000), between 1993 and 1998 only about half of all victims of domestic violence reported the crime to the police. However, reporting increased from 48% of victims in 1993 to 59% of victims in 1998. Similarly, since the 1970s the rates of reporting rape cases to the police increased (Baumer, Felson, & Messner, 2003), and accelerated during the 1990s.

Other studies using the NCVS have examined factors associated with law enforcement’s response to cases of domestic
violence. For example, Felson and Ackerman (2001) reported that in cases of minor violence, the police are less likely to make an arrest, and victims are less likely to sign complaints when it occurred in an intimate relationship than when the batterer is a stranger. This indicates that the relationship between victim and perpetrator has a significant effect on police arrest decisions. Further, victims are often reluctant to report to the police because of privacy concerns, fear of reprisal, and desire to protect the perpetrator (Felson, 2002). On the other hand, police are more likely to be called and perpetrators are more likely to be arrested in first time incidents of physical assaults against women and incidents that involve injury (Jasinski, 2003).

One of the most controversial issues regarding criminal justice intervention with cases of domestic violence is aggressive law enforcement such as mandatory arrest policies. For example, some advocates argue that arrest might assist a victim in the short term but make the victim more vulnerable to further violence in the long term (Schmidt & Sherman, 1993). Other authors point out that the assumption of aggressive prosecution to protect victims is largely an untested ideological assertion which may facilitate violence because it deprives a victim of control and increases the risk of retaliation from batterers (Danis, 2003; Ford, 2003; Travis, 1998). On the other hand, proponents of aggressive law enforcement argue that the problem lies with lenient law enforcement and sentencing and suggest that the laws should be enforced more strictly (Bohmer, Brandt, Bronson, & Hartnett, 2002; Buzawa & Austin, 1993; Stark, 1996; Zorza, 1994). In sum, while victims' reporting to the police seems to have increased and particularly accelerated during the 1990s, the effect of subsequent criminal justice interventions is unclear.

Very few studies have attempted to examine domestic violence using trend analyses. Lawrenz, Lembo, and Schade (1988) used time series analysis to examine the effect of a mandatory arrest policy and found a slight increase in the number of arrests per day. There appears to be no studies utilizing time series analysis with the NCVS data to describe and examine domestic violence trends. Therefore, the present study, which utilized interrupted time series analyses of data from the NCVS, can provide some insight into the relationship between passage of the VAWA and its
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subsequent impact on reducing domestic violence, and can also facilitate future studies to enhance the understanding of long-term trends of domestic violence. Particularly, this study seeks to answer the following questions: 1) Did passage of the VAWA reduce the incidence of domestic violence? 2) Did passage of the VAWA increase the rate of reporting violence to the police? 3) Did passage of the VAWA increase the rate of perpetrator arrest? 4) Did passage of the VAWA increase the rate of victims' contact with other criminal justice authorities (e.g., District Attorney, etc.)?

Methods

Data

The analyses are based on data from incident files of the NCVS. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the NCVS annually on behalf of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, gathering detailed crime data from a nationally representative sample of households. The NCVS, previously called the National Crime Survey (NCS), was revised in 1992 and consequently, NCS data are not compatible with NCVS. Therefore, data for the present study is limited to NCVS data from 1992. The NCVS asked respondents if they were criminally victimized during the previous six months. For each victimization incident, the respondent is asked detailed questions, the answers to which comprise the NCVS incident files.

While the full NCVS sample includes individuals age 12 and older, our sample excludes females under the age of 18 as these events are primarily addressed by juvenile- and school-related interventions rather than by the VAWA. Incidents involving violent crime perpetrated by a current or former spouse or boyfriend, including rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault, were selected for analysis. The final sample includes 2,368 female victims of violence within an intimate relationship.

Dependent variables

Domestic violence incidence rate. The domestic violence incidence rate is defined by the Bureau of Justice Statistics as the rate of females over the age of 18 who were victims of violent crime, including rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and
simple assault, committed by a current or former spouse or boyfriend (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). To examine change in the domestic violence incidence rate following enactment of the VAWA, population estimates were generated from the NCVS. Estimates of the incidence rate of domestic violence were obtained by dividing the population estimate provided by the Bureau of Justice Statistics by the population provided by U.S. Census data.

Rate of reporting to the police. To determine if police became involved in the incident, the NCVS asked victims, “Were the police informed or did they find out about this incident in any way?” The rate of reporting to the police was obtained by dividing the number of victims who indicated they reported the violence to the police by the total number of victims.

Arrest rate. For victims who involved the police, the NCVS asked, “What did they do while they were (there/here)?” The question consisted of a range of response categories including arrest. An affirmative response to the category of arrest was included. Arrest rates were obtained by dividing the number of arrests made by the number of police responses.

Rate of contact with other authorities. To see whether other authorities except the police became involved in the incident, the NCVS asked respondents, “Have you had contact with any other authorities about this incident (such as prosecutor, court, or juvenile officer)?” The rate of contact with other authorities was obtained by dividing the number of respondents who had contact with other authorities by the total number of victims.

Hypotheses

The present study examines the effect of the VAWA on the interaction between victims and the criminal justice system. Specifically, the study tests the following hypotheses:

1. The domestic violence incidence rate will decrease following enactment of the VAWA.
2. The rate of reporting to the police will increase following enactment of the VAWA.
3. The perpetrator arrest rate will increase following enactment of the VAWA.
4. The rate of contact with other authorities will increase following enactment of the VAWA.

Data Analysis

The study used an interrupted time series design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963) and used SPSS v11.5 for data analysis. The intervention is defined as the date of enactment of VAWA. This study uses quarterly data on domestic violence beginning in 1992 and ending in 2003. The VAWA was enacted in September of 1994 so that the quarters prior to the fourth quarter of 1994 serve as the control group and the quarters after serve as the treatment group. As a result, the control group has 9 observations and the experimental group 35 observations for total of 44 observations. The intervention is represented as a 1-0 binary variable. It is important to note that the study is not attempting to explain the totality of trends in domestic violence and its related aspects in 1994 to 2003, but to look for a discrete change in them. Gradual changes are removed by differencing in an interrupted time series analysis. In other words, possible effects of changes over time in the proportion of the population can be controlled by differencing. In addition, frequency distributions of the sample and related comparisons with the U.S. population were also computed.

Results

Sample characteristics

Table 1 compares characteristics of the current sample of victims of domestic violence with victims of other crimes in the NCVS incident files. Domestic violence victims are younger, less likely to be married, more likely to be divorced or separated, and have a lower educational attainment than other victims. The NCVS data reflect marital status at the time of the interview, so it is unknown if the violent episode occurred while the victim was separated or divorced, or if the victim separated or divorced following the incident.

Time series analyses for dependent variables

Figure 1 shows the time series trends for the four dependent variables. First, the time series for the domestic violence incidence
Table 1

Sample Characteristics \((N = 2,368)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Study Sample ((N = 2,368))</th>
<th>NCVS Sample ((N = 67,042))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational attainment (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska native</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

rate shows an apparent decrease, in which the rates fell from 1.9 victims per 1,000 women to 0.3 victims between the third quarter of 1992 and the second quarter of 2003. (Note: the data used in this study are quarterly, not annual. Quarterly data should be summed to get annual estimates. Using this formula, there is a decrease in the annual estimate of domestic violence from 7.7 victims per 1,000 women to 3.7 victims per 1,000 women between 1993 and 2002). The time series for the rate of reporting to the police shows a slight increase from 54% to 61% over the same period, although the trend is not as apparent as that seen for the domestic violence incidence rate. The arrest rate dramatically increased from 23% to 51% and the rate of contact with other authorities shows a small increase. This reflects an increasingly aggressive criminal justice response to violence against women.
Figure 1
Trends for Dependent Variables

(a) Domestic violence incidence rate; (b) Rate of reporting to the police; (c) Arrest rate; (d) Rate of contact with other authorities.
Table 2

Impact Assessment Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Effect coefficient</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence incidence rate</td>
<td>-0.0003</td>
<td>0.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of reporting to the police</td>
<td>0.0762</td>
<td>0.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrest rate</td>
<td>0.0554</td>
<td>0.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with other authorities</td>
<td>0.0554</td>
<td>0.022*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*α = .05

The intervention analysis followed conventional procedures. Each of the time series was first analyzed using an autoregressive integrated moving average (ARIMA) model. All of them produced white noise without any differencing, in which both the autoregressive and moving average parameters are equal to 1. In other words, all of the four time series are well identified by ARIMA (1, 0, 1) model.

The VAWA (intervention) was enacted in the fourth quarter of 1994. One dummy variable was created to represent the timing of the intervention. Prior to the fourth quarter of 1994, the dummy variable was coded as 0, and starting with the fourth quarter of 1994 it was coded as 1. The model was reestimated, including the dummy variable, for the entire time series. Table 2 shows the model results.

Overall, for each of the variables, small intervention effects were demonstrated. However, a significant finding was only seen for contact with other authorities indicating that the VAWA appears to have a positive impact on victims' contact with authorities such as a prosecutor or court official. The rate of contact with other authorities increased 5.5% following enactment of the VAWA. For the remaining three analyses, results suggest that the VAWA had no significant impact on the domestic violence incidence rate, rate of reporting to the police, and arrest rate. Therefore the first three hypotheses were rejected while the last hypothesis was accepted.

Additional descriptions for dependent variables

It is important to note that failing to find an intervention effect does not mean that there is no change at all in the interested
variables. Instead, it means that there is no difference in the slope of the variables before and after the intervention. Therefore, it is useful to examine the correlations between time and the three nonsignificant variables for some insights into the overall trends. First, the correlation between the domestic violence incidence rate and time is -.63. This means that domestic violence has been decreasing over time, which one can plainly see in Figure 1. In other words, although the VAWA did not have a unique impact on the domestic violence incidence rate, a variety of efforts, including criminal justice interventions, state legislation, and social services, have cumulatively reduced the incidence of domestic violence.

Similarly, the correlation between the rate of reporting to the police and time is .41, which means that there has been an increase over time in the proportion of victims who report the violent incident to the police. However, descriptive data indicate that the type of crime is related to reporting to the police. For example, rape and sexual assault were reported less often to the police (25.8%) than robbery (74.3%) or assault (61.2%). The correlation between arrest rate and time is .40, which indicates that there has been an increase over time of police making arrests. Similarly, type of crime is related to arrest of the perpetrator. In contrast to the rate of reporting to the police, incidents involving rape and sexual assault most often lead to arrest (94%) compared to robbery (73.2%) and assault (82.7%).

**Discussion**

Overall, contrary to expectations, the VAWA enactment did not appear to have a unique impact on most of the existing trends of domestic violence measured for this study, including the domestic violence incidence rate, rate of reporting to the police, and arrest rate. However, a positive change in the rate of contact with other authorities following the VAWA was found. On the other hand, both of the time series graphs for all four variables, and the correlation coefficients show the expected changes; that is, the domestic violence incidence rate decreased over time while the other variables increased since the early 1990s.

Why did enactment of the VAWA, the most comprehensive federal legislation addressing domestic violence, not appear to
impact the existing trends of domestic violence? First, one might expect the impact of the VAWA enactment to have occurred in later years (i.e., at longer lags) rather than immediately after the fourth quarter of 1994. It is normal that it takes time from the law enactment to its enforcement and implementation. To examine this possibility, additional time series analyses were conducted beginning with the second quarter of 1995 (six months after the VAWA enactment) and the fourth quarter of 1995 (one year after the enactment). There were still no significant changes in the existing trends using this strategy. Therefore this explanation appears not to be plausible. In fact, it may be difficult to detect the lagged impacts of the intervention when there is no "strong background theory (that) permits us to predict a specific lag... (because) the interpretation of a delayed effect is obscured by historical events between treatment... and... effect" (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002, p. 197).

A second possible explanation is contrary to the first; if the expected changes for the interested variables were already occurring before enactment of the VAWA, the impact of the VAWA would have been minimized. For example, the number of emergency shelters for battered women has increased nationwide since the early 1970s, batterer treatment programs have been adopted since the late 1970s, and state mandatory or pro-arrest policies have been implemented since the mid 1980s. These pre-VAWA interventions might have had a positive impact on domestic violence. Some studies suggest positive trends in domestic violence before the VAWA. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000), the number of female victims of intimate partner homicide fell an average 1% per year between 1976 and 1998. For rape cases, police notification has increased since the early 1970s and the increase in rates of police notification accelerated since the early 1990s (Baumer et al., 2003). The arrest rates for assaults including domestic violence increased up to 70% from 1984 to 1989 following implementation of pro-arrest policies. However, these trends could not be examined in this study due to the lack of data before the 1990s.

Although the study results reveal little unique impact of the VAWA, it is encouraging that all variables in this study show desirable trends over time. The domestic violence incidence has been
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decreasing over time, while reporting to the police, perpetrator arrest, and contact with other authorities have been increasing. This indicates that the variety of efforts to address violence against women, including the VAWA, state legislation, and criminal justice interventions have reinforced each other to have positively affected domestic violence. In addition, it must not be overlooked that the VAWA may have intangible and indirect impacts that were not measured in this study such as increased public awareness, which also importantly contribute to positive changes in domestic violence and response by the criminal justice system to victims.

Limitations

These results should be viewed within the context of the study's limitations. First, the study did not include data before the early 1990s. This prevented examining whether any significant change occurred before the early 1990s. In addition, in this context, having unequal time intervals before and after the intervention (9 observations for the control group and 35 observations for the experimental group) may be another weak point of the study. If there had been considerable change in the time series slope before 1992, the analysis based on data beginning in 1992 might have led to erroneous results.

A second limitation is that the date of enactment and when the laws are substantially implemented are undoubtedly different, and could be different in each state. A nationwide survey such as the NCVS could not capture the time difference among states, which might obscure the effects of the federal law enactment.

Conclusion

This study suggests that the Violence Against Women Act has significantly strengthened victims' involvement with criminal justice authorities such as prosecutors and court officers. In addition, study results suggest that the domestic violence rate has been declining and victims' responses to domestic violence have increasingly involved the criminal justice system. This may reflect an emphasis on victim empowerment (e.g. assistance with restraining orders) to the extent that victims have been actively
participating in the criminal justice system on their own behalf (Hart, 1996). In that context, the positive effects of the VAWA demonstrated in this study should be seen as evidence that efforts to address domestic violence have had some success, though much work remains.

References


Domestic Violence and the VAWA


Hate Crimes Against the Homeless:
Warning-Out New England Style

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This article reports on the hate crime victimization experienced by thirty individuals over the course of their homelessness in a New England city. In-depth interviews were conducted with the participants in order to provide a detailed, contextual account of the nature and forms of their hate crime victimization in public and semi-public spaces. Central to the article is the argument that hate crimes against homeless people function as informal social control mechanisms that impose spatial constraints, not unlike the character and objectives of the warning-out laws that were used to exclude homeless people from the public and private space of early New England communities.

Keywords: homelessness, hate crimes, warning-out

For homeless people in this country, public space is the realm in which they are forced to conduct the fragmented tasks of daily survival. Although public space has been romanticized as egalitarian in nature, homeless people have experienced it as a contested terrain filled with hierarchical and exclusive aspects (Anderson et al., 1994; Knowles, 2000). One of the earliest examples of efforts to segregate public space from the homeless in this country were laws imposed in colonial New England which were based on the Elizabethan Poor Laws. Homeless wanderers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were ordered to leave communities in which they did not have legal residence—a process referred to as “warning-out” (Katz, 1996).

While the pathways through public space no longer include the statutory challenges that were in place in colonial New England, homeless people are still being warned-out of public realms.
These contemporary warning-out practices take on a variety of complex cultural, legal, and socioeconomic forms and include, for example, statutes which are designed to impose spatial constraints, i.e. bans on sleeping and resting in public areas. Among the current warning-out mechanisms, one of the most powerful is hate crimes. Accounts suggest that homeless people are subjected to a broad array from those who blame them for their poverty and who regard them with fear and loathing (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2003; Swanson, 2001; Wachholz and Mullaly, 1993). These crimes contest the right of the homeless to community membership and public space and can therefore be conceptualized as an extension of colonial warning-out practices. Few have studied hate crimes against the homeless, however, and this form of victimization has generally not been included in legal definitions of hate crime.

This article reports on the hate crime victimization experienced by thirty individuals over the course of their homelessness in a New England city and the implications of these crimes on sociopolitical prescriptions about who should use public space. In-depth interviews were conducted with the participants in order to provide a detailed, contextual account of (1) the nature and forms of their victimization in public and semi-public spaces (e.g. malls, stores, and restaurants); (2) how their victimization varied according to race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender; and; (3) their responses to the victimization and the strategies they used to avoid future harm.

Since the late 1970s, there has been an enormous increase in the number of homeless people in the United States, making homelessness dramatically more visible in many communities. One recent estimate suggests that nearly two million Americans are now homeless over the course of a year (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 1999a). The significant rise of homelessness over the last two decades can be attributed to such structural factors as eroding work opportunities, low wages, lack of affordable housing, de-institutionalization, and the dismantling of welfare supports. These interconnected socioeconomic forces have created conditions whereby homelessness is now a fixed feature of our landscape (Cohen, 2001).

In response to the tremendous growth of homelessness, many
communities have raced to establish new strategies designed to control homeless people’s access to and movement within public space (Dear & Wolch, 1987; Snow & Anderson, 1993; Snow & Mulcahy, 2001; Wright, 1997). These actions have created conditions where challenges over space have become part of the daily struggles for many homeless people. They are, nonetheless, part of an entrenched historical pattern in which privileged groups regulate space as a means to erect socially and politically constructed boundaries between people and reflect discriminatory “impulses toward exclusion, control, security, sameness, and predictability” (Bickford, 2000, p. 362; and see Cooper & Oldenzeil, 1999; Knowles, 2000).

Although there is now a broad array of informal and formal social control mechanisms that impose spatial constraints on the homeless, these practices are neither simple nor new. At their core, symbolically they reflect the character and objectives of the English warning-out laws that were imported in the seventeenth century. Essentially, these laws provided colonial towns with a means to legally exclude people from communities by preventing them, and anyone else that they thought might be a welfare burden to them, from obtaining residence if they failed to demonstrate financial self-sufficiency or could not trace their familial heritage to a community. It is important to note, however, that warning-out laws not only functioned to protect communities from providing relief to the destitute, they were also used to guard a township’s job market. Individuals were warned-out if they were viewed as a threat to the supply of waged labor positions. Warning-out laws were also employed to expel individuals who held different religious and political beliefs (Beard, 1987; Benton, 1911, Crouse, 1986).

Warning-out notices were generally issued by a township’s overseer of the poor or selectmen and were served by a constable (Hankins, 2000; Kennedy, 1934). For example, John Poland was warned-out of what is now Gorham, Maine in 1791 by the Town Constable following the Massachusetts Bay Province Law of 1692, chapter 28 (General Court of the Commonwealth, 1869). His notice read, “John Poland & Family . . . Who have lately come into this Town, for the purpose of abiding therein, not having obtained the Town’s Consent therefore; That they depart the limits thereof
with their Children & others under their Care, (if such they have) within fifteen days" (McLellan, 1903, p. 334).

By the early part of the nineteenth century, most states had replaced the warning-out system with settlement laws that required towns to provide short-term relief to the poor (Hankins, 2000; Miller, 1991). However, similar warning-out mechanisms persist. The most obvious are statutes that criminalize behavior which is part of the survival strategies of the homeless—i.e. sitting or sleeping on sidewalks and asking for donations (Snow & Mulcahy, 2001). One study reports that seventy-two cities have recently sought to criminalize activities associated with homelessness (Cohen, 2001; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 1999b). These statutes, along with aggressive enforcement of anti-loitering laws, are part of an effort to make homelessness less visible in public arenas (Snow & Mulcahy, 2001). As Mitchell (1997) laments, “By seeking, that is, to so regulate the public space of the city such that there is no room for the homeless people, recreates the public sphere as intentionally exclusive” (p. 321).

Zoning laws are also used as a warning-out mechanism. They produce legal segregation by containing the development of services for homeless people within certain segments of cities. Some argue that the concentration of such services is the most efficient way to organize care; for others, this arrangement ghettoizes the homeless and functions to legally exclude them from public space (Dear & Wolch, 1987; Snow & Mulcahy, 2001).

The establishment of what Bickford (2000) refers to as "prickly space" is yet another means to remove homeless people from public realms. These spaces are designed to be uncomfortable and make people feel unwelcome. The creation of prickly space includes removing benches and placing enclosures around dumpsters and restaurants (Vesperi, 1985). Failing to supply shade, water, and public toilets is also part of this conceptualization. All of these actions are a displacement effort, as Kawash (1998) explains, that create conditions where “there is no place in the contemporary urban landscape for the homeless to be” (p. 326).

Missing from the literature on spatial control strategies, however, is a discussion of the bearing that hate crimes have on socio-spatial dynamics. This omission also occurs in the majority of studies that comprise the small body of literature on hate crimes against the homeless. Essentially, the National Coalition for the
Hate Crimes Against the Homeless (2003) has completed most of the research in this area. The National Coalition for the Homeless (2003) has completed most of the research in this area. Since 1999, the Coalition has been compiling newspaper articles from across the nation that discuss violent acts perpetrated against the homeless that appear to have been motivated by hate. Their research generally omits consideration of a victim's class (Perry, 2001), nor does it address how hate crimes function to establish spatial boundaries between the homeless and more privileged groups.

Several studies of hate crimes against homeless people in other countries have, nonetheless, included some level of discussion about how hate is used to displace and deny space to certain groups (Kelly & Maghan, 1998; Talhami, 1998; Wilson & Greider-Durango, 1998). For example, Wilson and Greider-Durango (1998) show how hate crimes known as limpieza social, or social cleansing, have led to the methodological killing of street children in Columbia. The murders, they argue, are fueled by a desire to remove homeless children from public space and sight. These “clean-up” operations are also occurring in Brazil.

Hate crime is, as Perry (2001) notes, “a form of interpersonal and intercultural expression that signifies boundaries” (p. 56). It is a powerfully destructive warning-out practice that has, to date, not been fully acknowledged as part of the dehumanizing, hurtful conditions endured by the very poor of this nation.

Methods

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted to gather narratives about hate crimes against homeless people. Since legal definitions of hate crime are socially and politically contingent, this study was not limited to acts that violate criminal law (Perry, 2001). Instead, a sociologically meaningful definition was used to capture the broad array of hate motivated acts perpetrated against the homeless. For purposes of this study, the concept of hate crime is defined as words or actions intended to harm or intimidate an individual because s/he is without an adequate, secure residence—in essence, homeless. This definition was discussed with each participant prior to the start of an interview. Following the lead of Dijkstra (2000), public space was defined as areas that have the characteristic of belonging to everyone.
Semi-public space referred to areas that offer specific uses (e.g. purchase of gas, food, clothing, etc.) where it is generally illegal to discriminate against customers, therefore fostering public access, but without any guarantee that such space belongs to everyone.

The research design, interview guide, interpretations of the data, and drafts of this article were completed in collaboration with a group that advocates for homeless people. The group consists of individuals who are homeless or formerly homeless, and it engages in both direct service and political action on behalf of the homeless. This collaborative brought the perspectives of homeless people into the production of knowledge about hate crimes.

This advocacy group also played a fundamental role in recruiting participants for the study, which consisted of a purposive sample of fifteen males and fifteen females. Twenty-seven of the individuals were homeless at the time of the interview while the remaining three had relatively recent experiences with homelessness. A diverse sample was sought in order to explore how the participants’ victimization experiences were shaped simultaneously by their status of being homeless and by factors such as age, race, ethnicity, disability, and gender.

Among the thirty participants, nine were racial minorities, with Native Americans accounting for the largest percentage. Although they ranged in age from eighteen to sixty-five, the majority could be described as single, middle-aged men and women; their average age was thirty-eight. The research site was a middle-sized New England city with a population of approximately 64,000; racial minorities account for less than ten percent of the residents.

The forms of homelessness experienced by the participants reflect the variety of housing conditions that Watson and Austerberry (1986) include within their definition of homelessness. These authors suggest that homelessness must be understood along a continuum where secure, tenured housing is at one end and literal rooflessness at the other. The various forms of insecure, precarious housing conditions that fall in between the two ends of the continuum, such as boarding homes, condemned rentals, and jails, are also included in the conceptualization of homelessness (Carlen, 1996). Reflecting this definition, four of the participants
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identified themselves as homeless because they were living in insecure, provisional housing.

The majority of the participants were living in a shelter for the homeless at the time of the interview. However, almost two-thirds had experienced a variety of living conditions over the course of their homelessness. This included living in cars, tents, recycling bins, box cars, abandoned buildings, carnival game boxes, and condemned trailers. Almost one-third had endured "couch surfing," which is a term that describes the process of sleeping on sofas in someone else's home. Their length of homelessness ranged from one week to twenty-five years; the average was approximately five years. Over half had experienced more than one period in their life without housing.

Pathways Through Hate

The discussion of hate crimes is organized around four of the locations that are part of the daily routines of survival: panhandling places, resting places, toilet places, and sleeping places. These terms are taken from a discussion of a map that appears in Vanderstaay's (1992) book Street lives: An oral history of homeless Americans. A homeless man created the map of the various places within a city that are part of his daily efforts to stay alive and meet his basic needs while living on the streets. As the findings from this study demonstrate, the participants experienced movement within the four places discussed in this article as a process of navigating through hate. The streets are indeed mean, as Hagan and McCarthy (1998) have declared, and they are filled with individuals who use hate-motivated words and actions to send out the longstanding colonial message: go away.

Panhandling places are the sites of most frequent victimization. There are three reasons for this. First, panhandling is a marker for homelessness; those who engage in it are more readily identifiable targets for hate. Second, following Wagner's (1993) research on the homeless in North City, panhandling reflects the historical myth that the impoverished lack a work ethic. Individuals may see panhandlers as intent on "making a livelihood off the hard-working citizen," as Stark (1992) asserts, even though the income generated is generally very small and individuals often turn
to panhandling only after they have exhausted other economic resources (p. 350). Finally, the use of streets and sidewalks to make money defies conceptions about the types of space that should be used for financial exchanges (Gottdiener, 1985; Wright, 1997).

Among the participants, seven women and six men indicated that they had periodically engaged in panhandling. None were racial minorities. Their panhandling behavior involved either "flying a sign," which refers to holding a cardboard sign, or "spraying"—asking for spare change, cigarettes, etc. Regardless of the panhandling technique, all of them provided myriad accounts in which they had been "categorized, inspected, dissected [and hurt]" by the public and city authorities (Wright, 1997, p. 39).

The most common form of hate speech directed at panhandlers consisted of words linked to paid employment: "Get a job, fucking bum; Can you spell work?; You're living off tax payers, you bum." This underscores Wagner's (1993) lament that if a person is poor and visible, "work status seems to become the primary public concern rather than hunger, illness, disease, or frostbite" (p. 69).

Among the women in the study who panhandled, the abuse frequently included sexually offensive or threatening comments. All of them described panhandling experiences in which they had been called "homeless sluts"—words that reinforce the notion, as Gardner (1995) argues, that public space is largely the realm of privileged men. Panhandling was bad enough, but a women panhandler was doubly disdained because she violated gender expectations: panhandling is traditionally perceived as a masculine activity (Gardner, 1991; Gardner, 1995; Messerschmidt, 1993; Messerschmidt, 1997).

Many of the words and gestures directed at women left them feeling frustrated, angry, unsettled and sometimes deeply frightened. One young woman, who had been panhandling since the age of twelve after fleeing a sexually abusive home, talked at length about the degrading, offensive interactions she experiences with men when she "flies a sign":

Like it's so frustrating. . . . They'll like honk, they'll like be making gestures like a blow job. Yeah, yeah, oh all the time, constantly, constantly. One time this dude held money out a window, I got
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up, I walked right up to car, and I look down and in the corner of my eye I see his hand going and he's jacking off right there and he's all like you want it, and it was just a handful of change.

Her experiences with this type of victimization and other forms of hate crimes linked to her identity as a homeless woman increased over time as she aged on the streets. The two other young adults who panhandled while growing up on the streets recounted similar experiences of maturing into public hate. As children, they tended to arouse public pity and sympathy, but as adults they became undeserving of such support. This reflects the historical distinction between the "deserving" and the "undeserving" poor that was incorporated into the English poor-laws of the sixteenth century (Katz, 1996; Wagner, 1993).

While the hate speech in panhandling places presented a harm in its own right, it was often linked with other harms, such as physical assault (Nielsen, 2002). All of the panhandlers in this study described multiple incidences in which assailants had combined degrading, hurtful words or expressions with physical assault. Most often, this assaultive behavior consisted of throwing objects at panhandlers, generally from the security of cars. The objects that were used as weapons to enact the warning-out message took many forms. As one individual explained, "I've been hit in the face with a handful of pennies. I've been hit in the face with a can of dog food . . . cups of coffee." As another recounted, "The other day somebody threw a penny at my head . . . I got an ice cream cone thrown at me once."

Although relatively rare, there were accounts of assaults in panhandling settings that resulted in some level of physical injury. Sally, who almost always panhandles with her partner Bill, was kicked in the face by a man one day when she was panhandling alone. Several people on the street witnessed the assault and called emergency services and the police on their cell phones. When asked why she thought he had kicked her, Sally stated simply that "he thought I was a piece of shit . . . Look, she's got a backpack, she's got filthy clothes, yeah, just shit." One of the male participants, Tom, described an incident in which he was hit in the face with a closed fist when he was flying a sign. As he recalled, "And this guy comes up, got out of his car, bucked his chest at
me, pushed me with his chest and called me a 'worthless piece of shit—get a job' and smacked me right in the face . . . closed fist punch—wham."

Both the men and women described an array of sophisticated strategies that they use to avoid harm in panhandling places. Several noted that when they make a verbal appeal, they carefully consider the tone and wording of their request so as not to anger, alienate, or frighten passersby. As Lankenau (1999) suggests, this effort transforms a request into a carefully orchestrated repertoire that functions to shield panhandlers from harm and increases the probably of a successful appeal. In turn, most indicated that to avoid escalating a situation and being at even further risk for harm, they actively work at concealing their emotions when someone lashes out at them. As such, they engage in what Hochschild (1983) refers to as "emotion work"—a process that entails managing one's emotions according to the requirements of a job.

Finally, many employed friends from the homeless community to stand within hearing distance of them so that they could summon help if they encountered threatening behavior. This practice was referred to as "shadow work." Garry often "runs shadow" and uses a harp to communicate signals to the individuals he protects. As he stated, almost every male panhandler gets hit or knocked down "every couple of weeks or so . . . that's why they want me. That's why they need someone to run shadow . . . I'm not a good beggar, but they love me to go with them, because I'm there."

Homeless people must develop other techniques to avoid being warned-out of resting, toilet, and sleeping places. These resourceful actions stand in sharp contrast to the conventional notion of the homeless as helpless and disorganized and underscore the view that the homeless should not be pathologized as socially disorganized, disaffiliated, or disempowered (Anderson, et al., 1994; Snow & Mulcahy, 2001; Wagner, 1993).

Public space is filled with resting stations: benches, steps, edges of planters and water fountains, walls, and railings (Ortiz, 1994; Bickford, 2000). When people in this study used these stations as resting places, they often encountered police and passersby who used hate-filled words, actions, and gestures to
communicate the message that homeless people were undesirable and illegitimate users of such social space even though, by virtue of being homeless, they were "residents of public space" (Kawash, 1998, p. 320).

For many of the participants, resting accounted for a relatively small portion of their day. Several talked about the tremendous amount of time and energy they devoted to simply accessing and maintaining social service benefits. Patty, who is HIV positive and has spent a significant amount of time in search of appropriate health care benefits and services, noted that she is "constantly always on the move for something. I'm on my feet all the time. I've been walking constantly because I have no truck... I mean I have fifty million things a day I'm doing, believe it or not." Volunteer work, informal mutual-aid within the homeless community, and waged labor also consumed a great deal of the participants' time. Well over half worked periodically in either part-time, casual jobs or in temporary day-labor positions; one in four was a volunteer in various nonprofit organizations. Their level of involvement in productive activities is similar to that found in other studies; and yet, homeless people continue to be stigmatized as lazy (Rossi, 1989; Snow & Anderson, 1992; Wagner, 1994).

Given this stereotype, by simply resting in public space the homeless can arouse considerable anger (Wagner, 1994). For many of the participants, then, activities such as sitting in public space or congregating with friends on sidewalks were all too often enmeshed with deflecting, ignoring or responding to hate-filled words and actions that served as warning-out mechanisms. Similar to the participants' experiences in panhandling places, hate speech was the most common form of victimization in resting places, and it was also generally white men, from the security of cars, who engaged in these warning-out actions. There were, however, some very significant differences in the patterns of hate speech victimization in this setting.

For the female participants, resting in public space carried a more frequent risk of being the victim of direct, face-to-face hate speech victimization. All but one of the female participants recounted incidents in resting places where individuals in close proximity to them had shouted sexually objectifying words such
as “homeless slut” or “homeless bitch.” In most instances, the perpetrators were men.

Although the males in the study were also subjected to hurtful remarks through direct confrontations with passersby, they were more apt to experience what one male participant referred to as “distant hate.” He described this as words, actions, or gestures used by perpetrators when their physical distance from the victim is sufficient to avoid retaliation. He noted that distance hate is usually employed from cars, but that individuals also engage in this behavior after they have walked past someone. As he explained, “It’s generally when they’ve gotten far enough away to where they don’t think I’m gonna come after them and beat em up or something, you know. There’s fear.” The distance haters were overwhelmingly male.

In general, women were more often victims of direct, face-to-face hate speech than men, reflecting the gender hierarchies that permeate public space. In this realm, as Gardner (1995) laments, women are frequently subjected to male harassment and are “pawns for street commentary, targets of gaze, subjects of touches, lures for trailing and stalking, dupes for foolmaking—and victims of rape and violent crime” (p. 240). These forms of harassment and abuse are an expression of patriarchal entitlement (Nielsen, 2002). To the homeless women in this study the perpetrators were not only asserting their masculine dominance, but they were also communicating the belief that homeless people should not be allowed to rest in public space and, in essence, be recognized as fellow citizens (Bickford, 2000; Perry, 2001).

Over half of the racial minority participants in the study described instances in which individuals had shouted racial epithets that were punctuated by words that expressed a desire to end their presence in the community altogether: “Go back to where you came from, homeless scum,” “Homeless piece of shit, I’m calling immigration.” Ironically, many of these victims were Native Americans. The harrassers thought that they were Hispanic and therefore shouted their wounding words in Spanish. Fred, one of the five Native American participants, noted that he was repeatedly victimized in this manner. As he stated, “I’ve had that done so frequently, I know a little bit of Spanish myself right now.”
Resting places were also sites where the homeless encountered a significant amount of hate speech from the police; six men and three women described instances in which they had been targets. Each recounted derogatory statements leveled by the police about their status of homelessness that were interwoven with words such as faggot, bitch, bottom feeder, and white trash. Terry, who noted that he was well known among the local law enforcement officers as a member of the homeless community, provided a particularly chilling account of this pattern: "One [police officer] comes up from behind me and I was like, oh man, what did I do? And that's when he slapped me on my back and he was like saying all this stuff in my ear real quietly, calling me a punk, calling me a homeless bitch."

With few notable exceptions, the participants reported that they were most likely to encounter hurtful, hate-filled words from the police during routine examinations of their identification documents. In resting places the police consistently and systematically check their I.D.—a practice that was described as occurring so frequently that it appeared to resemble a form of petite apartheid. Speaking to the frequency of police checks, a participant explained, "They [the police] go to a lot of these places where people sleep and hang out . . . they check them frequently, like everyday, sometimes three or four times a day." This heavy surveillance practice left many of the participants feeling angry, and it led to heated exchanges between the police and the homeless community.

Resting places were not only sites where the homeless were subjected to what Whillock and Slayden (1995) refer to as "credentialized" hate speech by officers of the state, but they were also forums where the homeless endured police brutality. Almost one-third of the participants indicated that they had been subjected to police use of excessive force—acts that they believe were driven by a disdain for the homeless and by a belief that the homeless were powerless to protect themselves. Overwhelmingly, the victims were male (n = 7) and, once again, the context for the abuse often surrounded interactions between the police and the homeless community that emerged from law enforcement surveillance practices. Sam, who started living on the streets at the age of
fourteen, described the police as a significant source of danger. As he stated, “Out of all the people that I have dealt with in my entire life with being homeless, the most terrifying people to deal with on the streets are the police. They are brutal. They use excessive... force. I have had the shit beaten out of me for nothing.” Consistent with these accounts of police violence, the law enforcement department was under federal investigation for police brutality at the time of the study.

There is now a growing body of literature that documents police’ involvement in hate crimes (Geller and Toch, 1996; Herek and Berrill, 1992; Perry, 2001). For example, in a recent study published by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (1998) the police accounted for eighteen percent of the perpetrators of hate crimes against gays and lesbians. Clearly, then, the police play a relatively hidden but powerfully important role in warning-out the homeless from public resting space.

Although such factors as gender, race, and ethnicity shaped the forms of hate crime victimization the participants experienced in resting places, virtually all of them stated that the rate of victimization was largely driven by how easily an individual could be tagged as homeless. Tagging was most likely to occur if an individual could be linked to what Goffman (1963) refers to as stigma symbols—attributes, traits, or styles of conduct that reveal a stigmatized individual’s true identity or condition. The types of space that were frequently used by the homeless for resting, such as sidewalks and parking lots near soup kitchens, shelters and social service agencies, functioned as stigma symbols that exposed their status. As one participant explained:

At least once a day someone says something [hateful]... especially when we’re sitting out in front of the shelter at night when it’s a nice, cool night. People drive by in cars, they know what the place is, they will yell, throw their fingers to us... calling us bums, homeless people, you’re nothing.

To avoid tagging some of the participants worked at avoiding stigmatized space. Stan, who had been living at a homeless shelter for approximately four years, said he tried not to be seen anywhere near the shelter during the day. He also walked long distances each day as he was fearful that if he rested for too long in
any one place he would be tagged as homeless. His daily journeys often covered large areas of the city. As he noted, “I might go up to the West-End promenade, East-End promenade, ya know, down to the port.” He used movement to avoid encountering the hate that operates through stigmatized space.

Clothing and hygiene practices that conflict with middle-class appearance norms also function as highly significant stigma symbols that can trigger the tagging process and lead to hate crime victimization in virtually all settings in the daily routines of homeless people. One of the stereotypes of homelessness is that they all wear shabby clothing and are unkempt (Lankenau, 1999). The participants in this study who violated appearance norms and conformed at some level to this stereotype were much more likely to be tagged as homeless and experience hate crime victimization. Barry, who lived in a camp and often had difficulty finding warm water for cleansing, noted that he encountered hate speech in resting places on a daily basis, and felt that he was more likely to have this experience based on his appearance.

Almost all of the participants talked about how their appearance was subjected to what Gardner (1995) refers to as “inspection draw”—close public scrutiny. Thus, while it was natural for them to maintain their appearance, they also saw it as a means to protect themselves from failing inspection and thereby increasing the probability of being victimized. They were acutely aware of the association that has been culturally constructed between dirt and homeless people (Douglas, 1966; Lakenau, 1999).

To avoid this detection while sitting in public spaces participants used props, such as books, magazines, newspapers and various religious items (e.g. bible, yarmulka) to signal that they were involved in an activity and not simply resting. As Goffman (1963) suggested in *Stigma*, these types of strategies, which he referred to as “passing,” are frequently employed by stigmatized individuals to mask their identity.

Both the frequency of victimization in resting places and the amount of energy required to avoid it left many of the participants angry and heightened their sense of displacement. Sam, who said that he was often the victim of hate speech in resting places because he was carrying the wrong plastic—a grocery bag and not a credit card—expressed this sentiment in poignantly clear
words that reflect his sense of feeling unwanted, unwelcome, and warned-out. As he lamented, "I feel like I am losing my place on the planet . . . Why as a homeless person are you given no space at all?" Resting in public space, in quiet solitude and peace, is an act that is reserved for the privileged.

Although relatively few have sought to systematically study access to bathrooms, they are also spaces where various power relations are reinforced and reproduced, and thus sites where the people in this study encountered warning-out through hate. In this location, however, the perpetrators were no longer predominately "nasty white males in cars," but rather men and women from a broad array of socioeconomic backgrounds. This victim-offender pattern is important to understand for, as Perry (2001) explains, hate crime "is much more than the act of mean-spirited bigots. It is embedded in the cultural and social context within which groups interact" (p. 1; and see Bowling, 1993; Young, 1990).

Among the participants, almost one-third (n = 8) described instances in which hate-filled words and actions had been used to deny them access to semi-public bathrooms, such as those found in gas stations and fast-food establishments. All of these individuals this was based on the fact that they were homeless and not because they were trying to use bathrooms that were private or "for customers only."

The most common strategy used to exclude the participants from toilet space entailed the employment of the claim that homeless people routinely create dirty messes in bathrooms, particularly when they used them to care for their bodies—e.g. brushing their teeth, washing their faces. Five of the eight participants who had been warned-out of bathrooms were told they could not use a certain facility as homeless people "trash" bathrooms. Duneier (1999) reports that the homeless men in his study were also subjected to this hurtful accusation. Stan was told by the manager of a Burger King that while it was good for the homeless to use toilets rather than the streets, "the restroom, right, it's not for taking and making a mess and trying to wash your face." One woman who sought to brush her teeth in a gas station was told by the attendant that it wasn't a "hobo homeless bathroom for her to dirty," and she overheard this individual calling her a white, homeless bitch. When confronted by the homeless woman
the attendant stated simply, "Ma'am, this is not for homeless people—that's all I got to say." By contrast, the airline traveler who attends to personal hygiene in an airport bathroom washes in peaceful privilege.

Nonetheless, many homeless people used clever strategies to gain access to bathrooms and to shield themselves from being warned-out of them. Hiding one's identity, or "passing" in Goffman's (1963) terms, was the central mechanism they employed to carry out these objectives. Jill, who was a former elementary teacher and had fled a physically abusive husband explained, "[In hotels I] pretend that I'm waiting for someone or that I am inquiring about the conference upstairs. And I can do that—go into the bathroom, freshen up."

Similarly, Marge used conversation about travel to pass as a tourist and thereby gain access to bathrooms in gas stations for her children when they were living in a car. She asked for directions while her children washed and used the toilets. Marge would also talk to the attendants about fictitious travel experiences. As she noted, "I was always pretending that we were traveling to different places... So we just kind of played the game that we didn't live any different than anybody else." Chad, as another case in point, would periodically represent himself as someone who was seeking employment and would start to fill out a job application form before slipping into the bathroom.

Traditionally, the actions that the participants used to gain access to bathrooms have been categorized in the literature on homelessness as either stigma management efforts or resourceful survival mechanisms (Anderson et al., 1994; Snow & Mulcahy, 2001). It is clear, however, that this behavior must also be understood as hate crime victimization prevention. They are strategies to avoid hearing the hate-filled words that Jim and his partner endured when they sought use of a bathroom to wash-up: "Why don't you get a house!"

Like finding a bathroom, finding a place to sleep is another daily challenge (Mitchell, 1997; Wright, 2000). Among the participants in this study, approximately two-thirds had slept outside in cars, tents, boxes, and recycling bins. These individuals were forced to work hard, as Wright (2000) so evocatively noted, "to fit themselves into the never-world cracks of the city" (p. 29). But
sleeping in a public space in now a criminal act. Approximately one-third of the participants who had slept outside reported being dislodged from their sleeping place by agents of social control (i.e. police, city workers, state road crews); five men and two women indicated that disparaging, hate-filled words and actions were used to carry out the task.

Although residing in shelters can shield the homeless from the hate crime victimization tied to sleeping outdoors, many were deterred by the discomforts and regulations of shelters. For example, the shelter could not provide arrangements for individuals to sleep with or be near those they cherished—e.g. husband or wives, partners, boy friends or girl friends, pets. One young woman said that she would never use a shelter as that would mean separation from her dog. As she explained, "They watch over you, they keep you company, they're your best friend, they don't hate you."

There are three different types of urban space that homeless people may sleep in. Prime space as any realm that is used by the domiciled for residential, recreational, navigational, financial or entrepreneurial purposes. Marginal space, the second type, is land that appears to be abandoned or ignored. Transitional space, the third type, is land occupied by low-income, marginalized individuals who are, nonetheless, domiciled (Snow and Mulcaney. 2001). Not surprisingly, homeless people have great trouble occupying prime space.

Most who camped in the marginal space were seldom asked to vacate their sleeping arrangements. However, some had established tent encampments in prime space near roads and these were the source of significant spatial contests. Five men reported that hate-motivated acts and/or words had been used to remove them from these areas. These individuals slept near roads as this space provided them with easy access to routes they used to traverse the city. They used the landscaping along roads, particularly bushes, to shield themselves from the watchful eye of the police and public. As such, it was prime space for them as well, but sleeping in it was not without risks and dangers.

Often, when evicted from roadside encampments, city or state transportation crews would also destroy their belongings. One
man who had recently experienced having all of his possessions thrown away by a transportation crew said that the destruction of his property was deeply symbolic of societal hate and contempt for the homeless. Further, he stated angrily, "They . . . never ask, 'Whose is this? Whose is that?' They just take it and dump it. I'm homeless not worthless."

Typically, the road crews began their destruction of the camps by employing the power of law and suggesting, whether true or not, that the police were en route. This statement, of course, led to frantic scrambles among the men to salvage what they could before fleeing the site. Describing this scene, one man explained, "And so you make a choice, what do you take with you? You got seconds to get out of there so you usually grab the small back pack and your day pack . . . You got two seconds or you are going to jail." These flash point moments, in which they lost their survival gear, created lasting financial hardships for the men and some described them as emotionally painful. Reflecting on seeing all of his worldly possessions destroyed, one man stated, "I mean I was hurt. You know I felt like dirt." Physical violence can accompany eviction. One man reported that on two occasions a road crew employee had kicked him in the ribs as a method to rouse him. "It was a pretty good kick in the side," he lamented.

Developing a sleeping place that was somehow hidden from public view was the most common strategy to avoid victimization. In many instances, vegetation played an important role in this endeavor. One couple, for example, had established a safe campsite by burrowing deep into a large stand of Japanese knotweed, a bushy, invasive plant in New England that was originally introduced to hide outhouses. Concealed by the plant, they slept undisturbed in this place each summer.

In one of the roadside encampments, known as "Camp Cal," the men had developed a furtive technique of carefully timing their entrance and exit from the bushes in order to keep their sleeping place secret. Camp Cal was in a particularly prized location as it was near a noisy highway overpass that functioned to drown out their voices and radios. Nested in the protection of the bushes, the men felt, as one stated, "[that] they were right
behind enemy lines.” Indeed, one might say that homeless people are always behind enemy lines.

Conclusion

In his brilliant novel *Midnight's Children*, Salmon Rushdie (1995) suggests that when you have “city eyes” you overlook the human suffering of the homeless—“the beggars in boxcars don’t impinge on you, and the concrete sections of future drainpipes don’t look like dormitories” (p. 100). But city eyes turn away. Homeless people in this country are also subjected to “imperial eyes” which look directly and are filled with hate.

The hate that homeless people are subjected to in public and semi-public space does much to reconfirm the dominant social-spatial hierarchical organization of rural and urban communities, and it ensures that they are kept at the margins of public and semi-public space (Mitchell, 1997). Thus, like the experiences of the wandering homeless in colonial New England, those without shelter today fail to be recognized as fellow citizen and, therefore, are warned-out of the public and private space that configures into the contested landscape of this country. In this sense, as Wright (2000), argues, cities and towns continue to be “staging grounds for advancing social inequalities” (p. 25).

To change this it is not enough to simply pass new laws that would ban hate crimes against the homeless, nor does it suffice to increase funding for job training programs or shelter grants. The heart of privilege must come under attack (Wright, 1997; Wagner, 1993; Cohen, 2001). This will require, as Wright (1997) suggests, “[broad scale] changes in employment, health care, housing, media, and education” (p. 302). This sentiment was shared by many of the participants in this study. Almost half of the participants (N = 14) volunteered ideas about means to end hate crime, with over one-third citing social policies as the best solution to this problem. As one man stressed, to get rid of hate crime we “need more mental health workers, we need more mental health care, we need more substance abuse care, we need more affordable housing . . . we need more jobs, we need a living wage.” Only through such change will we reduce the conditions that make homeless people feel “out of place” in the landscapes of public space (Wright, 1997).
Hate Crimes Against the Homeless

Acknowledgments

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References


Book Reviews


Poor people trigger different responses. They provoke many on the street to recite the folk wisdom about poverty. Within the academy, experts scrutinize their demographic traits. But so cut off are they from the body politic that except for intensifying the workfare requirements, politicians rarely talk about them at all. In One Nation Underprivileged, Mark Rank sets out to reduce the social and political distance between the poor and the rest of us. Deconstructing the dominant ideology about poverty, Rank insists that since the poor are poor for structural reasons, we should stop thinking about them as a tribe apart.

Rank's book is divided into three sections. The first part describes the conditions of poverty and explores the reasons for its existence. Beginning with a discussion of the politics of the poverty line, Rank moves on to highlight poverty’s changing demographics—in particular, how the decline of the poverty among the elderly has been offset by an increase in female-headed households and an accompanying rise in poverty among children. As Rank emphasizes, this poverty often forces people to make choices among necessities—the “heat or eat” dilemma—and is associated with poorer health, emotional strain, and children’s stunted mental and physical development. Nor are these outcomes random occurrences scattered across the population. With growing economic insecurity and 31 percent of family heads working for less than $10 an hour, families cycle in and out of poverty as their economic circumstances dictate. In such a fluid situation, it is no wonder that, as Rank notes in one of his more striking statistics, 58 percent of the U.S. population will be poor at some point between the ages of twenty and seventy-five.

The implications of this statistic buttress much of the author’s appeal to self-interest in the book’s next section. If a majority of Americans are going to be poor at some point in their adult life, then protections against poverty are not money wasted on
somebody else. Rank further maintains that these protections are consistent with two core value orientations that most Americans hold in high esteem, namely, the Judeo-Christian ethic and our nation's founding civic principles—democracy, equality, and social justice. Finally, even if these two reasons do prove insufficient, the issue of poverty merits our attention because we all have a shared responsibility to address problems that affect our fellow citizens. Whether the issue is health, education, or crime, our failure to adhere to our core values saddles us with unnecessary expenses that end up costing more in the long run.

The book's final section contains the author's policy remedies. In the labor market, Rank proposes using fiscal stimulus, employer wage subsidies, and public service employment to create enough adequately paying jobs. Likewise, an increase in the minimum wage and expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit to individuals without children would supplement the wages of current jobholders. To remedy deficits and inequities in education, housing, and health care, Rank advocates changes in tax policy and an enhancement of current programs such as housing vouchers and child's health coverage through either Medicaid or CHIP (the Children's Health Insurance Program). Sensitive to changes in the structure of families, the author also pays special attention to the impact of issues such as childcare and teenage pregnancy on family economic well-being.

Rank writes well, and his proposals reflect the state of the policy art on the more liberal end of the political spectrum. Amid all the political discourse about individual deficiencies, his focus on the structural causes of poverty is especially welcome. Rank recognizes that the causes of poverty lie in the workings of the U.S.'s particularly dogmatic brand of free market capitalism, and he knows that for precisely this reason, his proposals are sure to encounter strong opposition.

Rank nevertheless mischaracterizes that opposition when he presents it as primarily ideological. To some extent, it is ironic that he should stress this component, since he spends so much of the book discussing the economic origins of poverty. At the same time, however, this stress on poverty's economic origins shortchanges some much-needed discussion about who benefits from its existence. As a result, the free market appears as a deus
ex machina, a system whose social depredations occur without any human intervention. Such a description not only constitutes too partial a portrait of poverty’s structural origins; it may also mislead those committed to social change about the nature of the opposition they will face.

Joel Blau
Stony Brook University


Many aspects of social work can be viewed productively from the group perspective. Although, at times, social work with groups is perceived as a social work specialty, it embodies much of social work itself. This handbook shows how social work with groups uses social work knowledge, values, and frameworks to address social problems. The editors select and identify major group work issues and offer their influential views. The handbook explicates the theoretical and conceptual foundations; practice models; purpose and intentionality; locus and adaptability; organizations, communities, and other settings; ties to research and evaluation; and synchrony with technology.

The handbook shows how creative artful approaches are, in many ways, congruent with contemporary social science and strengths-based approaches. The case is made for an empowerment perspective, using conscientization and other theories which continue to guide group work, particularly in the developing world. This handbook points to currently underutilized aspects of social work with groups, including social action. As such, while it reveals its history, it also shows how group work, while effective in the present, can innovate in the future. Consistent with empowerment and consumer-based approaches, family group conferences are among the newer approaches to group work presented. The demand for social-emotional support and the capability of social work groups to meet such needs continues unabated, as is the capability of group work to adapt to increasingly prevalent technologically-based computerized methods of communication, which are among the newest developments and
applications. Acknowledging that much of social work involves working with persons in poverty, an explicit recognition is made that important group work occurs with homeless people. Community organization is a significant field for social work with groups.

The form of social work with groups is largely contingent upon setting. Fully half of the 28 chapters are devoted to group work in settings. Social work with groups must adapt its methods, which are largely appropriate for voluntary clients, to be effective with the preponderance of involuntary clients. A chapter on involuntary groups, based in part upon the application of reactance theory, is essential reading. The importance of group work also lies in its ambitions. Aiming to reduce some of the intergroup conflicts in the Middle East is evocative of earlier work in the USA which preceded large-scale social and legislative reforms.

This handbook fills an important gap in the literature on social work with groups. It will be useful to academics who are interested in reconceptualizing social work with groups. This handbook is distinctive. While most books on social work with groups tend to present a single point of view, by design, this handbook presents multiple viewpoints. Furthermore, although few handbooks present original research studies, to its credit, a study of group work within a global context is included. This handbook helps to fill the gap that exists given that most social workers are educated using a generalist model which provides limited education and training in social work with groups. It is a publication that all college and university libraries with social work programs should offer.

The handbook is uniformly well-written, and provides a thoughtful and nuanced approach to the field. The contemporary breadth of social work with groups is addressed in the volume. For instance, the scope of social work with groups encompasses task groups, and knowledge derived from organizational theories. The arts, popular education, and popular theater are also represented. Even the most established group work authority, and certainly anyone who has not peered into the scholarship on social work with groups recently, will learn something from this wide-ranging handbook.
This handbook reflects the extent to which research, including participatory research, has influenced the field of group work in recent years. Furthermore, although group work is revealed as a method in this handbook, it is also apparent that group work continues to be more than a method: it represents a set of values and a way of examining social phenomena. This book conveys a sense of continuity and unity of social group work from its origins to the contemporary scene. As such, it is a success.

Steven Rose
George Mason University


During the last century there was a remarkable change in social and political attitudes towards the provision of income safety nets for the elderly in industrial nations. Extending beyond the provision of income for mere subsistence, national policies created the opportunity for sustainable retirement through social security systems that ensured protection against the loss of both income and health in old age. This is the legacy of social security programs in all industrialized nations. The sheer magnitude and scale of public and private income and health care programs under social security that have become an indispensable aspect of public policy captured the attention of researchers and policy makers, resulting in an overwhelming body of literature and wide range of disputable perspectives.

In recent decades, the scholarly and public literature has focused on perceived and real threats to the viability of income and health care programs for the elderly, especially social security systems. Much of the discussion has been related to analysis of the impact of aging populations and a shrinking dependency ratio of people who are working and contributing money through payroll taxes to finance those who are not. Research has also been conducted on the impact of diminishing government resources and the ongoing attempts to shift some, or even most, of the government burden for income support and health care from the public to the private sector, including transferring responsibility for managing programs from national to local governments. The
findings of this research are inconclusive, leaving many unan-
swered questions, especially as to the sustainability of the public
systems, and the presence of political power sufficient to dramat-
ically alter such entrenched and popular programs.

The edited text under review adds to our knowledge of two
important but less frequently examined aspects of the debates
about support systems for income and health in old age. The text is
the ninth in a series of volumes on the economics of aging. The first
five chapters of this volume discuss how the elderly accumulate,
or fail to accumulate, wealth. The second six chapters examine
how wealth is related to health, including mortality. Four chapters
give an international perspective with two making comparisons
between the United States and Britain. One examines experiences
in South Africa and another discusses health in Russia. Several
chapters are followed by commentary from an expert in the field
that greatly enriches the content.

The authors draw on various sources of macro and micro
secondary socioeconomic status (SES) data, as well as data on
mortality rates from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Ser-
vices, the Asset and Health Dynamics among the Oldest Old
(AHEAD) panel study, and the Survey of Income and Program
Participation (SIPP), among other data sources. The data are
subjected to descriptive, analytical, and econometric evaluation.
Many readers may not be totally familiar with the nuances and
methods of econometric analysis, but there is ample discussion
of the data presented in each chapter to make this an informative
and interesting book to a wide audience.

Each chapter raises intriguing questions that are pertinent
to both practice with the elderly and the development of social
policies. This includes, for example, detailed discussion on what
has contributed to the reduction of mortality rates of the elderly.
Has it been public health? Better nutrition? Improved medica-
tions? Modified behavior? What, if any, is the significance of
home equity on income and age? What is the source of household
wealth? Does household pooled income provide more health
protection for elderly members? What is the relationship between
mortality, income, and income inequality? Is there a difference in
the geographic utilization of medical care and mortality among
the elderly in the United States? What has been the impact of the
transition from employer managed defined benefit pensions to defined contribution programs?

The text addresses these and related questions using strong methodological approaches. The discussions are thoughtful and thought provoking. The authors of the book's chapters range over many topics of importance to understanding the needs of elderly people. Anyone interested in how the elderly are impacted by income and health care support policies and programs will find this book to be of considerable value.

Martin B. Tracy
University of Kentucky


The spread of HIV/AIDS has emerged as a major health crisis both in the developed and developing countries. In many African countries and in small sub populations in developed countries, the rates of infection are alarmingly high. Perhaps two prominent characteristics of this crisis are: a) the rates of infection are dissimilar across various social and demographic categories such as drug users and Hispanics. b) the causal factors associated with the rate of infection are not the same across various social and demographic dimensions. Social researchers and practitioners engaged in the fight against AIDS have responded to this diversity by publishing a number of books in recent years. These books describe the rates as well as correlates of infection within sub populations such as women and minorities. Several of these books inform us of the various aspects of the demand structure of social services necessary for the prevention, treatment and management of the disease.

Understandably, a large number of social workers are engaged in the fight against AIDS. Social workers are closely involved with the provision of HIV/AIDS services at all levels ranging from the micro to macro. Social workers use a number of tools to help populations at risk. However, a book was needed that could instill not only confidence in what social workers do, but also provide broad guidelines and suggestions useful for social
service delivery to diverse populations with AIDS. This book is a welcome addition in this regard.

The book is a collection of chapters mostly written by social work scholars whose research is among HIV infected minority populations. A few practitioners, with several years of experience with HIV infected populations, also are among the contributors. This mix is very welcome as it reinforces the notion that theoretical discussions on social service delivery should not be divorced from practical experiences on the ground with provision of social service to the HIV infected. The very first chapter describes the potential and usefulness of the generalist model for social work among the HIV infected. The editors also endeavor to portray the magnitude of the current epidemic among sub populations that are hard to reach, neglected, stigmatized and socially excluded. Thus, service providers and social workers in general are made aware of the magnitude of the task they confront with regard to social service delivery and professional social work among socially excluded groups.

There is a general suggestion in the book that the case management approach is a useful one in the provision of social work services to the HIV infected. The editors suggest that case management in general is less based on treatment approaches and is more focused on community based multidimensional models of care. As a word of caution, the case management model will have to be flexible and be able to accommodate medical breakthroughs in the treatment of AIDS.

Two chapters discuss social practice with intravenous drug users. The usefulness of the harm reduction philosophy with this special population is considered in detail. The harm reduction approach is non-judgmental, promoting strategies for safer and managed use, and to the extent possible, abstinence. However, the United States restricts funding and other forms of support for needle exchange programs. This has ethical and legal implications for social work.

Four chapters discuss the role of social work among sub populations such as, Mexican migrant farm workers, African Americans, African Americans in the Delta region, and Louisiana African American women. Cultural values and roles play a very important part in the rate of infection in any given population.
Among Mexican migrant farm workers for example, traditional values and definitions of masculinity bring about secrecy about homosexual relationships. Familism and situational factors such as drug use and drinking also influence the risk of exposure. Social workers have a responsibility to reach out to the socially excluded. A number of practical suggestions have been made to achieve this social justice goal. For example, in the case of Mexican farm migrants, the following recommendations have been made: information be made available in Spanish, outreach efforts be made gender specific, role playing be incorporated in order to induce social learning, and folk theater such as the Chicano theatre for communication should also be used.

Among African Americans, familial influences still remain strong. This is an immense resource in giving care to AIDS victims and in bringing about harm reduction. In the Delta, in addition to the family, the church also exerts a powerful influence on the values and ideals that people hold. An asset-based approach is proposed for working with and within community. The social networks and informal organizations that are fostered by the church in particular are seen as assets to be utilized in helping the community.

This book is valuable for scholars as well as well practitioners. Scholars will find a number of suggestions pertaining to the theoretical validity of the generalist model in addressing the issues of HIV/AIDS among socially excluded populations. The practitioners will find a number of suggestions, tips and valuable insights necessary to help marginalized AIDS victims. Among helping professions, social workers perhaps have the most useful and pivotal role to play in containing and managing the AIDS pandemic. This book is highly recommended to anyone who is interested in issues of social service delivery to those who suffer from AIDS.

Vijayan K. Pillai
University of Texas at Arlington

A key line of investigation among comparative social policy scholars is the classification of national welfare systems. Their starting point is often Esping-Andersen welfare state regime theory and their end product is replete with the delineation of new and expanded typologies, often with theoretical and empirical justifications. This book from Ian Gough and his colleagues exemplifies this approach. They wish to recast the welfare state regime paradigm, putting forth a middle-range model that facilitates comparative social policy studies in both developed and developing nations.

The book is organized around three sections and a short conclusion. These sections cover theoretical frameworks, regional regimes and regimes in global context. Section one reviews the intellectual and normative foundations of welfare regimes, distinguishing three typologies, namely welfare regimes, informal security regimes and insecurity regimes. Section two looks at welfare regimes in three regions of the world: East Asia, Latin America, and Africa. The final section examines the multi-tiered, international welfare systems, bringing international-level covenants, treaties and agreements into the regime relationship between rights and correlative duties.

Importantly, Gough and his colleagues identify a series of distinctive regimes. Welfare regime are at the apex of their conceptual hierarchy and three distinct regime genuses, namely Esping-Andersen's original welfare state regimes, informal security regimes and insecurity regimes are then identified. The authors further contend that within each of these category, there is the possibility of identifying different species. In addition, there are two mixed variants combining informal security elements: the liberal-informal welfare regimes of Latin-America and the productivist welfare regimes of East Asia. Explicitly, the authors identify a moral hierarchy of regimes types on a continuum from insecurity to informal security to formal security.

To date, comparative research has paid little attention to the countries of the developing world. The author's elucidation and application of welfare regimes to the developing world remedies this imbalance, particularly with the addition of the two distinctive concepts of informal security regimes (discussed by Geof Wood in Chapter 2) and insecurity regimes (identified by Philippa
Bevan in Chapter 3). However, these informal security and insecurity regimes are evolving concepts, strong in theoretical discussions but weak on empirical validation. On the other hand, the book blends perspectives from development studies and social policy in an interesting way. There is a rich discussion of welfare development in the developing countries from the angle of development studies (for instance, Latin America by Armando Barrientos in Chapter 4 and Bangladesh by Peter Davis in Chapter 7).

This book is an ambitious undertaking, particularly when it tries to formulate welfare regimes for almost all parts of the world. Rightly, the editors caution that notwithstanding the unifying and converging forces of global capitalism, the variegated and path-dependent patterns of development or lack of development across different zones of the world must be emphasized. Their analysis is bolstered by cluster analysis of welfare outcomes and welfare mixes (i.e. public and private spending on welfare etc.) in Chapter 1, where patterns of similarities and differences are identified. However, the absence of quality comparative longitudinal data for developing countries undermines the efficacy of the statistical analysis. Admittedly, the unevenness of social welfare development and the paucity of reliable empirical data have always hampered research of social policy development in Asia and Africa.

The use of regime types and sub-species in the classification also raises questions about whether the typological approach can capture the complexity of welfare development across nations, particularly when the social, political, cultural and economic factors at work in different parts of the world are so numerous and complex. More importantly, the worsening plights of their poor and socially excluded groups urgently calls for effective ways to improve their conditions. Although the authors talk briefly about the battle for social citizenship, pragmatic and effective policy prescriptions are lacking.

Scholars analyzing events in East Asia will find another weakness in Gough account of the East Asian productivist welfare regime type which pays insufficient attention to indigenous writings and perspectives. Rather surprisingly, some key and early readings on East Asia welfare development are completely missing and indigenous assessments of future welfare pathways are
not appropriately assessed. Thus, when Gough argues that the Asian financial crisis required the state to develop a more autonomous welfare state, this view diverges from the views of many East Asian scholars. Recent developments are hard to reconcile with Gough's observations on welfare pathways in Korea: the South Korea President has not followed through on his promise to set up a poverty alleviation commission, while the pro-business Hong Kong post-colonial government established such a commission in early 2005.

While these shortcomings flaw the text, the book is serious in its intent, provocative in its theoretical discussion and wide ranging in its multi-perspectives. It should not only appeal to academics interested in classification but to those who are concerned with poverty and the problems of promoting human welfare in the developing countries. Additionally, it would make a thought-provoking text for a course on comparative social policy for graduate students in both the developed and developing worlds.

Kwong-leung Tang
The Chinese University of Hong Kong


During the 1990s, the welfare system underwent significant changes. As a result of the 1988 Family Support Act, new educational, job-training and job placement services were introduced and these significantly augmented the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (or AFDC) program which had been in existence since the 1930s. In addition, many states obtained waivers from the federal legislation in order to experiment with a variety of innovations that departed significantly from the entitlement approach that had characterized the AFDC program since its inception. With the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, AFDC was replaced with the new Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (or TANF) program, and significant reductions in welfare caseloads around the country were recorded.
"Welfare reform", as these changes are known, have attracted a great deal of scholarly attention and the number of social work and social policy research studies dealing with the new welfare system have increased exponentially. Many of the studies have sought to evaluate these policy changes and to determine whether they have reduced caseloads and successfully moved welfare recipients of the welfare rolls into regular employment and self-sufficiency. Many have used quantitative techniques to assess aggregate changes but some have sought to obtain more qualitative insights into the way the welfare system had affected the lives of those receiving benefits. Since the implementation of the TANF program, many studies have reported on overall caseload reductions and tracked the subsequent employment career of welfare leavers. The literature on the subject is now quite extensive and much more is known about the impact of the new program.

In view of the extensive literature now available on the subject, some may question the need for additional books about welfare reform. However, the two books reviewed here are of interest since they deal with two specific geographic localities, the Bay Area of California and the state of West Virginia, and address and number of topics that will be of interest not only to academic scholars but to social work practitioners and welfare administrators.

The first book, Changing Welfare Services, is compiled by Michael Austin, a professor at the School of Social Welfare at the University of California, Berkeley. It consists of 24 chapters written by Austin in collaboration with a number of the School's graduates students. Most of these chapter report on studies undertaken in recent years under the auspices of the Bay Area Social Services Consortium (or BASSC) which is a coalition of California Bay Area county social services directors, foundation representatives and the deans and directors of Bay Area schools of social work. In addition to his academic responsibilities, Austin serves as Staff Director to the Consortium.

The book is primarily concerned with the organizational and managerial aspects of welfare reform in the Bay Area, but it also addresses a number of related topics dealing with innovative social services programs and the role of community-based approaches to welfare reform. It is divided into five sections. The
first provides an overview of the legislative and administrative changes introduced under the TANF program while the second is concerned with barriers to workforce participation. Section III focuses on community partnerships while section IV deals with staffing managerial and other organizational issues affecting agency restructuring. The final section draws the material together and speculates about future developments.

The book is extremely wide-ranging and covers a large number of topics. One of its strengths is its case study approach which provides detailed information about specific projects and allows readers to focus on those aspects of welfare reform that are of particular interest to them. Several chapters report on innovative projects introduced by the county social services agencies which transcend the traditional benefit payment approach that previously characterized the welfare services. These include, for example, a ride-home transport service, a family loan program, the adopt-a-family program and an employment hotline. Several case studies report on community-based initiatives that address issues of homelessness, workforce development, substance abuse and child welfare. An interesting and welcome feature of the book is its attempt to assess these programs in terms of the social development approach which, the editor suggests, provides a useful framework for analyzing the impact on these programs. The book finds that many of the programs introduced by the county social services agencies reveal a strong commitment to social investment but, it suggests, more emphasis should be placed on human capital programs that adequately prepare people for sustained employment and self-sufficiency.

The second book, *Welfare Reform in West Virginia*, has been compiled by a number of scholars under the direction of Robert Jay Dilger, who works for the Library of Congress Congregational Research Service. Dilger was previously a professor of political science at West Virginia University. Most of the contributors are faculty members at West Virginia University. The book’s chapters deal with diverse aspects of welfare reform in West Virginia. Dilger sets the scene by tracing the history of welfare Reform and its impact on West Virginia, and reviews a number of statistical studies dealing with outcomes. He makes the point that a study of welfare reform in West Virginia should be of interest to scholars
nationally because of the state’s sizable rural population and the fact that its traditional industries are in decline. Subsequent chapters deal with the socio-economic, political and institutional contexts in which welfare reform took place, and these are followed by two chapters that focus on administered issues. One chapter examines the training opportunities provided under the new TANF program while another asks whether work is, in fact, the solution to the poverty problem? Other chapters deal with the impact of welfare reform on the state’s safety net and its most disadvantaged populations. The final chapter provides an excellent summary and draws a number of key lessons from West Virginia’s experience.

Although there are many aspects of welfare reform in West Virginia that are unique, the book shows that the overall impact of the TANF program is decidedly mixed. Although the state’s welfare caseload declined rapidly from 36,000 in 1997 to only 13,000 in 2002 (a 64% reduction), 80% of these welfare leavers are below the federal government’s poverty line and that almost 50% are unemployed. While welfare reform in West Virginia had succeeded in driving beneficiaries of the rolls, it had not moved them into stable employment and economic self-sufficiency. Drawing attention to the state’s lack of employment opportunities, its declining industrial base and its sizable number of poor rural people, the book is critical of a program that is concerned with caseload reduction rather than poverty alleviation. It is also critical of the way the new program treats those who remain in the system. Since state officials are required to meet federal “participation” targets, welfare recipients are required to engage in employment. However, the book finds that many clients have been placed in unpaid community service jobs and that nearly two thirds of all recipients continue to receive benefits without participating in any work-related activities. Although the TANF program is supposed to prepare clients for remunerative employment in the open labor market, West Virginia’s welfare system has clearly failed to do so.

The books will be of interest to scholars wishing to understand the changes that have taken place since the introduction of the TANF program. Austin and his student colleagues have compiled a useful collection of case studies that reveal the extent
to which the Bay Area county social services agencies have sought to transcend the limitations of the program by introducing policy and service innovations that can make a real difference to the lives of clients they serve. Since the book is primarily concerned with organizational change, it does not assess the overall impact of the TANF program on the incomes and standards of living of those who no longer receive benefits. On the other hand, this is the primary focus the book on West Virginia by Dilger and his colleagues. While its findings are not encouraging, the studies reported in the former book are more optimistic. The ambiguous nature of welfare reform's impact is perhaps the key lesson to be learned from these two books. Taken together, they not only highlight the program's mixed results but provide helpful insights into the way welfare reform has evolved in recent years.

James Midgley
University of California, Berkeley
Research into homelessness by social work and social policy scholars has focused on the psychological, economic and social dimensions of the problem, and recommendations for responding to the needs of homeless people have usually stressed the importance of social and psychological treatments and interventions. Counseling, job-training, employment referral, mental health and drug abuse treatment, advocacy and other programs are usually highlighted in the social welfare literature. But, as this interesting book demonstrates, access to various kinds of housing resources is equally important. Indeed, the author shows that services designed to help homeless people work best when they are provided in the context of adequate housing. While economic and political action is obviously required to secure adequate housing, he contends that housing design is an equally important component of policies and programs designed to address the homelessness problem.

Sam Davis is a Professor of architecture at the University of California, Berkeley who has been actively involved in designing shelters and other forms of housing for homeless people for many years. Davis stresses the need to incorporate adequate and appropriate housing design into a comprehensive plan to address the housing problem. He begins by showing how the St. Vincent de Paul Village in San Diego was designed to provide shelter for homeless people and how its architectural features have helped to address the problem. Although the Village is used as an example of how purposeful, careful architectural design can respond to the needs of homeless people, Davis is not entirely uncritical of its approach and it appears that his intention is to use the example of the Village shelter to embark on a detailed discussion of a variety of other approaches to housing the homeless. Using extensive illustrations, Davis shows that residential centers, supported housing and subsidized low-cost housing all have advantages and disadvantages. The author also provides a helpful summary of the social, economic and cultural aspects of homelessness.
It is clear that his extensive experience of working in the field is combined with a sound knowledge of the issues. Davis also makes a plea for the more extensive involvement of architects and planners in the field. He is highly critical of the ramshackle approach that has characterized shelter provision in the past. If homeless people are to be helped, they need to be provided with services in a secure, safe and positive built environment.

Davis has produced a very readable and informative publication that should be consulted by anyone working in the homelessness field today. Its emphasis on appropriate design and the use of diverse housing resources to address the problem will augment the services provided by social workers, psychologists and others who serve homeless people. The book deserves to be widely consulted and its message should be incorporated into all programs focused on the problem of homelessness. The book vividly demonstrates the need to incorporate a variety of intervention to address what has become an acute and apparently intractable problem.


Research indicates that there are no differences in child maltreatment rates among ethnic and racial groups, yet the evidence of disproportional representation of minority children in the child welfare system is undeniable. Generally speaking, minority children make up a larger percentage of child welfare cases than their percentage in the general population. This is particularly the case with African American children. Race and ethnicity have been found by researchers to be linked with maltreatment report rates, removal and placement decisions, length of stay in the system, and likelihood of reunification. The causes of disproportionality are believed by many to be a complex interaction among system biases, social and economic conditions of families, and institutional racism. Race and ethnicity may combine with other predictors of child welfare system involvement, such as caretaker substance abuse, child disability, and Medicaid receipt,
to result in greater rates of child welfare involvement for minorities. Researchers are concerned with parsing out the roots of disproportionality so that they may be addressed through policy and programmatic interventions.

In this regard, Child Welfare Revisited: An Africentric Perspective takes a fresh look at an old problem. This book examines the disproportionate involvement of African American children in the child welfare system through a different lens: one that is "Africentric" instead of "Eurocentric." The Africentric perspective takes as its reference point the strengths, values, and history of African Americans and their tradition of self-help. The book's authors, over twenty in all, each add something to the Africentric framework. The first section provides a background, reviewing the demography of African American families, theories of institutional racism in the child welfare system, and impact of child welfare policies on African American families. The next several chapters in section two explore African American family dynamics. Practitioners may find of particular value the practice model laid out in chapter four. The final section posits the need for holistic interventions, necessitated by the connections between child welfare and a host of social problems such as substance abuse, homelessness, and HIV/AIDS. Several recent holistically-oriented innovations in child welfare are highlighted, including family decision making. In the conclusion, the editors urge reforms in child welfare that are Africentric and just good practice—preventative and integrated services at the community level.

This book was written with practitioners in mind, and each chapter provides highly relevant information to inform practice with African American families. An enjoyable and fluid read, the book can also be approached chapter by chapter for reference on particular issues. In the ongoing quest to discover and address the causes of disproportionality, the authors of this helpful book contribute an original perspective and offer much food for thought.

Amy C. Conley, University of California, Berkeley

The plight of the 25,000 young people who turn 18 or 21 while in foster care each year, and thus "age out", is just beginning to gain public attention. Although most Americans do not believe their children are capable of supporting themselves until the age 25 or older, these young people, who come from some of the most disadvantaged backgrounds, are expected to be fully independent at an early age. The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 expanded independent living services for this vulnerable population, but it falls short of providing the resources necessary for a true safety net.

In this book, Martha Shirk and Gary Strangler provide an account of the lives of ten former foster youth and give an inside look into what happens to young people after foster care services end. The rich descriptions reveal how each young person's well-being is intricately tied to the resources and limitations of his or her social environment. The importance of social supports, independent living services, and individual strengths permeate these stories. For many of the youth discussed in this book, the positive impact of just a few caring adults was evident. For example, Holly, with the ongoing support of her social worker and others, was completing her Master's degree at the time of the book's publication, despite the abuse she suffered as a child and many changes in her living situation. The lack of a caring adult was equally influential in determining outcomes. Reggie, a young man with developmental disabilities and psychotic symptoms, was asked to leave a youth shelter on his 18th birthday with no plan for aftercare, carrying his belonging in plastic bags as he went to school. He was found dead less than four months later.

Independent living services can also be instrumental in supporting good outcomes. Children's Village in New York proved to be an excellent fit for Lamar, who moved through the program's varying levels of independence, then graduated from college, married, bought his own home, and started a business. Lamar's two brothers, however, were more difficult to engage in the Children's Village setting. One died in a car accident while on a drug run, and the other was in prison at the time of the book's publication. Some of the youth demonstrated extraordinary leadership. Giselle, who immigrated on her own to the United States from the Caribbean at age 15 to avoid her father's sexual abuse, flourished
as a writer and peer mentor once she found a paying position at a foster youth advocacy organization. She then became guardian to her younger sister, saving her from her father’s abuse as well, and traveled back to her homeland to make television appearances about sexual abuse.

The book provides vivid detail about these young people and others, and is an excellent addition to the emerging literature on this topic. Given the heterogeneity of pathways to adulthood in this population, an understanding of individual lives and experiences is valuable. Practitioners will appreciate the attention given to the interventions that proved helpful in specific situations, and policymakers will gain further insight into how policies differentially affect each young person.

Sarah Taylor, University of California, Berkeley


The terms associated with environmental degradation and public safety such as global warming, toxic waste, air and water pollution, drought, and chemical sensitivities are a part of the lexicon in all modern societies. However, it is not clear that these terms are properly understood by ordinary people. This lack of understanding can lead to confusion about the seriousness of environmental issues facing the United States and the rest of the world. The book, America’s Environmental Report Card: Are We Making the Grade, offers understandable definitions and descriptions of many of the major environmental issues. Using humor and a conversational manner the author attempts to personalize environmental issues, asking readers to examine the current state of affairs and think about the things that can be done to reduce environmental degradation.

The book consists of ten chapters covering a variety of environmental issues. The first two chapters focus on issues related to water. Chapter one examines how much fresh water exists in the United States and how we use, and waste water. Chapter two examines floods, revealing accounts of the way housing developments located in flood plains are subsidized by taxpayers. Chapter three covers the accumulation and disposal of household
waste. Chapter four discusses soil, crops, and food, including an interesting discussion of genetically modified foods. Sources and supplies of energy, including alternative sources of energy such as wind and solar, are covered in chapter five. Chapter six offers a very easily comprehended discussion of global warming. Chapters seven and eight discuss air pollution and the ozone layer. Nuclear energy and nuclear waste storage are the topics in chapter nine. The book concludes with a summary of issues addressed in the previous chapters includes suggestions on ways to address some common environmental issues.

The conversational style and avoidance of detailed scientific and technical data make America's Environmental Report Card a good resource for general readers interested in increasing their basic knowledge of the environment in the United States. The reliance on polling data and the occasional failure to cite specific evidence for stated claims are limitations but do not detract from the overall presentation or message of the book. The author does, however, fail to discuss the links between ethnicity, socio-economics, and the environment in any meaningful manner, and this an oversight that does detract from the book's usefulness. Nevertheless, this book will be of interest to anyone wishing to gain a basic understanding of the concepts related to the environment and how environmental resources are developed, used, discarded, and stored in the United States.

Terry V. Shaw, University of California, Berkeley


In Mobilizing an Asian American Community, Linda Trinh Vò provides a timely and well-written analysis addressing one of the most important issues facing community activists in working with Asian American communities. Asian Americans are the fastest growing ethnic minorities in the United States. They are also the most diverse minority comprised of more than 30 ethnic groups many of whom have historical, cultural, religious, and language distinctions. If there is anything these groups share in common before they migrated to the US, perhaps the only
common element is that they all share a part of the Pacific Ocean from the Asian and Pacific Rim. It is not until their arrival in the United States that they realize they are being referred to as Asian Americans and are being treated as a monolithic group.

It is generally agreed upon by scholars and community organizers that solidarity is one of the most important components in any successful mobilization effort. As such, ethnic identity has typically been treated as an essential basis for bonding a minority community and helping them to pursue their common goals. Paradoxically, given the nature of diversity within Asian American communities, the challenge of how to transcend Asian nationalism into a Pan-Asian American identity for ethnic mobilization purposes has become a black box in the Asian American community research and practice literature.

Võ contends that that community mobilization occurs and is shaped by the larger demographic, socioeconomic and political environment which causes ethnic minorities, in this case, Asian Americans, to respond to the needs and crises that emerge and threaten the overall well-being of the community as a whole. It is in this context that this interesting book provides a detailed account of how Asian Americans mobilized themselves in San Diego through coalition building both within and across different groups making an Asian American ethnic identity possible.

Using what Võ refers to as an interactive mobilization model, different examples of mobilization effort are discussed. These include the development of social services to meet the special needs of the immigrants at the neighborhood level, protests about Anti-Asian images in the media at the cultural level, the demand for access to resources at the economic level, the fight for the inclusion of representation at the political level, and the preservation of a historic district at the geographic and historic levels. She documents the different processes, strategies, conflicts and results of these mobilization efforts in transforming the Asian American community by creating solidarity in San Diego.

Võ's book sheds important light on community mobilization on the basis of ethnicity in a diverse society. There is no single approach or strategy of mobilization effort that can be applied in all settings. In building alliances and setting agendas, community leaders and activists must pay particular attention to the interplay
between the commonalities as well as differences among the stakeholders. The author also shows how community workers need to handle key issues related to community interest. The author has much to offer community organizers. This thoughtful and insightful book is a useful addition to the limited literature on community mobilization among ethnic minorities in general, and Asian Americans in particular.

*Julian Chun-Chung Chow, University of California, Berkeley*


Corporate social responsibility has become a popular concept in business circles. Based on the idea that business corporations should not be guided primarily by the profit motive but by a wider commitment to contribute positively to the well-being of the communities and societies in which they operate. This idea reflects a growing concern about business ethics and the need for corporations to pursue their activities in ways that are respected by consumers and citizens alike. Faced with growing public hostility as a result of recent well-publicized scandals, the business community is increasingly concerned about ethical issues and the need improve its image.

Although the concept of corporate social responsibility is still poorly defined, it is often used to refer to the provision of financial support by commercial firms to charitable organizations and their efforts to link up with the nonprofit sector. This collection of papers provides further insights into how the concepts of corporate social responsibility is currently used. Based on a conference organized by the Center for Innovation in Social Responsibility (CISR) at Columbia University in October 2001, the book contains ten chapters dealing with different aspects of the topic. These are fairly wide-ranging covering issues such as the involvement of corporations in community development, efforts to improve media reporting of social issues, the contribution of corporations to environmental protection, ethical responsibility in the legal profession, the work of Latino non-profits in the United States, and the spending policies of foundations. The book's opening
chapter by Jonathan Cohen provides an overview of the field and discusses the different ways in which corporations can promote socially responsible activities and, at the same time, be influenced by governments, nonprofit organizations and international development agencies. In this regard, he pays particular attention to the United Nations Global Compact which was introduced in 1999.

There is much in this book that will be helpful to readers wishing to know how the concept of corporate social responsibility has been interpreted and implemented around the world. However, the book’s diverse chapters are not linked together in a coherent way and some seem to be misplaced. For example, chapters dealing with the digital divide, the professional values of lawyers and the future of community-higher education partnerships do not shed much light on the way business firms can, as the editors point out, “give something back to their communities.” Nevertheless, the book contributes to the growing literature on corporate social responsibility and should be of interest to both scholars and practitioners in the field of social welfare which has not traditionally shown much interested in the potential contribution of business corporations to community well-being.
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Submit manuscripts to: Robert Leighton, School of Social Work, Arizona State University, P.O. Box 871802, Tempe, AZ 85287-1802. Send three copies together with an abstract of approximately 100 words. Since manuscripts are not returned by reviewers to the editorial office, the editorial office cannot return them to the authors. Submission certifies that it is an original article and that it has not been published nor is being considered for publication elsewhere. Receipt of manuscripts will be acknowledged by email.

Progress reports can be obtained by emailing the editor at rleightn@asu.edu. Reviewing normally takes 120 days.

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

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

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

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