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WR-Prevention

DRAFT

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Prevention Options

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"Interventions with pre-adolescents to increase educational and career aspirations and address school failures" DoEd

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Overview

The prevention issue group focussed its attention on childbearing by unmarried teenagers. The number of births to, and the birthrates of, unmarried teenagers have both increased steadily for several decades, accelerating in the mid-1980s. By one estimate, about half of all women who had a first child as an unmarried teenager were AFDC case-heads within the year following the birth.¹ About half the female case-heads currently receiving AFDC had their first child as a teenager.² *

Some of the options presented below are mutually compatible and some are mutually exclusive. Although they are presented within a unifying behavioral framework, they represent the range of the members' knowledge and advice, not a group consensus.

Our review found few interventions with at-risk teenagers that had more than very modest impacts on childbearing. Even well-designed programs to correct deficiencies in knowledge of sexuality, academic performance, behavioral problems, and opportunity so far have been unable to demonstrate much impact on teenagers most at-risk. For some innovative programs, this may only mean that rigorous evaluations have not been performed. In some such cases, we recommend further research and testing, or cautious expansion.

From the small effects of interventions aimed at teenagers, and research pointing to the roots of risk-taking behaviors in early family and school experience, the group infers that earlier interventions may be the best hope for more significant impacts. Unfortunately, the prevention potential of early interventions remains largely a matter of faith rather than hard evidence.

Research and common sense agree that disadvantaged teenagers must be convinced that they have something to lose in their futures before they will avoid risky behaviors. When the incomes of men and women who finish high-school and marry before having children are compared to the incomes of drop-outs and single-parent families, the economic consequences of becoming an unmarried teenage parent are strikingly evident. Arguably, finishing high-school and marrying before having children will tend to protect even disadvantaged adolescents from poverty better, and raise their incomes more, than any of the new opportunities the issue group proposes. Even disadvantaged teenagers already have a lot to lose by dropping out and becoming unmarried parents. So the group proposes alternative ways to make this simple truth more apparent to those who need to know it.

¹ 1993 Green Book, Committee on Ways and Means, WMCP 103-18, p.728.

² Facts at a Glance, (Child Trends Inc., Washington), March 1993.

Several initiatives, including school-to-work, One-Stop Career Centers, and implementation of the new youth title II-C in the Job Partnership Training Act, are the core of the Administration's efforts to increase economic opportunities for adolescents from poor families. On this foundation, the prevention issue group builds several options for opportunity interventions targeted directly at the behaviors that lead to welfare and poverty. Post-secondary education guarantees, and priority in a range of education and training programs, could be linked to avoiding unmarried teenage parenthood and crime and, as appropriate, completing high-school. To promote educational interests and aspirations in students with low academic achievement, both demonstration research and wider implementation of the career academies model is proposed. For adolescent female drop-outs with histories of low academic performance who yet have avoided parenthood, the JOBSTART intensive training and services model seems worth developing further. Employment guarantees are discussed, in the forms both of tax credits (for employers who offer trial employment to disadvantaged secondary students who graduate and avoid crime and parenthood) and government-created jobs in the most distressed neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, there is reason to believe that what can be done to increase economic opportunity will not be enough. Early prevention is also needed so that disadvantaged children arrive at adolescence more ready to recognize educational and economic opportunity and able to take advantage of it. The President's health care reform proposal would assure all parents a comprehensive package, including prenatal and preventive health benefits essential for early child development. In the areas of family support, Head Start, and Chapter 1 reauthorization, the Administration is strengthening programs that provide early developmental services that many are convinced hold the key to prevention of later self-destructive behavior.

Some children most at-risk are born into families with multi-dimensional, multi-generational problems aggravated by the neighborhoods in which they live. For such children, the group believes that prevention may require fundamental changes to the economic, social, and educational structure in some inner-city neighborhoods, and comprehensive services approaches to the persistent problems of inner-city families. Two demonstration approaches are proposed. Environmental change also is the basis of the prevention objective in a proposal to increase relocation of inner-city families receiving rental assistance.

In light of the fact that the mid-teens may already be too late to provide prevention interventions for some youths, an option to fund development of model middle-schools is proposed, as are options to develop federal guidelines for comprehensive health education curricula (including sexuality education) beginning with the early grades and continuing through high-school, and school-related health services, including family planning counselling and services.

Ultimately, however, risk-taking behavior, including unprotected sex, is neither pre-determined by childhood experiences nor compelled by hormones and peers.

Accordingly, many of the prevention issue group's options deal with ways of promoting more responsible behavior. The President has made it clear that the responsibility of parents to support their children will be a central message of welfare and child support reform. Recognizing that low-income programs are intended to provide a second chance both to those who are victims of circumstances and to those who have made mistakes, the prevention issue group presents a number of options intended to send a more consistent message in public programs that actions have consequences and people are responsible for their actions.

To underline the prevention potential in welfare reform's message of responsibility, the group stresses the importance of early mandatory participation in education and training for teenage case-heads during time-limited eligibility for cash aid, and simple, uniform time-limits with few exemptions for very young mothers. Because responsibility attaches to both parents, several options are proposed to increase the likelihood that fathers of children born to teenage mothers will be targeted for child support enforcement.

Options are presented to encourage the strengthening of a number of voluntary social institutions that promote development of character and responsibility in adolescents. White House support for volunteer programs that deal with disadvantaged children one-on-one is also proposed under the theme of Reach One Child.

The pervasive influence of television is the subject of two options, one for the Surgeon General to enter a dialog with the television industry about responsible presentation of public service messages about sexuality and teenage risk-behaviors and advertising of contraceptives. A broader option proposes a Presidential commission to extend our state of knowledge about the effects of television on character development and sexuality and to explore the positive potential of the medium in these areas.

Research gives little basis for hope that individual programs and policies to encourage responsibility or increase opportunity will have a large effect on the risk-taking behavior of adolescents. However, prevention is not the only, not even the major, justification for policies of responsibility and opportunity. More equality of opportunity is an end in itself, and expanding education and other human capital development programs for those with little opportunity serves that end. Similarly, the legitimacy of the public's desire that government programs should expect responsible behavior from citizens does not depend on whether that expectation is fulfilled.

Nonetheless, what we know about human behavior gives us reason to hope that the small behavioral effects of individual programs in isolation may understate the

prevention effects of a message of responsibility and opportunity communicated more consistently in public policy. To the extent that prevention of behaviors leading to welfare dependency and poverty is an objective, the goals of opportunity and responsibility should be pursued in a way that consistently reinforces their message to youth.

A. Prevention through a clear message of responsibility

Options to send clear messages about the responsibility of parents to support their children might include the following:

- A1. Minor mothers, who are by definition not adults, should live under adult supervision and should not be able to use welfare benefits to establish independent households. Options for consideration include: a) mandate states to require minor mothers to live with their parents or in other supervised settings; b) eliminate AFDC eligibility for minor mothers, and require them to rely on their parents for support. *state option? (unless paternity is established)*
- A2. During eligibility for cash assistance, participation by young mothers in education, training, and employment activities should be mandatory soon after eligibility is determined.
- A3. Time limits for assistance should be easy to understand and not avoidable by deliberate action, except by leaving the rolls.
- A4. Special efforts should be undertaken to establish paternity and child support orders for the children of teenage mothers. Options for consideration include: a) lower federal AFDC match rates for cases without established paternity; b) lower benefit levels for children without established paternity; c) incentives to states to establish paternity and child support orders for the fathers of the children born to teenagers; d) incentives for teenaged mothers to cooperate in paternity and child support efforts.

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A message of parental responsibility is at the center of the Administration's welfare and child support reform initiative. This message will reach at-risk youth as changes to options they face. A life on welfare will not be among their possible futures, and males will have no futures as deadbeat dads. A welfare prevention effect may result if this change in options deters³ some sexual risk-taking.

Welfare changes may seem too abstract and remote to influence behavior as unplanned and unreflective as teenage sexuality. However, it is widely held that some kinds of remote future consequences do have such an influence. One of the most

³ When present behavior is influenced by a wish to avoid a future consequence, the process can be termed 'deterrence.' Ordinarily, the term is used in the context of discussions of rewards and punishments. Here, the term is intended to mean only what it means if we say that a sign warning of the danger of falling deters someone from walking too near the edge of a precipice. Falling is not a punishment for ignoring the sign and walking too near the edge, it is a consequence.

frequently expressed views about teenaged childbearing is that lack of economic opportunity is a major contributing factor.⁴ Adolescents are more likely to undertake risky behavior when they perceive that they have little to lose.⁵

We have little proof that risk-taking can be deterred among at-risk youth either by a message of opportunity or by a message of responsibility. Discussion of the effect of increasing opportunity will be left to another section of this options paper. Research on the effects of welfare policy on childbearing has generally declared them to be small, at most. Attention has been mainly limited to the question of whether variation in AFDC benefits, either among states or over time, is correlated with birth-rates or family structure. Only a weak link has ever been measured.⁶

However, the effect of variations in AFDC benefits among states or over time probably is not a very good guide to what would happen if we end "welfare as we know it." Time-limits and community service work requirements would constitute a radical change in the daily life of welfare recipients. Would these and other welfare policy options actually deter teenage sexual risk-taking? What we know about how consequences influence behavior suggests that the probability of a consequence is at

⁴ Several examples are cited in Cheryl D. Hayes, Risking the Future, Adolescent Sexuality, Pregnancy, and Childbearing, (National Research Council, Washington) 1987, Vol I, pp.118-9. Other examples may be found in, Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto, Dilemmas of Social Power, Wesleyan University Press, (Middletown, CT, 1989), p.72; Irwin Garfinkel and Sara McLanahan, Single Mothers and Their Children, (Urban Institute, Washington), 1986, p.85; Elijah Anderson, "Neighborhood Effects on Teenage Pregnancy," in Christopher Jencks and Paul E. Peterson (eds), The Urban Underclass, (Brookings Institution, Washington) 1991, p.397; Greg J. Duncan and Saul D. Hoffman, "Teenage Behavior and Subsequent Poverty," in The Urban Underclass, p.172; Chong-Bum An, Robert Haveman, and Barbara Wolfe, "Teen Out-of-wedlock Births and Welfare Receipt: The Role of Childhood Events and Economic Circumstances," unpublished paper.

⁵ The exact mental and emotional processes by which expected consequences (especially remote consequences like lost economic opportunity) may influence the sexual behavior of teenagers are far from clear. A conventional view would be that a person takes an action if he or she prefers the consequences expected from taking it to the consequences expected from not taking it. With at-risk teenagers, a number of intervening factors may cloud and confuse this kind of rational process. The remote consequences may not be well-understood, or the likelihood of them resulting from the action may be assessed poorly. Some analysts point to immaturity, impulsiveness, or a high discount of any long-term future consequences, among youth in general and especially at-risk youth. The behavioral model informing the following discussion is drawn from the Appendix to Crime and Human Nature, James Q. Wilson and Richard J. Herrnstein, (Simon and Schuster, New York) 1985.

⁶ Robert Moffitt, "Incentive Effects of the U.S. Welfare System: A Review," Journal of Economic Literature, March 1992, pp.27-31. Gregory Acs, "The Impact of AFDC on Young Women's Childbearing Decisions," (Urban Institute, Washington) 1993. Duncan and Hoffman, 1991. Charles Murray, "Welfare and the Family: the U.S. Experience," Journal of Labor Economics, 1993, Vol.11, No.1, pp.s224-s262.

least as important as its magnitude. In other words, the frequency of exemptions from community service requirements may have more to do with deterrent impact than the kinds of behavior required.

Option A1 - Minor-mother policies

While it has been estimated that half the mothers receiving AFDC at a point in time had their first child as a teenager, in an average month in fiscal year 1992, only around 8 percent (or 305,000) female "adult" recipients were 19 years of age or younger. (Less than 5 percent were 18 or younger. Less than 2 percent were under 18.) Analysis of longitudinal data sets has shown that considerable time may elapse between birth of a child to a teenager and the mother's application for AFDC.⁷ Consequently, it is easy to conclude that policies aimed at minor-mothers on AFDC are not likely to have much welfare prevention impact.

However, two factors of welfare dynamics suggest that minor-mother policies may have a larger impact than the share of teenage case-heads in a current cross-section of the AFDC caseload suggests. First, the share of the female adult recipients of AFDC represented by teenaged mothers increased by nearly half from 1987 through 1992. The entire AFDC caseload increased rapidly during the recent economic downturn. However, teenaged mothers increased faster. The share of the AFDC caseload they represented increased by about one-fourth during this period, an annual average rate of increase of 4 percent. *

Second, unmarried teenaged mothers who do not finish high-school and who have little work experience are likely to become long-term dependents. Many teenagers on the rolls now will still be on the rolls, or will have returned, when they reach their mid- and late-20s. If 8 percent of the current caseload has a case-head less than 20, and that group averages ten years on the rolls, between one-fifth and one-fourth of current AFDC cases may be headed by mothers who came onto the rolls as teenagers.

Since the Family Support Act of 1988, states have the option of requiring many never-married minor-mothers to live with their parents or in some other supervised setting, rather than establishing their own households. In such cases, protective AFDC payments are made to the supervising parent or adult, rather than to the minor-mother. Exceptions are made if the mother had already moved out a year prior to giving birth or applying for AFDC, or if the safety of mother or child might be endangered.

⁷ 1993 Green Book, p.728.

The rationale for the Family Support Act policy was concern that at-risk females could view early motherhood and AFDC as a way to escape often difficult home environments.⁶ However, currently, only six states have taken this option, two as part of demonstrations. To the extent that the original concern was well based, it does not appear that the current State-option policy will address it very widely.

Option A1(a) - The current policy could be converted to a mandate. Obviously this would increase the likelihood that minor-mothers would be required to live with their parents as a condition of AFDC eligibility. On the other hand, the fact that so few states have adopted this option suggests that a mandate would not be received enthusiastically. Current law permits states to exempt minor-mothers for a variety of reasons, including some that would be easy for states to apply very liberally. It appears that states could, to some extent, undermine the effects of a mandate with which they disagreed. The simplified behavioral model sketched above tells us that uneven and uncertain application of the requirement would tend to reduce its deterrent effect.

At some administrative cost, documentation of exceptions could be required as part of the case record. However, it is not clear what effective sanctions for failure to comply could be applied to states. On the other hand, too vigorous a pursuit of states for allowing too many exceptions could result in minor-mothers being required to live in family situations that are unsafe for them or their children.

It seems unlikely that significant savings would result from this option. It probably is too soon to see impacts on caseloads in states adopting the current option. However, the proportion of the caseload headed by minor mothers, the fact that they retain eligibility in their parents' homes, and the possibility that states could avoid the mandate through frequent exemptions all work against significant impacts.

Option A1(b) - Recently, Robert J. Samuelson became one of the more well-known advocates of eliminating welfare eligibility for minor-mothers altogether. Such a policy would make larger changes to the consequences of teenage childbearing than Option A1(a), and these changes would be certain to apply to all individuals. On both dimensions, the deterrent effect of Option A1(b) is likely to be greater.

On the other hand, the policy would have other consequences that weigh against it. Some teenagers would not be deterred. Without any AFDC eligibility as caretakers, they might remain eligible for noncash aid, and for cash aid in some states, much like

⁶ In "The Impact of AFDC on Family Structure and Living Arrangements," Bane and Ellwood had found that single mothers were more likely to establish their own households in states with higher AFDC benefits.

General Assistance currently. Some would also be forced back upon their parents for support, or might choose to marry or work, all responses that arguably are usually better than welfare dependency. However, some unpredictable number of teenage mothers would not respond by increasing income from other sources, and the effect of Option A1(b) would be to reduce the already modest income available to the dependent children in the family.

Option A1(b) is a special case of a broader deterrent approach. Perhaps the easiest, and probably the most effective, way to highlight the consequences of bearing children without the means to support them is simply to reduce welfare eligibility and benefits. (For example, the behavioral effect of time-limits with no subsequent work guarantee probably would be greater than the effect of time-limits followed by community service.) However, a deterrent objective needs to be balanced against the welfare of dependent children whose parents are not deterred.

In addition, if minor-mothers are not eligible for AFDC, they cannot be required to participate in programs for AFDC caretakers designed to make them more self-supporting. The Teenage Parent Demonstration showed the practicality of increasing the education, employment and earnings, and reducing welfare dependency, among teenage mothers on AFDC.

The current ASPE estimate of eliminating eligibility for minor mothers shows \$270 million per year in federal savings, AFDC net of food stamp offsets. No behavioral effects are modeled. In addition, if some of the children of disqualified minor-mothers were placed in foster care, the great differential between foster care benefits and AFDC benefits would further reduce federal savings. Making minors ineligible to be AFDC case-heads a state option would reduce the impact as well.

Options A2 and A3 - Simplicity and certainty of participation requirements, time-limits, and work requirements

Major features of the President's welfare reform - time limits followed by community service - send the message of responsibility. Basic behavioral theory tells us that the message will be diluted for at-risk teenagers if many AFDC parents are to be exempt (particularly very young mothers), if activities during the time-limit look like welfare as we know it, or if the length of the time-limits may vary very much from individual to individual. It is not just the nature of possible consequences, but also the perceived likelihood of their occurrence that influences behavior. Consequences that are more remote, or are otherwise perceived as less probable, will have less effect on choices - such as the choice to take fewer risks with sexual behavior.

If at-risk youth in neighborhoods with concentrations of AFDC families see that many of their neighbors' lives are unaffected by requirements to participate in training activities, or by time limits on cash assistance, they are likely to discount the probability that they themselves might be subject to mandatory participation and time-limits. So broad and imprecise exemption categories would tend to dilute the message of responsibility.

On the other hand, if mandatory participation is not required during the period of eligibility for cash assistance, or if time-limits varied considerably from case to case, the message of responsibility would tend to become more remote. Responsibility for supporting children through work would move further out into the future.

With young teenagers in general, and with at-risk teenagers especially, research shows a sharp discount of remote consequences.⁹ The connection between actions and consequences is often limited to a short time horizon. While the actual deterrent impact of mandatory participation and time-limits remains to be seen, if a deterrent effect on at-risk teenagers is an objective, the remoteness of the consequences should be a key consideration.

Requiring mandatory participation by a larger proportion of AFDC recipients and limiting exemptions to the participation and post-transitional work program may increase the deterrent impact of welfare reform but it may also increase costs overall. Of those on the rolls, a greater proportion would be in activities (education and training or community service) that involved costs beyond benefits and normal administration. Whether overall costs would be higher or lower would depend on whether these added activity levels had deterrent and exit effects large enough to offset the higher average case costs. That can be determined only by experimentation.

Currently, all non-exempt teenage caretakers who have not finished high-school are supposed to be engaged in educational activities. If AFDC were limited to two years and followed by community service with no behavioral effects, the cost of 100 percent participation in education and training during the transition period, and in community service after two years, for teenage parents while they were teenagers might amount to around \$1 billion in education, training, child care, and community service costs.¹⁰

⁹ Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985, pp.146-7, 174, 205. For a more skeptical view, Cheryl D. Hayes and Sandra Hoffreth, Risking the Future, Adolescent Sexuality, Precnancy, and Childbearing, (National Research Council, Washington), Vol II, pp.33.

¹⁰ The estimate is drawn from a cohort-based model using exit and return rates from "The Dynamics of Welfare Use: Implications for Implementing a Time-Limited Welfare System," circulated to reviewers by Wendell Primus on September 29, and unit cost estimates from "Costs of Employment-Support Services Under Welfare Reform," circulated by Wendell Primus on October 5.

The incremental cost of requiring immediate participation and imposing simple time limits on teenage parents would be the difference between this \$1 billion maximum cost and the participation and time-limits otherwise planned for teenage care-takers.

Option A4 - Child support enforcement for the fathers of children born to teenagers

The President's welfare reform proposal will stress the responsibility of both parents to support their children. For noncustodial fathers, the message of responsibility will be delivered through the child support enforcement system.

Currently, the threat of being forced to live up to his responsibility to provide regular financial support for any children he may father is not a very real to at-risk teenage males. It is estimated that paternity is established in about one-third of all cases where children are born to unmarried mothers.¹¹ Only about 24 percent of unmarried mothers have court orders for child support, and only about 73 percent of these receive any of the support they are due.¹² If the partners of at-risk teenaged women were more certain that they would be required to support any children they fathered, they might modify their risk-taking behavior to avoid that possibility.

To improve state performance with paternity establishment, the U.S. Commission on Interstate Child Support recommended, and the child support issue group appears prepared to support, a model of voluntary and decriminalized paternity establishment, with the State of Washington as the example. The voluntary acknowledgement model builds on the fact that most unwed parents maintain contact prior to the birth of the child, but that contact falls off rapidly thereafter. Many, maybe a majority, of unmarried fathers visit the hospital after delivery. The voluntary recognition model provides education about the importance of paternity and an opportunity for the father to acknowledge his newborn largely independent from the question of child support.

It seems evident that emphasis on voluntary acknowledgement, maybe coupled with efforts to transfer paternity practices from more effective to less effective states, could improve the rate of paternity establishment. If paternity establishment became really universal, there would be no need for policies reflecting a particular prevention perspective. However, a number of factors suggest that voluntary acknowledgement, decriminalization, and interstate technical assistance by themselves will not achieve universal paternity establishment.

¹¹ Testimony of David Ellwood before the Human Resources Subcommittee, June 10, 1993, Table VI.

¹² Gordon H. Lester, Child Support and Alimony: 1989, Bureau of the Census, 1991, P-60, No. 173, Table C.

First, while many unmarried fathers visit their partners and children in the hospital after delivery, many do not. In a recent study of several hundred births to unmarried parents in Minnesota, Esther Wattenberg estimated that about two-thirds of the fathers visited the hospital.¹³ At this point, we have to speculate whether the same high percentage are present in the most disadvantaged large urban neighborhood. In any case, it looks like at least one-third of unmarried fathers currently would not be reached by a voluntary acknowledgement campaign aimed at birthing hospitals.

Additionally, as voluntary acknowledgement programs become more common, two kinds of responses that would tend to limit their effectiveness may be expected. First, as it becomes known that efforts to identify fathers for child support enforcement take place in hospitals, fewer fathers will visit their partners, and those who do will be less recognizable to staff. While some unmarried fathers are quite willing to acknowledge paternity and accept responsibility for support, others are not. The link between voluntary acknowledgement and support orders, which may not be evident to unmarried fathers when voluntary acknowledgement programs are new, will become well known to the extent that they are effective in increasing orders and support collections. An avoidance behavioral response on the part of unmarried fathers must be expected.

Second, it appears that the effectiveness of voluntary acknowledgement programs is partially a function of separating paternity establishment from child support enforcement. Staff can stress the aspects of paternity establishment that unmarried fathers find appealing and costless. But it seems likely that legal representatives of unmarried fathers eventually will seek to have the link with child support enforcement made more evident in voluntary acknowledgement processes, so that unmarried fathers will become increasingly aware that it may not be in their interest to acknowledge paternity.

So it appears that voluntary acknowledgement strategies will not reach a large share of unmarried fathers, and that the effectiveness of the strategy may tend to diminish over time. Accordingly, any voluntary acknowledgement strategy should be supplemented with policies that will be effective when unmarried fathers do not have a volition to acknowledge paternity.

Options A4(a) and (b) - If federal reimbursement for state AFDC benefits were lower in cases where paternity was not established, the consequences to states of an ineffective IV-D program would be more immediate than under current law. If states were permitted to lower benefits in cases without paternity establishment, some or all of the incentive to establish paternity would pass through to the AFDC mother.

¹³ Cited in, David Ellwood and Paul Legler, "Getting Serious About Paternity," January 1993 draft.

Lower federal reimbursement for cases without paternity could be implemented in a number of ways. First, the rate of federal reimbursement could be lowered in such cases, assuming the benefit remained the same. All the pressure would be on the state. Second, the state could be permitted to provide lower benefits in such cases. If the benefit were lowered but the rate of federal reimbursement remained as it is, all the pressure would be on the mother to establish paternity. In fact, because states would have lower outlays in cases where paternity was not established, there would be a financial incentive for states not to pursue paternity.

The right balance would seem to involve pressure on both the state and the family, meaning benefits set lower, but state outlays not reduced in such cases. For example, in a state with a 50 percent federal match, the matching rate for cases without paternity might be reduced 20 percent to 40 percent. Similarly, if a state's matching rate were 80 percent, a federal withdrawal of 20 percent in matching would leave 64 percent. At the same time, the benefit might be reduced 10 percent. Both the family and the state would have an incentive to establish paternity. The 20 percent level is chosen only for illustration. The optimal level of reduction in federal reimbursement and benefits to families remains to be determined.

Immediate full-scale implementation of a variable reimbursement policy could overwhelm the IV-D capabilities of states. In addition, paternity establishment appears to get increasingly difficult the older a child is. Families already on the AFDC rolls for several years would have a harder time avoiding lower benefits than families with newborn children. For both reasons, a policy of lower federal reimbursement and lower benefits in cases without paternity establishment might be implemented for children conceived and born after passage of the necessary legislation.

If a 20 percent reduction in federal reimbursement rate made no difference to state paternity establishment performance, and the policy were implemented for the entire caseload at once, annual federal savings would amount to more than \$1 billion. Applying the new policy only to applicants (whether first-time or returners) might save between one-third and one-half of that amount. Covering only first-time applicants would reduce savings by more than half again. If states were permitted to reduce benefits by 10 percent in such cases and states with one-half the caseload did, around one-sixth of the AFDC savings to the federal government would be offset by food stamp increases.

savings

Option A4(c) - Incentives for states to focus on cases with teenage mothers

Instead of being threatened with a stick of lower IV-A matching rates for cases without paternity established, states could be enticed with carrots of federal incentives to devote resources to establishing paternity in every case where a mother was a minor

at the conception or birth of her first child. At present, these cases frequently lead to relatively low collection levels, and correspondingly low rewards for states.

By design, an incentive approach could be implemented at the rate states found optimal. The principal consideration would be funding for the incentives. However, as with the option of changing federal IV-A reimbursement rates, the policy could be combined with other adjustments in current federal matching and incentive rates to provide more federal funds, save federal funds, or be roughly cost-neutral.

Option A4(d) - Incentives for teenage mothers to cooperate with paternity and child support efforts

Currently, as a condition of AFDC eligibility, mothers are required to cooperate with efforts to establish paternity and obtain child support. However, there is some evidence that unmarried teenage mothers often regard paternity and child support enforcement as "capricious, arbitrary, and punitive," "shrouded in uncertainty and complexities," that might "hamper future or current relationships with other partners." Accordingly, they follow a "strategy of avoidance," whereby they are not sanctioned for failure to cooperate, but frustrate child support efforts.¹⁴

Paternity testing methods can now give positive results with a very high degree of certainty. Adjudication of the fact of paternity in a trial setting is becoming increasingly uncommon. However, in order for the improved testing to be used to prove that an individual is the father, usually the mother must name him as such, and often she must play a central role in locating him.

To improve the cooperation of teenage or minor-mothers in establishing paternity and obtaining a child support order, the minor-mother options discussed above could be made conditional on paternity establishment. In other words, minor-mothers might be required to live in supervised settings, or their eligibility might be restricted, unless paternity for their children had been established.

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An alternative incentive scheme might supplement voluntary in-hospital paternity programs by offering a gift in some way earmarked for the newborn. Such a policy might promote the willingness of both unmarried teenaged parents to cooperate, especially if the bonus were offered soon after delivery, when the identity and location of the father were easiest to determine. However, even if the father did not cooperate voluntarily, the program could be effective if the mother identified him and provided information necessary to locate him.

¹⁴ Robert I. Lerman and Theodora Ooms (eds). Young Unwed Fathers. (Temple University Press, Philadelphia) 1993, pp.220-1.

Such incentives might gain public support if they were effectively earmarked for the infant. In light of the low rate of paternity establishment overall, and the high rate at which unmarried teenage mothers end up on the AFDC rolls, this incentive program has some potential to generate offsetting savings. Assuming around 400,000 births to unmarried teenagers in a year, a \$200 gift earmarked for every newborn could run \$80 million. Assuming three-fourths of the mothers have a spell on welfare, and that an increase in \$800 in child support enforcement collections were received from one-third of those fathers (net of the \$50 pass-through to custodial families), the taxpayers would break even (though the states would come out a little ahead and the federal government a little in the hole under current rules for distribution of child support collected from fathers of AFDC children).¹⁵

¹⁵ In 1989, the mean amount of child support received by never-married mothers was \$1,888. (Lester, 1991, Table 1) Probably the average incomes of the fathers of AFDC children born to teenage mothers would have lower incomes than the average for the child-support-paying fathers of all children born to unmarried mothers. A net increase in collections of \$800 from one-third of such fathers seems realistic.

B. Prevention through increased opportunity

The link between teenage risk-taking and lack of economic opportunity is well established. If such behavior follows from a belief that there is little to lose, then it should be possible to modify the behavior by improving the educational and economic opportunities that the behavior puts at-risk. Modifications could take the form of changes to the prevalence of opportunity, or changes to the ability of at-risk youth to take advantage of the opportunities that are available.

Many Administration initiatives are intended to increase opportunity for children and youth, including Head Start increases, implementation of family preservation legislation, and a major overhaul of Chapter 1 that aim at early prevention by giving disadvantaged children a better developmental and educational start. Once they have reached adolescence and young adulthood, the Administration's school-to-work and One-Stop Career Centers initiatives are designed to enhance their educational and employment opportunities.

Other options could be tailored for prevention among the populations most at-risk :

- B1. The JOBSTART intensive training and services model, could be refined with an eye to increasing its demonstrated preventive impact on 17-24 year-old childless female drop-outs.
- B2. The message that responsible sexuality pays-off could be strengthened by: a) guarantees of post-secondary education opportunities for at-risk youth who graduate, do not commit crimes, and do not become unmarried teenage parents; b) priority for placement in education and training programs for youth conditioned on the same kinds of good behavior.
- B3. To increase the educational aspirations of young at-risk teenagers, both demonstration research and wider implementation of career academies for low-achieving youth could be supported.
- B4. To both address the problems large urban employers have in finding entry-level employees with adequate basic skills and work habits, and to increase the certainty with which at-risk youth can view the benefits of responsible behavior, tax credits could be tested for firms that will make hiring guarantees to inner-city junior-high and senior-high students who finish school, don't commit crimes, and don't become unmarried teenage parents before they graduate.
- B5. A government jobs program targeted at 18-25 year-olds in urban underclass neighborhoods, and conditioned on avoiding parenthood and crime, and

maintaining acceptable school performance, could replicate the strong effects that the Youth Entitlement Demonstration had on employment and improve on that demonstration's lack of apparent effect on childbearing.

- B6. A public information campaign and school curriculum development initiative could increase awareness of parents and adolescents of the economic consequences of finishing school and living in a two-worker family.
- B7. Housing vouchers could be used to relocate housing assistance recipients to neighborhoods where educational and economic opportunity is greater.
- B8. Any positive impacts found by the rigorous evaluation of the School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program could be the basis for promoting a reorganization of middle-schools serving large numbers of at-risk students and a restructuring of the educational program they provide. Both technical assistance and incentive funding could be employed.

The association of teenage childbearing with low economic opportunity is clear. A principal intervening variable is education. While education levels and achievement are associated with higher levels of employment and earnings, teenage childbearing and its antecedents are associated with academic and behavioral problems in school, probably both as cause and effect. Low scores on intelligence tests and low valuation of education are associated with early initiation of sex among both males and females.¹⁶ Similarly, low levels of educational aspiration, poor school performance, and low parental education are all associated with poor contraceptive use.¹⁷ Early initiation of sex and poor contraceptive practices are two of the chief determinants of pregnancy risk. Subsequently, teenage mothers are likely to drop out of school.¹⁸ Among a cohort recently followed from eighth grade through twelfth, between one-quarter and one-half of female drop-outs, gave pregnancy or becoming a parent as the reason.¹⁹ Although some researchers have found significant numbers of teenage mothers later completing high-school or GED programs, even the most encouraging

¹⁶ Hayes, 1987, p.100.

¹⁷ Hayes, 1987, p.107.

¹⁸ Hayes, 1987, p.126.

¹⁹ Marilyn M. McMillen, et al., Dropout Rates in the United States: 1992, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 93-464, Table 20. The table describes the reasons given by those that dropped out between the 10th and 12th grades. A parallel table in the 1991 report showed similar proportions of those dropping out between the 8th and 10th grades giving these responses.

data only show the education gap between former teenage mothers and others diminishing, not disappearing.²⁰

Low educational achievement makes it more difficult for former teenage mothers to support their families through their earnings, and more likely that they will become dependent upon welfare for long periods. In one study using longitudinal data, 43 percent of long-term welfare recipients had become mothers before they were 18.²¹ ✓

Although influencing the sexual behavior of at-risk teenagers is a primary focus of prevention strategy, earlier interventions to prevent the academic and behavioral problems associated with early initiation of sex are also indicated. Research suggests that the roots of some behaviors associated with later school failures and behavioral problems are very deep, stretching back into the first years of life, and the earliest interactions between parent and child. To be effective, some interventions may have to occur at that stage as well.

A number of current Administration initiatives are intended to alter the circumstances facing disadvantaged children and thereby improve their educational and economic opportunities. The President's health care reform proposal would assure all parents a comprehensive package, including prenatal and preventive health benefits essential to early child development. Recent data from the Bureau of the Census show that, in 1992, nearly eight million related children in families were not covered by any health insurance at any time during the year, 2.4 million under six years of age.

In the coming year, HHS will implement a new subpart of title IV-B of the Social Security Act that provides grants to states for family preservation and family support services. By 1998, these grants will grow to \$255 million, and are intended to strengthen families and improve parenting skills that research has shown are critical to the development in children of trust and character.²²

Evaluation of the Perry Preschool Program demonstrated that even very early interventions can have measurable welfare prevention effects, as well as a range of other positive outcomes.²³ The doubling of Head Start spending since 1989, reaching

²⁰ Hayes, 1987, p.127.

²¹ Nicholas Zill, et.al., "Welfare Mothers as Potential Employees: A Statistical Profile Based on National Survey Data," (Child Trends, Inc., Washington) 1991, p.32.

²² Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985. pp.226-240.

²³ John R. Berrueta-Clement, et.al., "Changed Lives, The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths Through Age 19," (High/Scope Press, Ypsilanti MI) 1984, Table 13.

\$2.8 billion and about .7 million children in 1993, demonstrates a strong commitment by Congress to early intervention and prevention. For 1995, Secretary Shalala has proposed to increase Head Start funding to \$4.3 billion, and plans to reduce the gap between the promise of the Perry Preschool results and the reality of Head Start operations by implementing recommendations of her Head Start Advisory Committee, whose report is due soon.

The Administration's "Improving America's Schools Act of 1993" (IASA) would increase the educational opportunity of disadvantaged children by sending more of the available funds to the schools that need it most. Schools with the highest poverty levels among their students would see a 15 percent increase in Chapter 1 funding. But, as evaluations have consistently shown, to improve educational outcomes, all students must be subject to higher expectations, and parents must become more involved in the educational progress of their sons and daughters. IASA promotes both these objectives by requiring states to develop content and performance standards and measure schools and local education agencies against them, and by encouraging parental involvement in school policy development and school-parent compacts setting out the responsibilities of parents in reaching performance standards.

Several other Administration efforts will contribute to greater educational and economic opportunity for older children and youth. To prevent under-funding of middle- and high-schools, IASA would require Chapter 1 funding be available to all schools with student poverty rates of at least 75 percent before funding other schools.

The Administration's "School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1993" will provide "venture capital" to states to develop school-to-work systems built around school-based learning, work-based learning, and connecting activities. The transition from school-to-work is critical for all youth, not just at-risk youth. However, special grants will be available for urban and rural areas characterized by high unemployment and poverty.

Year-round training and employment services will be available both to disadvantaged youth under the newly recast title II-C of the Job Training Partnership Act. Amendments in 1992 set aside half the funds for drop-outs, who have been found to be hard to serve effectively. The Administration's proposal for One-Stop Career Centers would make it much more likely that at-risk youth, and others, would successfully negotiate the tangle of government program rules to identify and obtain the education and training opportunities most appropriate for them.

These Administration initiatives seek to reduce the number of teenagers who are at-risk of bearing or fathering a child, and to influence the choices of those who are at-risk by offering a chance at a better future. In addition, experience with past efforts to achieve these goals suggests several other options.

Option B1 - Further development the JOBSTART model for childless teenage female drop-outs

JOBSTART was a demonstration of a package of intensive education and training services and job placement assistance conceived as a non-residential Job Corps.²⁴ One group that appeared to benefit from JOBSTART was made up mostly of very disadvantaged childless adolescent females.²⁵ Despite foregoing some earnings and employment experience by participating in the demonstration, by the second year, annual earnings of that subgroup of JOBSTART participants apparently passed the earnings of the comparable controls and the gap continued to widen in years three and four. However, although the pattern of improved employment was clear, the difference did not reach the level of statistical significance.²⁶

Importantly, while about half of this subgroup had given birth by the end of the four-year follow up, this appeared to be a lower rate than among the controls (although the apparent difference was not statistically significant).²⁷ Moreover, in each of the last three years of follow-up, AFDC reciprocity was significantly lower among participants than among controls.²⁸

²⁴ Participants were low-income 17-21 year-old drop-outs reading below an eighth-grade level. The median length of JOBSTART participation was six months. The 13 JOBSTART sites varied in the implementation of the model along several dimensions. However, all sites were to implement four central components: 1) instruction in basic academic skills, with considerably individualized curricula; 2) classroom and hands-on occupational skills training for high-demand occupations; 3) support services, including transportation, child care, life skills training, and needs-based incentive payments tied to program performance; 4) job placement assistance. George Cave and Fred Doolittle, "Assessing JOBSTART: Interim Impacts of a Program for School Dropouts," (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, New York) 1991, p.xii.

²⁵ More precisely, subgroup members were not living with any children of their own on enrollment into JOBSTART. Evaluators are not sure how many might have been mothers living apart from their children. For convenience, this group will be called childless.

²⁶ George Cave, et.al., "JOBSTART: Final Report on a Program for School Dropouts," (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, New York) 1993, Table 5.6.

²⁷ Cave, 1993, Table 6.6.

²⁸ Cave, 1993, Table 6.2. It appears that at least two factors contributed to these lower levels of welfare receipt among participants. First, a smaller percentage of experimentals became mothers. Second, a smaller percentage of those experimentals who became mothers received AFDC. Higher earnings among recipients appears to account for the difference. It appears that JOBSTART may have prevented some welfare entries not just by reducing childbearing but also by increasing the earnings of some women who did bear children.

While not a silver prevention bullet, JOBSTART is one of a very few opportunity-enhancement models with demonstrated welfare prevention impacts. The apparent JOBSTART fertility impacts lend at least weak support, and the significant welfare impacts lend stronger support, to earlier similar findings of a less-rigorous evaluation of Job Corps, on which JOBSTART is modelled. Despite the uncertain employment and earnings impacts and unfavorable short-term cost/benefit ratio,²⁹ some further refinement of the model should be considered.

A JOBSTART variation targeted on childless female drop-outs could be tested. Reanalysis of the JOBSTART data would look for administrative or program design features that appear to be associated with impacts on the subgroup. Those features would be combined in a multi-site demonstration. A well-designed family planning services component would be considered as an enhancement to the model.

A demonstration strategy, rather than broader implementation, is warranted by the modest size of the prevention impacts and unanswered questions about the exact mechanism of the impacts and how they might be enhanced. At present, the JOBSTART model for childless female drop-outs does not promise a large prevention effect, but it does represent one of the only opportunity enhancement interventions with a demonstrated prevention effect.

Option B2 - Condition some education and training funds on avoiding unmarried teenage parenthood

One recurrent theme in the remarks of a group of experts invited by the issue group to discuss prevention strategies was that current government programs are perceived by youth as favoring those who get into trouble. For the unmarried 16 year-old girl who has a child, the government has AFDC, food stamps, medicaid, and perhaps housing assistance. She may have enough income from government aid to escape a difficult

☆☆☆
→ No
AFDC, FS,
or housing
under
19
= Having

²⁹ JOBSTART was an intensive intervention, with costs that were high in comparison to other non-residential JTPA programs. Average costs for the core components per JOBSTART participant varied widely among sites (\$2,200 to \$9,900), in part due to the length of the program in the sites. Impacts on earnings and welfare receipt did not appear to be diminishing in later quarters, and so probably would continue to accrue beyond the accounting period employed by the evaluator. In addition, non-monetary benefits of the program, such as some benefits of additional education, could not be included. With those qualifications, the evaluators acknowledge, "... the program's bottom line after four years of follow-up from both the taxpayer and societal perspectives appears to be largely negative." (Cave, 1993, p.228) In effect, taxpayers' investment of around \$4,500 per JOBSTART participant was not offset after four years by about \$1,100 in welfare savings from women without children (Cave, 1993, Table 7.8). For those women, increases in earnings were more than offset by lower transfers.

home situation and set up her own household. In very disadvantaged neighborhoods, her income may make her more popular.³⁰

Moreover, in some localities, teenage mothers may attend special secondary school programs. Through the JOBS program, they may have individualized plans developed that include secondary and post-secondary education and training opportunities.

Whether or not beliefs about preferential treatment for teenagers who do not defer childbearing are well-founded, it would not be unreasonable for an at-risk teenager to conclude that avoiding teenage parenthood made little difference to his or her educational and training opportunities. In fact, if a teenager had a history of frustration and failure in her conventional schooling, a hiatus to have a child followed by a much briefer GED preparation course and community college could look appealing.

If the message society wants to send is that minors should not become parents, the availability of federally-funded education and training opportunities does not support it. In behaviorist language, human capital rewards are not contingent upon the desired behavior. To strengthen the message that society values responsible sexuality and that it rewards individuals who avoid becoming teenage parents, eligibility for some federal education and training programs could be conditioned on good behavior. While there is no evidence that the availability of post-secondary education aid is a factor in adolescents' decisions about childbearing or crime, the broader link between opportunity and these behaviors is well established.

However, behavior-conditioning options discussed here and below have potential for two kinds of unwanted consequences that must be kept in mind. First, while rewards for avoiding unmarried teenage childbearing would be intended to reduce the frequency of unprotected sex, it could also increase the frequency of abortion. Second, depending on how the reward for good behavior were designed, the policy might result in less help available for teenage mothers and delinquents.

Two strategic policies in targeting education and training are inherently in competition. On the one hand, good behavior should be encouraged. On the other hand, a second chance should be available. Conditioning eligibility for Job Corps, for instance, on avoiding a criminal record might encourage teenage males to avoid crime, but, depending on demand for the available slots, it could also exclude some delinquents from a program that might put them back on the right path.

To balance the two strategic objectives, superior opportunities might be available based on good behavior, without excluding others entirely. For example, those

³⁰ Anderson, 1991, p.398.

meeting behavioral criteria might be eligible for special programs or greater benefits not available to others. Option B2(a) is such an option. Alternatively, behavior might be a criterion of priority where the number of opportunities is limited. For example, Job Corps slots might be filled first with those who both meet the current eligibility criteria and also have not become teenage parents or acquired criminal records prior to acceptance into the program. Option B2(b) is such an option.

Option B2(a) - Teenagers from poor families who graduate from high-school without committing crimes or becoming unmarried teenage parents could be guaranteed Pell grants for up to four years at qualified institutions. In a sense, Pells are guaranteed to eligible students now. Major design features of this proposal could include: i) public information campaigns in schools with concentrations of students from poor families; ii) variation in the Pell maximum for this segment of the program; iii) behavioral conditions for eligibility.

*

cf BC in Arkansas

i) Although Pells are virtual entitlements to students identified as eligible by qualified institutions, they (and other federal post-secondary aid) are largely invisible to needy secondary students and their families. Typically, higher education aid is administered and awarded by post-secondary institutions. A secondary student will not know what aid he will receive until he is accepted by an institution. The message that the government will help pay for college for any qualified student does not get through. A public information campaign could carry this message to students and their families, to some extent increasing the perceived value of avoiding trouble and pursuing education.

ii) Teenage parents and youth with criminal records may qualify for Pells, and for other forms of federal post-secondary aid. Publicizing the availability of educational assistance could, itself, brighten the future at-risk youth associate with good behavior. However, it would not reward good behavior. If changing the reward structure is the goal, it would be necessary either to reduce aid available to those who exhibit behavior to be discouraged, or increase aid to those who exhibit the behavior to be rewarded.

change?

In light of the fact that maximum Pell amounts are well below the costs of full-time attendance at most two-year or four-year colleges, a higher maximum could be allowed for especially needy students. These good-behavior-Pells would attach to individual secondary students, rather than being administered and awarded by post-secondary institutions like other Pells.

iii) Conditioning educational opportunity rewards on avoiding teenage parenthood inherently exerts an unfairly differential impact on females, in that it is much easier for males to avoid detection. To deflect criticism of the policy on that grounds, the higher

assistance could also be conditioned on avoiding conviction of a crime. That condition would impact males more than females, although mostly because males are more likely to commit a crime, rather than because females are better at avoiding detection.

Critics would note that needy students are being singled-out for behavioral conditioning. In the last analysis, the proposal would have to be defended for what it was, an effort to reward the good behavior of a subgroup of teenagers for whom misbehavior tends to be more common and more costly to society.

Because Pell maximums currently are determined essentially by dividing appropriated funds by the number of eligible students, a higher maximum to reward good behavior by needy students could, in theory, be cost-neutral, if amounts to other Pell recipients were reduced. Alternatively, reward funds might be added to Pell appropriations. In either case, the amount of reward funds required would depend upon the good behavior conditions, the means-test, and uptake rates. For example, in academic-year 1989-90, about 10 percent of dependent students came from families with incomes below \$10,000.³¹ A doubling of the \$2,300 maximum Pell grant amount for 10 percent of the 4.4 million current recipients would amount to about \$100 million. It would be very difficult to have confidence in any estimate of the number of current recipients who might qualify for the higher amounts on behavioral grounds, let alone any behavioral effects the guarantee might have.

small change

Option B2(b) - Reasons similar to those advanced for B2(a) could also argue for giving priority in a range of education and training programs to otherwise-eligibles who also met good behavior standards.

With some programs and in some localities, good behavior priority might not have much practical impact. If applicants are not being turned down for program slots, prioritizing will not have much effect on who participates. Nevertheless, priority for good behavior is a policy theme that could be expressed simply and applied broadly, qualities that would tend to enhance public awareness and prevention effects. And, since neither eligibility nor assistance levels are changed, spending should not be affected.

On the other hand, this policy might lead to fewer, or at least less desirable, second chances in programs, such as some Job Corps centers, where there are more applicants than slots. To adopt this option, the importance of modest changes in the reward structure implicit in government education and training programs would have to

³¹ Chuck Bryce and Carl Schmitt, Financing Undergraduate Education, (National Center for Education Statistics, Washington) NCES 93-201, Table 2.4.

be judged to outweigh similarly modest reductions in the second chance opportunities for teenage parents and delinquents.

Option B3 - Career academies for low-achieving students

Options discussed so far are aimed either at those who drop out of school or those who can succeed in high-school and benefit from post-secondary education. However, we know that characteristics associated with risk of fathering or bearing a child may make it difficult for at-risk teenagers to graduate from regular high-school programs. What can be done for teenagers with low educational achievement before they become drop-outs?

The Administration's School-to-Work Opportunities Act includes career academies among its school-to-work models. The career academies model is nearly a quarter century old, starting in Philadelphia in 1969 and spreading throughout the city, to Pittsburgh, Portland, California, and, recently, to Florida. The three core elements are: a) a small learning community, or school-within-a-school organization, that seeks a long-term relation between students and teachers and a supportive peer culture; b) a specific occupational or industrial theme, such as health or electronics; c) involvement by local employers as advisers, mentors, and suppliers of equipment.³² In comparison to actual apprenticeship programs, career academies offer programs to large numbers of disadvantaged students at modest incremental costs (MDRC reports that the California career academies are among the more expensive, at around \$1,000 per student per year, in large part because career academies in California maintain lower teacher/student ratios than regular high-school programs). The original Philadelphia career academies were designed for students who would not qualify for the usual vocational programs because of low academic skills (but reading at least at a 5th grade level), low motivation, or lack of particular career interests.³³ However, gradually the share of less disadvantaged students in career academies has increased.

Impact analysis of the California career academies based on matched comparison groups suggests that they achieve the objective of reducing drop-out rates. However, evaluation based on a more rigorous design is needed before the direction and magnitude of education and employment impacts can be known. And the childbearing and welfare prevention of career academies remain open questions.

³² Thomas Bailey and Donna Merritt, "The School-to-Work Transition and Youth Apprenticeship: Lessons from the U.S. Experience," (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, New York), 1993, p.20.

³³ Bailey and Merritt, 1993, p.29.

The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation has begun a rigorous evaluation of 10-12 career academies with substantial numbers of at-risk students. One option would be to support and perhaps expand this demonstration research effort. The objectives could be: to achieve more focus on students with the greatest academic and behavioral problems; to test models with shortened initial in-school curriculum followed by employment and supplementary part-time academics; to build up the uneven health education and family planning supports in the career academy model; to make childbearing and welfare prevention an impact variable in the current research. Such support and expansion might involve several million dollars over the stage that runs the next several years.

As an alternate or complement, a concerted effort to disseminate the model could be made in implementation of the school-to-work program. Research to this point may be supportive enough to encourage wider implementation of the model, recognizing that program modifications might be justified when results of MDRC's evaluation program are available. The career academy model could be promoted through technical assistance and advice from the federal level, and with federal planning and implementation incentive funds for schools that adopt the model.

Options B4 and B5 - Tax credits for employers who promise jobs to at-risk students and a targeted public jobs program for at-risk youth

The impact of future consequences upon present behavior depends upon the nature of the consequences and how far into the future they would occur, but also upon the subject's assessment of the probability that they will occur at all.³⁴ Arguably, the certainty attached to welfare is one its most powerful behavior-influencing features.

In neighborhoods where employment rates are very low, teenagers are more likely to rate their own future employment prospects as low. Alternative approaches for guaranteeing employment would aim to increase the probability at-risk youth assign to the likelihood of future employment. Both might affect risk-taking in two ways. First, if they increased employment among older youth, such programs would probably increase an expectation of employment in younger youth just based on the experience of others. Second, the stated guaranteed nature of the employment (in one variety, guaranteed to the individual) would tend to further increase the subject's confidence that he or she would be employed eventually.

In addition to affecting risk-taking behavior by increasing hope, guaranteed employment approaches could shed new light on whether low employment among

³⁴ The simple behavioral model implicit in this section is drawn from the Appendix to Wilson and Herrnstein, 1955.

some subgroups is driven more by supply or demand factors. The Youth Entitlement Program of a decade ago provided strong evidence in support of demand theories. However, supply theories persist and the possibility cannot be dismissed that employment characteristics of at-risk youth and availability of alternate income sources has changed since the early 1980s.

Option B4 - This option borrows features from Eugene Lang's promise of college educations to a class of disadvantaged junior high-school students, but promises employment rather than college. Junior-high or high-school students would be promised a period of trial employment with a future if they complete high-school, do not acquire a criminal record, and do not bear or father a child before graduating.

Experience with Eugene Lang's original cohort showed that many students did not keep up despite the promise of college. It appears that supplemental in-school services, including mentoring, might be necessary for the program to have its largest impact. Similarly, the disappointing early years of the Boston Compact show that employer support will depend upon the ability of problem schools to make improvements in the way they fulfil their primary educational mission.

Potential employers would be sought among large public and private employers in the locality. However, smaller employers could be recruited as well, as long as the promise was made to individuals rather than, for example, a whole class or school.

Local employers, such as the phone company and other service sector businesses, who hire large numbers of skilled and unskilled employees for work in or close to the disadvantaged neighborhood would have an incentive to participate. Such employers probably would benefit from the good behavior screener, if, as appears to be the case, good behavior in school tends to correlate with better educational outcomes. Employers also would have reasonably good advance knowledge of the levels of qualified candidates they could expect to hire. As an elaboration of the model, employers might help develop and deliver workplace expectations training for those to whom the promise was made. However, to reach large numbers of students, the program would not require the kind of specialized skill training and work experience elements characteristic of apprenticeship models.

Aside from training and hiring assistance, employers would receive tax credits for some portion of wages paid to participants retained for some specified period. Experience with the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit and other job subsidies aimed at structural unemployment has not been very encouraging. Uptake among employers has been disappointingly low, apparently due to high administrative burden and stigma attaching to the subsidized applicants. However, somewhat larger credits in a

program that screened youth for good behavior may be perceived as worthwhile by employers who must hire large numbers from the local labor market in any case.

The cost of a credit program would depend upon how broadly the model was implemented, the size of the employer credit, and the level of supplemental services employed. Probably, a development and demonstration phase ought to be tried first to test designs to maximize employer response and to find out whether the theoretical prevention effect would materialize.

Option B5 - A targeted government job creation program probably would raise employment more effectively than a tax-credit-subsidized job-promise program like Option B4. While tax-credits would depend upon private sector uptake, which historically has been low in such programs, job creation programs have greater control over the level of employment generated.

The large-scale 1978-1980 Youth Entitlement Program had an average of 20,000 to 25,000 disadvantaged 16-19 year-olds employed in full-time summer jobs and part-time jobs during the school year in 17 demonstration sites. What we know about the impacts of YEP is based on a quasi-experimental evaluation that affords less confidence than experimental designs that are more common now. With that caution, it appears that YEP raised youth employment rates in program sites 68 percent higher than in matched comparison sites.³⁵ Participation was especially high among black youth, 73 percent of those eligible took minimum wage jobs and held them for over one year.³⁶ Employment rate differentials between black and white male youth disappeared during the program.

It should be noted that, although the Youth Entitlement Program succeeded in raising youth employment dramatically during the program period, and smaller impacts persisted more than one year after the program ended, YEP apparently did not have a prevention effect. School drop-out and childbearing rates were about the same in program and comparison sites.³⁷ On the other hand, YEP was not conditioned directly on avoiding teenage parenthood, and the level of family planning counselling and services that were available to participants is unclear.

³⁵ Judith M. Gueron, "Lessons From a Job Guarantee, The Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects," (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, New York) 1984, p.33.

³⁶ Gueron, 1984, p.45.

³⁷ George Farkas, et.al., "Post-program Impacts of the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects," (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, New York) 1984, pp.52-3, 148.

Both tax credits and public jobs would be expensive interventions, and would have to be limited to the most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Insofar as tax credits would offset only part of the wages paid by private employers to students hired through Option B4, the YEP model's full government subsidy would tend to cost more per job.

Option B6 - Making the case that "following the rules" pays

Many members of the welfare reform working group were surprised by charts showing the gaps in income between single parent families and married couples. If a group of well-informed social program experts was not fully aware of the economic consequences of risk-taking behavior, it seems likely that the general public, including at-risk teenagers, is not aware either. Yet the general strategy of increasing opportunity to reduce risk-taking among adolescents assumes they can make realistic assessments of the possible futures open to them.

In 1992, the poverty rate for married couples was 6.2 percent, 8.4 percent if they had children.³⁸ But if both a husband and wife with children worked, their poverty rate was only 3.6 percent. By comparison, female householders with children had a poverty rate of 45.7 percent, still 29.6 percent if the householder worked, and 10.6 percent even if she worked full-time, year-round.

For black families, the rates generally were higher, but in about the same relationships. Only 6.9 percent of two-earner black couples with children were poor in 1992, not much higher than the 3.9 percent of two-earner white couples who were poor. By comparison, 57.2 percent of black female householders with children, and even 38.8 percent who were working were poor. In 1992, black female householders with children were about four times as likely to be poor as black couples with children.

A similarly dramatic picture appears out of comparisons of poverty by education level. Among whites with no high-school diploma, 22.0 percent were poor in 1992, but only 8.5 percent of those who had a high-school diploma (but no college). Among blacks, 42.7 percent of those without, and 24.6 percent of those with a high-school diploma were poor.

Income statistics tell the same story. Median income among white married couples aged 25 to 34 years was \$40,271, while for white female householders it was

³⁸ These and other poverty and income statistics in this section are taken from, Poverty in the United States: 1992, Bureau of the Census, P-60, No 185 and Money Income of Households, Families, and Persons in the United States: 1992, Bureau of the Census, P-60, No. 184.

\$12,590.³⁹ For black couples aged 25 to 34 years, median income was \$32,196. For black female householders it was \$8,476. A large part of the difference in income by marital status was due to the number of earners in the family. Median income among one-earner white families in 1992 was \$28,666; for two-earner white families it was \$46,895. The median black one-earner family had \$16,131, while the median two-earner family had more than twice as much income, \$34,950.

On closer look, the message turns out to be more complicated. Poverty seems to vary more by race than education. And it is likely that the education and family structure groups differ in many other ways relevant to income and poverty. Because white male high-school graduates aged 25 to 34 years had median earnings about twice as high as young white males who never completed 9th grade, it does not follow that these drop-outs would double their earnings by completing high-school. Nonetheless, these numbers carry a strong message that completion of high-school and marriage before having children effectively prevents poverty.⁴⁰

To make such facts known to the at-risk adolescents who might make better decisions if they knew them, a bully-pulpit or school curriculum approach might be developed. An ongoing public information campaign, using high federal officials or celebrities as spokespersons, might be appropriate, in that it could reach a wide audience with a simple and brief, but repetitive, message.

Alternatively, a better understanding of choices and opportunities might be fostered by development of model life-course economics curricula for middle-school students. A review of available life-options education materials would be a good first step in assessing the extent to which the economic consequences of risk-taking behaviors are adequately covered. If these subjects are not being treated adequately in available materials, development of new materials and a dissemination plan would be the next step.

Option B7 - Moving to opportunity

Beginning with a 1976 settlement of a housing discrimination suit, residents of the Gautreaux housing project in Chicago had the opportunity to relocate. Some moved within the city, and some to suburbs. Evaluators who compared the experiences of the two groups of voluntary movers found that the suburban movers were 14 percent more likely to be employed. Educational and employment outcomes for their children

³⁹ More precisely, the age of the householder was 25 to 34 years.

⁴⁰ See also, Charles Murray and Deborah Laren, "According to Age," prepared for the Working Seminar on the Family and American Welfare Policy, 1986.

were even more positive. The evaluators find support for a demand-side explanation of low employment in inner-cities.⁴¹

It is expected that HUD's 1995 Budget submission will propose to devote around 50,000 housing vouchers to support a moving-to-opportunity program along the lines of the Gautreaux experience. A voucher represents a 30-year commitment, at about \$5,000 - \$6,000 per year. HUD is expected to seek additional moving-to-opportunity vouchers for the out-years. In addition to the vouchers, for which budget authority already exists, HUD probably will seek about \$150 million for counselling participants.

The 50,000 vouchers do not represent all the new vouchers budgeted for 1995, so the number devoted to moving-to-opportunity could be expanded without additional discretionary outlays. However, dedication of very large numbers of vouchers to families with children who will relocate outside inner-cities may increase the length of time that other eligibles, such as the disabled and elderly and families not residing in inner-cities, must wait for housing aid.

Based on evaluation of Gautreaux, moving-to-opportunity promises a significant prevention impact. In addition, relocation programs present an important opportunity to advance the goal of integration of residential neighborhoods. However, a number of questions about the design of the evaluation should make us cautious about expecting that a wide replication of the model will result in impacts of the size found with Gautreaux.⁴²

⁴¹ James E Rosenbaum, "Black Pioneers - Do Their Moves to the Suburbs Increase Economic Opportunity for Mothers and Children?" in Housing Policy Debate, Vol 2, Issue 4, pp.1170-1213.

⁴² The Gautreaux movers (both intra-city and suburban) had relatively high education and employment levels. Only about 20 percent were drop-outs, and about 35 percent had some college education. About 60 percent of the intra-city movers and about 64 percent of the suburban movers were employed before their moves. It is not clear that the positive impacts apparent in the Gautreaux data would be duplicated with a more disadvantaged population.

The possibility that those moving out of the city to the suburbs may have been a more motivated group cannot be ruled out. The evaluators compare observable characteristics of the intra-city and suburban movers and conclude that they are not different in relevant ways. However, motivation is hard to infer from observable characteristics. To make sure that the only difference between the two groups is their destination, random assignment of families to city or suburban apartments would have been desirable. The evaluators point to the fact, "Although participants are allowed to refuse two housing offers, most accepted the first offer they receive ... fewer than half moved to their preferred location." (James E. Rosenbaum and Susan J. Popkin, "Employment and Earnings of Blacks Who Move to Middle-Class Suburbs," in Jencks and Peterson, 1991, p. 346.) This is not a very precise statement of the potential for self-selection and its relation to the magnitude of the impacts claimed. If only 1 percent turned down the first apartment offered, we could be confident that self-selection into suburbia was not

Option B8 - Middle-school intervention

In the 1988 Survey of Family Growth, about one-in-four unmarried 15 year-olds reported that they were sexually active.⁴³ The 1990 Youth Risk Survey found that 40 percent of 9th graders reported having had sexual intercourse.⁴⁴ By the 10th grade, 7 percent of all students who were 8th graders in 1988 had already dropped out of school, 10 percent of black students.⁴⁵ Truly preventive interventions will have to come earlier than the 9th or 10th grade for many at-risk children.

In a 1990 report, "Turning Points," the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development formulated a series of recommendations to change the way our middle-schools (grades 7-9) are organized and the ways they try to meet the educational and other needs of pre-adolescents. Themes of the recommendations included smaller learning "houses" within large middle schools, team teaching, adult advisors for each student, development of capacities for critical thinking, life sciences, citizenship education and community service, mixing students of different abilities, empowerment of teachers, specific training for teaching in middle-schools, comprehensive health services, involvement of parents, and support by the business community.⁴⁶ While some of the recommendations address problems of risk-taking behavior directly, others seek changes to the educational experience of middle-schools that will bring children to adolescence better-able to recognize opportunities and to take advantage of them.

Beginning in 1991, a total of 85 projects were funded by the School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program to test many of the elements of the Carnegie Council model. Five school restructuring programs and 18 projects targeted to at-risk middle- and high-school youth will be subject to impact evaluations, with the targeted

responsible for a 14 percent employment increase. However, if one-third turned down an offer in order to get their preferred destination, that could easily account for the observed impact.

Finally, analysis was based on a survey to movers with a response rate of 67 percent. Response rates for the study of children were even lower. The evaluators took steps to check for bias introduced by these low rates, and concluded that none was likely.

⁴³ "Premarital Sexual Experience Among Adolescent Women - United States, 1970-1988," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Centers for Disease Control, Jan 4, 1991, Table 1.

⁴⁴ 1992 Green Book, p.1092.

⁴⁵ McMillen, 1993, Table 19. By the end of 12th grade, 11.6 percent of the original 8th grade cohort were no longer attending. Some of those dropping out by the 10th grade had returned.

⁴⁶ "Turning Points, Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century," abridged version, (Carnegie Council On Adolescent Development, New York) 1990, pp.10-26.

programs evaluated based upon random assignment of at-risk youth to the model program or to control groups. For the four-year life of the demonstrations, federal funding will reach about \$150 million. Required grantee matching funds will amount to about another \$50 million.

The targeted projects may be organized as special programs for at-risk youth, schools-within-schools, alternative schools, or other arrangements. Projects must include accelerated learning, attendance monitoring and follow-up, family outreach, counseling, career awareness and vocational training, social services, and links to feeder schools and the business community.

In light of the substantial demonstration research resources invested in this drop-out prevention effort, it would be premature to promote wider implementation of model middle-school elements before the results of the demonstration are available in 1995 and 1996. At that time, assuming positive results, the Administration might strengthen the requirement (currently in IASA) that Chapter 1 funds reach the poorer middle-schools, and consider technical assistance and incentive funding to adopt model elements with demonstrated impacts.

C. Family planning

By one estimate, about one-half of all initial premarital pregnancies occur within the first six months of sexual activity. About one-in-five occurs in the first month.⁴⁷

Clearly, if teenagers were better contraceptors when they first became sexually active, significant reductions in unintended pregnancies would be possible.

Options to improve contraception knowledge and practice among teenagers when they first become sexually active:

- C1. Develop guidelines for a sexuality education curricula as part of a comprehensive health education program, beginning in the early grades.
- C2. Increase the outreach efforts of family planning services agencies, enhance counseling services provided by those agencies, and increase the accessibility, both in location and hours of operation, of those agencies to teenagers through school-based and school-linked services.
- C3. Through title X, make a special outreach to AFDC mothers with daughters in their early teens. 7
- C4. Through the Office of the Surgeon General, invite television network and local station executives and family planning experts to: a) develop acceptable public service messages and programming promoting: i) delaying initiation of sex; ii) the moral and prudential importance of contraception at the first (and every) sexual experience; iii) the safety and effectiveness of available methods to prevent pregnancy and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases; b) undertake an industry review of the presentation of extramarital sex, responsible contraception, and the consequences of teenaged childbearing in entertainment programming.

Option C1 - School health education and school-related health services

Teenagers often evince mistaken views about reproductive processes and contraception. Although about three-fourths of adolescents report having received some sexuality education before leaving school,⁴⁸ the extent and timing of the education is uneven. Only about 10 percent receive a comprehensive program; most

⁴⁷ Cheryl Hayes and Sandra Hoffreth (eds) Risking the Future. Adolescent Sexuality, Pregnancy, and Childbearing. Vol II, (National Research Council, Washington), 1987, p.64.

⁴⁸ Hayes and Hoffreth, 1987, p.211

receive sex education as a subsection of a health or physical education curriculum, devoting ten hours or less to the subject.⁴⁹

Sex education has been shown to be successful at increasing knowledge of the subject. Some studies have found indications that contraceptive practice also increases as a result of sex education. However, impacts on pregnancies or childbearing have not been shown.⁵⁰

When sex education is pigeonholed into 10 hours of instruction, it may not be surprising that its impact on behavior is minimal. By presenting sexuality education in the context of a comprehensive health education program, it would be possible to explore the connections between basic reproductive processes and other aspects of the students' lives and relationships to others.

The President's health care reform proposal includes support for comprehensive school health education (including sexuality education) focussed on reducing behaviors associated with preventable morbidity and mortality. Communities would develop a variety of comprehensive health education curricula following broad state and federal guidelines.

It does?

The level and timing of federal support for these efforts remains to be specified. This option proposes that the school health education and school-based health services elements within health care reform receive priority attention and funding, in light of their potential for the prevention of poverty and welfare.

Option C2 - Access to services

Although it does not appear that sex education itself increases initiation of sexual activity,⁵¹ it also should not, by itself, be expected to prevent early initiation and the one-half of pregnancies that occur within the first six months. Clearly other factors besides lack of knowledge are at work. The message from the best research is that education about sexuality and counselling on decision making, the advantages of delaying initiation, and life options combined with access to contraceptive information and services, constitute an effective combination.

⁴⁹ "Preventing Teenage Pregnancy," CQ Researcher, Congressional Quarterly, Inc., May 14, 1993, p.423, Hayes and Hoffreth, 1987, p.144.

⁵⁰ Hayes and Hoffreth, 1987, pp.215-6.

⁵¹ Hayes and Hoffreth, 1987, pp. 215-6.

About two-thirds of females who first had intercourse when they were under age 15, and about one-half from 15 to 17, and about two-fifths of those aged 18 or older report not using any contraceptive method. Among the great majority who indicate that intercourse was unplanned, only 12 percent reported in a survey that they did not know about contraception.⁵² About the same proportion said they did not want to use contraceptives, or did not care whether they got pregnant. About the same percentage said contraceptives were not available. Well over half said they did not use contraceptives because intercourse was not planned (34 percent) or because they "didn't think about using contraceptives" (24 percent). Males were somewhat more likely to report not knowing about contraceptives, and much more likely to report that they did not want to use contraceptives. 58%
impulsive

Review of focus group discussions with teenage females find that a reluctance to acknowledge (to parents or self) being sexually active is a prime reason for not using contraceptives, along with the unplanned nature of sexual activity, a desire by one partner or the other that the experience should be "natural," and embarrassment in purchasing contraceptives.⁵³

Although more effective sexuality education clearly can address lack of knowledge about contraceptives, policies are needed to improve availability and to provide effective contraception even when, as is especially the case among very young teenagers, intercourse is unplanned and the parties do not "think of" protecting themselves. Less than half of teens receiving family planning services receive them from a private physician.⁵⁴ Although outreach by family physicians might be encouraged, teenagers' reluctance to acknowledge being sexually active may constitute more of a barrier to family physicians than to family planning clinic staff.⁵⁵

Outreach and enhanced counseling services by family planning clinic staff may be able to reduce the delay between initiation of sexual activity and request for family planning services. The Self Center, a three-year demonstration project for inner-city minority junior and senior high-school students in Baltimore, apparently made impressive impacts on postponement of first intercourse among females, clinic

⁵² Hayes and Hoffreth, 1987, p.398.

⁵³ Lulu Mae Nix, et.al., "A Focus Group Study of Sexually Active Black Male Teenagers," Adolescence, Vol XXIII, No 91, Fall 1988, pp.748-9. Freya L. Sonenstein, "Risking Paternity: Sex and Contraception among Adolescent Males," in Adolescent Fatherhood, Arthur Elseter and Michael Lamb (eds), (Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc., Inc., Hillsdale, NJ) 1986, pp.44-47.

⁵⁴ Hayes, 1987, p.154.

⁵⁵ Hayes, 1987, p.159.

attendance by females prior to first intercourse, and reductions in conceptions while a comparison group of schools saw sharp increases.⁵⁶ It should be noted that impacts on teenage childbearing were also driven by increased abortions.

The very encouraging results of the Self Center, and a school-based clinic in Minneapolis/St.Paul, have not been confirmed by a recent evaluation of six school-based clinic sites. Those sites, which appeared to deliver a broad range of health services to underserved students successfully, had only minor positive impacts on pregnancies.⁵⁷ The level of support for family planning education and services in these school-based sites appears to have been lower than in the more successful Self Center model. In addition, the school-linked arrangement of the Self Center, which allowed it a measure of privacy, and also allowed access by teenagers not attending school and during hours and days when school was not in session, has also been cited as a design feature responsible for its larger prevention impacts.

As noted above, the President's health care reform package includes school-related health services (including family planning services) as an important element in its prevention orientation. This option proposes that family planning services for at-risk teenagers receive priority in implementation of health care reform, and also that implementation of the school-based health services strategy not be delayed until implementation of health care reform. Title X family planning obligations for 1992 were \$150 million, or about 60 percent of the 1981 level, in constant dollars. Neglect of family planning during the previous two Administrations should not continue during debate over the shape of health care reform and planning for its implementation.

Option C3 - Outreach to an especially vulnerable population

Research points to one especially vulnerable population that justifies a special outreach effort. Receipt of welfare as a dependent child by itself appears to increase the likelihood that teenagers will bear or father children.⁵⁸ But whether or not receipt of welfare itself independently increases the likelihood of teenaged parenthood, children in welfare families are likely to possess other characteristics associated with teenage childbearing. Daughters in mother-headed families initiate sexual activity

⁵⁶ Hayes, 1987, p.172-3.

⁵⁷ Theodora Ooms and Lisa Herendeen, "Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Programs: What Have We Learned?" Family Impact Seminar, May 1989, p.11.

⁵⁸ Duncan and Hoffman, R. Lerman, "Who are the Absent Fathers?," Youth & Society, 18:3-27, 1986.

earlier than daughters from intact families.⁵⁹ About half the single mothers on welfare at any point had their first children as teenagers, and a correlation has been found between a mother's age at first birth and her daughter's.⁶⁰ Low levels of parents' education is associated with a lower probability of contracepting at first intercourse and greater likelihood of bearing a child outside marriage.⁶¹

In short, the daughters of mothers receiving welfare are unusually at risk of becoming teenage mothers and welfare case-heads themselves. This danger clearly is a great concern to their mothers. In survey data, 76 percent of mothers in welfare families agreed with the statement that having a child as an unmarried 16 year old was one of the worst things their teenage daughters could do.⁶²

Based on their risk levels, the prevention potential from reaching out to these mothers and helping them to protect their daughters from repeating their mistakes is great. In light of concern in the African-American community about contraception requirements for welfare mothers proposed by governors and state legislatures in the last few years, the outreach initiative should be purely voluntary, appealing solely to the mother's concern for her daughter's future. The objective would be to support the prevention methods chosen by the mother as most suitable, including efforts to delay onset of sexual activity. However, the same immaturity in young teenagers that makes it appropriate to enlist their parents in prevention interventions in the first place has been shown to undermine effective compliance with contraceptive regimens. Accordingly, we would expect that parents would often choose a method that, like an immunization, does not depend for its effectiveness on any conscientious behavior by the teenager.

good

While welfare agencies would be needed to make the referrals, family planning clinics should do the outreach, in order to minimize any apprehension about coercion. The outreach effort might be staffed sympathetically by other welfare mothers in transitional and post-transitional community service assignments.

Option C4 - Television's role

The family planning options discussed so far would operate largely through some of the social institutions that usually transmit norms of sexual and parental responsibility

⁵⁹ Hayes and Hoffreth, 1987, p.25.

⁶⁰ Hayes and Hoffreth, 1987, p.24.

⁶¹ Hayes and Hoffreth, 1987, pp.63, 87.

⁶² Special tabulations by Child Trends, Inc. of data from the 1987 National Survey of Children.

from one generation to the next - families, schools, and religious institutions. Unfortunately, teenagers most at-risk often have weak ties, if any, to those institutions.

It is widely believed that the value-transmitting function of those pillar-institutions has been replaced in the lives of many youth by peer groups and the mass media, particularly television.⁶³ Another section of this paper will discuss options for influencing broad messages about family and responsibility transmitted through peer groups and television. Here we note possible connections between television and responsible contraceptive practices.

A number of other industrialized nations have been found to have levels of teenage sexual activity similar to ours, but levels of both abortion and teenaged childbearing that are well below the United States.⁶⁴ One of the reasons cited for the difference, is the different level of public acceptance of contraception, evidenced in public information and media advertising.⁶⁴

In the United States, the broadcast media have rejected contraceptive advertising because a significant segment of the audience they hope to attract would find it objectionable. Reluctance to air certain kinds of contraceptive-related public service messages has also been found.⁶⁵ However, substantial majorities of the public would not find such advertising objectionable, and the majority grows to about three-fourths when the question mentions the role of condoms in fighting sexually transmitted diseases.⁶⁶ The logic behind avoidance of contraceptive advertising is further strained by survey data showing that the television industry does accept advertising for other products which larger minorities of the public find objectionable.

It is time for a national discussion of the low level of contraceptive information and messages about responsible use in the media. This initiative would involve a research element, to review and develop evidence about the role of contraception advertising and public information on the lower pregnancy rates in Western Europe. It would also include discussions between the Surgeon General, prevention experts, and television executives (including both network executives and representatives of the much more segmented cable programming), about how to make sure that teenagers most at-risk

⁶³ Hayes and Hoffreth, 1987, p.27. "Attitudes About Television, Sex, and Contraceptive Advertising," Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1987, p.3.

⁶⁴ Draft Office of Population Affairs paper, "Adolescent Pregnancy and Childbearing: International Comparisons"

⁶⁵ Hayes, 1987, p.151.

⁶⁶ Planned Parenthood Federation, 1987, p 6

in the viewing audience are not receiving the wrong messages, and are receiving the right messages and information, about responsible sexuality.

D. Prevention and social institutions

The discouraging trends in childbearing by unmarried teenagers are largely driven by initiation of sexual activity at younger ages. In 1970, one in twenty unmarried 15 year-olds reported being sexually experienced; in 1988, it was one in four.⁶⁷ Longer exposure to the risk of pregnancy and less maturity and competence in contraception among young teenagers are the major contributors.⁶⁸ Plausible economic explanations for this trend have not been advanced. And, while age of menarche has declined significantly over the long-term,⁶⁹ it will not account sufficiently for shorter-term trends or differences among population subgroups.

We are left with looking for the roots of this trend toward earlier and earlier onset of sexuality in changes in social institutions whose function has been to govern and delay sexual behavior among adolescents, particularly institutions that develop powers of self-restraint and delayed gratification in individuals. Such institutions change over time, and it appears that their power may have diminished significantly over the past two decades, particularly for at-risk youth.

Research has associated early onset of sexual activity with being raised in a single-parent family, academic and behavioral problems in school and low educational aspirations, and low levels of religious association.⁷⁰ If recent trends in unmarried teenage childbearing result, in part, from a weakening of the effectiveness of family, schools, and churches in controlling natural impulsiveness and risk-taking in adolescents and developing self-control, can government action strengthen the institutions and improve their effectiveness? We have few working models of such interventions. However, the following options propose to explore this possibility.

- D1. The possible effects of television on impulsive behavior and children's views of sexuality and the family, and the medium's potential for supporting the family's function of developing character in children and youth could be the subject of a Presidential commission.
- D2. To address the comprehensive and multi-generational nature of economic, educational and social deficiencies in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods,

⁶⁷ "Premarital Sexual Experience Among Adolescent Women - United States, 1970-1988," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Centers for Disease Control, Jan 4, 1991, Table 1.

⁶⁸ Hayes and Hoffreth, 1987, pp. 75, 82.

⁶⁹ Daniel P. Moynihan, Family and Nation, (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York) 1986, p.167.

⁷⁰ Hayes, 1987, pp.98-104.

Federal resources could be coordinated and pooled to encourage appropriately comprehensive interventions. For example, Federal guidance for implementation of empowerment zone legislation could include a prevention theme, encompassing the complementary elements of economic and social reform in the disadvantaged neighborhoods that will become empowerment zones.

- D3. Planning, organizing, and coordination funds could be provided to networks of voluntary social institutions (such as PTAs, scouts, little league, church groups, and neighborhood watch) in "sister neighborhoods," one very disadvantaged and the other less so, to promote mutual support and reduce social isolation.
- D4. Programs of adults volunteering to work with disadvantaged children one-on-one, such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and volunteer tutoring, recreation, and mentoring programs, could be given a White House spotlight and a federal research agenda and best-practices clearinghouse under a unifying national theme, such as Reach One Child.
- D5. Executive agencies providing social program funding to states and localities could be instructed to determine the legality and appropriateness of including inner-city church groups as grantees or sub-grantees.
- D6. States could be encouraged to include counseling of at-risk teenagers among the types of community service assignments to which family heads may be assigned after their AFDC time-limit has expired.

Option D1 - Presidential commission on television, the family, and character

The public is more certain than the experts about the effects of television on character and behavior. A 1987 poll found that 81 percent of respondents (87 percent of those with children) believe that television influences the values and behavior of those who watch several hours a day. More than two-thirds of parents expressed concern about the effect television has on the values and behavior of their own children. More specifically, 64 percent of all respondents believe that television encourages teenage sexuality, and 83 percent believe that television exaggerates the importance of sex in American life.⁷¹

Researchers often share this intuition about the power of television, but the way television influences behavior and the impact of sexual programming on children and adolescents are still matters of controversy. While knowledge of sexual subjects

⁷¹ Planned Parenthood Federation, 1987, pp.3-4.

clearly is increased through television programming, evidence of influence on behavior has been limited largely to effects of portrayals of sexual violence.⁷² However, a more indirect, but perhaps more pervasive influence of television upon sexual behavior is the apparent increase in general impulsiveness and reduction in the ability to tolerate delay of gratification that has been observed in the context of research on television and violence.⁷³ These characteristics have been associated with a number of forms of dangerous behavior, including early sexual initiation and poor contraceptive practices.

We know that the ties between at-risk teenagers and the social institutions that usually transmit sexual norms - families, schools, and religious institutions - are weak. We know little about how the apparent substitutes for these institutions - peer groups and mass media, particularly television - shape teenagers' views and values.⁷⁴

Much less do we know how the effects of television may have changed over the past several decades. Content analysis of television programming found a sharp increase in programming with implicit or explicit sexual behavior in the 1970s. References to possible negative consequences of sex are rare.⁷⁵ However, as one author notes, "...it remains for researchers to discover the long-term effects on human development and behavior for a generation of young people who have never lived without a TV."⁷⁶

A Presidential commission, or some other high-profile gathering, might be convened to promote and summarize necessary additional research on the relation of television to character development and sexual behavior, and to oversee a public debate about how best to limit any negative effects of television and promote positive effects. Positive or "pro-social" potential for television has been confirmed by research. On a short term basis, pro-social television programming has been shown to produce desired behavior in children, and the medium played an important role in the public education campaign against smoking. The potential for television to have a prevention effect through parenting education seems especially promising. Judging from opinion surveys, a high-profile search for knowledge and practical solutions in this area would be supported by a large majority, particularly parents.

⁷² Aletha C. Huston, et al., Big World, Small Screen - The Role of Television in American Society, (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln) 1992, pp. 46-51, 135.

⁷³ Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985, pp. 338, 350.

⁷⁴ Hayes, 1987, pp. 105-6.

⁷⁵ Hayes, 1987, pp. 91-2.

⁷⁶ Hayes, 1987, pp.91-2.

Although the public's interest in the possible effects of television on character development and sexual behavior is not likely to be disputed, the ongoing public debate about the effect of televised violence shows how difficult it is to address the social effects of television. Free expression is a fundamental value in America. A public discussion of the effects of television on character would have to confront the possibility that free expression has been ascendent over responsibility to others and the common good.

Option D2 - Neighborhood and comprehensive approaches to prevention

While teenage childbearing is not exclusively an inner-city problem, teenage mothers are often more concentrated in inner-city neighborhoods than elsewhere. Research indicates that neighborhoods themselves may promote teenage childbearing, with the most disadvantaged neighborhoods having very large effects.⁷⁷

"Epidemic" and "tipping" models have been suggested to explain neighborhood effects on underclass behavior. Whatever the process, in the worst neighborhoods, the pillar social institutions typically are all in decay - families, schools, policing, other municipal services, and employment. The comprehensive nature of the problems seems to call for maximum coordination of resources in an equally comprehensive intervention.

Option D2(a) - A lot of interest and hope follows efforts to coordinate and optimize the effects of the considerable levels of government social spending already flowing into inner-city neighborhoods. However, one ingredient widely regarded as a necessary foundation for turning a neighborhood around - employment - seems to require more than better use of current government program funds.

Programs exist to prepare residents of disadvantaged inner-city neighborhoods for employment outside their neighborhoods. Increasing employment opportunities within these neighborhoods would require either creation of a public jobs program or an infusion of private capital. Empowerment zones represent an unusual opportunity for the latter.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Jonathan Crane, "Dropping Out and Teenage Childbearing," in Jencks and Peterson, 1991, p.317.

⁷⁸ Six urban zones (each with a population of no more than 200,000 and a poverty rate of at least 20 percent in each census tract) will each receive \$50 million block grants in each of the first two years of designation. They also will share most of \$2 billion in tax incentives over the first five years of operation, and gradually declining tax incentives over the remainder of their ten years' duration. Under the largest tax incentive, employers locating within a zone will receive up to \$3,000 in tax credits for each zone resident employed. (It is expected that most of the employees covered by the credit will not represent net employment gains for the neighborhood.)

The most direct means of promoting prevention themes in empowerment zones would be to require the strategic plans that applicants submit to address subjects and issues research and experience show are critical to pregnancy, drop-out, and welfare prevention. For example, applicants might be directed to address in their strategic plans how they will increase opportunity for male and female youth who display the characteristics and behavior that puts them at-risk of early sexual initiation and becoming a teenage parent. In light of what we know about the links between stable families, educational success, pregnancy prevention, and employment success, the introduction of prevention themes into the strategic plans would be consistent with the primary economic and employment focus of empowerment zones.

Two major sub-options for introducing prevention themes into empowerment zones are available. The most aggressive approach would be to require the strategic plans to address such prevention issues, and then give weight to these elements in the competition for designation of empowerment zone status.

Prevention would become a more optional theme if, instead of specifying issues for the strategic plan to address, federal guidance only suggested that prevention was an important factor in the coordinated economic, human, community, and physical development of the zone. Technical assistance could be provided to zone applicants who asked for help in developing this aspect of their plan.

However, it must be kept in mind that designing and implementing an effective strategic plan focussed on the economic development and employment elements of empowerment zones represent a very large challenge. It may be unrealistic to suppose that local zones will also be able to make a quantum leap from the current tangle of social programs in an urban neighborhood to a comprehensive services approach favored by much theory and little practice.

A medium-sized urban zone of 100,000, with a poverty rate of 25 percent, might, over the first five years, receive \$300 million in grants and credits, or \$3,000 per person, or \$12,000 for every poor person. Although the internal distribution of these funds will vary from zone-to-zone, clearly, empowerment zones have the potential to provide a rare large infusion of private capital and employment subsidies into inner-city neighborhoods where teenage childbearing is most prevalent.

To be designated an empowerment zone, an area must submit a strategic plan that describes the coordinated economic, human, community, and physical development proposed for the zone. Statutory language describing uses of grant funds echoes the theme that social and community development are intended to complement economic development in the zones. These statutory references to social, as well as economic, objectives could be the basis of federal efforts to promote prevention themes in development of the strategic plans.

Option D2(b) - A more controlled approach to the development and trial of comprehensive services approaches might be pursued outside the context of empowerment zones. An interagency initiative might develop models or principles of comprehensive interventions that could be used to solicit interest among states and cities. For this purpose, current funding amounts and statutory flexibility might be marshalled, or special legislation for controlled experimentation might be sought.

Such an approach would permit a more deliberate design and implementation phase than empowerment zones. And, rather than leaving program development entirely to local groups, as with the strategic plans of empowerment zones, this option would allow a partnership of federal, state, and local planners to create comprehensive programs that are tailored to local needs but also reflective of the current state of research and as wide a range of experience as possible.

It is not clear that sufficient resources could be allocated to create much economic improvement and increased employment within the neighborhoods chosen to pilot the comprehensive approaches. As noted above, to the degree that this foundation of economic improvement must be the basis for turning around the families, schools, and other pillar institutions of an inner-city neighborhood, empowerment zones represent a rare opportunity. However, a competition for authority and some special social program funding to pilot such comprehensive service approaches could set as one criterion the ability of local areas to assure economic development and employment increases within the pilot neighborhoods through private sector and state resources.

Option D3 - Voluntary socializing institutions

An extraordinary expansion of socializing effort by non-governmental groups has been identified as one of factors in the long decline of crime from the mid-19th to the mid-20th centuries. Many of these associations are still in existence, often in disadvantaged neighborhoods.⁷⁹ One strategic approach to early prevention is to support the work of these voluntary socializing institutions in the neighborhoods that need them most, through an organized network of parallel institutions from a "sister" neighborhood.

For example, federal planning and coordination grants might be provided to a coalition made up of pairs of PTAs, YMCAs, scout troops, little leagues, and church charity and social service agencies, one of each pair from an inner-city neighborhood and the other from a more stable, mainstream neighborhood nearby. Such a variety of paired

⁷⁹ A frequently used cut-off for discussions of underclass neighborhoods is a poverty rate of 40 percent, meaning up to 60 percent of the neighborhood may not be poor.

associations probably would develop a similarly wide variety of ways that the more stable could help the less stable.

In addition to the provision of help in the form of material resources from the more well-off to the less well-off member of each pair, the presence of the other's members in the functions of each neighborhood's organizations would be sought. In light of the level of violent crime in many inner-city neighborhoods, such interaction of memberships might call for an unusual level of social solidarity. However, social conscience is at the core of many of the groups included in the example above. And, in light of the possibility that a declining prevalence of middle- and upper-class role models in inner-city neighborhoods has contributed to development of underclass behaviors,⁸⁰ helping to diminish the social isolation of some inner-city neighborhoods could have a significant preventive effect independent of strengthening the local socializing institutions.

Option D4 - Reach One Child

A wide variety of prevention-oriented programs employing volunteers rather than government employees exists already on the local level. A separate, on-going interagency group might be established to think of ways to promote such programs, as the Points of Light office did under the previous Administration.

The Points of Light initiative was very broad in its coverage, and lacked an organizing or unifying theme, beyond volunteerism. An organizing theme is important to communicate overall objectives, obtain visibility, promote continuity, and give participants the encouragement and hope for success that comes from being a part of a common effort much larger than themselves. The framework of "sister neighborhoods," described above, proposes an institution-based theme on which to organize volunteer resources.

Volunteer programs dealing directly with at-risk children on a one-to-one basis could be promoted under a prevention theme of reaching one child. Big-brother and big-sister programs, boys clubs and girls clubs, scouts, recreational programs, tutoring and counselling programs for children and youth would be included. In addition to any primary service or activity of the volunteer groups, reduced social isolation of the most disadvantaged children would be a common theme. Prevention issue group members provided first-hand examples of such programs, including volunteer tutoring, counselling, and attendance monitoring and encouragement efforts in D.C.'s Hine

⁸⁰ e.g., William Julius Wilson, "Public Policy Research and The Truly Disadvantaged," in Jencks and Peterson, 1991, pp. 461-2.

Junior High School that appear to have had substantial impacts on attendance over the last four years.

The White House could provide a national platform for communicating the theme of reaching one child, through statements and recognition events. In addition, the federal government might develop a research agenda and clearinghouse of research and best-practices, so that successful innovation in recruiting and training volunteers and reaching disadvantaged children could be documented and replicated. To reduce the social isolation of disadvantaged children, adults participating on a volunteer basis may necessarily be more effective than paid "service-providers" dealing with "clients." If that is true, government's role in such an initiative may have to be limited to research, organizing, and cheer-leading.

Such an option would inevitably invite comparison with the Points of Light effort of the previous Administration. That initiative was criticized for being a substitute for bolder government action.

Option D5 - Religious institutions as grantees

In some of the nation's most disadvantaged neighborhoods, the strongest pillar institutions are churches. Through their sectarian activities, religious institutions inculcate character in individuals and support other socializing institutions, particularly the family. However, inner-city churches often provide non-sectarian services and programs that are largely indistinguishable from similar publicly funded activities. A limit on public funding of the social service activities of religious institutions is the Constitution's prohibition against government "establishment" of a state-sponsored religion.

Where human service agencies sponsored by religious institutions provide their services in a manner that is completely separated from any religious context or message, government funding sometimes has been allowed. For example, hospitals sponsored by religious institutions may receive medicare or medicaid reimbursements, and, more recently, religious institutions that operate child care centers have been allowed to receive funding under child care programs created by OBRA 1990.

Executive agencies could be instructed to actively expand the range of federal funding received by religious institutions, or their coalitions, to provide human and social services within disadvantaged neighborhoods. Principles governing government funding already received by religious institutions would be followed in any expansion of funding, so that new legislative authority would not be needed.

The National Council of Churches has recommended such a policy, arguing for funding to coalitions of religious organizations that are inherently watchful that their activities do not promote the sectarian aims of any member. They note, "Housing, health care delivery, supplementary education, job training, public works projects in local neighborhoods, and small business development are projects religious bodies already try to do but are limited by meager resources."

As noted, the primary effects of churches on character development and support of the family presumably come through their religious activities, rather than through providing services that substitute for government services. There is no certainty that increasing human and social service funding to religious organizations would strengthen them in these socializing functions of most direct interest to prevention. On the other hand, to the degree that churches can be more effective in delivering social service programs because they are churches, the "no establishment" issue seems to be reintroduced. For example, by reaching out into their communities to deliver social programs, churches might well expand their membership.

Option D6 - Prevention counselling by young AFDC mothers

The weak attachment at-risk youth often have to institutions that are supposed to transmit sexual norms - the family, schools, and religious institutions - may mean they are more likely to be influenced by the mass media or peers. Researchers have consistently found that a teenager's attitudes are associated with his or her beliefs about the behavior of peers.⁸¹ One result has been development of peer-based counselling and education programs to increase teenagers knowledge and willingness to discuss sexuality. To date, the effectiveness of peer counselling on sexual behavior, pregnancy, or childbearing has not been tested rigorously.⁸² However, there are good grounds to at least explore this intervention more fully.

In theory, counselling of at-risk teenagers by young welfare mothers could be especially effective. The peer counsellors' similarities in age and background would increase their credibility, and their personal experience as teenage mothers on welfare would increase their authenticity.

While not every young mother on welfare might be suitable as a peer counsellor, it seems clear that many have learned lessons that would be useful to those a little younger. In one recent focus-group study of young mothers on welfare and the

⁸¹ Hayes and Hoffreth, 1987, pp.27-8.

⁸² Hayes, 1987, pp. 145-6.

absent fathers of their children, Frank Furstenberg found that virtually all the young parents believed it would have been better to postpone the birth of their first child.⁸³

Volunteer peer counsellor programs might be funded by the same sources used to fund life-options and sexuality education programs. However, welfare reform could create other opportunities for peer counselling. Requirements for mandatory activities during time-limited eligibility for AFDC might be expanded to allow volunteers to be trained and assigned as peer counsellors. Mandatory activities will include human capital enhancement and labor market tests. Peer counselling at-risk teenagers might be included in the range of acceptable activities due, at least in part, to the apparent benefit to peer counsellors. Descriptions of peer advocate programs report increased knowledge and responsibility among the peer counsellors.⁸⁴ Additionally, peer counselling training and experience might be embedded in an enhanced education and training program to prepare candidates for related permanent-employment.

good

Additionally, post-transitional community service could include peer counselling assignments. As with counselling during time-limited eligibility for AFDC, post-transitional assignments would have to be among volunteers. Generally, it should be expected that parents who reach the end of the time-limit and become subject to the community service requirement will have fewer labor-market advantages, such as less education, and work experience, and perhaps more emotional and behavioral handicaps. These characteristics might also reduce their effectiveness as peer counsellors. Accordingly, we should expect that assignment of post-transitional community service workers as peer counsellors might require more screening and training than assignment of transitional period recipients.

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⁸³ Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., et.al., "Caring and Paying: What Fathers and Mothers Say About Child Support," (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, New York) 1992, p.54.

⁸⁴ Hayes, 1987, p.146.

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EDUCATION-ORIENTED DROPOUT AND PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The evidence on education-oriented dropout and pregnancy prevention programs indicates that:

- Disadvantaged youth do not have adequate information on educational or occupational opportunities available to them.
- Where opportunities are available, disadvantaged youth require social support systems to enable them to take advantage of those opportunities.
- Immediate and longer term incentives are necessary to provide motivation to improve their school performance and complete high school.

The following summarizes the research on dropout prevention, outlines components of effective dropout prevention programs, and describes incentive programs for improving school performance and completing high school. These components and incentives are best implemented in comprehensive programs and school-wide reform efforts that provide early intervention and include high expectations for all students.

LACK OF INFORMATION LOWERS EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

The evidence indicates that youth from welfare and other low-income families fail to attain high school graduation because they see no connection between remaining in school and improving their future prospects. At-risk youth often have little information about jobs and careers and few role models in good jobs. They are convinced that they will never attend college, because funds to go to college will not be available.

- Young women who attach less importance to school or work and who feel that they have few educational and occupational opportunities are more likely to become teen mothers. Those with lower scores on tests of academic performance and, particularly for blacks, lack of future educational plans are more likely to become pregnant and drop out of school or vice versa to drop out of school and become pregnant.
- While early childbearers are more likely not to finish school, many complete high school, obtain stable employment, and control their future fertility--contrary to stereotyped images of adolescent mothers. Higher levels of success are related to: higher educational aspirations, especially if the young mother was at grade level at the time of the pregnancy; the willingness to avoid additional pregnancies; and temporary residence with parents, who often provide support for a teen parent to finish high school.

From a policy perspective, this suggests that teenagers's awareness and perception of what she would stand to lose by becoming a single mother can act as a powerful deterrent to doing so. Youth need to be better informed of the opportunities available to them and provided with incentives to take advantage of those opportunities.

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CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LONG TERM SUCCESS

Disadvantaged students frequently begin school without the skills needed to succeed and, by the sixth grade, many students are already two years behind grade level. The following components of effective dropout prevention projects could be implemented as special programs for at-risk youth in regular schools, a "school within a school," alternative schools that serve only at-risk youth, or other similar arrangements or could be incorporated into school-wide reform efforts.

- **Accelerated learning strategies for improving academic performance,**
- **Systematic monitoring of attendance and follow-up with parents,**
- **Counseling services which include individual, group, or family counseling.**
 - Full-time counselors may work with teachers, parents, other community service agencies, and employers.
 - Advisor/mentors also assist students with school-related problems and in their interactions with community agencies and employers. These individuals--both school-based and volunteer--are proactive in their approach, seeking out students rather than waiting to be contacted by students.
- **Career awareness and preparation services (such as career guidance, vocational training, enhancement of employability skills, job internship, and job placement services), and**
 - Paid-work experience is a key incentive and means of linking the value of schooling tangibly to future work.
- **Social support services can be based in the school to provide services such as day care for children of students, health care, and transportation. Alternatively, a case manager located in the school can refer students to services available in the community such as legal aid and financial support.**

INCENTIVES TO DO WELL IN SCHOOL

"Tuition Guarantee" Plans. Although the availability of student financial aid is broadly advertised, many have concluded that the message is reaching only the academic achievers among the poorest students. This has led to several "tuition guarantee" plans through which elementary or junior high school students from the poorest families, in return for various academic and moral commitments, are promised full-cost funding for two or four years of college.

- **Sponsors of these programs have found that in addition to tuition guarantees, other support services, such as mentoring, tutoring, and establishing links with colleges, are also necessary to encourage youth to remain in school.**

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- Omaha Housing Authority Program. Four colleges have earmarked scholarships for high school graduates who live in Omaha's public housing. Every child with a perfect school attendance record receives a \$100 saving bond at an end-of-year ceremony. These bonds, as well as recreational and parent/student activities, are partly funded by a \$1 surcharge on public housing residents' cable TV fees which are discounted.

"Job Guarantee" Programs. Paid work experience of less than 20 hours a week can provide work-based learning that enriches school-based learning and links academic learning to future employment. Adult supervisors and co-workers act as role models in the work place. Job placement assistance is particularly important to disadvantaged youth with little information and few connections enabling them to find initial employment.

- Compact Partnerships. The purpose of the Job Collaborative program of the Boston Compact is to improve the quality of public education and increase employment opportunities for youth by securing employment opportunities after school, in the summer, and upon graduation.

- Placement of high school graduates is based on their high school achievement and attendance.
- Career Specialists provide a variety of services to students such as career awareness, job training, counselling, resume and interview preparation, college and financial aid applications, as well as job placement services.
- The number of youth served has increased since the program began in 1980 as the number of companies participating has increased. Boston public high school graduates earn \$3.00 more per hour than the national average and have much lower unemployment rates.

Welfare Sanctions and Benefits. Welfare reform programs such as Wisconsin's Learnfare and Ohio's LEAP program show that financial sanctions and incentives alone are not effective in increasing school enrollment and attendance.

- Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program uses financial incentives and penalties to promote school attendance among pregnant and parenting teenagers on welfare. Teens who provide evidence that they are enrolled in a school or program receive a bonus payment of \$62 and \$62 in their welfare check for each month in which they meet the program's attendance requirements. Teens who do fail to provide proof of school enrollment have \$62 deducted from their grant in every month until they comply. Similarly, enrolled teens are sanctioned \$62 for each month in which they exceed the allowed number of unexcused absences.
- Each LEAP teen is assigned to a case manager, who is responsible for explaining the rules, monitoring compliance, and helping the teen overcome barriers to school attendance. Teens are also eligible to receive assistance with child care and transportation as needed to attend school.

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- The evaluation of LEAP shows that school retention increased school retention among in-school teens and many dropouts returned to a school or adult education program.
- Rates of repeat pregnancy are high among LEAP teens, and LEAP appears to have smaller effects on teens who have subsequent pregnancies. Originally LEAP did not automatically exempt pregnant teens; however, after the first year, a pregnancy exemption was added. This exemption may send an inappropriate message about additional pregnancies.
- Wisconsin's Learnfare requires all AFDC recipients between the ages of 13 and 19 to regularly attend school or an alternative program leading to a high school diploma or a GED credential in order for their families to continue to qualify for their full AFDC grant. Learnfare's use of financial incentives is limited to sanctions; it does not grant increase for good school attendance.
- An evaluation of the Learnfare program found that attendance has not improved among students whose families are on welfare, however, sanctions have not been consistently applied. It is our understanding that results of the Learnfare program have been more positive in areas other than Milwaukee, where a range of alternative services are available to students returning to school.

Policy Option 7
Supplemental Input
Office of Population Affairs
Public Health Service

Our discussions of programs and services to divert persons from the welfare system center around services and approaches which support families and assist them to operate as more coherent and effective social and economic units. Nevertheless,

- o family planning programs are unlikely to work very well if adolescents become sexually active before they are aware of clinic functions or even existence;
- o jobs programs are unlikely to work very well for young persons for whom work is merely an alternative means to secure resources, and for whom a work ethic is theoretical rather than experientially ingrained;
- o school-to-work programs are unlikely to have much effect if the school curriculum is, or is seen to be, irrelevant, or if kids drop out, physically or emotionally, before the school-to-work intervention kicks in;
- o intensive case management programs designed to stabilize individual families are promising in theory, but intensive interventions are enormously expensive, seem to work best only when staffed with exceptional case managers, and they do not take advantage of the efficiencies, or opportunity for peer reinforcement, of a curriculum guided school-based intervention.

This is not to say that these components (family planning, work training, school to work transitions) are not important. However, all of these approaches are enhanced by the component that has been given least attention in our discussions: early and comprehensive life skills education complemented by a parental education component. Such an intervention can provide;

- o age appropriate health and sexuality education, including information on disease and pregnancy prevention, contraception and access to clinic services, and avoidance of substance abuse, as well as coping with substance abuse in the household;
- o education and training on decision making, including consideration of deferral of gratification, resistance to peer pressure and refusal skills;

- o education on "the way the world works," including the role and functioning of families, racism, the relationships between education, employment and income, and identification of risks to individual and family development;
- o a parental component. This is particularly important for parents who themselves became parents too young, or with insufficient parenting skills, or with little personal experience with a functioning family. This won't work for everyone, but some parents will participate, and they will derive benefits from it.
- o Linkage to counseling and casework services. School based curricular interventions can only do so much, and when the limits of their capabilities are reached, individual professional services are needed. But the school program can identify the kids (and families) for whom the school based services are insufficient, and referrals can be made.

Curricula delivered to students on an intensive two week basis, or one hour a week over one semester or one year are unlikely to have much effect. We would never propose that math be taught in such a manner, because we know that it would be insufficient. Yet the life skills curriculum for at-risk-of-welfare kids is at least as important as math... if only because it may give kids a reason for dealing seriously with their math lessons.

Rather, this life skills education should be started early (kindergarten) and continued through high school. Obviously, the material, whether sexuality related, focused on decision making, or on coping with substance abuse in the family, should obviously be introduced only as the age of students makes such introduction appropriate.

Curricula exist which have been shown to be effective in dealing with many of these issues, although we are unaware of any that deal with all of them or last from elementary through high school. Different curricula could be used, several could be combined and modules on specific topics developed to make for smoother transitions in approach and material. Some of the substance proposed for inclusion is more controversial than others, but the entire approach would require community and parental review and approval before adoption by any school district.

A Federal role could include development of (or combining) curricula, as well as demonstrating and/or testing their use in communities which agree to participate. A long-term Federal commitment would be necessary, however, if the effect of a complete (13 year) program of life skills education is to be assessed for even one cohort.

DRAFT / FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

**GROUP #9
PREVENTION**

FAMILY COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM/POLICY

Most services offered to "single parent families" are designed for the head of household. In some cases, there will be some form of support services such as day care and transportation costs. Unfortunately few, if any, of the programs offered are designed to "stabilize the household" so that the entire family will eventually become self-sufficient.

The head of household has to contend with a series of crisis situations, both in and outside of the home, which can make it difficult to seek outside assistance that can make a difference in the quality of life. Keep in mind that poverty and its attendant ills---the proliferation of violence, teen parenthood, substance abuse, poor health, low educational achievement, juvenile delinquency, lack of self esteem--- have a profound affect on the ways in which young people and adults perceive and act upon the range of opportunities available.

In the process of planning, thoughts could include a "Family Comprehensive Program or Policy" that would serve as a **STABILIZER** first, then as the **CATALYST** to move the entire household towards self-sufficiency.

WHO WILL IT SERVE?

- Severely "at risk" households
- Grandparents who are in the "second phase" of parenting (many are young, healthy, and possess some work experience)

WHAT WILL IT DO?

- Access individual household members to determine levels of service
- Focus on prevention and problem solving in order to create stability within the household
- Provide intensive case management, referral, and follow-up

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PREVENTION GROUP
FAMILY COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM/POLICY
PAGE TWO

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:
(AFTER 2 YEARS)

- Decrease in "RE-CYCLE SYNDROME"
- Decrease in "TOTAL" public assistance needs per household

POSSIBLE INCENTIVES:

- Extension of housing subsidies
- Extension of medical coverage
- Clothing Bonus for those employed a minimum of one year and a maximum of two
- Clothing allowance only for children whose attendance is 95% of days required per school year

Policy Question #3: Family Planning ServicesIssue

Adolescent childbearing has long been associated with numerous consequences that are well documented in the literature. Among these are reduced educational attainment and employment opportunities for adolescent parents. In turn, poverty and AFDC receipt are more prevalent in families begun by adolescents, particularly those that are unmarried. It has been estimated that more than \$25 billion in AFDC, Food Stamps and Medicaid could be saved if all costs attributable to adolescent childbearing were eliminated (which is a theoretical, although not a practical, goal). (Center for Population Options, 1992). Moreover, the children of adolescent parents are more likely to become adolescent parents themselves, perpetuating the cycle.

Teen pregnancy
costs us
\$25 B

To the extent that early childbearing increases the likelihood of welfare dependency, expanded family planning services have the potential to reduce the incidence of adolescent pregnancy and thus, the early family formation that is typified by single parent status and dependence on public assistance. It has been estimated that for every dollar invested in family planning services, a savings of \$4.40 in averted expenditures for welfare and medical services is realized (Forrest and Singh, 1990). It should always be recognized, however, that contraceptive education and services cannot be effective if adolescents are not motivated to avoid pregnancy because they do not perceive any advantage in deferring parenthood.

Background

The Family Planning (Title X) funding level, which in nominal terms surpassed in FY 1993, for the first time, the appropriation level of the last (1981) Carter budget, nevertheless has much less purchasing power than in 1981. This is the result of three factors: (1) inflation, (2) clients presenting with more serious problems (younger, a greater number of lifetime partners, more likely to be infected with a STD and more at risk of a serious STD, including HIV) and (3) increased costs of clinic operations, including more stringent OSHA rules, more need for infection control procedures and CLIA.

The FY 1993 and 1994 Title X budgets called for substantial increases, and the FY 1995 budget is likely to call for further increases. However, it should be recognized that these steps represent only decreases in the service gap, rather than net increases in overall program capability from some already achieved standard. Within the priorities identified for Title X attention are increased outreach to low-income women including adolescents, other persons at risk of unintended pregnancy or STD and greater emphasis on teen pregnancy, including development of

new counseling techniques and new service arrangements and auspices for conducting counseling and services to teens.

While there are a number of other Federal programs which offer potential for increasing emphasis on family planning, Title X and an adolescent pregnancy or adolescent health approach focus most directly on prevention of teen and other unintended pregnancy and are most amenable to change in policy direction:

- o Medicaid, while spending more on family planning than Title X, does so mainly through private physicians or general focus clinics rather than through organized family planning programs. Further, the structure of Medicaid rewards units of service provided, rather than outreach or counseling.
- o Maternal and Child Health, the Social Services Black Grant and PHS Primary Care programs all provide family planning services, in most cases as part of a broader spectrum of care. None of these programs has a particular focus on prevention of unwanted pregnancy or outreach to sexually active teens and young women.
- o Title X policies typically govern a total program that is triple the size of the Title X grant. These additional funds include MCH and SSBG funds included as part of the Grantee's Title X program, patient fees collected from middle income clients, State and local government funds, and reimbursements, including Medicaid.

Policy Approaches

1. Expansion of family planning services to reduce the probability of welfare dependency can build on Title X plans already being emphasized. These include:

- o Increased Outreach Efforts: Outreach would include information to demystify clinic procedures, as well as dispel myths and incorrect information about sexuality and contraceptives. Clinic personnel would deliver information directly to adolescents, through education and familiarization sessions at clinics, through presentations in schools and in locations such as Job Corps sites, community centers, runaway shelters, homeless shelters, drug treatment centers and juvenile detention facilities. (Note: Such outreach is not new for Title X. However, budget constraints have led program administrators, faced with whether to emphasize outreach or to emphasize service to clients already in queue, to choose the latter.)

- o **Enhanced Counseling Services:** Counseling services would include encouraging abstinence where appropriate, reinforcing decision-making and refusal skills and, for persons choosing contraception, the importance of proper and consistent use. Two crucial aspects of an enhanced counseling effort would be attention to the adolescent's personal situation when deciding among contraceptive methods and emphasis on safer sex practices, especially condom use to prevent STD even when oral contraceptives, Norplant or other nonbarrier methods are chosen.
- o **Accessibility of Services:** Clinic personnel would be specifically trained to counsel and treat adolescents. In addition, clinic protocols would be developed for adolescents--including emphasis on assurance of confidentiality, service hours that would coincide with the hours adolescents are available (after school, evenings, weekends), accommodation for walk-in services and an emphasis on STD screening. Service sites must also be accessible, with clinics set up in locations that are in or near schools, community centers and low-income neighborhoods.

Research indicates that adolescents delay visiting a clinic or physician for contraceptive services because of concerns about confidentiality, fear of the pelvic examination and other clinic procedures and a belief that contraceptives, specifically medical methods, are dangerous. For those adolescents who do seek contraceptive services, confidentiality, caring staff and accessibility are primary considerations in clinic choice. In addition, clinic attendance, soon after or before sexual debut, is associated with clinic outreach services, convenient hours and availability of group counseling and education sessions. (Zabin and Clark, 1981; Zabin and Clark, 1983; Kisker, 1984) It has also been found that a more directive approach with adolescent clients, "authoritative guidance", is more successful in maintaining continuation of a contraceptive method. (Nathanson and Becker, 1985)

In addition to clinic characteristics, success of clinic services also seems to be coupled with other interventions such as focused educational or counseling components. A recent evaluation of six school based clinics found that providing contraceptive services alone was not enough to increase their use. Rather, increases in contraceptive use were observed in those clinics where the associated school had a strong educational program on prevention issues. (Kirby, 1991) Evaluation of a school linked program in Baltimore showed delays in sexual activity, increases in contraceptive use and decreases in pregnancy among participating students. Clinic services were linked with two schools and, in addition to medical and contraceptive services, the program included sexuality and contraceptive education, as well as individual and group counseling. (Zabin, et.al., 1986)

2. Adolescent pregnancy prevention (or, more broadly, adolescent health) services through the Title XX program, or its successor, would be greatly expanded to provide a more comprehensive approach.

- o Development and Dissemination of Sexuality Education Curricula: Curricula would be developed as part of a comprehensive health education program which begins in the early grades. It would include age appropriate sexuality education including reasons and means to delay sexual activity (especially targeted to younger adolescents) and also complete information on contraceptives.
- o Support for School Based and School Linked Services: Funding support for school based and school linked services would ensure the provision of comprehensive health education and services. In addition, support for contraceptive education and services would be provided for those communities that request them.

Evaluations of sexuality education programs have shown little effect. Gains in knowledge have been demonstrated, but that does not seem to translate into changes in behavior. However, three relatively new sexuality education curricula have shown promising results with respect to delay of sexual activity, as well as increased contraceptive use when sexual activity is initiated. (Howard and McCabe, 1990; Kirby et al, 1991; Risen et al, 1990) All three programs include information about sexuality and contraception, as do most traditional sexuality education programs. The important difference is that they also include training in decision-making and resistance skills and practice in applying those skills. It is interesting to note that these programs appear to be more effective with younger adolescents and with those who have not yet initiated sexual activity, providing support for the argument that sexuality education begin earlier than is currently the norm. Another study has shown that young men who reported receiving instruction in resistance skills had lower rates of sexual activity than those who did not receive such instruction. (Ku, et al, 1992)

Evidence to support the effectiveness of contraceptive services in school based or linked clinics has been discussed above. It is important to add, however, that there are approximately 500 of these clinics throughout the U.S. and, while not all provide reproductive health services, most do provide a comprehensive array of physical and mental health services, as well as health education. Even in the absence of reproductive health and contraceptive services, the experience of these clinics can be applied to some of the issues concerning services and programs for high-risk youth.

A recently completed process evaluation of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's School-Based Adolescent Health Care Program indicates that clinic location within a school, staff with expertise in and a preference for working with adolescents, and provision of comprehensive services--including education in sexuality and family planning, STDs and HIV, substance abuse, stress management, decision making and self esteem--has increased students' access to and use of services. In addition, the evaluation finds that maintaining confidentiality and demonstrating respect for students are crucial in recruiting and retaining clinic clients. (Marke and Marake, 1993)

Discussion

There are a number of obstacles, identified in the literature, to successful contraceptive use by adolescents. Some are psychological--reluctance of adolescents to admit their sexually active status and, directly connected with this, the notion that intercourse is more acceptable if it is "spontaneous". Both of these, of course, preclude contraceptive use because, other than withdrawal, such use must be planned for ahead of time.

These problems obviously will not be solved by increasing access to family planning services. However, they might be amenable to outreach and education efforts. By reaching adolescents in their own environments to resolve myths and fears about sexuality and contraceptives, as well as provide information about availability and location of services, these barriers to contraceptive use could be reduced. In addition, the role playing usually employed in resistance skill training provides practice for dealing with unplanned events and, in fact, helps legitimize planning. Focus groups conducted with high-risk youth indicate that while youth are reasonably well informed about health issues, they need help with integrating and applying that information. (HHS, 1993)

It is also well established that even when adolescents do use contraceptives, they often do not use effective methods and they do not use them consistently. Again, education and counseling play an important role. There is little reason to believe that providing services alone will improve adolescent contraceptive use, but there is evidence that combining services with education and counseling will have a positive effect. (Zabin et al, 1986 and Kirby, 1990)

There are also lessons to be learned from research comparing the experience of U.S. and West European adolescents. Although levels of adolescent sexual activity appear to be similar in the U.S. and Western Europe, pregnancy and birth rates are much higher for U.S. adolescents. Conversely, sexuality education and contraceptive services are more accessible for West European adolescents and contraceptive use higher. (Jones, et al., 1986) While European policies cannot be adopted wholesale by the U.S., the European experience does provide further evidence that

education, through the schools and the media, and accessible services do increase contraceptive use among adolescents and increased contraceptive use does lower pregnancy and birth rates.

Additional problems with reducing adolescent childbearing that are particularly pertinent to high-risk populations concern issues dealing with perceptions of self and of life options. If an adolescent has no belief in his or her future, or their control over it, there is little incentive to avoid pregnancy and parenthood. Sufficiently expanded family planning services can begin to address this through education and counseling efforts. Many current sexuality education curricula include components designed to improve self-esteem and decision-making skills and there is some limited evidence that they are successful.

Integration of this type of program with contraceptive service provision and programs to significantly enhance educational and employment opportunities could reasonably be expected to show positive results for at-risk youth--both in terms of reduced childbearing and welfare dependency. Any single intervention is unlikely to work. It does appear that high-risk youth need the motivation--belief in their ability to affect their future and that that future holds promise--and the means--either support to delay sexual involvement or education about, and access to, contraceptives when they are necessary--to delay parenthood and become productive members of their community.

In 1987, The National Academy of Sciences released a report on adolescent sexuality, pregnancy and childbearing, Risking the Future. Although conclusive evidence was lacking in support of specific program models, a number of recommendations were made in the interest of reducing the rate and incidence of unintended pregnancy among adolescents. (Hayes, ed., 1987)

- o Enhance Life Options. Higher-risk adolescents need reasons to delay parenthood through help and encouragement in establishing career goals and understanding the value of education and training in achieving them. Recommended program interventions included life-planning courses, programs to improve school performance, employment programs and positive role models.
- o Delay Sexual Initiation. Older adolescents are better able to make responsible decisions about sexuality and contraception. Interventions thought to have some potential for helping young adolescents postpone sexual activity included sex education and family life education, assertiveness and decision-making training, positive role models and responsible media treatment of sexuality.

- o Encourage Contraception. Although contraception alone cannot adequately reduce adolescent fertility, it is a necessary part of an overall strategy. Interventions to encourage contraceptive use among adolescents include sex education, contraceptive services and contraceptive advertising.

While there is still not a large body of evidence that any particular intervention--or combination of interventions--will work, the research and evaluation findings that are available do appear to support these recommendations.

An additional obstacle to consider is the fact that there will be some political and public resistance to expanding family planning services and education for adolescents. To be effective, such initiatives will become more visible and thus invite opposition, particularly at the local level. Education and services provided directly through Federally funded programs such as Title X are likely to generate fewer problems than educational efforts through local school systems. However, school systems have the benefit of immediate access to large numbers of youth and a number of strategies have been shown to be useful in managing local controversy: involving parents in the planning of school based services and encouraging them to act as advocates; forming a community advisory committee to guide the planning effort and requiring parental consent for students to receive services. (Marke and Marzke, 1993) In addition, Federal support for the development and testing of a variety of health and sexuality education curricula, as well as supplementary modules, will be necessary to ensure a sufficient pool of material that can be adapted to individual community needs, ensure a balanced and comprehensive treatment of the subject matter and temper local opposition.

The Department of Health and Human Services has already expressed renewed commitment to increase access to reproductive health education and services for all persons, including adolescents. There are compelling reasons, aside from preventing pregnancy and dependency, to do so. Prevention, diagnosis and treatment of STDs, including HIV, are of paramount importance. The prevalence of these diseases is rising and adolescents are disproportionately affected; expanded efforts in prevention education and screening for STD/HIV are long overdue. In addition, family planning clinics are often a point of entry into the health care system and remain the primary or only source of health care for low-income women and adolescents.

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INTEGRATED PREVENTION STRATEGIES

A welfare reform plan to "end welfare as we know it" should incorporate a prevention focus throughout--in the incentives to families and individuals within those families, in the services targeted at families, and in the expectations of those who receive welfare benefits and services. Traditionally, obligations and services to welfare families have focused on the designated payee and not on other family members. Yet, the circumstances of other family members often adversely affect the behaviors of and outcomes for the payee and set the stage for the intergenerational transfer of poverty.

In order to maximize the primary effects of any welfare reform strategy that emphasizes work as the avenue to self-sufficiency, the support services and obligations should extend to all family members and their varied needs. Not only should we expect a case head to work or engage in an employment-focused human capital endeavor while receiving benefits, but we should expect healthy and productive behaviors of other family members. Children should receive important health services; preschoolers should be in safe and preferably enriching day care or preschools; school age children should be in school and performing at grade level; adolescents should be knowledgeable about human sexuality and family planning; teenagers need sound career counseling and work experience opportunities.

These needs are frequently not fulfilled among children in welfare families, often with more general consequences for other family members. Sometimes the failures stem from characteristics and actions of the case head. But, seemingly more frequently, there are simply family and community dynamics that lead to compounding problems.

We propose that a key aspect of the Administration's prevention strategy be a broad and intensive focus on family support as part of the work-support programs instituted under welfare reform. Case managers should be assigned responsibility for families, not simply case heads. The circumstances and needs of all family members should be considered in determining the support services needs of case heads who are subject to time limits and offered employment-oriented services. Moreover, the case managers should be much more proactive than has historically been the case in addressing warning signs of longer term problems for children from welfare families and/or the confounding influences of problems associated with other family members.

Specific suggestions for preventive strategies that should be incorporated into the family support services provided under the reformed welfare system include the following:

- **Childhood Immunizations and Basic Health Care.** Case managers should ensure that all families are getting the necessary medical care for their children as well as themselves. This need not be a burdensome activity for case managers. Rather, case managers should be familiar with the health status of family members and initiate referrals if immunizations are not up to date or other needs are going unattended.
- **Child Care and Preschool.** It is critical that all children whose parents are in the work force or doing out-of-home activities preparatory to that have adequate child care during their parent's absence from the home. At the most basic level, when parents are uneasy with their care arrangements or when the arrangements are not supporting the parent's need to be out of the home, the case manager should ensure that the family receives necessary guidance and/or financial support to address this problem. As children approach school age, case

managers should ensure that families take full advantage of available enriched preschool options, playing the family advocate where necessary. Finally, in any case of special needs, case managers should get the family linked with appropriate health, education, and social support services.

- **School Performance.** School failure is an immediate sign that something is wrong at home, at school, or most likely both at home and in school. Currently, neither the schools nor the welfare system feels sufficiently accountable for school failures. The schools are blaming "dysfunctional" families and communities for their poor performance indicators; the welfare system and society more generally tend to blame the schools. We need to forge a partnership between the welfare system and the schools to support the needs of children and families so as to ensure educational success. A major step in this direction would be for the welfare system to take a more proactive interest in the educational success of poor children. The system also should help families create a more supportive home environment and attain maximum support through the schools, including possibly testing for learning differences, providing after school care and/or tutoring, working with parents to plan and follow through on an educational strategy for the student, and providing coordinating social services to the student and his/her family.

We should send a clear message to parents and children that dropping out of school is not acceptable. This could come in the form of reduced or no benefits for dropouts living in welfare households (as in the Wisconsin Learnfare program). However, a more constructive approach would be to have teen-focused JOBS-type services available for at-risk and dropout youth. Perhaps we should be less concerned about whether a youth is in or out of school at any point in time than that he/she is pursuing "productive activities," that might include employment or community service. If good-faith efforts on the part of the family support agency did not result in the child engaging in an approved activity, then we should consider a reduction in the family's welfare grant. (The current system sends different messages to in-school youth, dropout teen parents, and other dropouts.)

- **Discouraging Risky Behaviors and Minimizing Their Consequences.** Adolescents are prone to "risky" behaviors, particularly drug and alcohol use and sex. Family support services should be available to help parents guide their children to avoid peer pressures to engage in such activities and to minimize the consequences if they do succumb to the peer pressure. For example, parents need to know how to talk with their children about sex and substance abuse and they need to recognize the signs of substance use and know how to respond constructively to them.

Adolescents need to have good instruction on human sexuality and family planning, as well as the perils of substance abuse. For those who get involved in drugs and/or alcohol abuse, treatment services and family support services are important.

We need to make more effective contraceptive methods available to those who will continue to be sexually active--contraceptive methods such as Norplant whose effectiveness is not contingent on follow through actions by the teenager. Those who become teenage parents need to be held accountable for the support of their children, but many also will need some transitional support in attaining the skills and employment that enable them to support their children.

Integrating these types of support services into the basic welfare reform plan is sensible from a prevention perspective, and consistent with maximizing the impact of the basic change in posture vis a vis the role of welfare in our society. There will be a consistent theme for all family members--welfare is a transitional support program made available to those who are trying to put their lives back together or get over temporary problems that impede the family's ability to support itself. This also has the advantage of being a relatively low-cost piece of the welfare reform plan as we are talking about mainly the marginal costs of the added case management services.

7. Interventions with pre-adolescents to increase educational and career aspirations and address school failures.

What Research Has Shown

Turning Points, the Carnegie Commission report on the Education of Young Adolescents, found that during early adolescence, youth enter a period of trial and error during which many first experiment with alcohol and drugs and risk permanent addiction. More and more adolescents 15 years old and youth are becoming sexually active, risking sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy and the birth of unhealthy, low-birthweight babies. They live in urban neighborhoods and even in some rural towns where the stability of close-knit relationships is rare, and where the sense of community has eroded. The Commission considered middle grade schools to be a critical point in the lives of youth and had several recommendations that are key to improving educational expectations and performance and preventing youth from dropping out of school. The recommendations included the following strategies:

- **Create small communities for learning** such as schools-within-schools, students and teachers grouped together as teams, and small group advisories that ensure that every student is known well by at least one adult.
- **Improve academic performance through fostering the health and fitness** of young adolescents, by providing a health coordinator in every middle grade school [and] access to health care and counseling services.
- **Reengage families in the education of young adolescents** by giving families meaningful roles in school governance, communicating with families about the school program and student's progress, and offering families opportunities to support the learning process at home and at school.
- **Connect school with communities**, which together share responsibility for each middle grade student's success, through identifying service opportunities in the community, establishing partnerships and collaborations to ensure students' access to health and social services, and using community resources to enrich the instructional program and opportunities for constructive after-school activities.

Current Proposals and Other Possible Options

Department of Education discussions on the reauthorization of Chapter 1 of the Elementary and Secondary School Act have centered around a number of issues that share the concerns of the Carnegie report. The following is being proposed:

- **Expanding the school-wide approach in Chapter 1** by lowering the current 75 percent poverty threshold to 50 percent would allow more of the poorest schools to use Chapter 1 dollars, in combination with state and local funds, for comprehensive instructional reform.

- **Strengthening school/community connections by supporting:**

- **Greater parent involvement** by requiring schools to inform parents of state standards for what all children are expected to know and how their school's program is designed to help their children meet these standards; emphasizing parent training; and setting up parent/school agreements that identify the mutual responsibilities of parents and schools to help children succeed.

This proposal acknowledges that parents in Chapter 1 schools are less likely than other parents to encourage learning outside the school, such as visiting a museum or library or reading to a child. Parents want to be more involved, but often do not know how.

- **Integrated services** by asking school districts to show how Chapter 1 services are coordinated and integrated with educational, health, and social services funded through other sources, including Head Start; allowing Chapter 1 to provide resources to support the coordination of services; and requiring Chapter 1 funds to be used as the funding source of last resort for health screenings in high-poverty elementary schools at school entry and at a later grade.

This proposal recognizes the poorer health and the lower access to health services in high poverty schools. More than one-fifth of first graders in high-poverty schools are perceived by their teachers as having general health problems, almost twice the percentage in low-poverty schools. Principals in high-poverty schools are more than three times as likely as low-poverty schools to see physical conflict as a problem--learning is difficult when students fear for their safety.

- **Fostering better school-to-work transitions among older students by supporting career counselors and mentoring.**

In middle and high schools, Chapter 1 should support services such as career counseling and mentoring that have holding power for students and help motivate them in setting and attaining goals.

The Administration might consider additional options for linking education to welfare reform that reach out to children and their parents.

- **Addressing teen pregnancy.** Prevention or delay of teen pregnancy increases students' likelihood of staying in school and avoiding dependency on welfare.

- Encourage schools to assist on several fronts, including: providing a strong guidance and vocational education program; creating mentorships and peer-counseling programs; and developing a life skills curriculum that provides age-appropriate health and sexuality education. A life skills curriculum would include information on disease and pregnancy prevention, contraception and access to clinic services, and avoidance of substance abuse, as well as coping with substance abuse in the

household. Facilities for neglected or delinquent youth should also be a special focus of such efforts.

- Help pregnant teens and teen parents stay in or return to school. Providing them skills to become employed or to attend postsecondary institutions can help them avoid welfare. Access to schools must be made easier through providing transportation and child care facilities or access to child care.
- Encourage or require teen parents to participate in parenting classes. This is particularly important for young parents who may have little personal experience with a functioning family.
- **Providing children with enriching alternatives to the street.** Children in high poverty communities have access to fewer community programs that provide them with enriching opportunities during non-school hours.
 - Extend time in schools by providing slots for before and after school programs for children in high poverty schools or whose families are on AFDC. Study halls and after school programs could be set up in housing projects and in homeless shelters/centers.
- **Reaching out to parents to involve them in their children's schooling and their own education and providing families with social service support.**
 - Provide parents with opportunities to participate in programs such as Even Start where parents are taught how to interact with teachers and schools and how to support their children's education.
 - Require that parents receiving welfare attend parent teacher conferences. Token payments that would assist with transportation or child care could be provided. Sanctions could be applied to parents who refuse to participate; for example in Arkansas, parents are fined if they do not attend required conferences.
 - Encourage schools to reach out to students and families for whom school services are insufficient and refer them to appropriate social service agencies. This should be linked to reducing the case load of intensive case management programs designed to stabilize individual families.

Recommendations of Turning Points, the Carnegie report on the Education of Young Adolescents

- **Create small communities for learning** where stable, close, mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers are considered fundamental for intellectual development and personal growth. The key elements of these communities are schools-within-schools, students and teachers grouped together as teams, and small group advisories that ensure that every student is known well by at least one adult.
- **Teach a core academic program** that results in students who are literate, including in the sciences, and who know how to think critically, lead a healthy life, behave ethically, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship in a pluralistic society. Youth service to promote values for citizenship is an essential part of the core academic program.
- **Ensure success for all students through the elimination of tracking by achievement level** and promotion of cooperative learning, flexibility in arranging instructional time, and adequate resources (time, space, equipment, and materials) for teachers.
- **Empower teachers and administrators to make decisions about the experiences of middle grade students** through creative control by teachers over the instructional program linked to greater responsibilities for students' performance, governance committees that assist the principal in designing and coordinating school-wide programs, and autonomy and leadership within sub-schools or houses to create environments tailored to enhance the intellectual and emotional development of all youth.
- **Staff middle grade schools with teacher who are expert at teaching young adolescents** and how have been specially prepared for assignment to the middle grades.
- **Improve academic performance through fostering the health and fitness of young adolescents**, by providing a health coordinator in every middle grade school, access to health care and counseling services, and a health-promoting school environment.
- **Reengage families in the education of young adolescents** by giving families meaningful roles in school governance, communicating with families about the school program and student's progress, and offering families opportunities to support the learning process at home and at school.
- **Connect school with communities**, which together share responsibility for each middle grade student's success, through identifying service opportunities in the community, establishing partnerships and collaborations to ensure students' access to health and social services, and using community resources to enrich the instructional program and opportunities for constructive after-school activities.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TEENAGERS MOST AT-RISK OF TEENAGE PARENTING

GOAL: The goal is to have a procedure for identifying young people who are at greatest risk of becoming dependent on welfare or of having offspring whom they cannot support. Identification should be at the earliest point when effective prevention strategies can be implemented. Ideally, the procedure would identify efficiently a high percentage of those who will fall into dependency in the absence of intervention, would screen out those who would make it on their own, and would be implemented in a non-stigmatizing manner. Such a procedure should not increase the chances that the identified group would fall into dependency.

NOTE: This goal is broader than that outlined in the issue group memo of July 1, 1993. We have not restricted the goal to identifying those who will become teenage parents.

THE LITERATURE ON THE AT-RISK

Although there are two separate bodies of literature dealing with teenage motherhood and fatherhood, the research points to a common set of causes and consequences. Two interacting conditions precede welfare dependency for oneself and/or one's children: (1) having children; and (2) having limited or no source of financial support. Teenage parenting creates the former and greatly increases the odds of the latter by interfering with schooling and work, and jeopardizing supportive family relationships. The latter condition is precipitated by a variety of factors, among them the parent's limited education and earnings power.

Resnick and Burt (Resnick, et al., 1992) propose that "risk" for early adolescents is a function of a) negative antecedent conditions which create vulnerabilities and b) specific negative behaviors. This definition fits with the major findings regarding girls and boys at risk of becoming pregnant or fathering children early and out of wedlock. It suggests that these youth could be identified as high risk during early adolescence before conceiving any children. One

caveat to the predictors for teenage childbearing and fatherhood is that our ability to distinguish at risk adolescents with specific risk factors appears to be less precise for Blacks than for Whites or other minorities.

Poverty is a critical antecedent factor connected with being "at risk." Boys who become young absent fathers tend to come from low income families (Lerman, 1986). Disadvantaged teens are 3 to 4 times more likely to have children out of wedlock than teens who are not disadvantaged (Robinson, 1988). The family income for young white males who became absent fathers was 48% below the average for all white families; the equivalent percentages for Hispanics and Blacks are 35% and 20%, respectively. These young men were more likely to come from families that had been on welfare. The National Longitudinal Survey of Labor Force Participation data from 1979-1983 showed 27% of absent fathers had lived in families that receive welfare, compared to 8-9% of all other young men. Prior welfare involvement was much more of a predictor of absent fatherhood for whites and Hispanics than for Blacks (Lerman, 1986). Young black mothers who were on welfare at the time they became mothers are significantly more likely to be poor and dependent on welfare well into adulthood than those who had not been receiving welfare (Duncan and Hoffman, 1990).

Family environment is a similarly important antecedent factor. Robinson states that young fathers are more likely to be products of teenage parents, to have a sibling born out of wedlock, or to have a sibling who was an unwed parent. Marsiglio studied NLSY data and determined that males who had not lived with two parents at age 14 were overrepresented in the subsample of teenage fathers several years later. These fathers were more likely to have parents who had not completed high school. Likewise, teenage girls' sexual activity and fertility are strongly related to their family experiences. Girls who have grown up in mother-only families or who have sisters who have given birth out of wedlock, or who have lived in

families on welfare are more likely to become teen mothers (Hogan et al., 1985; Antel, 1988).

Resnick and Burt assert that poor school performance combined with poverty or a difficult family environment create high risk status for youth. School failure is both a factor related to increased incidence of teenage parenting and a major independent contributor to welfare dependence. Moreover, teenage parenting sometimes precipitates school failure among those who are "on the edge." Children who are failing in school frequently seek other avenues for gratification and success—including participation in social groups and behaviors that are related to teenage parenting. Sometimes the same factors that precipitate teenage parenting also lead to school failure. School failure also directly limits the potential of teenagers to support themselves and their children, as well as their access to employment and training services designed to enhance their employment skills. Adolescent girls who place little value on educational attainment and who do not do well in school are more likely to have intercourse at a young age and to use contraceptives either poorly or not at all. In one nationally representative survey of sophomore girls, teens with disciplinary problems in school, class-cutting and absenteeism were more likely to claim that they were or might be willing to bear a child outside of marriage (Abrahamse et al 1988). The younger and more disadvantaged women are when they have their first child, the less likely they are to graduate from high school (Upchurch, 1989).

Surveys of teen fathers have shown a high degree of correlation between poor school performance and early fatherhood. In Lerman's analysis of young absent fathers, he found that 40% were high school drop-outs (49% for Whites). More had been placed in remedial English classes, and they had lower math and verbal abilities than childless young men. In a study of fathers of children born to teenage mothers in Baltimore, 53% of white fathers had less than a 9th grade education -- only 12% had finished high school. For Blacks the levels

were much less dramatic though still low: 11% had less than a 9th grade education and only 49% had finished high school (Hardy, et al, 1989).

Initiation of sexual activity is a key risk behavior. Sixty-five percent (65%) of boys who become "absent fathers" started having sex before age 16 compared with 25% of childless teens. That was in 1983; all indications point to teens starting sex even earlier today. Of note is the fact that the median lag from first sex to fatherhood was 4.5 years, with a longer delay for Blacks. It appears that unlike girls, highest risk of conception for young males does not tend to be during the first months of sexual activity. This information can help to target early adolescent boys who are sexually active and intervene with pregnancy prevention programs before age 15 or 16. And it points out to us that programs promoting abstinence among boys must begin quite early in adolescence to have any effect among the population most at risk for becoming absent fathers. On the other hand, females who first have intercourse at age 15 or below have been found to be nearly twice as likely to get pregnant in the first 1 to 6 months of sexual activity as adolescents who wait until they are 18 or 19 to have intercourse. This points out the large risks of pregnancies among the age groups most likely to fall into welfare dependence. Knowledge and understanding of abstinence and contraceptives are key for young girls before they become sexually active.

APPROACH

Our preliminary approach is to consider targeting prevention services on all children who meet one of two criteria: (1) they exhibit significant problems in school; or (2) they are children in welfare households. This targeting strategy will capture the vast majority of those at risk of dependency--those who will become parents with limited sources of financial support. It also will capture others who may not become teenage parents, but who may consume large public expenditures for a variety of other reasons related to poor school performance or outcomes--essentially, those who are likely to have low levels of labor market attachment and/or low

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earnings power and thus consume significant employment and training resources, adult education services, and non-AFDC forms of public assistance, such as food stamps, EITC, child care subsidies, health care, and so forth.

This type of identification strategy presumes availability of a wide range of intervention services on an as-needed basis. Many of these could (and arguably should) be provided by the education system--services such as before and after school care, tutorial services, and social work services. Others may be services that are more appropriately part of the welfare system, such as family counseling, and health care. Other services might be provided through a variety of channels with welfare case managers or school staff who make appropriate referrals--for example, support and community groups, or substance abuse treatment. As children approach teenage years, they also should have family planning counseling and education, as well as access to services.

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Options for changing the opportunity and reward structure in federal education, employment, and training programs

1. Expand programs intended to increase opportunities for at-risk youth.

Many education, training, and employment programs provide services to at-risk youth. Among them are Chapter 1, TRIO programs, Vocational Education Opportunities - Disadvantaged Activities, Pell and other post-secondary education grants, Perkins loans, JTPA IIA, IIB, and Job Corps. In addition, the Administration's school-to-work initiatives, while generally not targeted especially to at-risk youth, will include them.

Pros

- * Expansion of current spending in this area would be the most obvious way to show increased commitment to greater opportunity for at-risk youth.
- * Generally, these programs do not serve all eligibles, so expansions could be justified.

Cons

- * Simply increasing spending will not change the reward structure. Teenage parents are eligible for all these programs. The balance of opportunities for adolescents who delay childbearing and for those who don't will remain largely unchanged.
- * There is virtually no good evidence that most of these programs prevent adolescent childbearing and subsequent welfare receipt.
- * Except for the Perkins loans, these programs represent discretionary spending subject to the BEA cap. Given other policy priorities, it will be difficult to achieve significant spending increases in these discretionary programs.

2. Make avoidance of adolescent parenthood a condition of all individual-based, federally funded human capital enhancement programs for secondary and post-secondary adolescents.

Currently, federally-funded education, training, and employment programs often set general conditions of eligibility in addition to need or preparation.

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Frequently, programs are available only to U.S. citizens, or to those without delinquent educational loan repayments. All programs could add as a condition of eligibility that applicants may not be adolescent parents, or, alternatively, unmarried adolescent parents.

Pros

- * A very broad policy would be the clearest and potentially most powerful.
- * In some ways, a very broad, uniform policy would be the easiest to administer.
- * This significant change to the reward structure could be achieved without increased spending.

Cons

- * Conditioning all federally funded aid on good behavior seems to leave no room for helping those who have made a mistake but want to turn their lives around.
- * Currently, these programs do not exclude applicants who have been convicted to crimes. (In fact, some programs and demonstrations have been aimed at this group specifically.) It would be perverse to provide aid to felons but exclude it to unmarried adolescent parents.
- * The policy would have an unfairly harsher effect on females than on males. It is still much easier to determine whether a female adolescent is an unmarried mother than whether a male adolescent is an unmarried father.
- * A policy that simply redirects current spending may be portrayed as a weak commitment and reform on the cheap.
- * Administration and auditing of the requirement will not be simple and could be expensive on a per-case basis, such that the cost of confirming eligibility would look too large in comparison to the cost of the intervention.
- * The policy could be criticized for encouraging pregnancy terminations.

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3. Make eligibility for only some appropriate and desirable programs (such as school-to-work, TRIO, residential Job Corps and JTPA II-A OJT, and II-B Summer Youth Employment), or set-asides within some programs, conditioned on avoiding adolescent parenthood.

Pros

- * Setting good behavior conditions on a few programs offering expensive and desirable opportunities would target the most significant opportunities the federal government funds to the group we want to influence. This could represent a noticeable change to the reward structure in communities with concentrations of at-risk youth.
- * Other education and training programs would remain available to adolescent parents who were trying to get back on track.

Cons

- * This more targeted policy would have the same differential impact on females as the more general policy.
 - * A policy that simply redirects current spending may be portrayed as a weak commitment and reform on the cheap.
 - * The motivating power of the policy would be undermined when the limited number of these opportunities falls short of the demand.
 - * The policy could be criticized for encouraging pregnancy terminations.
4. In several demonstration neighborhoods with very high levels of school drop-outs and adolescent pregnancies, promise post-secondary education assistance for those with college ambitions, and guarantee appropriate training and then a public job or hiring preference to some with low educational achievement. Condition these offers on avoiding adolescent parenthood.

Pros

- * A guarantee of post-secondary opportunity, either education and training or a guaranteed job, may be needed to motivate students who have low educational achievement and weak attachment to regular secondary

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school. Under current budget constraints, a real guarantee initiative would probably have to be limited to several pilot sites at first.

- * Concentrating on those who are not college bound and are not likely to benefit from advanced technical skills training is appropriate in light of the profile of adolescents most at-risk.
- * Focussing resources on a few test sites would permit more controlled integration of opportunity policies with welfare policies and crime policies. The coordination of all three elements may be a necessary if any are going to have an effect.

Cons

- * A demonstration strategy may be criticized as an inadequate response to a problem of this size and importance.
 - * We have no experience in successful implementation of initiatives that aim to change the economy and social structure of distressed neighborhoods.
 - * Some education guarantee programs appear to be having trouble keeping eligible students on track. It appears that support services are needed as well.
 - * Demonstrations imply evaluations. It will be practically impossible to perform a rigorous evaluation of a program that involves such fundamental changes of a whole neighborhood along so many dimensions.
5. Provide hiring, training, or wage subsidies to private-for-profit firms, private-non-profit or public agencies that will make job guarantees to junior-high and high-school students who graduate, don't commit crimes, and don't become adolescent parents.

Pros

- * The most effective form of increasing opportunity, especially for those who would not benefit from college or training in advanced technical skills, would be a regular job.

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- Subsidies for employers who hire at-risk youth can be more economical than creation of jobs for that target group.
- A subsidy would represent a major new program and make the Administration's commitment evident. It could be distinguished from the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit by the level of subsidy, new childbearing condition of eligibility, and inclusion of public-sector employers who do not benefit from the current federal tax credit program.

Cons

- The program would be inefficient. Many at-risk youth find employment successfully without such subsidies.
- Employer subsidies for hiring and training disadvantaged employees have typically had low uptake. The Targeted Jobs Tax Credit has not been shown to increase employment among the target groups.
- Depending on how the subsidies were funded, additional spending under the BEA discretionary cap or additional mandatory cuts or revenue increases would be needed.
- Increasingly, research and experience with employment and training programs for the most disadvantaged find that getting a job in the first place is not hard, even in socially isolated and impoverished neighborhoods. Rather, the problem is keeping the job. This proposal would not help that.

Job Corps

Currently, the Job Corps serves approximately 60,000 new enrollees each year. Thirty-eight percent of enrollees are females. Female youth with children can enroll in the Job Corps, and a small number of centers have child care programs on-site. Other sites have developed off-site child care programs, and non-residential slots are also available for young women with children. Roughly 20 percent of the women who enter the Job Corps have dependents, and 4 percent of the males who enroll have dependents. Forty-eight percent of the women who enroll in non-residential slots have dependents, as compared to 13 percent of the women who enroll in residential centers. A 50 percent expansion of the Job Corps is planned by the year 2000.

School-to-Work Initiative

The Administration will introduce legislation later this summer for a major school-to-work initiative. The legislation will provide for joint DOL and Department of Education funding for grants to restructure high schools to better link schools to the workplace. The program is aimed at increasing the aspirations and long-term career opportunities for non-college youth.

Youth Fair Chance

Youth Fair Chance is a new DOL initiative aimed at high-poverty inner-city neighborhoods and rural areas. The program concentrates resources into neighborhoods restricted to a population of 25,000 or less and with a poverty rate of over 30 percent. All urban neighborhoods reached by this program will be predominantly black or Hispanic. The program combines school-to-work initiatives with a variety of interventions involving sports and recreation, local colleges, community development, and job training. Currently, there are 11 pilot sites, and \$50 million has been appropriated for the program in the recent supplemental legislation to the FY 1993 budget. The idea of the program is to saturate an area with all types of positive interventions, and to turn negative peer pressure into positive peer pressure. Reducing teen parenting is one of the goals of the program.

#7. OPTIONS FOR PREVENTING TEEN PARENTHOOD

The disappointing results of the STEP demonstration suggest that no one intervention, in isolation, is going to dramatically reduce teen pregnancy. However, because the costs of welfare are so high for families started by unwed teenagers, it is worth a lot of time and money to attempt to change cultural patterns of adolescent childbearing. Research on both young males and females suggest that youth who are doing well in school and have aspirations for college are markedly less likely to become teen parents. Research also suggests much higher rates of teen parenthood in high-poverty urban neighborhoods.

What may be needed is a series of concentrated interventions--started when children are small--to boost their educational achievement and aspirations for college. To increase the cost-effectiveness of such programs, funding could be restricted to areas of 30 percent or higher poverty. This would exclusively target the funds to minority inner-city areas and rural areas which would also be minority except in the case of Appalachia. People who work with youth indicate that there is no more powerful force operating on youth than peer pressure, and the goal would be to introduce enough positive interventions into communities so as to turn peer pressure from negative to positive. New federal programs in such a prevention initiative could be based on the following models:

- o **New Beginnings** is a program aimed at increasing the involvement of parents in the education of children in elementary school. It is based in part on James Comer's ideas for increasing parent and community involvement in elementary schools.
- o **LA's Best** is a comprehensive after-school program operated in inner-city elementary schools. Students receive a variety of positive experiences, including tutoring, sports and recreation, art instruction, and field trips to various cultural events.
- o **I Know I Can--Start Early** is a program that starts in the sixth grade to get children interested in the idea of going to college. Parents are also involved. During summers, children work and study on college campuses.
- o **Middle School Restructuring** has been identified by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development as fundamental to efforts to reform urban schools. Typically, students move from small elementary schools where they receive much attention to large, impersonal middle schools. In their **Turning Points** report, the Carnegie Council lists a number of recommendations for improving middle schools, including breaking up large schools into "houses" or "schools within schools".
- o **Sports Programs** have been very effective in some of DOL's Youth Fair Chance pilot sites in expanding the involvement of youth in positive activities. There is much room in most inner-city neighborhoods for expanded sports leagues in baseball, softball, soccer, football, and basketball. Such leagues are needed for both children and youth, and for both boys and girls.
- o **CollegeBound** is a public/private collaboration started in Baltimore in which minority youth attending high school are assisted in applying for and enrolling in college. Counselors make sure that students take the PSAT and SAT tests on time, apply for financial aid, and fill out applications for colleges. Counselors also take students on trips to colleges, and parents are also involved. Counselors also work with local colleges to help youth get accepted

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and receive financial aid. Also, "last dollar" financial aid is promised to make up the difference between financial aid available and what the student needs to attend college. Combined, the I Know I Can and CollegeBound programs can be the equivalent of the more expensive I Have a Dream program. The promise of college financial aid is important to the I Have A Dream model, but perhaps just as important is the follow-through to make sure youth are making good progress in school and then apply to college. Combined I Know I Can and CollegeBound programs can provide both the "last dollar" guarantee and the follow-through.

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Prevention as a theme in welfare and child support reform

The prevention issue group likely will have recommendations about the kinds of programs that first come to mind in this area - pregnancy and drop-out prevention programs. It also probably will have recommendations that aim to increase educational and employment opportunities that are available to teenage males and females most at-risk of fathering or bearing children before they are ready to support them.

In addition, the issue group views prevention as a policy theme that could run through several elements of the welfare reform package taking shape. So a significant part of the mission of the issue group is to state how the prevention theme could be incorporated in welfare and child support policies, and to make the case that it should. These prevention objectives can then be balanced against other possibly competing goals and objectives in the design of welfare and child support reform.

Assumptions underlying a prevention theme are consistent with the widely held view that a principal factor contributing to risky behavior by adolescents is their perception that they have little to lose if they don't delay becoming parents and little to gain if they do. This view does not entail a belief that adolescents make choices about sexual activity and contraception based upon fine estimates of the present value of future income streams. But it does assume that, if the desirability of the options at-risk youth see before them could be changed, their childbearing behavior would change as well. More would be cautious about fathering or bearing children if the futures they associated with those outcomes appeared relatively less desirable than the futures they associated with alternatives. Such a change in the relative desirability of these futures might be brought about by:

- a) making welfare less attractive, not by further jeopardizing the well-being of dependent children, but by making the responsibilities that parents bear more transparent;
- b) increasing the opportunities at-risk youth enjoy when they avoid becoming parents (in comparison to opportunities they enjoy when they do not).

The prevention issue group has identified several elements in the welfare and child support reform package that seem most consequential for enforcing parental responsibilities and establishing relative opportunities. At this point, the issue group has not settled on particular policy options to recommend. However, the bearing of the prevention perspective on key issues can be sketched.

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First is establishment of paternity and an order to pay child support. In the most recent year for which we have data, about two-thirds of all teenagers giving birth were unmarried. More than nine-in-ten black teenagers giving birth were unmarried. Currently, an unmarried adolescent father can be relatively confident that he will not be forced to provide regular child support. It is estimated that paternity is established in about one-third of all cases where children are born to unmarried mothers.¹ Only about 24 percent of unmarried mothers have court orders for child support, and only about 73 percent of these receive any of the support they are due.²

The perspective of prevention suggests that, if the partners of at-risk teenaged women were more certain that they would be required to support any children they fathered, they might modify their risk-taking behavior to avoid that possibility. For child support, the prevention theme stresses that the fathers of the children of teenage mothers should not be on the bottom of the priority lists of child support enforcement agencies just because they often have little income in the years soon after the birth. From the prevention perspective, it would be best if youth at-risk of becoming unmarried fathers were certain that they would be required to support their children.

Second is the nature of any welfare time-limit and post-transitional employment. A time-limit is a powerful way to convey the message that mothers have a responsibility to support their children through employment. If the time-limit were uniform and exemptions few, at-risk female youth would be certain of a very different life on welfare than in the past. If the time limit were complicated, varying by many factors, with many exemptions, the transitional period could end up looking a lot like welfare as we know it.

In theory, a post-transitional safety net that amounted to work-for-welfare would constitute an added cost of assistance for mothers. It could be a large cost, relative to the current program, in leisure time or time with children. On the other hand, a post-transitional job that was much more desirable, such as regular public employment, might make welfare more attractive than it is now, and possibly even more attractive than other employment expectations of the most disadvantaged at-risk youth.

Third is the nature of education, training, and employment opportunities made available to those who do not delay fathering or bearing children. Due to the low average educational attainment of teenage mothers, and their likelihood of long

¹ Testimony of David Ellwood before the Human Resources Subcommittee, June 10, 1993, Table VI.

² Gordon H. Lester, Child Support and Alimony 1989, Bureau of the Census, 1991, P-60, No.173, Table C.

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welfare careers, intensive and expensive interventions to increase their earnings potential have been recommended. More frequently now, the same kinds of arguments are being made for intensive interventions for absent fathers. However, to the extent that an alternative high-school, or skills training, or community college is made available to those who do not avoid fathering or bearing a child, the opportunity costs of these behaviors are lowered.

These prevention angles on program policies all assume that welfare, child support, and human capital enhancement programs can influence antecedent behavior, such as initiation of sexual activity, contraception practices, and pregnancy terminations. We have little of the kind of knowledge we would need to make an estimate of whether these policies would have measurable prevention effects. No strong effects of the level of welfare benefits on fertility have been found.³ However, much of the analysis of this issue has been based on cross-state variation in AFDC benefits, which is not an obviously appropriate basis on which to predict the effects of a time-limit on eligibility for AFDC, followed by work relief or some other universal work requirement.

In general, our theoretical and empirical understanding of the entry effects of welfare policies is not as developed as our understanding of exit effects. However, a recent analysis of the potential for entry effects in the JOBS program estimated that generous education and training opportunities could draw significant numbers onto the rolls, while a very rigorous work requirement could have a significant preventive impact.⁴

This analysis did not concentrate on fertility impacts, nor, explicitly, on the behavior of adolescents. Predictions of behavioral impacts of policy changes on these particular behaviors of this target group are especially difficult. Analysis has shown that models of pure economic choice do not explain current childbearing behavior of teenage mothers very well.⁵

On balance, research does not assure us that incorporating a prevention theme into welfare and child support reform would actually prevent many adolescents from entering the welfare rolls. On the other hand, welfare time-limits and a certainty of child support orders for unmarried fathers would represent very big changes in the message welfare and child support programs send to adolescents regarding the

³ Robert Moffitt, "Incentive Effects of the U.S. Welfare System: A Review," Journal of Economic Literature, March 1992, pp.27-31.

⁴ Robert Moffitt, "The Effect of Welfare Training Programs on the Welfare Caseload," Report to the US Dept of Health and Human Services, (August, 1992).

⁵ David Ellwood, "Understanding Dependency. Choices, Confidence, or Culture?" US Dept of Health and Human Services, (Washington, DC, 1987), pp.93-4.

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responsibilities of fathering and bearing children. We don't have research on the effects of changes of this magnitude. It is not unreasonable to hope that such large changes in the signals welfare and child support send about responsibilities may have behavioral impacts, especially if complemented by increases in alternative opportunities.

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Summary of a Neighborhood Approach to Welfare Prevention

The goal of our proposal would be to demonstrate and rigorously evaluate a series of interventions committed to changing the circumstances of youth to a degree that would be large, meaningful and readily discernable to the members of that community. An additional intent would be to create a "success story" proving it is possible to reverse the adverse trends for youth and, as a consequence, initiate a growing chain of successes. At the same time, the demonstrations could provide information for administrators and policy-makers for improved efforts.

These efforts would encompass the principles presented below. They would use existing federal, state and local programs where possible, and available private resources, coordinating and focusing their use in a deliberate, manner. The demonstration would follow an intervention strategy put together from the best expertise available, and it would follow a period of consensus building with involved parties.

Principles

Our goal should be a prevention effort which produces results which are large enough to be apparent to society.

Early child-bearing and other problem behaviors are interrelated and strongly influenced by the general life-experience associated with poverty. Any prevention effort which fails to deal with those factors is likely to have an impact that is minor when compared to the extent of the problem.

In the end, the decision to avoid non-constructive behaviors is an internal one which stems from personal life-experience. Therefore, changing the circumstances in which people live and consequently how they view themselves is needed to change the decisions young people make in regard to their lives. It also helps make them more responsive to more specific interventions.

Consequently, attention must be made to the circumstances in which youth grow and live in any effort which hopes to have results that are large enough to be meaningful to the community. This effort should address the broad spectrum of areas associated with a healthy community: economic opportunity, safety, health, education, etc.

The factors which influence youths' behavior are powerful, often long-term, and pervasive. To be most effective, interventions should have similar characteristics. This suggests that efforts to change the environment should be concentrated and focused so that they achieve a sufficient size or "critical mass" needed to change day

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to day experiences, decisions and behaviors. Therefore, resources should not be dissipated.

In regard to support and intervention services it means that they should be non-categorical, integrated and delivered with a personal dimension, such as through mentoring, in-home visits, and personal counseling/case-management. There is evidence that the interest and concern of the intervention provider can add much to the effectiveness of the intervention.

Existing programs and expenditures may be sufficient if properly coordinated. One objective of this task group should be to at least initiate an ongoing effort to more effectively coordinate and utilize the resources that are already being devoted to helping communities and youth.

In addition to changing neighborhoods, our proposal would include directly support youth and families. In addition to collaborations among existing institutions such as schools, health systems, and justice systems, special programs to strengthen families and provide direct services to family members, particularly adolescents, must be provided.

In addition to programs which intervene in crises or are aimed at dealing with specific problems, we would emphasize programs which develop life skills and improve self-image and life course expectations through personal development. Programs for parents and families and programs specifically focused on adolescents would be required.

Family support programs which link families with other families and local institutions can lessen isolation, increase coping skills, provide emotional support, and enhance parenting skills as well as provide opportunities for increased or improved labor market participation. The current Head Start family support component is an example of how programs can include a range of activities to improve the emotional and economic well-being of parents and encourage child development. Existing models can be used as a basis for expanding or improving services to families with adolescents.

Research evidence indicates that peer support with adult guidance can help address the many negative influences faced by adolescents. As with their parents, adolescents have been shown to benefit from programs which reduce isolation, increase self-esteem and assertiveness, and improve decision making and problem solving. Opportunities to create and maintain positive relationships with adults and peers has been shown to be important.

DISCUSSION¹

Since the purpose of this panel is welfare prevention through avoidance of too-early child-bearing, our recommendation depends on acceptance of the proposition that poverty and the conditions of the poverty and that behavior are interrelated. This connection is well supported by research including that reported in the paper prepared for this panel, Operational Definition of Teenagers most at-Risk of Teenage Parenting.

The suggested approach attaches great importance to what William J. Wilson refers to the "tangle of pathology in the inner city", wherein residents have become increasingly isolated from mainstream patterns of behavior." The National Research Council (NRC) holds that "Settings are important not only for the "first chances" they provide, but also for "second chances," those opportunities to redeem past failures or inappropriate choices. Such second chances are clearly less available when settings are in disarray, limited in resources, and subject to continuing pressure toward illegitimate activities."

Others have noted the contagion effect, wherein non-productive attitudes and behaviors reinforce themselves and spread. Given the existence of the fertile ground for these problems James Wilson say that "the abrupt rise in the number of young persons has had an exponential effect on the rate of certain social problem" there may be a "critical mass" of young persons in a community such that when which when reached "a self-sustaining chain reaction is set off that creates an explosive increase in the amount of crime, teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, and welfare dependency." [p 38; James Q. Wilson, Thinking about Crime, (New York: Basic Books, 1975, pp.16,17)

This is similar to what Julius Wilson refers to this as a "concentration effect." He notes that "The social transforation of the inner city has resulted in a disproportionate concentration of the most disadvantaged ... creating a social milieu so significantly different from the environment that existed in these communities several decades ago."... "The residents of these areas, whether women and children of welfare families or aggressive treat criminals have become increasingly socially isolated from mainstream patterns of behavior. These concentration effects include the constraints and opportunities in neighborhoods in which the population is overwhelmingly socially disadvantaged--constraints and opportunities that include the kinds of ecological niches

¹ Unfortunately, time pressure did not permit strict adherence to accepted citation of references.

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that the residents of these neighborhoods occupy in terms of access to jobs and job networks... involvement in quality schools, and exposure to conventional role models."

Others note that "Once a neighborhood begins to substantially lose its economic base, however, other factors come into play. Adults and young people become socially isolated, losing the kind of networks and self- or group identification that support customary behavior... (Wilson, 1987; Fernandez and Harris, 1990; Harrell and Peterson, 1992; Crane, 1991) Social institutions-schools, the social welfare system, and the criminal justice system, tend to anticipate failure, shame, and hopelessness (Williams and Kornblum, 1985) Parents also lose some degree of hope and have fears form the well-being of themselves and their children (National Commission on Children, 1991). Employers also respond: people living in underclass neighborhoods, even with the same backgrounds and skill are hired less often than those in other neighborhoods..."(Kirschenman and Neckermanm, 1991) [See attachment A for a further discussion of research on neighborhood effects]

We know of know direct evaluation of the effect of a comprehensive change in environment or setting has on families and youth. However, Chicago's Gautreaux program, designed to counter the legal problems of housing segregation, offers a limited experiment of the effects on ghetto residents of changing their environment. The program provides for applicants to be moved with government subsidies from public housing to better housing in the city itself or in the suburbs. Measuring certain crucial behavioral responses to these moves provides the data for a natural experiment where the "control" group moves from largely segregated public housing to better quality but still segregated private housing within the city, while the "experimental" group moves from segregated public housing to integrated private housing in the suburbs. Program participants were not purposefully selected for city or suburban housing; when a house became available, the next person on the list was contacted and offered the shelter. The two groups are very similar in socio-demographic characteristics.

While there are some minor problems with the study and results should be accepted with cautionary warnings, James E. Rosenbaum's evaluation of the program produces some interesting results. Compared with city movers, significantly more suburban movers were employed, even after controls, though their average pay and hours worked were about the same. Children in the Gautreaux program also showed positive effects. Suburban movers' children are more likely than city movers' children to be in school, in college-track programs, in four-year colleges, in jobs, in better-paying jobs, and in jobs with benefits. Rosenbaum concludes, "Just by moving people and without providing additional services, this program has uncovered capabilities of these low-

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income people that were not evident in the city." Interview comments from participants also turned up very positive attitudes about the suburban moves. One said: "[Living in the suburbs] made me feel that I'm worth something. I can do anything I want to do if I get up and try it." The Gautreaux Program provides an opportunity to see some clear-cut positive effects of changing the environment of low-income people.

PROS

- A. This approach has the potential for societally significant reductions in early child-bearing and other behaviors which put youth at risk.

By dealing with the general influences that promote at-risk behavior a broad approach such as this has the greatest potential for large impacts. Just as the great gains in public health came from eliminating the sources of infection from the environment rather than dealing with the disease or symptoms, we believe that a necessary part of an intervention which would have societally significant results is to deal with the environment which promotes at-risk behaviors. Essentially the approach we recommend differs from more narrow interventions only in that it includes steps designed to deal with the "negative antecedent conditions which create vulnerabilities" in the words of Resnick and Burt, by reducing those antecedent conditions and consequently the "vulnerabilities" before they occur.

- B. This general approach does not preclude inclusion of specific pregnancy prevention interventions.

While envisioning a demonstration which is attempting to reduce the root causes for the adoption of risky behavior we recognize the need for more specific programs that attempt to deal directly with those behaviors. Adoption of this option for a general approach does not preclude adoption of any or all of the more specific approaches recommended by the panel.

- C. A general approach intended to improve the background or settings in which youth live may help the more specific interventions be successful.

Just as training seems to be more effective when it is felt by the person to be relevant to his or her life, specific pregnancy prevention interventions should be more effective when youth are prepared by their experiences to be receptive to the message. Being told there is an opportunity cost associated with early child-bearing will be more effective when the target of the message believes or feels that it is true. This belief

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needs to be inculcated by their life experience and consequently their attitudes about themselves.

D. The demonstration need not involve additional cost.

There are a great deal of resources being expended on the components of this demonstration now. We see the need not as additional resources but better coordination and, most importantly, focusing of resources so that they have the weight sufficient to make a difference in a neighborhood or community. We would use available programs and new initiatives, like enterprise zones, where possible as foundations for action. We would take advantage, where possible, of similar community development demonstrations planned or in progress. However, if the general approach were implemented more widely following a favorable demonstration phase, additional resources might be needed.

D. It is likely that foundations and other private entities would be interested in forming a coalition with the federal government for this initiative.

Many major foundations are interested in at-risk youth and community development. They have already begun to think in terms of an approach that is comprehensive across a number of crucial services, that integrates and coordinates these crucial services, and that saturates a local area with the kinds of services the area needs for a real difference in living standards and future development. The Cleveland Community-Building Initiative is an example of an approach similar to the one we are advocating.

E. This approach would be in line with the growing consensus regarding what is needed to deal with the problem of at-risk youth.

Although not necessarily endorsing their specific recommendations, our proposal is in line with the National Research Council's central position about the overwhelming importance of the environment. "Our decision to focus on settings reflects the panels appreciation of the profound influence that context has on adolescent behavior and youth ... The lack of attention to settings has resulted in concentration on individual adolescent behaviors and categorical programs such as teenage pregnancy prevention... Because these problems are interrelated and have common predictors that are largely environmental, more comprehensive integrated approaches are needed to reduce the exposure of children and adolescents to high-risk settings... The categorical focus on individual behaviors has been largely ineffective because behavior is the result of individual and group interactions with the environment. Sustained attention paid to reducing the risks generated by these settings is virtually the pre condition for

achieving widespread reductions in health - and life compromising behaviors."

William J. Wilson expressed a similar view in his book The Truly Disadvantaged. " In the history of inquiry about the development of youth, the focus has traditionally been on individuals rather than context, and the latter has generally been ignored. This is a good time to right the balance, to extend understanding, to acknowledge and elaborate the pervasive influence of contexts or settings. Second, the role a setting plays must actually be seen as twofold, and thus, doubly important: it influences the development of a person over time, through experience, socialization, and exposure in various contexts, and it also interacts with that person at any given time in influencing the specific behavior that occurs. Third, it is evident that there are large variations in rates or levels of health - and life-compromising experiences and behavior associated with different contexts, especially for differences that relate to the level of poverty (for example, rates of school failure and dropout, unprotected sexual intercourse, aggression and violence, and drug and alcohol use)...policy efforts to prevent or ameliorate bad outcomes (such as school failure) are clearly more feasible and more likely to be efficient when targeted toward changing contexts or settings-using what is known broadly as a public health approach-than when targeted at changing individuals on a one-by-one basis."

CONS

- A. Because it is ambitious, this approach would be a challenge to organize and put into place, and execute.
- B. It would require the willing participation of many federal agencies.
- C. As compared to less complex, more narrowly focused options, this option will be less readily seen as a welfare prevention intervention.
- D. Areas of program overlap would have to be dealt with, possibly through legislation.
- E. Although costs of the demonstration might be met through better coordination of existing resources, if successful, wide replication could involve substantial new expenditures.

Implementation Plan

There are various approaches all incorporating organization of a public/private initiative to plan a demonstration, pool resources, select one or more demonstration

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sites, manage and monitor, evaluate. One specific variation:

- 1) Develop a public/private partnership with leading foundations with an interest in the problems of at-risk youth and community development.
- 2) Commission papers that: pull together what is known or hypothesized about the root causes of the behavior of at-risk youth; based on that understanding presents one or more comprehensive intervention strategies that could be implemented in a community or neighborhood; identify existing resources that could be used to meet the specified intervention needs; and identify additional resources or interventions that would be needed, if any.
- 3) Distribute papers to a panel of appropriate policy makers, administrators, community leaders and academic experts.
- 4) Convene a conference with the goal of approaching or reaching agreement on a demonstration intervention and agreement to coordinate resources as dictated by the intervention design.
- 5) Establish a cooperative decision making and coordinating entity of panel members or representatives to select demonstration sites, and to implement, evaluate and administer (or monitor) the demonstration.
- 6) Maintain interest and momentum by involving the original panel as advisors on a continuing basis.

Funds for planning and organizing the demonstration could come from a variety of sources, including Section 1110 Social Services R&D funding. Attachment C provides a preliminary list of some of the program resources which could be included in the demonstration communities' intervention.

ATTACHMENT A

Neighborhood Effects and Impacts on Adolescent Behavior Such As School Drop-out And Pregnancy

Few studies have been conducted in the area of neighborhood effects, and data and methodology have varied greatly among these studies. Research in this area has been recent and has stemmed from the reopening of dialogue regarding an "underclass". Defining the term "underclass" has been controversial among scholars and has increased the difficulties in operationalizing definitions for the study of neighborhood effects. William Julius Wilson (1987), one of the first scholars to reexamine the issue, defines underclass as the "heterogeneous grouping of families and individuals who are outside the mainstream of the American occupational system. Included in this group are individuals who lack training and skills and either experience long-term unemployment or are not members of the labor force, individuals who are engaged in street crime and other forms of aberrant behavior, and families that experience long-term spells of poverty and/or welfare dependency."

Theorists on the topic of underclass have been placed into two categories: structuralists, such as Wilson and Douglas Massey, and behavioralists, such as Isabel Sawhill and Erol Ricketts (Prosser, 1991). Structuralists theorize the problem of an underclass as derived from societal forces that limit opportunity for neighborhood residents (Prosser, 1991). Behavioralists associate the causes of neighborhood deterioration to individual and group behaviors (Prosser, 1991). Within these two divergent theories, definition of an underclass can be categorized in three ways: (1) a geographic concentration of individuals with similar characteristics; (2) the prevalence of behaviors in a given area; and (3) the persistence of these behaviors over time and across generations (Prosser, 1991).

In efforts to empirically test hypotheses on the underclass and their neighborhoods, the operationalization of definitions has varied due in part to these different theoretical approaches. Definitions for testing have been arbitrary and to some extent dictated by available data (Prosser, 1991). As a result, estimates on the prevalence of underclass persons or neighborhoods remain dramatically different from study to study.

By focusing on the controversy of underclass definitions and prevalence, many of the approaches to the study of underclass neighborhoods have emphasized the determinants and analysis of underclass, spacial concentration of underclass behaviors, and intergenerational transmission of underclass behaviors. A list of key theorists and researchers in these areas is included in the appendix. While these issues are relevant to the understanding of neighborhood culture, these studies do not directly address the effects a neighborhood has on an individual's behavior.

Relatively few studies have focused specifically on the influences and effects of neighborhoods. Theoretical studies include: Douglas Wolf, Rebecca Clark, and Vicki Freedman (1990) who conducted a study to examine three different theoretical models

for the purpose of specifying a model as the basis for empirical study; and, Jorge Martinez-Vazquez and Rubin Saposnik (1990) who analyzed a contagion model of the underclass.

The existing empirical studies have applied and tested some of the theoretical models mentioned above. Jonathan Crane (1991) tested his epidemic theory of neighborhood effect on teen childbearing and school drop out. Mary Corcoran, Roger Gordon, Deborah Laren, and Gray Solon (1989) studied the effects of family and community background on men's economic status. Most recently, Rebecca Clark (1991) applied a model of the epidemic theory to test the neighborhood influence on school drop out for male youth. A final study conducted by Mary Corcoran examined three theoretical models including the epidemic theory to test the impact of family and neighborhood factors and will be available in February, 1993 (Prosser, 1991).

Theoretical Studies

Modeling the Growth of the Underclass: Neighborhood Effects and Neighborhood Dynamics

Wolf et al. (1990) focused their study on three theoretical models. Prior to specifying these models, Wolf et al. (1990) addressed numerous definitional and conceptual issues critical to the development of empirical neighborhood studies. These issues were raised through a review of the literature available in 1990 which, as previously indicated, was not focused directly on the hypothesis of a neighborhood effect. Wolf et al. (1990) infer that such research had not been conducted due to the lack of theoretical models designed to reflect the complex and interactional relationship between an individual and their neighborhood.

The issues raised emphasize the process of measurement. Measurement issues such as the definition and prevalence of an underclass have already been mentioned, however, Wolf et al. (1990) also point out that "it is difficult to describe the underclass as a whole and simultaneously to identify the individuals who constitute it". Another measurement issue related to definition involves the arbitrary line between behaviors that are persistent versus temporary in nature. The multidimensional aspects of underclass definitions has also been cited as a measurement issue leading Christopher Jencks (Wolf et al., 1990) to define three distinct categories of underclass: an economic, a moral, and an educational underclass.

In addition to these definitional issues of measurement, Wolf et al (1990) identify three criteria areas effecting measurement. These areas include income-based, behavioral, and location-based criteria. In identifying income-based measure for studies, researchers have argued that the underclass and their neighborhoods should be distinguished from the poor and low-income areas. The official poverty threshold is the most widely accepted and utilized income-based measurement, however, it does not reflect the duration or the social context of poverty (eg. some graduate students,

farmers, and long-term AFDC recipients would all be classified together), and therefore, does not serve to differentiate among poor and underclass groups (Wolf et al., 1990).

Behavioral criteria seem to most clearly distinguish the poor from the underclass by the manner in which the behaviors are not in conformity with mainstream social norms. Examples of such behaviors include high incidence of crime, teen pregnancy, child abuse, joblessness, dependency on AFDC, substance abuse and others. As noted, however, such behaviors may not necessarily apply to a group and an individual within the group simultaneously.

Location-based criteria focus on "poverty areas" or spatial concentration of poverty (Wolf et al., 1990). Census tracts or zip code data are often used to determine high concentrations of poverty. Some researchers such as Sawhill and Ricketts have applied other criteria to their location-based measurements to define underclass neighborhoods. Sawhill and Ricketts (Wolf et al., 1990) examined census tracts that had high incidence of school drop-out, single parenthood, welfare dependency, and male joblessness. While location-based criteria may effectively identify underclass areas, assumption or generalizations regarding individual neighborhood residents can not be made. Additionally, the definitional issues again become critical when studying "neighborhoods". A census tract or zip code may only arbitrarily define areas based on geography without taking into account the social context or culture that transcends geographic boundaries.

As a result of these research issues, Wolf et al. (1990) state that current research has not been able to establish a strong basis for a "theoretically relevant neighborhood attribute to include in a model of any given outcome". Wolf et al. (1990) argue that these problems complicate the process of model specification, however, without a theoretical base for which to empirically test neighborhood effects, research in this area can not move forward with any direction.

With the acknowledgement of these definitional and conceptual issues, Wolf et al. (1990) approach the development of three theoretical models by examining the outcome of high school dropout behavior. These models are based on the basic premise that the decision to drop out of school is influenced by two factors: (1) the number of choices available at the point of decision and, (2) the nature of the preferences the student uses to rank these choices. By applying these basic factors, Wolf et al. developed a regression formula for the general study of high school dropout independent of neighborhood effects. In addition to this equation, three distinct mechanisms by which neighborhoods effect school drop out are applied. The three mechanisms influence by (1) serving as a resource or reference group for information, (2) influencing the preferences of an individual, and (3) effecting the rewards or sanctions of various choices. Wolf et al. proposed these mechanisms as

three distinct models referred to as the information model, the preference model, and the reward and sanctions model.

The information model hypothesizes that an individual bases behavioral choices and preferences on the information provided by his/her frame of reference, namely, the residents in the neighborhood. Wolf et al. (1990) note that the issue of identifying theoretically relevant attributes to specify a neighborhood is not problematic in this particular model since data describing the high school drop out rate can be clearly specified.

The preference model hypothesizes that the manner in which an individual ranks his/her preferences of available choices is influenced by the observable behaviors of the residents in the neighborhood. Wolf et al. (1990) relate this model as most like the contagion or epidemic models. The benefit of this model is the acknowledgement that concrete financial cost-benefits are not the only influences on behavior. The idea that the observable behaviors of one's reference group can influence the desirability of various outcomes is further supported by Moffitt's (Wolf et al., 1990) model of welfare stigma by the notion that stigma can become an influential factor in an individual's ranking of preferences and the degree of stigma is determined by that individual's reference group. Wolf et al. (1990) point out that a complication of this model is, however, that it does not take into account the degree or the duration of exposure to these reference group behaviors. Similarly, other problems with the preference model relate to the changing environment and the question of how malleable one's preferences are to the environment. Once preferences are formed, some theorists argue that it is not clear the degree to which preferences can be influenced or changed (Wolf et al., 1990). Child development studies on the relationship between environment and nature as well as studies on resiliency currently indicate that preferences and tendencies are quite malleable, especially in children (see earlier memo on child development).

The reward and sanctions model hypothesizes that an individual's behaviors are influenced by the rewards and sanctions imposed on that individual by their reference group (eg. peer pressure). In consideration of peer pressure, the individual does not change their preferences (as in the preference model) but act according to the pressure of their peer group. One of the difficulties with this model involves establishing an empirical specification distinct from that of the preference model (ie., capturing the sometimes subtle difference between influence and pressure).

Of these three models, Wolf et al. (1990) identify the information model as the most scientifically rigorous model and describe the other two models as weak because they do not have a "clear-cut relation to model specification". Wolf et al. (1990) also point out that these three models are not mutually exclusive and that empirical models need to be developed to take into account more than one statistically distinct mechanism. Another key element missing from these models is the question of how a neighborhood becomes "bad" initially (Wolf et al., 1990).

Many explanations for the cause of neighborhood decline have been provided by theorists. Wolf et al. (1990) identify the mechanisms of "exogenous shock" and selective migration as the most common, however, the dynamic relationship between a neighborhood and the residents through the course of change is less emphasized yet considered an important mechanism for explaining neighborhood declines.

Wolf et al. (1990) describe the interdependent or interactional effects that a neighborhood and the residents have on each other as a "process of dynamic evolution" while also referring to the exchange as "cross-sectional in that current decisions made in a neighborhood can effect the individual decisions of residents in the future. Wolf et al. (1990) see the ideal model as taking these dynamic and interactional mechanisms into account yet raise concerns again about the method of defining or quantifying such quality-oriented issues. They credit Crane with most closely addressing this "quality" issue in a neighborhood effects model. Relating to these model specification concerns, Wolf et al. (1990) raise the questions that since "models are typically estimated using data representing a distribution of neighborhood quality, are the implications of such a model uniform across neighborhoods differentiated according to quality?" and "do the findings from a cross-sectional relationship representing the effects of neighborhoods on individuals, have sensible or even plausible implications when embedded in the dynamics of neighborhood change?".

Wolf et al. (190) conclude their theoretical analysis by saying:

It does seem reasonable to conclude that models in which neighborhood attributes influence their individual residents' behavior may have subtle, possibly unexpected implications for the feedback of individual behaviors onto the neighborhood contexts of future decision makers. Models which average over a broad range of neighborhood attributes may not be uniformly applicable to that range for purposes of prediction and forecasting. Hidden interactions and unexplored nonlinearities may undo the researcher's attempts to marry the cross-sectional and dynamic perspectives in a model of reciprocal associations between neighborhood attributes and the behavior of the people that inhabit them.

"A Contagion Model of Underclass Neighborhoods"

Martínez-Vasquez and Saposnik (1990) approach the theoretical study of neighborhood effects by examining Wilson's hypotheses and Crane's epidemic theory regarding the cause of underclass neighborhoods and the notion that the concentration of this underclass, itself, can increase underclass behaviors. Martínez-Vasquez and Saposnik apply these assumptions and propose a basic behavioral model and both analytical and simulation solutions for the growth of underclass in a single neighborhood.

In specifying a model, several basic assumptions are addressed. These assumptions begin with the definition of neighborhood. Martínez-Vasquez and Saposnik (1990)

emphasize that a neighborhood is defined more by its function than by a geographical or physical characteristics, however, they contend that the less communication and education of the individuals in the neighborhood, the more overlap there will be between functional and physical neighborhoods. Other factors considered influential include net income available for purchase of ordinary market commodities and a complex commodity representing "social standing". Both the individual's contribution to social standing and the contribution by other members for the individual are taken into consideration as well as the price or opportunity cost for such contributions. Personal interactions and feedback among members of the neighborhood are taken into account through the inclusion of social standing in the model formula. Social standing is also assumed to be a characteristic of other factors such as the relative degree of isolation from other communities. Therefore, changing of behavior as well as amount of certain behaviors in the community.

Martinez-Vasquez and Saposnik (1990) attempt to take into account various reasons for which underclass behaviors begin in a neighborhood such as "a generalized increase in unemployment or the suburbanization of jobs, changes in the reward structure of criminal activity, changes in educational quality and achievements, or changes in government policies, such as welfare programs". The main objective, however, is to address the issue of growth of underclass behaviors in a neighborhood. In efforts to achieve this objective, Martinez-Vasquez and Saposnik generally account for both the underclass and "conventional" migration-flow of the neighborhood.

Two main limitations are addressed regarding this approach. First, the approach does not account for the possibility that underclass behavior could grow and then reach a stable level. Second, the level of aggregation in the equations do not allow insight into the various aspects of an individual's decision making process. Another issue, although one that Martinez-Vasquez and Saposnik (1990) attempt to address is that the analytical approach to migration flow is accounted for in a rather mechanical manner. They apply a simulation approach to try to explicitly incorporate the dynamic complexities of neighborhood concentration. The assumptions are similar to the assumptions previously discussed except that in this simulation, it is assumed that the individual will compare the value of their various choices following four different action patterns. These four actions involve the individual choosing to: (1) remain in the neighborhood and participate in conventional behavior, (2) remain in the neighborhood and participate in underclass behaviors, (3) move to another neighborhood and participate in conventional behavior, or (4) move and participate in underclass behavior.

In summary, the critical point of this theoretical model involves distinguishing between conditions that cause underclass behaviors and the mechanism that cause the concentration of these behaviors, itself, to be an influential factor in further growth (Martinez-Vasquez and Saposnik, 1990). Also, the consideration of the dynamic and interactional factors between the individual and the neighborhood that include income opportunities, social standing, and opportunity costs becomes critical while assessing

both the susceptibility and frequency of contact to underclass behavior.

Empirical Studies

"The Epidemic Theory of Ghettos and Neighborhood Effects on Dropping Out and Teenage Childbearing"

Jonathon Crane developed his epidemic theory of neighborhood effects in 1988 and has been a pioneer of this theoretical approach by arguing that the underclass behavior grows much like an infectious disease (Martinez-Vasquez and Saposnik, 1990) in that as a neighborhood declines in quality, sharp increases will occur in the probability for individuals to display underclass behaviors (Crane, 1991). The basic assumption underlying his model is that these "infectious" behaviors are spread through peer influence. Crane looks for critical levels of incidence. He argues that the incidence of problems "move toward equilibrium levels" but once the incidence reaches a critical point, Crane contends the spread of incidence will "explode".

A community's susceptibility to the spread of behaviors is based on two conditions: (1) the degree of risk factors that individual residents present, and (2) their susceptibility to peer influence (Crane, 1991). Through his review of the literature, Crane finds that adolescent boys, particularly poor urban boys, are more susceptible to peer pressure to participate in antisocial behaviors. In addition, his theory argues that a pattern of incidence is found in these susceptible communities. Crane contends that two distributions occur with the first distribution including those neighborhoods which are poor but have not experienced an epidemic of the problem. The second distribution then includes all the "underclass" neighborhoods. Within these two distributions, Crane argues also that social problems will not increase or decline at a constant rate but will increase significantly at the bottom of the distributions as a result of higher prevalence.

In terms of methodology, Crane (1991) utilized a data set not often used. This data set, which defined geographic units as neighborhoods and provided characteristics regarding the individuals, was collected by the Census Bureau in 1970 and made publicly available through the Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). The neighborhoods in this data collection were not identified but fifty-five neighborhood indices were provided with an individual's record.

For the purpose of study, Crane used geographic keys associated with households to determine geographic units proportional in size to census tracts (approximately 4,000-5,000 people). No socioeconomic or demographic data was used to define these areas. Crane examined only teenagers living with their parents. Since Crane's model assumed one-way causality and "made no adjustment for a simultaneity effect, Crane could not control for the effects of teenagers who moved out of their parents home. Although this exclusion is a weakness in the model, Crane asserts that estimates would be biased upward. Teenagers were also excluded on the basis of two data-cleaning

criteria and those with inconsistencies were left out. The total number of 16-19 year olds was 113,997 (56,233 females). After exclusions, the sample size for the study totaled 92,512 for school drop out and 44,466 females for childbearing analysis. Crane uses a piecewise linear logit model to estimate the neighborhoods effects. The index Crane uses for defining neighborhood quality is the percentage of workers in the neighborhood who held professional or managerial jobs (% High Status).

Crane found the pattern of neighborhood effects to support his epidemic prediction in both black and white groups. A sharp jump in probabilities at the lowest range of the distributions. Hispanics revealed a pattern of linearity. For blacks, the very worst neighborhood was more than 50 times greater than the effect in the middle (The ratio of the steep slope to the flat slope is 52.7). For whites, the neighborhood effect was 15 times greater below the critical point. For hispanics, the pattern of increase was approximately linear across the entire distribution.

In a sub-group of the largest cities compared to "other places", Crane found the level, the absolute level, and the rate of increase in drop out probabilities below the key point to be greater within the largest cities. Among the sub-groups of black males and females, black males showed a neighborhood effect of almost 38 times greater below the key point than above it.

For teenage childbearing, evidence of an epidemic was also seen for sub-groups of black females, black females in large cities, white females, and white females in large cities. However, the increases in childbearing probabilities were not significant. Crane argues that the pattern of results could have been sensitive to the scale of measurement and that the nonlinear pattern suggests a neighborhood effect did occur in the worst neighborhoods. Crane ties these effects to social interaction within the neighborhoods because of the strikingly sharp increases in probabilities and the fact that these increases occur at approximately the same place on the distribution.

Crane (1991) discusses, at length, the many biases related to this study including sampling bias, measurement error, specification error and endogeneity bias. However, he emphasizes the effort to structure the analysis so that estimates in the overall neighborhood effect and the relative size of the effect at the bottom would be biased downwards. The exclusion of certain teenagers from the study is identified as the most important biasing factor. Since these excluded teenagers would be disproportionately school dropouts and teen parents, Crane argues that the net bias would be downward, and therefore, results would be probably conservative. Despite the numerous potential bias, Crane holds that unless the net bias was upward and very large in underclass neighborhood specifically, "the basic findings of sharp increases at the bottom of the neighborhood distributions in the largest cities is valid".

In conclusion, Crane (1991) calls for more research on the epidemic theory. He states that the data needs to be updates, additional models need to be formulated, and alternatives theories for explaining the results need to be developed and tested. While acknowledging that the research is too limited at this time to make policy

recommendations, Crane identifies two policy interventions suggested by the epidemic theory. First, neighborhoods that have already been effected by an epidemic should be given intensive services and have large investments of resources in efforts to raise the equilibrium level above the key point on the distribution. If the equilibrium level is not raised above this key point, intervention efforts and resources are lost. From this implication, Crane contends that the best approach to resources allocation given the current situation of limited resources is to concentrate resources in fewer places. Once low equilibrium levels are attained, resources should then be transferred to other neighborhoods since maintenance of the low equilibrium would be rather inexpensive. Secondly, Crane argues for prevention of epidemics by targeting the at-risk neighborhoods to keep the equilibrium levels low. Resources for prevention, then, should be spread out across all the at-risk neighborhoods rather than concentrated.

"Effects of Family and Community Background On Men's Economic Status"

Mary Corcoran et al. (1989) conducted their study using intergenerational data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) to investigate the effects of family and community background on men's economic status. The PSID is a longitudinal study that began in 1968 with approximately 5,000 families and family members have been reinterviewed every year since 1968 (Corcoran et al., 1989). The sample that Corcoran et al. uses in their empirical analysis includes men in 644 families who were between the ages of 25 and 32 by 1983. Communities are determined using zip code data for the men during childhood. Corcoran et al. use a regression equation to analyze the data with family income and community background as the outcome measures. The life cycle stage of the individual and general time effects such as the business cycle are controlled for. Background variables include a set of income variables involving family income and family "needs" (ie. welfare receipt, unemployment rate), race, and parents' education.

Using coefficient estimates, results showed that strong negative associations occurred between all outcome variables and the proportion of years the family of origin was below the poverty-related needs standard. Substantial economic disadvantages were found among black men, men from lower-economic families, and men from more welfare-dependent families and communities (Corcoran et al., 1989). Neither parental education nor community background appeared to effect economic status, however, Corcoran et al. argue that the findings for community background may have been related to a grossness of geographic definition for which community variables were measured. Other potential biases included concerns regarding measurement bias and the possible omission of variables. Corcoran et al. concede that these problems preclude formulating any causal inferences from the associations found.

ATTACHMENT B CLEVELAND, NEW FUTURES

The report describing the program notes that poverty in Cleveland neighborhoods was increasing so fast that it threatened to engulf three-quarters of the city by 2000.

"Traditional piecemeal ways of addressing the plight of the poor had failed to alter significantly this increasingly grim picture. What was needed was a larger strategy, a long term, comprehensive plan that would maximize the impact of available resources and create new synergies -- by linking promising programs in an integrated approach to addressing the needs of urban families."

A comprehensive study of Cleveland poverty neighborhoods had shown a common thread: deteriorating social infrastructure. The study went on, as many have, to point out the relationship between deteriorating social infrastructure in communities to lack of support for family structure and a consequent deterioration of both family and community. This analysis suggested that treating dysfunctional family symptoms was to fight a losing battle, and that another approach was appropriate: focusing resources on community development wherein poor families resided, what they call a Community-Building Initiative.

Five principles guided the Community-Building Initiative:

1. Cleveland's plan must be comprehensive and integrated.
2. Strategies should be tailored to individual neighborhoods.
3. An individual community's strategy should begin with an inventory of its assets, not of its deficits.
4. The local communities themselves must be actively involved in shaping strategies and choices.
5. This approach should be tested over the next few years in three pilot areas and carefully evaluated before any attempt to transplant it to other Cleveland neighborhoods.

What this means is a comprehensive program that includes:

1. Investment in the targeted community's jobs base, housing, commercial reinvestment, and all those community development areas having to do with the economic base.
2. Education, starting with those in whose care children will develop, starting early, and running throughout the life cycle.
3. Family development through the fostering of healthy family relationships and

the repair of broken family relationships.

4. Health care as a key to school and work performance in include rehabilitative services that will help disadvantaged or disabled individuals integrate into the community's economic network.
5. Human resource development through job training and other forms of training designed to connect individuals to opportunities and community needs. This also includes enhancement of critical family and parenting skills that produce children ready to learn and develop in school and later in the labor force.

The Cleveland approach emphasizes use of programs that have already been proven effective in other contexts, and development of programs tailor-made to handle specific problems in the targeted areas. It recognizes the plight of many poor urban neighborhoods that have been passed over as the economy that once used to recruit from their labor markets has moved on to the suburbs. A prime goal of the approach is to reconnect poor neighborhoods to the mainstream of the regional economy.

It is obvious from the ambitious goals of the Cleveland Community Building Initiative that virtually every community resource has a role to play in the overall scheme: health, education, welfare, housing, law enforcement, community development, economics, commerce, and many others, requiring a coordination and integration effort made up of a number of Federal, State, and local government and private forces. Clearly, the mechanisms for that coordination have yet to be developed.

A series of projects in Bridgeport, Dayton, Little Rock, Pittsburgh, and Savannah, sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and called New Futures, is based on similar philosophy, but is more specifically focused on the needs and problems of youth. New Futures works on the assumptions (among others) that the problems and risks experienced by disadvantaged children are interrelated and must be addressed as such, and that educational, health, and other services are fragmented and do not fully meet the multiple needs of many children, and therefore must be truly and effectively integrated.

New Futures rejects the notion that nothing can be done about the plight of poor children's academic and later work performance because there are too many factors beyond the control of the relevant institutions in the community. New Futures is very clear that "the failure of community institutions to do what they can do to equip youngsters with the expectations, opportunities, supports, and incentives they need to become aspiring, responsible and successful adults" is the proper focus of solutions to the problems of poor youth. Community institutions "have real power to create environments that actually shape the values, self-esteem, expectations and behavior of at-risk youth, in spite of persisting social and economic variables. In a sense, the New Futures strategy presumes that the shapers of community institutions have a choice. Institutions can either reinforce social and economic disadvantage by communicating

(through their policy, practices, and structures) low expectations, negative labeling, cultural bias, and limited opportunity for those at risk. Or they can address these risk factors by creating countervailing environments based on the premise that all young people are able and are 'entitled' to succeed."

Since fragmentation of services is a major cause of ineffective youth service, New Futures places a great deal of emphasis on requiring that "participating communities organize and maintain a multi-sector, politically empowered 'collaborative' to initially plan and then to oversee the city's at-risk youth reform agenda" and then, through case management, to encourage staff "to integrate multiple resources, supports and services to more fully address individual needs."

It would seem that there is a growing consensus, at least among foundations interested in the problems of poverty, that it is time to try an approach to that involves a geographically targeted, comprehensive, coordinated and integrated set of services designed to empower residents of targeted areas to assume responsibility for their lives.

ATTACHMENT C

There are very many Federal programs alone (not counting State and local ones), covering a host of areas that could be appropriately targeted on a local community in a demonstration such as the one contemplated in this paper. One of the critical planning phases of the contemplated approach would be to obtain a fuller and more detailed understanding of these resources and beginning to plan how they could be coordinated most effectively to accomplish the goals of the demonstration.

Some relevant programs administered in the Administration for Families and Children (ACF) are listed below. In addition to the familiar programs such as Aid-to-Families-With-Dependent-Children (AFDC), Child Support Enforcement, Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program (JOBS), Head Start, Low Income Home Energy Assistance, and Child Care, Community Services Block Grants, Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, there is an extensive list of ACF service programs that give an idea of the diversity of needs covered:

- Comprehensive Child Development Centers
- Child Development Scholarships
- Child Abuse State Grants
- Child Abuse Discretionary Activities
- Child Abuse Challenge Grants
- Consolidated Runaway and Homeless Youth Program
- Runaway and Homeless Youth
- Transitional Living for Homeless Youth
- Dependent Care Planning and Development Grants
- Temporary Child Care and Crisis Nurseries
- Child Welfare Services
- Child Welfare Training
- Adoption Opportunities
- Drug Education and Prevention for Runaway and Homeless Youth
- Anti-Drug Programs for Youth Gangs
- Abandoned Infants Assistance Program
- Emergency Child Abuse Prevention - Substance Abuse
- Family Violence
- Developmental Disabilities State Grants
- Developmental Disabilities Protection and Advocacy

Outside of ACF there are also a large number of relevant programs such as the food programs of the Food and Nutrition Service, health programs covering a number of diseases and pathological conditions (both preventive and basic care), education and training programs for all ages, housing programs that provide basic shelter, encourage home ownership, improve basic housing stock of a community, programs that improve the area's economic and physical infrastructure, its law enforcement capability and transportation facilities. The list is long and varied and nowhere near complete. This

DRAFT

July 28, 1993

treatment of the resources available for a community is meant to illustrate a little of the range that could be drawn upon for demonstration purposes.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

To: Blac

From: Belle

Title I: Prevention

Minor Parents

- No one under the age of 19 will be eligible to receive AFDC as a case head. Minors will be expected to live with their parents or in other supervised settings. Good cause exceptions will be permitted.

Paternity Establishment

- States will be required to establish as many paternities as possible at the time of birth, regardless of welfare or income status. Voluntary in-hospital programs and civil procedures that offer multiple opportunities for voluntary consent will be strongly encouraged for all out-of-wedlock births. The benefits of paternity establishment will be emphasized, including the restriction of most government benefits in the future to those with two legal parents. A media campaign would be used to disseminate this message.

- No child born one year after the enactment of this law will be eligible for AFDC or other federal benefits until paternity has been established.

- In cases where paternity has not been established, mothers will be expected to cooperate in identifying the father, and a presumptive determination of paternity will be made at the time of application, except in cases where the putative father, upon notification, appears for a blood test and an immediate hearing to prove otherwise.

- Emergency assistance will be provided in cases where the determination of paternity is delayed for reasons beyond the control of the mother.

- Exceptions will be made for cases of rape, incest, or endangerment of the mother and child.

A New Social Contract

- All parents applying for AFDC will be required to sign a contract specifying the types of assistance to be provided and their obligations. Assistance can include job placement, education, training, child care, social services including family planning, and community service opportunities. Obligations can include a commitment to participate in an agreed-upon plan of job search, training, drug treatment, parenting classes, community service, and deferred childbearing.

- States that do not live up to their part of the plan will be required to provide benefits without obligations. Individuals

that do not live up to their part of the plan can be sanctioned (denied benefits).

- Sanctions will be imposed on the whole family. In cases where this endangers children, they will be placed in foster care or in group homes.

At-risk Teenagers

- All schools receiving Chapter I concentration grants will be required to establish, in conjunction with the Public Health Service (?), school-based or school-linked health clinics that provide counselling, health screening, and family planning services to adolescents.

- Older welfare recipients who began a welfare spell as a teen mother will be recruited and trained to serve as counsellors and aides in the clinics as part of their training and community service assignment.

- Funding for these services will be provided so that they can be made available free of charge to everyone attending a Chapter I concentration school.

- Support will also be provided to nonprofit community-based organizations that establish innovative programs that use peer-group activities to foster responsible attitudes and behavior among this group.

14

cc: Belle
WHAT IS THIS?

file:
wg
Prenatal

U.S. to revise strategy on teen-age pregnancy

Education, contraception part of plan

By Christopher Scanlan
Knight-Ridder News Service

WASHINGTON — The federal government is quietly planning a dramatic — and controversial — shift in its attack against teen-age pregnancy and the epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases among adolescents.

The Clinton administration plans to revise the 12-year-old Republican message of "Just Say No" to premarital sex by placing greater emphasis on birth control and disease prevention.

For the past several months, the Department of Health and Human Services has been developing an ambitious proposal that could end up funneling millions, perhaps billions, of dollars into comprehensive health services for the nation's 35 million

10- to 19-year-olds.

The plan would provide more money for sex education, birth control counseling, health care and contraceptives at clinics in or near schools, said HHS officials who described the plan on condition they not be identified.

"It's a huge change," said Lisa Kaiser, a policy expert for the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a leading reproductive health research group in New York City.

"The government is finally recognizing what the reality of [adolescents'] lives is all about. They are under incredible pressure, bombarded with messages from peers, TV, the media, to have sex," Ms. Kaiser said.

A major force behind the change

is the official who will champion the new approach — Dr. Joycelyn Elders. The outspoken former Arkansas health director is expected to win Senate confirmation Tuesday as the new U.S. surgeon general.

As the nation's most visible health official, Dr. Elders plans to use her job's "bully pulpit" to lobby for the new plan, according to federal officials and health activists familiar with her efforts to reshape the gov-

ernment's approach to teen sexuality. Dr. Elders refused to give interviews pending Tuesday's vote, but she outlined her pitch at July's confirmation hearing.

"We need to teach our children more than just 'no.' We need to teach them how to say no. And we need to teach them, you know, if they get into problems, to be responsible," Dr. Elders said.

But conservative critics warned that the new federal approach would encourage more sexual activity and abortions among teens and do little to prevent pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases.

"Teen-agers are just not reliable contraceptive users," said Susan Hirochmann, a spokeswoman for the Eagle Forum, a group headed by conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly.

"The answer is to teach the children to respect their bodies and to respect themselves and the only healthy solution for these kids is abstinence."

Ms. Hirochmann called Dr. Elders "the wrong person to be giving advice to teen-agers. Her statement that every girl should take a condom in her purse when she goes out on a date contradicts the values of most parents in this country."

The teen health initiative is coming at a time when government and public surveys are painting a stark portrait of the risks America's young people face from sex.

Nearly three-fourths of all high school students say they have sex by the time they graduate, according to a 1990 survey by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Three million teen-agers — about one in eight 13- to 19-year-olds — acquire a sexually transmitted disease every year, the Guttmacher Institute reports. The United States has the highest rates of teen pregnancy, abortion and childbirth in the industrialized world.

"The high teen pregnancy rate is just a symptom of the fact that [teens] have poor access to health care," said Jackie Noyes, Washington director for the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Few adolescents have access to birth control counseling and services in school-based clinics, according to the Center for Population Options, a Washington-based group that supports school-based clinics.

About 4.3 million adolescents, mostly girls from poor families, can receive contraceptives at more than 4,000 federally financed family planning clinics nationwide.

The impact of the HHS plan would be to reach more teen-agers by substantially increasing the amount of federal dollars used to support clinics associated with public schools.

HHS officials haven't decided on a specific budget request for the teen initiative. Cost estimates for the new program range from several hundred million dollars to as much as \$7 billion a year, Ms. Noyes said.

Until now, the government has targeted teens in schools through a \$2 million-a-year program started in 1981 that preaches an abstinence-only approach to sex, dubbed the "chastity program."

"There still is going to be an emphasis on abstinence for those kids for whom the abstinence message is going to work," an HHS official said.

"But this newer, more comprehensive approach is going to have something for those kids who are going to become sexually active."

"Pitching abstinence with no other message really just abandons those kids you don't hook with the abstinence message. Some of the techniques used by abstinence promoters like 'Pet your dog and not your date,' don't really work very well with kids."



Bruce Reed - byi

August 18, 1993

AUG 19 RECD

WR -
Prevention

Dear Friend of AEI:

In an article entitled "Welfare and the Family: The U.S. Experience" (*Journal of Labor Economics*, January 1993), Bradley Fellow Charles Murray discussed the development of the American welfare system and examined the relationship between welfare benefits and the illegitimacy ratio.

A copy of his article is enclosed.

Mr. Murray may be reached at 202-862-5812.

Welfare and the Family: The U.S. Experience

Charles Murray, *American Enterprise Institute*

After describing the development and dimensions of the American welfare system, this paper explores the relationship of illegitimacy to welfare. Alternative measures of illegitimacy are discussed. The relationship of the welfare package and the illegitimacy ratio is examined over time and across states, by race. A bivariate relationship of welfare and illegitimacy exists among whites, but not among blacks. Among blacks, a strong cross-state relationship exists between density of the black population and the illegitimacy ratio. The relationship is robust, persisting after controlling for a variety of demographic and economic variables, and persisting across time.

I. Introduction

In the United States, the relationship of government welfare programs to the family became a subject of controversy shortly after the passage of the first federal welfare program, Aid to Dependent Children (now known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, AFDC). An aide to Frances Perkins, one of the architects of AFDC, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's secretary of labor and the first woman cabinet member, spelled out the crux of the controversy that has remained to this day:

[Perkins] felt the Children's Bureau let her down on the provision for aid to mothers with dependent children. She maintained that she always thought a "dependent mother" was a widow with small children or one whose husband had been disabled in an industrial accident or one who had married a ne'er-do-well who had deserted her or hit

the bottle. She said it never occurred to her, in view of the fact that she'd been active in drives for the homes that took care of mothers with illegitimate children, that these mothers would be called "dependent" in the new legislation. She blamed the huge illegitimacy rate among blacks on aid for mothers with dependent children. [Louchheim 1983, p. 175]

Does the existence of welfare undermine marriage and the family? After more than a half-century of the U.S. experience, the answer is still incompletely understood.

The general public believes in such a link because two kinds of widely recognized data support it. Quantitatively, the total welfare package has become more generous over the last several decades, and illegitimacy has become more widespread during the same time. That the two phenomena are linked seems too plausible to require more proof. Qualitatively, many women caught up in the system openly state that the link is real. Often this is captured in print journalism or in television programs. Bill Moyers's 1986 CBS special on the vanishing black family is one of the best known. But evidence is not limited to anecdotes. A recent survey of 149 Chicago welfare mothers found that 67% believed that receiving welfare "has had a negative effect on their family life." The specific comments were about as explicit as it is possible to be: "Public aid made the problems with my older girls worse," as one respondent put it. "If they knew that they wouldn't get no help, they wouldn't be having all these babies. I have tried telling them to wait until they get established and married, but they don't listen to me" (Popkin 1990, p. 68).

The reason for the rejection of the link by many academicians is based on the belief that the United States' system of AFDC provides a natural experiment for testing the proposition that welfare is linked to family breakup and that the results of this natural experiment fail to confirm the hypothesis that a link exists. Daniel Vining, Jr., put the case most explicitly in responding to Gary Becker's *Treatise on the Family*:

The wide variation in levels of welfare payments across states provides a natural experiment by which to test Becker's model. In particular, Southern states provide a level of assistance to families with dependent children which is less than half that of the rest of the country. . . . And yet, despite the large differential in welfare payments between the South and the rest of the country, the black illegitimacy ratio in the Southern states is only slightly lower than in the rest of the country. It is this simple fact that underlies and explains the results of every cross-sectional econometric test, however complicated and sophisticated its specification of Becker's thesis, at least with respect to blacks. [Vining 1983, p. 107]

In 1985, David Ellwood and Mary Jo Bane published a paper entitled "AFDC Impact on Family Structure and Living Arrangements," which

made Vinson's case in much more detail (Ellwood and Bane 1985). Unmarried mothers in states with high AFDC payments lived apart from their parents more often than unmarried mothers in states with low AFDC payments. Ellwood and Bane found, but young single women in states with high AFDC payments did not have more babies than their peers in states with low AFDC payments. The Ellwood and Bane paper has since been the standard source used to discredit the proposition that welfare is impudently linked to creation of single-parent families in general and unmarried single-parent families in particular.

In this paper I describe the changes in the American welfare system that have been the subject of the controversy and then briefly review the literature linking the welfare system to family dissolution. The rest of the paper is devoted to an exploratory examination of the most controversial issue in the debate, the link between welfare and illegitimacy, in order to lay out some of the dynamics underlying the statistical findings. Finally, I propose hypotheses for subsequent explorations of the relationship of welfare to illegitimacy.

II. Welfare in the United States over Time

Welfare in the United States (as of 1991) consists of three overlapping centers, each of which has a core program: support for indigent parents with dependent children (AFDC); special support for the blind, disabled, and indigent elderly (the Supplemental Security Income, or SSI, program), and support for the elderly (Social Security). These core programs are augmented by programs to assist with housing (housing subsidies, public housing), medical care (Medicaid for the working aged, Medicare for the elderly), food (food stamps plus eight other smaller programs), and a variety of social services. Because Social Security and Medicare cover all elderly as quasi-insurance programs, they are not usually counted as "welfare," though it serves that purpose for many low-income elderly. They will not be included in the following discussion. "Welfare" as used here shall refer to programs that provide direct assistance targeted to people who are poor.

Not surprisingly, comparisons of U.S. and Canadian expenditures are complicated. In the United States, the states contribute a substantial proportion of welfare costs; in Canada, the provinces do not. In the United States, the federal government pays for medical care for welfare recipients (through Medicaid) while it does not do so for the ordinary working-aged person, thereby making medical care an important part of the welfare package; Canada has a national health insurance plan, and welfare recipients are not in an advantaged position. Figures 1 and 2 in Allen's article (in this issue) should be seen as a comparison of the two countries regarding core, nonmedical welfare expenditures by the central government. The numbers that follow and the figures that accompany them may be read as

a more inclusive (although still not all-inclusive) summary of the U.S. array of welfare programs.

Table 1 shows some of the basic statistics. The aggregate budget figures are based on the category "public aid" used in the standard budget breakdown used by the Department of Health and Human Services. For the most recent figures, for 1987, 88% of the federal contribution was taken up by AFDC, food stamps, Medicaid, and SSI, with the rest going to a variety of social services and special assistance programs. The state and local figures for that year were almost entirely (98%) given over to AFDC, Medicaid, and SSI, with the remaining 2% going to general social services.

The numbers in table 1 are minimal estimates of the total and per capita expenditures. For example, the official aggregate expenditure for public aid in 1987 as shown in table 1 is shown as \$127.3 billion (this and all subsequent dollar figures are based on 1990 U.S. dollars). Two pages later in the same publication, the same source presents a compilation of "cash and non-cash benefits for persons with limited income," showing 1987

Table 1
Basic U.S. Welfare Statistics

	1960	1970	1980	1987
Public aid expenditures (in \$ millions)				
Federal	9,334	32,469	77,282	79,618
State and local	8,747	23,013	36,735	47,681
Total	18,081	55,482	114,017	127,299
Public aid per capita (in \$):				
Federal	\$2	159	340	327
State and local	49	113	162	196
Total	191	272	502	523
Welfare recipients:				
AFDC:				
No. (thousands)	3,073	9,659	11,101	10,882
As % of population	1.7	4.7	4.9	4.5
Supplemental Security Income*				
No. (thousands)	2,781	3,098	4,142	4,383
As % of population	1.5	1.5	1.8	1.8
Persons below the poverty line:				
No. (thousands)	39,851	24,420	29,272	32,546
As % of population	22.2	12.6	13.0	13.5
Average annual payments:				
AFDC only	\$4,084	\$7,560	\$5,310	\$4,992
AFDC and food stamps	\$4,084	\$9,984	\$7,452	\$7,716

Source: Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, various editions). "Public aid" is a term used by the Bureau of the Census to include Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Medicaid, Food Stamps, social service, and (depending on the year), general assistance, emergency assistance, and low-income energy assistance.
Note: *All welfare figures are in 1990 U.S. dollars.
† All 1970 (for 1960 and 1970), Old-Age Assistance and Aid to the Blind and Disabled.

expenditures of \$182.6 billion.¹ This discrepancy, a substantial \$55.3 billion, is explained by a variety of education, housing, and jobs programs that do not seem to fit a common understanding of "welfare" and by a patchwork of other assistance programs that have changed from year to year and do not lend themselves to consistent statistics over time. Similarly, the annualized expression of welfare payments shown in table 1 is a minimal figure, excluding Medicaid, housing subsidy or public housing, and supplemental food, energy, or other forms of assistance that might or might not be available to a given welfare recipient. These ambiguities explain some of the reasons why the U.S. welfare state is subject to such widely varying descriptions as too stingy or lavish and why different analyses can show welfare budgets as rising or falling. Much depends on which programs are included or excluded.

Figure 1 shows the nature of the change in terms of the total funds—federal, state, and local—spent on public aid per capita from 1930 to 1987. The effects of New Deal spending on public aid during the depression are obvious, and so is the steep rise in real per capita spending from 1965 until the late 1970s. Spending continued to increase in current dollars through 1981, but it did not keep pace with the high inflation rate during those years.

The relationship of U.S. spending on public aid to GNP has varied widely over the years, as shown in figure 2. During the depression, public aid spending was in excess of 4% of GNP. Then it sank to less than 1% during World War II, where it remained until the last half of the 1960s, when it began the same decade-long rise seen in the previous figure.

The changes that began in the 1960s were accompanied by an increased value of the welfare package. The average AFDC payment in constant dollars had been rising slowly in the 1950s (up 11% for the decade) and somewhat more rapidly in the first half of the 1960s (up 9% from 1960 to 1965). Then in the last half of the 1960s, the average payment rose by 24%. Furthermore, entirely new benefits were created during this same 5-year period. The Food Stamps program began, providing cash-equivalent coupons for purchasing food. Medicaid began, in effect providing free medical care for welfare recipients. Public housing became much more widely available, as did rent subsidies.

Estimating the total impact of these changes on the income available to AFDC recipients is problematic because their availability was not uniform nationwide. In some states AFDC payments increased more than in others; Medicaid was not immediately adopted by all the states; public housing was virtually an entitlement in some cities and entirely absent in others. I will return to the problem of valuing the welfare package later; for now,

¹ The two tables are shown in U.S. Bureau of the Census (1991), tables 576, 580.

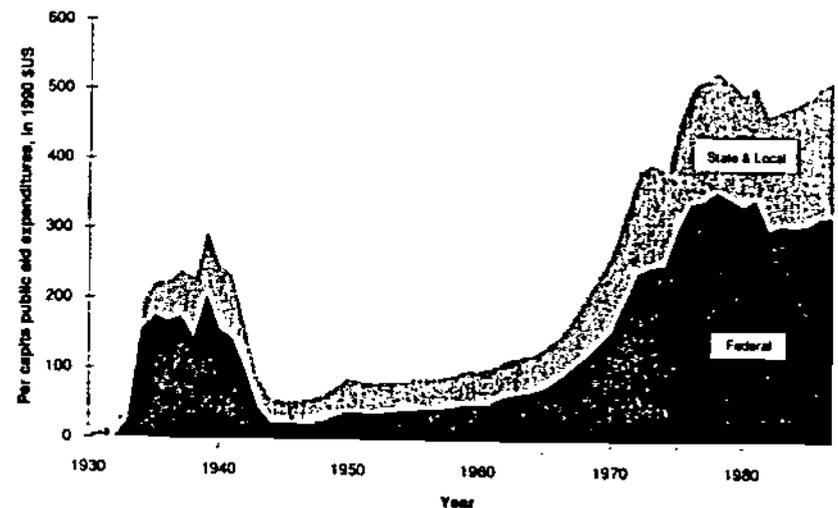


FIG. 1.—Real per capita public aid expenditures, 1930–87. Taken from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), H32-47, and *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, various years).

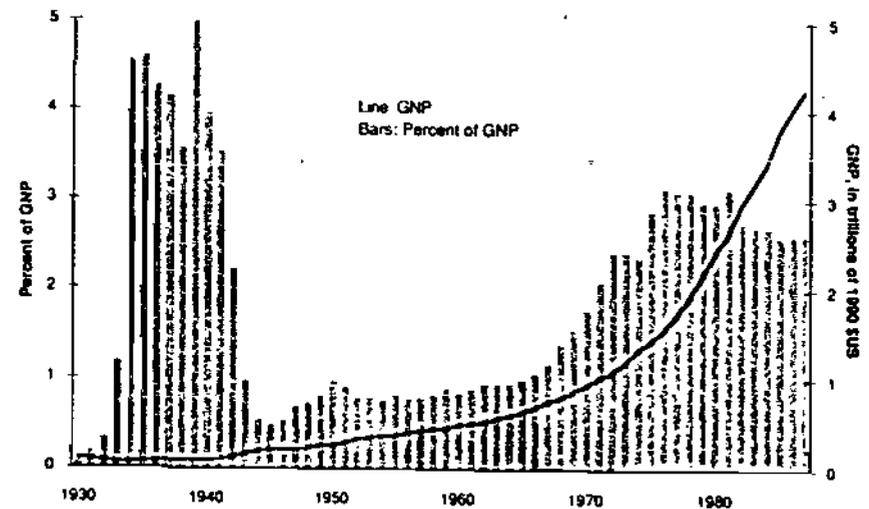


FIG. 2.—Public aid and the gross national product. Taken from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), tables F 1-5, H32-47, and *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, various years).

Table 2
Landmarks in the Development of the U.S. Welfare System

1935	Creation of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Aid to the (indigent) Aged, and Aid to the Blind
1937	Housing Act authorizes beginning of public housing
1956	Passage of Disability Insurance program
1962	States authorized to use AFDC for families with an unemployed father (AFDC-UF)
1964	Food Stamp program begins
1966	Medicaid begins
1967	Legislation permits welfare recipients to keep part of their AFDC benefits while working and authorizes funds for day care for welfare mothers who are working or in a job-training program
1968	Supreme Court strikes down eligibility restrictions on AFDC: women living with a man
1969	Supreme Court strikes down 1-year state residency requirements for welfare eligibility
1974	Legislation tightens child support enforcement provisions
1981	Omnibus Budget and Reconciliation Act tightens eligibility for AFDC
1988	Legislation enables former welfare recipients to keep Medicaid and child care benefits after leaving welfare; also introduces possibility of eventual work requirements

a reasonable benchmark estimate is that real benefits rose on the order of 50%-100% during the last half of the 1960s, depending on locality.

The increase in the monetary value of the welfare package was not the only change, however. It was arguably not even the most important. In a variety of other ways, AFDC in particular and welfare in general were transformed. Table 2 summarizes the key events.

Until the 1960s, American welfare was stigmatized not only in the public mind but operationally. The AFDC mother was subject to a variety of restrictions. First, the recipient was in fact always a *she*; married couples were not eligible for AFDC payments. Furthermore, she could not live with a man. She could not hold a job. She might have to wait through a residency period before becoming eligible for assistance. Her caseworker was as much an enforcer of the rules as a source of guidance and help. During the 1960s, all of these restrictions were relaxed or eliminated. In 1961, federal law was changed to permit AFDC payments to families with an unemployed father. Eventually, half the states adopted this option. In 1966, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare issued guidelines forbidding at-home eligibility checks, and the proscription on welfare recipients living with men was effectively repealed. A year later, Congress enacted legislation permitting women to keep a portion of their earnings from jobs while continuing to receive partial benefits (also known as the \$30-and-a-third rule).² To the next year, 1968, the Supreme Court formally struck down man-in-the-house eligibility restrictions. In 1969, the Supreme

² So named because the law permitted AFDC recipients to keep the first \$30 of earnings with no reduction in the benefit. Thereafter, the benefit was reduced by \$2 for every \$3 of earnings.

Court ended this burst of welfare reform by striking down state residency requirements for welfare eligibility. Table 2 shows how these changes fit in the overall development of the welfare system since the New Deal.

These legal changes were accompanied by a change in the received wisdom regarding welfare in academic and policy circles. By the end of the 1960s, the man in the street might continue to think that welfare recipients were parasites and loafers, but a consensus among academics, policy experts, government officials, and Supreme Court justices was pressing for welfare to be seen as a right and welfare recipients to be seen as people who were innocent victims of circumstance. Advertising campaigns for food stamps were instituted to combat the lingering impression among potential recipients that there was something demeaning about accepting government assistance. A new phrase came into vogue—"blaming the victim"—to characterize argument suggesting that some of the problems of poverty and dependence could be attributed to some recipients' own behavior.

During the 1970s, the regulations involving child support were tightened (1974), making a common-law husband more responsible for the support of a child of his companion. During this decade, the increases in welfare benefits stopped, and inflation eroded the purchasing power of previous gains.

During the 1980s, two important reforms were enacted. The first was part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1981. The act tightened the eligibility requirements of AFDC in several ways, cutting off everyone whose gross income exceeded 150% of each state's "need standard" and establishing a \$75 maximum on work expense deductions and a \$160 maximum per child on child-care expense deductions. Further, the OBRA amendments applied the \$30-and-a-third rule to net rather than gross earnings and cut off benefits altogether after four consecutive months of employment in any 12-month period. In 1988, a second major piece of legislation was passed. The immediate effect of the bill was to qualify AFDC women for a year of Medicaid coverage and day-care benefits after getting a job. The longer-term intentions of the bill were to link welfare to work. The legislation was widely referred to as a "workfare" bill. In reality, the main intention of the bill (loosely specified, with wide latitude for state-by-state discretion and no guarantees of funding) was to provide welfare recipients with opportunities for job training and placement, leaving open the possibility of removing from the rolls recipients who failed to cooperate in these efforts.

III. Review of the Technical Evidence for a Link between Welfare and Family Structure

In the 1960s, during the same years when reform was most vigorous, two developments among American families began to cause great consternation: a sudden, rapid rise in divorce, and a sudden, rapid rise in the

proportion of children born to single women. Both of these trends continued through the 1970s and 1980s, leading to the emergence of a large technical literature and to the extended controversy over public policy that continues to this day. The findings on many of these issues are not reviewed in this article. The most important omission is perhaps the question of welfare dependency and its effects on child raising and subsequent generations. This article focuses instead on the relationship of welfare to formation and maintenance of traditional two-parent families.

A. Marital Dissolution

Many of the early studies of the effects of welfare on family structure focused on marital dissolution. In the 1960s, it was widely argued that the welfare system encouraged men to leave the family. The rationale held that, because AFDC benefits were available exclusively to single women, leaving that destitute fathers could often reasonably conclude that the best way to provide for their families was to leave the house—in the words of H.W. secretary under Nixon, Elliot Richardson, a "prudent face incentive." The sort had been one of the chief reasons for amending the Social Security Act in 1962 so as to permit states to provide AFDC to two-parent families, the so-called AFDC-UP (for Unemployed Parent) option. As of 1982, 26 states and the District of Columbia had availed themselves of this option. Two types of evidence pertain to this issue. One involves the general tendency of welfare to encourage marital dissolution; the other involves the specific effects of AFDC-UP with regard to marital dissolution.

Welfare and Marital Dissolution in General

One of the first scholarly attempts to derive quantitative estimates of the effects of AFDC was Honig (1974), who found a strong relationship between the size of AFDC payments and marital dissolution. Based on 1960 and 1970 census data, Honig reported that a 10% increase in the AFDC signorid could be expected to produce an increase in the AFDC recipient rate of approximately 1% for the nonwhite population and 1% for the white population. Shantzy, Chesler, Ross and Swehlfell (1973), for the white population, Shantzy, Chesler, Ross and Swehlfell (1973), Cairight and Madras (1976), and Minarik and Goldfarb (1976) published analyses concluding variously that benefit rates had some effect on living arrangements and on remarriage, but not on the number or proportions of women who were single heads of household. Hurdman (1979) presented an econometric analysis of remarriage decisions and found a substantial impact, putting his findings into an evocative example: if Mississippi, with its very low AFDC payments, were to adopt New York's very high payments, then the probability of a Mississippi woman's remarriage would drop about 56% (or, Al, Kahr (1979), using marital dissolution and remarriage as dependent variables, and the National Longitudinal Survey as his data

base, found strong relationships with welfare reciprocity on both counts. In none of these studies which found effects on family dissolution did the authors argue that the mechanism leading to marital breakup involved the caring-but-destitute father who felt forced to leave for the good of his family. Rather, a simpler phenomenon seemed to be involved, whereby higher welfare payments marginalized the role of the father and made him more dispensable.

Using Welfare to Prevent Marital Dissolution

Other research has directly addressed the issue of whether providing support to two-parent families can avert marital dissolution. The best-known and most extensive of this research was part of the Income Maintenance Experiments that were conducted in several cities in the United States in the early 1970s. The results were considered to be among the most politically damning of any of the negative outcomes of that famous experiment. In the New Jersey site, black family breakup was 66% higher in the experimental than in the control group, while white families showed no effect (Bishop 1980). In the Denver and Seattle sites (SIME/DIME), dissolution was 36% higher for whites receiving the negative-income-tax (NIT) payments than for those who did not; for blacks the figure was 42% (Groenewold, Turner, and Hannan 1980). In one experiment, Gary, no effect was observed—apparently because the recipient couples were under the impression that if they split up they would lose their payments (Groenewold et al. 1980).

Recently, Cain and Wisseker (1990, p. 1266) have reopened this issue, concluding that "the data from SIME/DIME do not demonstrate that an NIT program would increase marital breakups among married couples with children." In their response, Hannan and Turner (1990) just as flatly argue that their findings stand. I will not try to adjudicate the complex technical issues the authors dispute in the 79 pages of their exchange. Three important differences from the initial SIME/DIME analyses are that Cain and Wisseker limited their analysis to couples with children; pooled data on blacks, whites, and Chicanos in analyzing time variation; and used raw counts of dissolutions, reconciliations, and remarriages rather than adjust them for length of exposure. The debate remains unresolved as of this writing. Presumably, the dust will settle eventually.

Schram and Wiseman (1988) have recently added to the literature on this topic with an examination of the AFDC-UP option. Using state-by-state data for 1980 and introducing controls for payment levels, racial composition of the population, and local unemployment, the authors found that the existence of the AFDC-UP program had a statistically significant effect on increasing the proportion of children who are recipients of AFDC. The article that argues most sweepingly that welfare does not have an effect on marital headship is Darity and Myers (1984). The usefulness of

the article is diminished by its use of a variable to denote the "attractiveness of welfare" that consists of the ratio of AFDC payments to the expected nonwhite male income, which is defined as "the product of that group's probability of being employed and the income received if employed." This variable, which is used as a measure of the attractiveness of welfare over time, ignores food stamps, Medicaid, housing subsidies, and all other forms of welfare. It is also highly sensitive both to the trends in real wages and in unemployment during this period. Using this measure, the authors find that the attractiveness of welfare declines from 1955 until 1980, most sharply during the period 1967 to 1973. The authors conclude from their analysis that the incidence of female headship drives the level of AFDC benefits, not the other way around. It is impossible to evaluate this conclusion, except to note that it relies on a measure that shows real welfare benefits decreasing since 1966—a perspective unique in the literature.

B. Illegitimacy

Illegitimacy as a phenomenon distinct from "single parenthood" was largely ignored until the mid-1980s. As part of his larger *Treatise on the Family*, Becker (1981) formally modeled in econometric terms the mechanisms whereby welfare might be expected to increase illegitimacy and concluded that "the growth of these [welfare] programs in recent years has contributed heavily to the sharp growth in the ratio of illegitimate to legitimate birth rates since the 1960s" (Becker 1981, p. 97). Murray (1984) argued that a combination of changes in welfare benefits, welfare eligibility rules, and contemporaneous changes in educational and law enforcement policies had affected the calculations of young men and women in ways that could explain increased illegitimacy rates. But at that time neither Becker nor Murray could point to a body of research directly verifying their rationales for the link. The few studies that had touched on the illegitimacy issue had argued, though inconclusively, that no effect existed (Moore and Caldwell 1977; Moore and Burt 1982). Seven studies that have addressed this issue subsequently are summarized below.

Ellwood and Bane (1985)

The authors used three separate methods for estimating the relationship of welfare to family structure, using state-by-state data in each case: (1) a time-series analysis of welfare benefits and family structure to see whether changes in family structure were greatest in states where the changes in benefit levels had been greatest; (2) a cross-sectional analysis comparing divorce rates of women with and without children, to see whether high benefit levels led to comparatively high divorce rates among women with children; and (3) a cross-sectional analysis based on the differing probabilities across states that a woman will in fact collect AFDC if she becomes

a single mother, to see whether, in high-benefit states, those who are most likely to collect also have relatively more divorces or unmarried births.

Ellwood and Bane found that, by methods 1 and 3, high benefits led to a substantial increase in the proportion of single women who lived independently—in low-benefit states, they tended to live instead with a parent. They found evidence by all three methods that a modest relationship exists between divorce of women with children and high benefit rates. But they found only slender evidence, and only via method 3, that high benefits affect illegitimacy. The effect they found amounted to perhaps a 5% increase in the number of single mothers per \$100 increase in monthly AFDC benefits.

The analyses which the authors considered to be most important involved method 3, which employed the Survey of Income and Education (SIE). Their procedure in effect used women with a low probability of receiving benefits as a control group for those women who had a high probability of receiving benefits. This was intended as a method of compensating for unmeasured differences among the states. Their method involved a two-stage procedure. In the first stage, a linear probability regression was run for all independent female heads in the sample. The dependent variable was a binary variable indicating receipt of AFDC in the past year. They used the coefficients from this process to estimate the probability of AFDC receipt, if she were to become a single mother, for each person in the sample. In the second stage (regarding specifically the analyses of illegitimacy) they used as the dependent variable a dichotomous variable with a value of one if the woman were both never-married and a mother, and zero otherwise. The dependent variable is a rate-based (or fertility-based) measure rather than a ratio-based measure. Then, along with a vector of control variables, the authors investigated whether the measure of welfare benefit, either alone or incorporating the probability of welfare receipt, was statistically significant. In all cases using this method, it was not.

For the over-time comparison, the authors used state-by-state census data for 1960 and 1970, using a model incorporating the birth rate for unmarried mothers as the dependent variable and, as independent variables, a vector of control variables and a measure of welfare benefits. Once again, none of the analyses revealed a significant relationship between level of welfare benefits and illegitimacy. The authors emphasize the consistency of the results across methods and across many different ways of specifying the models.

Winegarden (1988)

This study was a time-series analysis also employing Granger's (1969) procedure, which is based on the concept that variable *X* may be said to cause variable *Y* if present *Y* can be better predicted by using past values

of X than by not doing so. The author proposed a model in which the marginal benefit of the AFDC program is viewed as a linear function of the mean cash payment per recipient, the number of children per AFDC family, the average hourly earnings in retail trade (as a proxy for expected income from a low-skill job), and a dichotomous variable representing varying conditions of AFDC availability, with 1947-68 coded as zero and 1969-83 as one (based on the abrogation of the "man-in-the-house" rule and the ability of welfare recipients to keep earnings from a job, both of which took effect in 1968). The author also incorporated unemployment rates (to remove the effects of labor market conditions) and lagged dependent variables (to capture unobserved influences on welfare dependency such as changes in cultural attitudes). Using national data for the years 1947-83, the author claimed strong empirical verification that AFDC benefit levels affect the nonwhite illegitimacy ratio. A dynamic simulation of the type suggested by Granger indicated that about half of the rise in the nonwhite illegitimacy ratio between 1963 and 1983 may be attributed to the growth of AFDC net benefits.

Ozawa (1989)

The author used the "illegitimacy rate of birth to adolescents," which is equivalent to what is more commonly called the illegitimacy ratio, limited in this case to births to young women 19 years or younger. Using state-by-state data for 1984, the author tested a model in which the illegitimacy ratio was the dependent variable. Independent variables were the AFDC benefit level, the AFDC acceptance rate, a dichotomous variable to designate states with AFDC-UP, a measure for enforcement of child support, the poverty rate for children under 18, the unemployment rate, and percentage of the population that is black. The results showed that the AFDC payment was significantly ($p < .01$) related to the illegitimacy ratio for all women. This relationship was accounted for by whites, however. Among blacks, the relationship was insignificantly inverse.

Bernston (1988)

This study contained the most fully explicated theory of the relationship between illegitimacy and welfare. The author applies a Malthusian framework to the problem and brings a variety of cross-national and historical data to bear. For our purposes, the key points involve the author's incorporation of labor market variables into the model: "Welfare state regulations generate the disemployed and unmarriedable segments of the society," he proposed, "while welfare state transfers pay single motherhood subsidies. This creates a positive non-marital fertility effect" (p. 18). The author tested the model with two data sets (state-level data and the 1980 census Public Use 1% Sample) and employed three levels of observation (state, location within the state roughly corresponding to the county, and indi-

vidual). The models were tested with ordinary least squares, two-stage least squares (for the state-level data), and maximum likelihood probit estimates (for the location- and individual-level data). In the least-squares analyses, the dependent variable was nonmarital fertility rate for women aged 15-19. For the probit analysis, the dependent variable was birth to an unmarried woman aged 19. The author claimed general correspondence between his theoretical model and the empirical results. Specifically regarding welfare benefits and illegitimacy, he summarized the results as follows: "Childbearing in 1979 to unmarried women aged 19 in 1980 may have increased by 6% in response to a 10% increase in welfare benefits. Among blacks, such an increase may have been 10%. It is important that these findings are more or less consistent among different independent data sets" (p. 61).

Plotnick (1990) and Lundberg and Plotnick (1990)

Plotnick used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) for the period of 1979-84. Employing logit cross-section and discrete time hazard models estimated separately by race, the author found that the welfare guarantee bore a significant, positive relationship to the likelihood of premarital childbearing for whites. For blacks, an index of stringency of the states eligibility rules for AFDC was significantly negatively related to premarital childbearing. For Hispanics, none of the state welfare policy variables was significantly associated with premarital childbearing. The author discussed possible reasons why his results are at variance with those of Ellwood and Bane, suggesting as a hypothesis that the relationship has changed in the 1980s. The findings of this paper were extended in Lundberg and Plotnick (1990), which found that the level of welfare benefits is positively and significantly related to the probability of teen out-of-wedlock birth for whites, but not for blacks. The same analysis found that long-term opportunity costs were a significant factor in reducing the probability of pregnancy among whites. The opportunity-cost model did not fit the data for blacks, nor was there evidence that the generosity of welfare played a significant role for women in the black sample.

Duncan and Hoffman (1990)

The authors modeled the decision to have an out-of-wedlock birth as a teenager's comparison of the net attractiveness of the welfare benefits available to her if she had a child, and the economic opportunities available to her if she did not, using a variable estimating a young woman's income at age 26 if she did not have a child out of wedlock. Data were taken from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID). The authors concluded that that "AFDC benefit levels have a modest but statistically insignificant positive effect on the incidence of teen out-of-wedlock births, whereas future economic opportunities have a larger and statistically significant

negative effect" (p. 530). They also found significant effects from low economic status, parental receipt of AFDC, and living in the Northeast or North Central regions, even after controlling for economic opportunities.

An, Haveman, and Wolfe (1990)

The authors modeled the decision to give birth as unwed teenagers and then, having given birth, the decision to apply for AFDC benefits. Data were taken from the PSID. They found that the probability of teen out-of-wedlock birth was significantly inversely related to low socioeconomic status and mother's educational attainment and significantly directly related to parental separations, parental remarriage, years living in the standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA), and being black. Regarding welfare benefits, the coefficient was not statistically significant. Its magnitude was such that "a 20 percent increase in welfare generosity across all states would increase the probability of teen births by nearly 18 percent" (p. 23).

IV. An Exploratory Look at the Data on Illegitimacy, Welfare, and Race

Each of the studies summarized above is an attempt to operationalize some portion of the elephant that constitutes the welfare/illegitimacy conundrum. Yet Ellwood and Bane, Duncan and Hoffman, and An et al. found no significant effect of welfare on illegitimacy, whereas Winegarden, Ozawa, Bernstein, and Plouchnik did find significant effects. The purpose of the following is to augment these findings by opening up the data to easier inspection.

The discussion takes the general form of exploratory data analysis (EDA), identified most closely with statistician John W. Tukey (Tukey 1977), who argued that social scientists should come to the data not as a physicist tests a precisely specified theory but as a detective examines the scene of a crime. To do that, he urged, researchers must stay intimately close to the data—literally looking at the scatterplots, the histograms, the outliers—to try to tease out the underlying patterns. This approach is employed here out of a general position that the mathematical power of quantitative methods in the social sciences has outstripped the capacity of social scientists to operationalize those models realistically. That is, political scientists and sociologists in particular are too quick to treat the variables available to them as adequate reifications of the construct they have in mind. Some familiar examples are the treatments of poverty and unemployment, where social scientists use any number below the poverty index to represent "the state of being without the means to live a modest but decent existence" and use the Department of Labor's unemployment rate for "the state of wanting to work but being unable to find a job." In the present instance, the variable "welfare benefits" presents similar problems.

In articles employing such measures, the discussions of measurement error and idiosyncrasies of the data base are extensive; discussions of what Herbert Costner called "epistemic" error—the difference between the operational measure being used and the construct that lies behind it (Costner 1971)—are virtually nonexistent.

And yet such discrepancies between construct and operational measure are often so gaping, in such important ways, that the entire analysis is threatened. In this sense, the articles described above are, ultimately, uninterpretable. For example, Duncan and Hoffman's procedure for constructing a variable estimating the alternative to welfare in the form of expected income at age 26 is both sophisticated and ingenious from a statistical standpoint. It seems fair to say as well that it remains an open question whether the variable they constructed bears any resemblance to the way a teenage girl from the inner city thinks about her future economic opportunities—but the assumption that it bears not only a resemblance but indeed is a quantitatively accurate representation of the perceptions of a teenage girl from the inner city is the linchpin for the analyses and conclusions that follow.

The use of many independent variables that are supposed to be serving as "controls" poses similar obstacles to interpretation. First, there is always the question of whether they are in fact accurate representations of the thing they are supposed to control for. Does, for example, the "order in which a state ratified the Equal Rights Amendment" (one of the control variables in Ellwood and Bane) accurately capture an aspect of the political environment within the state? And once that question is answered, there is another, equally problematic one: Does the control variable refer to some condition which, if not controlled for, would distort the relationship being tested between AFDC and illegitimate births? It is seldom remarked upon that a "control" variable may as easily mask an authentic causal relationship as reveal it, by soaking up variance that is appropriately accounted for by the independent variable of causal interest.

Such questions apply to the choice of variables in any analysis (including the analyses that follow), but the point is that they do indeed represent choices that cannot be taken for granted when contemplating regression results. At the end of it all, the reader has little more than a beta coefficient, of problematic real meaning, that may indicate that a relationship is statistically significant but otherwise gives him very little to build on.

The purpose of the following is to provide a more visual and intuitive basis for understanding what has been happening to illegitimacy and welfare during the last 3 decades in the United States. Unless otherwise specified, all subsequent data in the text and figures are drawn from three products of the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1975), *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (various years), and *City and County Data Book* (various issues); and from the National Center for Health Statistics' annual publication,

Vital Statistics. The discussion focuses on illegitimacy rather than marital dissolution as being the family-formation phenomenon most closely linked to low socioeconomic class (Robbins, Kaplan, and Martin 1985; Abrahamse, Morrison, and Waite 1988) and therefore putatively most likely to be affected by changes in welfare benefits.

A. Longitudinal Trends in U.S. Illegitimacy

The first difficulty in assessing the relationship of welfare to illegitimacy lies in understanding what has in fact been the trend in the production of babies born out of wedlock. For whites, the picture is relatively uncomplicated, as shown in figure 3.

The fertility rate of single white women (number of births per 1,000 single women) and the illegitimacy ratio (the proportion of live births that occur to single women) have both risen since 1960, with the trend lines moving more or less in tandem.

For blacks, the story is not only complicated but apparently contradictory. Compare the trend lines for whites shown in figure 3 with the trend lines for blacks shown in figure 4.

The black illegitimacy ratio, which began at a much higher base than the white ratio, rose rapidly from 1965 to 1974 and has continued a slower but steady rise since then. But the number of births per 1,000 black single women fell substantially, especially from 1972 until 1985.

The reason for this peculiar contrast in trend lines lies in marriage patterns among blacks. Beginning in 1965, the proportion of black women ages

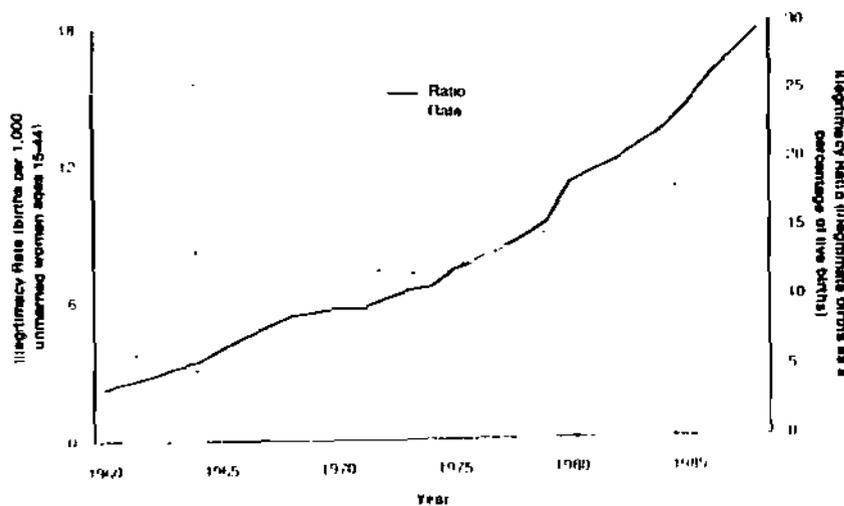


FIG. 3. Illegitimacy among U.S. whites, 1960-88

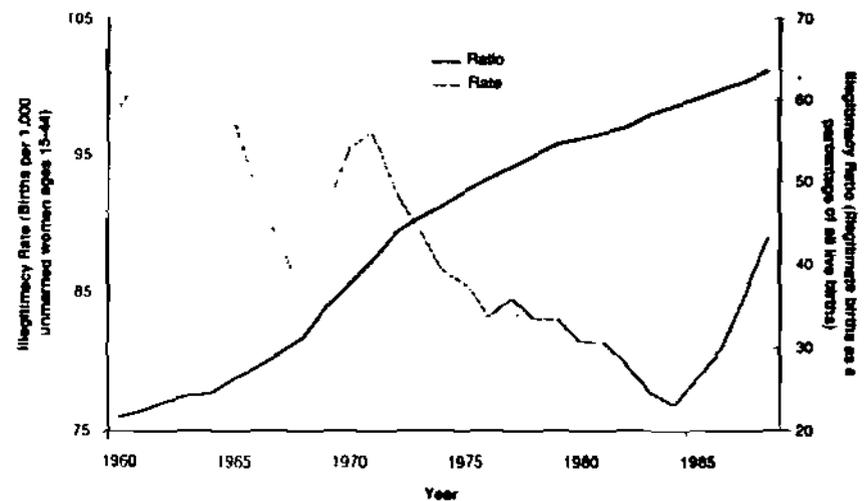


FIG. 4.—Illegitimacy among U.S. blacks, 1960-88

15-44 who were married dropped steeply from 64.4% in that year to 37.5% by 1988. During the same period, the white proportion fell from 68.8% to 58.0%. For analyses of the issue, see Espenshade (1985) and Schoen and Kleugel (1988). The nature of the problem this poses for interpreting fertility rates is analogous to that of interpreting SAT scores during a period when the pool of test takers is changing: Are the changes in the scores due to differences in the population mean or differences in the pool? In effect, the denominator for the black illegitimacy rate has been flooded with black women who formerly would have been married. Do these women, who for whatever reasons would have gotten married in 1960 but are failing to get married in 1990, have the same social, economic, or cultural propensity to have babies out of wedlock as the women who would have been single had the marriage rates remained the same? The question has as yet no empirical answer, but it seems extremely improbable that they would have the same propensity. A measure of illegitimacy rate that is indifferent to changes in marriage rates seems desirable. It is available, in the form of the number of illegitimate births per 1,000 women of child-bearing age. The results using this definition of fertility rate are shown in figure 5, alongside the rate for unmarried women.

Using all black women ages 15-44 for the denominator transforms the picture. In 1960, every 1,000 black women of child-bearing age produced 33 illegitimate babies. This figure had risen slowly to 35 by 1968 and then jumped to 43 by 1970. As of 1988, it stood at 56. Thus the paradox: each 1,000 unmarried black women in 1988 were producing fewer illegitimate babies than they did in 1960, but a cohort of 1,000 black women of child-

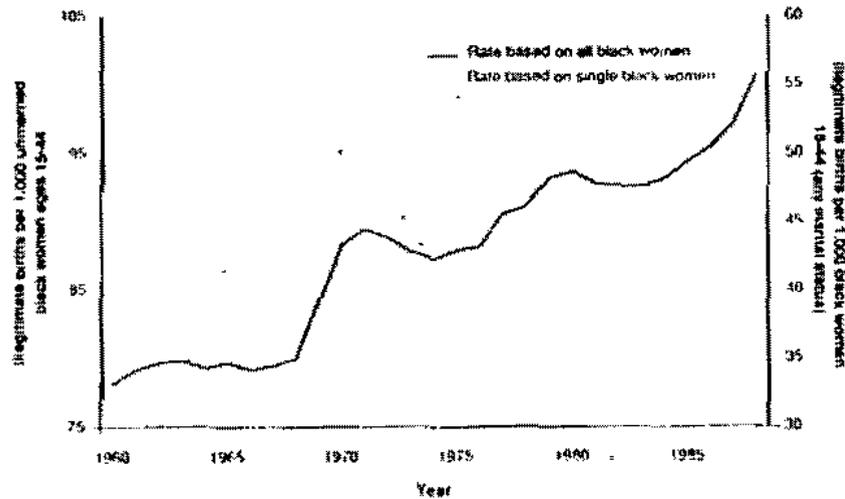


FIG. 3. Two views of illegitimate births per 1,000 black women, 1960-88

bearing age was in fact producing 23 more illegitimate babies in 1988 than a similar cohort in 1960.

One conclusion to be drawn from this exercise is that time-series analyses in which the dependent variable is the probability of a black unmarried woman giving birth to a baby are extremely difficult to interpret. More concretely, the generally falling illegitimacy rate among single black women from 1960 to 1985 is misleading insofar as it implies that fewer illegitimate babies per population unit are being produced. The number has actually been increasing. Finally, it may be noted that the steepest increase in fertility rate (using the cohort of black women of childbearing age as the denominator) occurred in the period 1968-72, when the expansion of welfare benefits and rights was most pronounced. This does not prove the case for welfare as a cause, but it is suggestive.

What then should one use as the dependent variable? We have considered three possibilities for expressing the extent of illegitimacy, employing two or more of four variables: births to unmarried women (B_u), births to married women (B_m), unmarried women ages 15-44 (W_u), and married women ages 15-44 (W_m). These measures may be summarized as follows:

Rate, version I: B_u/W_u .—The fertility rate of unmarried women.

Rate, version II: $B_u/(W_u + W_m)$.—Illegitimate births per 1,000 women of child-bearing age.

The ratio: $B_u/(B_u + B_m)$.—Illegitimate births as a proportion of all live births (the illegitimacy ratio).

The merits of the three alternative measures depend in part on whether they are to be used for a cross-sectional or time-series measure. If cross-

sectional, then either the fertility rate or the ratio can be defended as the measure of choice. If comparisons are being made across time, however, the simple fertility rate is likely to be useless at best and misleading at worst, for the reasons discussed above. Because the following analyses use both cross-sectional and time-series presentations, they employ the illegitimacy ratio. It would be desirable to replicate the analyses with rate data, using the entire age cohort of women as the denominator, but that task will be left to others.

B. U.S. Longitudinal Trends in Welfare: Nationwide

There are as many different ways of assessing the value of the welfare package as there are ways of expressing the prevalence of illegitimacy. Figure 6 shows an approximation of four major versions of the welfare package.

Until 1965, the welfare package consisted of the AFDC payment and, for a comparatively small proportion of AFDC recipients, public housing. In 1965, the Food Stamp program began operation. In 1966, Medicaid was initiated. Neither of these latter programs went into every state immediately, so the bump in the 1965-66 period is to that extent exaggerated. Use of the programs spread very rapidly, however, and was mandated nationwide by the late 1960s. Throughout the 1960s and continuing into the 1980s, funds spent on public housing and housing subsidies expanded. The overall estimate is thought to represent a conservative estimate of the average package of benefits, for reasons explained in the notes.¹

¹ The dollar value of AFDC refers to the average family AFDC payment. Food stamps are calculated for a family of four, assuming the standard deduction appropriate to each year. The Medicaid valuation poses numerous problems. In one sense, the value of Medicaid has been constant since 1966 insofar as it provides coverage for sickness. In another sense, the value of Medicaid has increased as the real cost of basic medical care has risen. Moreover, hospitals and physicians in the 1960s often provided free or cut-rate care to low-income patients, whereas such practices have subsequently become uncommon—Medicare is in that respect more essential to low-income families now than it was when it was established. To complicate matters further, Medicaid has no concrete value unless someone gets sick—but the widespread reports of AFDC recipients who are reluctant to leave the rolls for fear of losing their medical coverage (a major argument in behalf of the 1988 welfare reform bill) suggest that the inclusion of Medicaid is indeed a major factor among recipients and presumably prospective recipients in assessing the welfare package. To cost Medicaid, for which there are a variety of methods, the figure employs the procedure used by the GAO when it was costing out welfare packages in the late 1970s, assigning Medicaid a value equivalent to the cost of a basic government Blue Cross policy—\$112/month in 1979 dollars (Government Accounting Office 1980). The price index for medical services was then used to estimate changes in the cost of such a policy for 1966-88. The estimated value of Medicaid, expressed in 1990 dollars, was \$165 in 1966 and had risen to \$256 by 1988. Parallel analyses were conducted using an alternative measure in which the value of Medicaid was assumed to be a constant, for which the 1979 figure (which

The figure reveals one major source of confusion regarding the trends in benefits. If one uses only the AFDC payment to represent welfare, then it can accurately be said that the average in the 1980s had retreated to 1960s benefit levels. If one includes all the major elements of the welfare package, then benefits increased rapidly during the decade from 1965 to 1974, retreated in real value (though not in current dollars) through the rest of the 1970s, and rose slightly during the 1980s, remaining at approximately twice the 1960 level in real terms.

The relationship of illegitimacy to this changing package of benefits is shown in figure 7, which highlights another source of differing interpretations of recent history. In popular and scholarly discussions of illegitimacy (see for \$202 in 1990 dollars) was used. Using that version tends to exaggerate the increase in benefits during the last half of the 1960s. The version that was actually used shows Medicaid as having a rising value. Each choice has disadvantages from a theoretical standpoint. As a practical matter, none of the analyses is materially affected by using one measure instead of the other. Visually, figures using the different measures are indistinguishable. Calculating the value of housing benefits poses another problem that has no completely satisfactory solution. Expenditures on housing benefits for low-income persons increased from \$780 million in 1960 to \$15.2 billion in 1987, almost a 20-fold real increase during a period when the total number of public assistance recipients increased by 1.5 times. But housing benefits are not spread evenly among AFDC recipients. In some localities, the AFDC recipient has virtually a guarantee of free housing; in other localities, the benefits are small or altogether unavailable. The line for housing in fig. 6 is a rough way of representing the role of the increased housing benefits in augmenting the welfare package. It imputes to AFDC the same proportion of housing expenditures as AFDC families constitute as a proportion of all public aid recipients. The resulting imputed housing budget for AFDC recipients is then divided by the number of AFDC families to reach the figure incorporated into fig. 6. The value of the total package is converted to 1990 dollars. The total estimates probably underestimate the contemporary value of the package of benefits. The case of food stamps illustrates the general situation: the figure used in the calculation is the food stamp allotment for a four-person family, which overstates the value of food stamps for families of fewer than four. But the calculation omits altogether any value for the other food programs which are targeted heavily at AFDC families: National School Lunch program, School Breakfast program, Special School Milk program, Women-Infant-Children program, Child Care feeding program, Summer Feeding program, and Needy Family Community program. In the case of housing, it is true that some AFDC women get no housing benefit, but the calculation here omits any valuation of the numerous special funds for rental subsidies, eviction avoidance, furniture and household goods allowances, that are available in many of the largest cities where the AFDC caseloads are most dense. As for Medicaid, one may contemplate the cost of replacing Medicaid insurance for the families that Medicaid covers with insurance from the private sector. If available at all, it would be a multiple of the cost of that cover for government employees, the basis for the valuation used here. For a discussion of technical issues regarding valuation of welfare benefits, see Smeeding (1982). For a discussion of changes in statewide needs, see Moffitt (1988).



FIG. 6.—The value of the U.S. welfare package: national averages from 1936 to 1998

ally, it is often noted that illegitimacy continued to increase in the 1970s and 1980s, even though welfare benefits declined in real value. As figure 7 shows, this was indeed the experience during the latter 1970s. But in trying to draw a causal interpretation, one must choose between two sets of

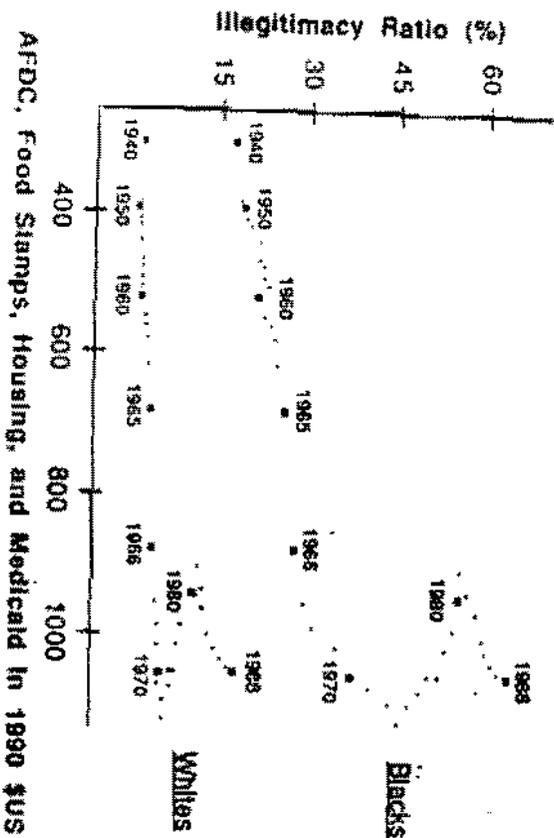


FIG. 7.—Relationship between the illegitimacy ratio and the value of the welfare package, 1940-88.

assumptions. The first set assumes that (1) fertility behavior is highly sensitive to incremental changes in benefits, more or less independently of the existing trend line; (2) the behavioral responses occur with little or no lag time; and (3) young women accurately and quickly discount nominal increases in welfare according to changes in the consumer price index. These assumptions permit one to interpret figure 7 as evidence against a link between welfare benefits and illegitimacy. Alternatively, one may assume that (1) some lag time greater than 9 months will occur between a change in benefits and a behavioral response as complex as having a baby; (2) an individual's perception of changes in the real prices lags behind changes in nominal prices; and (3) as out-of-wedlock births become more common, many of the social forces militating against illegitimacy, especially social stigma, are themselves reduced, affecting subsequent trends. These assumptions permit one to argue that a very large increase in benefits during the last half of the 1960s had by the end of that decade produced a jagged, sharply rising rate of black illegitimacy, and that this continued as the nominal value of welfare continued to rise during the last half of the 1970s and stigma against having a baby out of wedlock continued to diminish.

Whichever of these explanations seems more plausible, figure 7 at least makes plain why econometric time-series analyses of welfare benefits can produce conflicting results. The specifications of the process are crucial.

C. U.S. Trends in Welfare Illegitimacy: Between-State Differences

We come now to the topic of between-state differences in welfare benefits. The first question to address is how much disparity actually exists. If AFDC alone is used as the basis for the comparison, the discrepancy can be quite large. In 1988, for example, the extremes were Alabama, with an average payment of \$114, and Alaska, with \$599—more than a five-fold difference. When other benefits are factored into the package, the discrepancy closes. When the General Accounting Office undertook such an analysis for urban areas in 13 states as of 1978, the extremes in the analysis consisted of Louisiana and California (Government Accounting Office 1980). The AFDC grant for a family in San Francisco was 2.6 times that of New Orleans. But when food stamps, housing subsidies, school meals, and Medicaid were added, the San Francisco package was only 1.3 times larger than the New Orleans package. When these packages are then put in terms of the local economy, the San Francisco package provided an income equivalent to 66% of the median household income in San Francisco, while the New Orleans package provided an income equivalent to 65% of the New Orleans median household income. State-by-state differences in welfare benefits do exist, but the magnitude of those differences is subject to widely varying estimates.

In the absence of a detailed study of specific localities, it is difficult to say much more about the state-by-state differences in the total value of

welfare benefits. The differences among the states in the nature of Medicaid coverage and differences among localities in housing benefits are too great to estimate statewide values of the total welfare package with any confidence. As a set of general statements about between-states differences across time, it may be said that (1) the ceiling for benefits (taken as a package) rose sharply between 1960 and 1970 and fell almost as far between 1970 and 1980; (2) the floor continued to rise between 1970 and 1980, however, falling slightly from 1980 to 1988; (3) the range has narrowed substantially since 1970. When using AFDC payments as an independent variable in state-by-state analyses, it is important to remember these changes in the way that the variance of the welfare package has diminished over time. In effect, the variable has had diminishing leverage in exerting a cross-sectional effect on illegitimacy.

With these limitations in mind, we may nonetheless examine some differences among states. The analyses that follow use statewide aggregations of three variables: WELFARE, referring to the mean family AFDC payment plus the food stamp allotment for a family of four in a given state, RATIO_W, referring to the statewide illegitimacy ratio among whites, and RATIO_B, referring to the statewide illegitimacy ratio among blacks. Statewide illegitimacy data are available for 34 states from 1954 to 1965, 39 states from 1966 to 1979, and all 50 states from 1980 to 1988. Complete bi-yearly data from 1954–88 were obtained for 30 states.

The most prominent result of this exercise is consistent with the findings of Ozawa (1989), Plotnick (1990), and Lundberg and Plotnick (1990): a between-states relationship of welfare payments with illegitimacy exists among whites, but not among blacks. An examination of the year-by-year plots of AFDC payments and illegitimacy ratios among whites and blacks elucidates the reasons for this divergence.

Whites

Among whites, a simple bivariate relationship between the size of WELFARE and the illegitimacy ratio in that state emerged during the 1960s and continued thereafter, diminishing during the 1980s. Figure 8 shows the trend line in the size of the Pearson correlation coefficient for WELFARE and RATIO_W for the years 1954–88.

The sample sizes are small, and the absolute magnitudes of the correlations should therefore be interpreted cautiously.⁴ But the shape of the trend line is instructive. The basic point to be made is that there was no relationship between AFDC payments and the illegitimacy ratio in the

⁴The number of states with illegitimacy data in a given year ranged from 35 in the 1950s to roughly 40 in late 1960s and 1970s, reaching the full 50 only in the 1980s. Complete data over the entire period could be obtained for only 30 states. Correlations based on those 30 states, not shown, produce a plot virtually indistinguishable from the one shown in fig. 8.

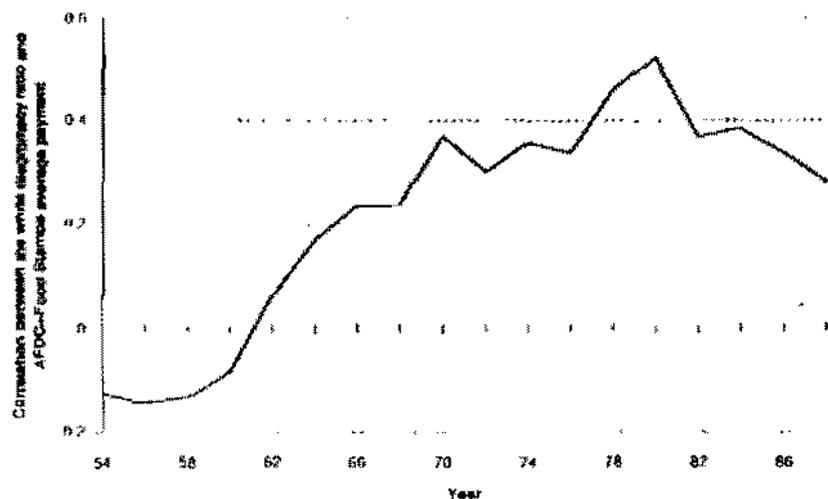


Fig. 8.—Correlation of the white illegitimacy ratio and AFDC+Food Stamps, U.S. states, 1954-88.

1950s and that a substantial bivariate relationship developed rapidly during the 1960s. The relationship remained fairly constant during the 1970s and then attenuated in the 1980s. This emergence of a relationship during the 1960s and the attenuation of it in the 1980s is a provocative pattern with a variety of interpretive possibilities. I shall return to it in the discussion.

To provide a more concrete idea of how the states are arrayed on white illegitimacy and welfare payments, figure 9 shows the scatterplot for the most recent data, 1988, when the correlation had attenuated to 0.29. The dotted lines denote the means for the two variables.

The broad geographical observation to be drawn from figure 9 is that the South has been characterized since the 1950s by AFDC payments and white illegitimacy ratios that have both remained well below the national average. This is in sharp counterdistinction to the black experience in the South, as discussed below.

Figure 9 also points up a potential threat to interpreting white illegitimacy ratios across states: "Hispanic" is not a racial categorization in the natality data. Most Hispanics are classified as white. In view of this, it is worth noting that during the late 1970s and 1980s, New Mexico and Arizona have become conspicuous outliers in plots of welfare against illegitimacy, with below-average welfare payments but illegitimacy ratios far above the national white mean. The changes in these two states alone account for most of the attenuation in the bivariate correlation of WELFARE and RATIO_w since the late 1970s. The obvious hypothesis is that the white figure for states with rapidly increasing Hispanic populations reflects the higher illegitimacy ratio that has characterized Hispanic populations, with

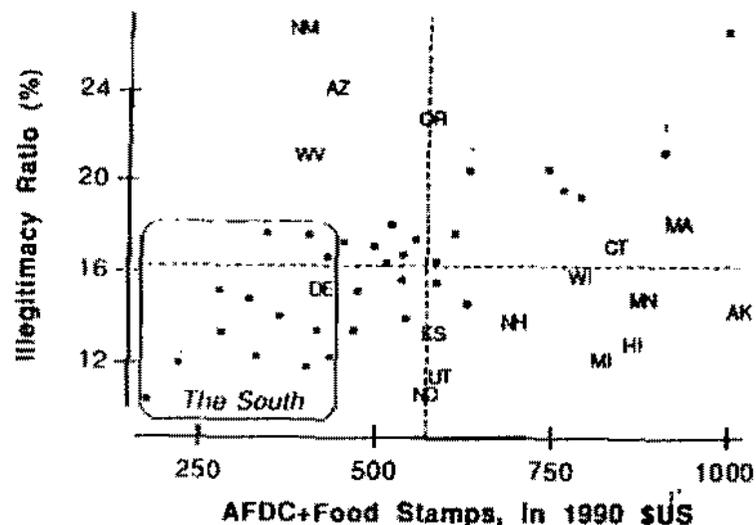


Fig. 9.—Welfare and illegitimacy among whites by state, 1988

the notable exception of the large Cuban-American community in Florida.⁵ This hypothesis would apply as well to the comparatively high illegitimacy ratios observed for California (with a large Mexican-American population) and New York (Puerto Rican).

What other statewide variables are related to the white illegitimacy ratio? Besides variables that are confounded with the illegitimacy measure (e.g., proportion of the population on AFDC), the largest correlations are observed for the state's size (r with resident population = +.32), urbanization (r with size of the largest city = +.31; with percent of the population living in urban areas = +.25), and, intriguingly, the size of the minority population (r with percentage of blacks in the population = -.40). The correlation of the white illegitimacy ratio with mean per capita income was 0.18. None has an obvious rationale as a direct cause of illegitimacy. It is much easier to explain why some of the same variables are related to the size of the AFDC payment: rich states can afford to be more generous than poor ones (r of WELFARE with mean per capita income = +.63); urbanized states tend to have more liberal politics which in turn tends to produce larger welfare benefits (r of WELFARE with size of the largest city = +.29); states with large proportions of blacks tend to be southern and poor, with small welfare benefits (r of WELFARE with percentage of blacks in the population = -.60).

⁵ In 1988, Hispanic illegitimacy ratios by origin of mother as reported by the National Center for Health Statistics were: Mexican, 34.0%; Puerto Rican, 53.3%; Cuban, 16.3%; Central and South American, 36.4%.

Once again, however, the interpretation of the results of an analysis of the relationship between illegitimacy and welfare depends critically on the specification of the model. Given these intercorrelations, a regression equation that uses these demographic background variables as controls will thereby reduce or eliminate the relationship between the measure of welfare and the measure of illegitimacy. A model that assumes (via a path model or similar multistage approaches) that such variables predict welfare, while welfare itself predicts illegitimacy, will be more likely to find a relationship.

Blacks

Among blacks, no comparable bivariate relationship has been observed in statewide AFDC payments and the illegitimacy ratio. Indeed, the relationship between black illegitimacy ratios and AFDC was highly negative in the 1950s, with the r between AFDC and $RATIO_b$ in excess of $-.50$ throughout most of the decade. The negative relationship attenuated during the 1960s, but no significant bivariate positive relationship has ever been observed.

The most obvious cause of the negative relationship in the 1950s was a combination of low AFDC payments and high illegitimacy ratios in the South. A less obvious explanation for the situation in the 1950s was a combination of comparatively high AFDC payments but comparatively low illegitimacy ratios in another set of states that is less easily characterized. Figure 10 shows the situation in 1954, based on AFDC only as the WELFARE measure, since food stamps were not yet part of the package.

The group to the upper left in figure 10 is clear cut: it includes every state of the Confederacy (for which data were available for 1954) plus Missouri. The group in the lower right is more heterogeneous, but all of the states had some things in common as of 1954—low levels of urbanization and small (often minuscule) black populations. Lack of urbanization cannot be the explanatory variable, however, for the southern states also lacked urbanization and yet had high black illegitimacy ratios. The size of the black population is left as the obvious distinction. Michigan and New Jersey are partial exceptions to this generalization, but not as much as might be supposed. In 1950, just 6.9% and 6.6%, respectively, of their populations were black.

This pattern continued to hold true, and indeed was accentuated, during the next 3 decades, as states with conspicuously below-average black illegitimacy ratios by 1980 continued to consist exclusively of states that had low black populations. To illustrate, figure 11 shows the 1988 plot with the names of the outlier group filled in. The state with the largest proportion of blacks among the 14 was Colorado, with 3.5%. Nine of the states had black populations of less than 1%. This strongly suggests some sort of interaction between the black illegitimacy ratio and some dynamic having to do with the concentration of blacks within a geographic area.

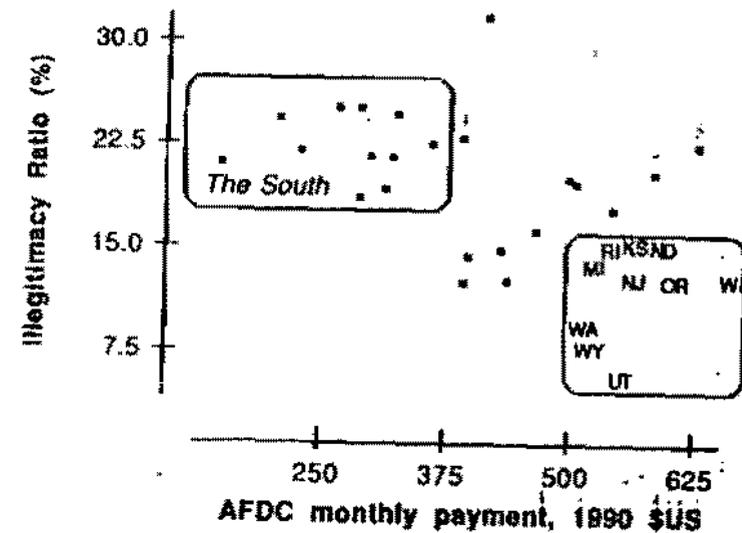


FIG. 10.—Welfare and illegitimacy among blacks by state, 1954

We now turn to some possibilities for exploring that relationship more systematically.

V. Some Directions for Future Investigation

The literature reviewed earlier in the paper took a variety of approaches to modeling the processes that might account for these disparate and

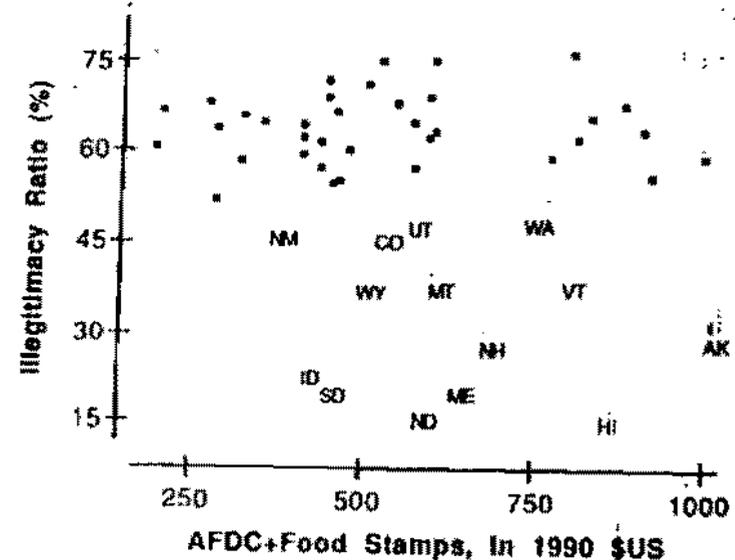


FIG. 11. Welfare and illegitimacy among blacks by state, 1988

sometimes contradictory characteristics of the data on illegitimacy and welfare. They tended to focus on an economic process whereby the young woman weighs alternative economic benefits and responds to economic incentives in the welfare system by having a baby. That approach is not implausible, but it needs to be enriched. Two supplemental hypotheses seem to offer promising leads. One, proposed elsewhere (Murray 1986), is that welfare enables poor single women to have babies rather than induces them to do so. The argument is that young men do not need to be induced by economic incentives to want to have sex with young women. Young women do not need to be induced by economic incentives to find babies endearing. Young men refrain from having sex and young women take precautions not to have a baby because of economic and social penalties associated with having a baby outside marriage. The role of social policy in the last 30 years, according to this logic, has been to lighten penalties.

With regard to economic incentives, it is hypothesized that the right analogy for thinking about welfare is not a price system in which increases in welfare increase the value of having a baby but, rather, the concept of "enough," whereby an event (having babies) that is intrinsically desired becomes feasible. At some very low level, a welfare package is so small that hardly any woman will think that it constitutes "enough" to support herself and a baby. If every woman had precisely the same threshold definition of "enough," then illegitimacy ratios would be discontinuous as the welfare package increased. It is more reasonable to assume that women's threshold definitions are different but bunched within a relatively small range, so that at some point there is a bump in the "enabling effect" as the welfare package reaches a point where any poor woman can reasonably decide that the package is large enough that she can take care of the baby by herself if she has to.

The second, related hypothesis is that the incidence of illegitimacy is affected by the local dominant culture, or what will be called here the "proximate culture" (see also Case and Katz 1991). If a person lives in a culture where illegitimacy is both rare and highly stigmatized, the economic effects one might expect from the size of the welfare package will be damped. At the limit, they will be virtually extinguished. But a latent propensity to have illegitimate children will be present in all cultures, for the elemental reasons noted above: sex is fun and babies are endearing.

Two changes in the environment will plausibly change the illegitimacy ratio. One, alluded to in the enabling hypothesis, is a substantial shift in the economic feasibility of having a baby without a spouse, which will be affected by the welfare package among that part of the population for whom the size of the welfare package seems adequate—namely, low-income groups. The smaller the welfare package, the more limited the groups that will find it a relevant incentive.

The second change that will alter the illegitimacy ratio is a change in the opinion of the people who live in one's immediate neighborhood and

form the proximate culture. It is assumed here that the proximate culture is defined in geographically quite limited terms and that, when it comes to sexual behavior, its effectiveness as a restraint can readily be undermined. Sex is such a powerful incentive, especially among the young, that all people need is a nudge. It is not necessary that a majority of the people in the proximate culture have changed their norms in order to produce marked erosion of stigma against having a baby out of wedlock.

A. Applying the Interpretation to White Illegitimacy

Regarding whites, this pair of hypotheses is consistent with two observations about the U.S. experience since the 1950s. First, the hypotheses are consistent with the observation that, during the 1950s, the white illegitimacy ratio showed very little correlation with variables that would later bear substantial bivariate relationships—WELFARE, percentage of blacks in the population, urbanization, size of the state. During the 1950s, these correlations were effectively zero. The proposed explanation is that, as of the 1950s, illegitimacy was much more independent of statewide variables than it was to become later. Virtually no white women anywhere felt socially or economically enabled to have a baby without a husband. Virtually all tried to avoid it. The relatively rare failures were just that—failures to avoid a dreaded consequence, with few systematic explanations for failure. The 1950s represented the baseline condition when the effects of welfare on illegitimacy were damped to the point of extinction, both because the social norm among whites was so uniform and strongly enforced with social sanctions and because the welfare package itself was below the threshold at which it meaningfully "enabled" a significant number of poor white women to behave differently.

From the early 1960s onward, the dominant culture in the United States began to change its attitude toward premarital sex. This might have been expected to increase the overall illegitimacy rate slightly, just because "exposure" was increasing, even if welfare had remained unchanged. But the changes in the attitudes toward premarital sex should not in themselves have affected the relationship between the illegitimacy ratio and the size of the welfare payment. The contemporaneous changes in the welfare system, both in the size and in the variety of the supports and the eligibility and enforcement rules, are a more plausible culprit. The observed pattern of correlations between the white illegitimacy ratio and AFDC (fig. 8) tracks with this explanation—no correlation in the 1950s, then a steeply rising correlation through the 1960s.

But why did the correlation remain through the 1970s (and even increase slightly) when the real value of the mean welfare payments was sliding? That it should have done so is inconsistent, if unmarried fertility is a linear function of the size of the welfare payment. But it is not inconsistent if welfare enables illegitimacy to occur. As long as the welfare package remained "enough"—above the threshold—reductions were not going to

produce a one-for-one downward pull on illegitimacy. In this regard, it is worth remembering that the maximum value of the welfare package available anywhere in the United States fell during the 1970s, but the minimum amounts available everywhere continued to increase. If enabling is indeed the correct conceptualization of the way that welfare acts on illegitimacy, more and more states may be seen as having passed the threshold during the 1970s, and the rising illegitimacy ratio should come as no surprise.

B. Applying the Interpretation to Black Illegitimacy

We turn to the more complicated case of black illegitimacy. As preface, it should be emphasized that the studies of the link between labor force factors and illegitimacy discussed in the literature review are promising current lines of investigation. What follows is intended not to supplant those lines of investigation, but to augment them.

Blacks as of the 1950s differed from whites in that, in some parts of the country, they already lived in communities that countenanced a degree of illegitimacy that was still unacceptable in white communities.⁶ Even in the early 1950s, the ratio in the southern states was running in excess of 20%. A broader definition of "family" and a generally lower level of stigma associated with illegitimacy meant that, in many black communities, the proximate culture was already failing to limit the natural tendency of young adults to have sex and babies.

What may we expect to happen when the economic punishments for illegitimacy are lowered in a community where the social punishments for illegitimacy are already low and the overall economic norms of the community are already low? One may model the interaction in several ways. It seems reasonable to expect, however, that an economic increment of X will exceed the "enough" threshold for a far higher proportion of people in such a community than in a community where those two conditions do not apply. Or, to put it more roughly, from the point of view of people at the bottom of the economic ladder, disproportionately black, the changes in welfare during the 1960s did more than just add value to the package. The changes were qualitatively different, providing in effect a guarantee

⁶ Some black communities but not all; at some points in the pre-1960 period but not all. The ethnographic literature in this regard is rich. See esp. Du Bois (1899), Borchert (1980), Bethel (1981), and Davis (1988). Accounts of these variations are important for understanding the ways in which a proximate culture works. It should be emphasized, however, that the argument does not require that one postulate a uniquely black culture. It requires only the empirical observation that something in American black communities has led to illegitimacy ratios that were much higher than in American white communities at any historical moment. No major study has been able to introduce a vector of control variables that eliminates this discrepancy.

that formerly AFDC alone did not provide. From 1966 onward, a mother with a child but no husband would nonetheless have two critical needs provided for: food (food stamps, WIC, school lunches) and medical care (Medicaid). In many localities, she was also guaranteed housing. Standing in a detached perspective, one may note that the coverage provided by Medicaid varies from state to state, that the quality of the housing is not good, and that the increases in the actual AFDC allotment have not kept up with inflation. What one must question is whether any of these considerations override the more primitive understanding in the post-1966 world that a young woman whose economic expectations were not high to begin with was in fact economically enabled to have a baby without a husband in a way that she was not prior to 1966, and this fundamental change has not been affected by subsequent perturbations in the system.

In short, given the two conditions of low stigma and a large proportion of the population for whom the size of the welfare package will be economically relevant, changes in the welfare system such as occurred in the 1960s will lead to a large rise in the illegitimacy ratio everywhere. This is one obvious way to interpret the history of the black illegitimacy ratio as presented in figure 7. But though black illegitimacy ratios rose everywhere and by large amounts, they nonetheless rose at different rates and to different degrees. In trying to understand why, we may also draw interpretive leverage from the finding that the black illegitimacy ratio in a number of states was conspicuously lower than the average.

Earlier in the paper, it was noted that all of the states in which this happened were ones in which the black population was small. But why should a low proportion of blacks in a state's population be a causal reason for lower-than-average illegitimacy ratios? The concept of proximate culture suggests this explanation: the key is not only the proportion of blacks in a state, but the proportion of blacks in a given community. The working hypothesis is that in states where blacks constitute not only a tiny minority of the state population but a small minority within the cities in the state, the proximate culture for blacks will tend to be represented by white norms, including norms regarding illegitimacy. In states where a large proportion of the black population lives in all-black or nearly all-black communities, the proximate culture will be constituted of black norms. Operationally, $RATIO_B$ will vary according to the density of the black population, with effects presumably stemming both from the overall proportion of blacks in the state population and the degree of concentration within urban communities.

As suggested by the nature of the outliers in figure 11, this indeed is the case. Figure 12 shows an example, using as the expression of black population density the highest proportion of blacks in any city in the state (of 50,000 population or more). The illegitimacy data are for 1988.

As figure 12 shows, $RATIO_B$ has a distinctly curvilinear relationship

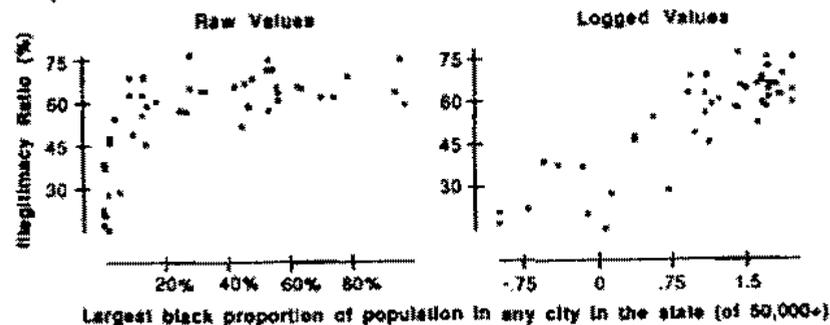


FIG. 12.—Relationship between the density of the black population and the black illegitimacy ratio by state, 1988.

with the density measure. This holds true even at the lower end of the density values, as the plot of logged values shows. The bivariate r of $RATIO_B$ and density of the black population (logged values) is an extraordinarily high $+0.86$. There seems to be reason to conclude, therefore, that we not only observe a strong empirical relationship between proportion of blacks in a state and their illegitimacy ratios but also have a consistent explanation of why this should be so. In passing, we also have an explanation for the odd relationship noted earlier in which the white illegitimacy ratio is negatively correlated with the percentage of blacks in the population. It is not that white behavior changes as the proportion of blacks increases, but that black behavior changes.

To explore this relationship more systematically, an index was constructed using three indicators: percentage of blacks in the state population, the percentage of blacks in the state's largest city, and the variable represented in figure 12, the highest proportion of blacks in any city of 50,000 population or greater. In states where the state's largest city also had the highest proportion of blacks of any city in the state, the values for the two indicators were identical. The logged values for each were added. The reliability of the index, using Cronbach's α , was .952 (Cronbach 1951).

The first question is whether this relationship has persisted over time, and the answer is yes. The bivariate correlation between $RATIO_B$ and the black population density index across states has tended to get stronger over time, rising from the $+0.6$ range in the mid-1950s to the $+0.8$ range by the early 1970s. It is not the change, however, but the simple magnitude of the correlations for the city-based indicators which is striking. Few unconfounded, complex social variables show correlations near $+0.8$, where the correlation between the density index and black illegitimacy ratio has remained for almost 20 years.

It may be added that the density indicator is not capturing some more general variable that correlates with illegitimacy in all groups. The correlation between the white illegitimacy ratio, $RATIO_W$, and the black population density index has hovered near zero since the 1950s.

The relationship between black population density and illegitimacy is robust. Entered with different combinations of control variables that included per capita income, state population, population of the largest city, educational attainment of the population, percent of the population living in nonrural areas, $RATIO_W$, and WELFARE, and repeating these analyses over time, the black population density index consistently explained much more of the variance than any other variable. For many of the combinations and for many of the replications over time, it was the only variable that reached statistical significance. Furthermore, the inclusion of density as an explanatory variable typically changed the pattern of coefficients, often dramatically. Table 3 shows the results for 1988 when two models for explaining $RATIO_B$ are employed, identical except that the second model adds black population density as a predictor.

In model 1, the variables reaching statistical significance are $RATIO_W$, logged value of state population, and per capita personal income, all of which had positive coefficients. WELFARE has a small, statistically insignificant negative coefficient. In model 2, when the black population density index is added, the R^2 jumps from .570 to .760. The size of the state population is no longer significant. $RATIO_W$ continues to have a strong

Table 3
Predicting the Black Illegitimacy Ratio with and without Black Population Density as a Variable (1988)

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Constant	-26.03	13.65	32.38	12.35
$RATIO_W$ (white illegitimacy ratio)	.79**	.28	.91***	.21
State population (logged)	23.36**	5.10	5.27	4.39
Population of largest city (logged)	-8.15	5.14	-6.03	3.87
Percent living in nonrural areas	.21	.13	.08	.10
WELFARE (AFDC + food stamps in 1990 dollars)	-.011	.008	.014*	.007
Per capita personal income (1990 dollars)	.003**	.001	-.001	.001
Percent aged 25+ with 16+ years of school	-2.56	.59	-.98	.48
Black population density index	6.22**	.73
No. of observations	50		50	
R^2	.570		.760	

Note.—Dependent variable: $RATIO_B$.

* Significant at the .05 level.

** Significant at the .01 level.

*** Significant at the .001 level.

positive relationship. And the WELFARE coefficient shifts from negative to positive, statistically significant at the .05 level.

Little importance should be attached to the statistical significance of the AFDC coefficient. The regression analysis has only 50 observations. Replications for years prior to 1980 have no more than 39 cases. In neither case is the sample large enough to have confidence in regression results with several independent variables. When the analysis is replicated, the relationship of WELFARE is significant in some years, not in others. The stable result regarding WELFARE, worth bearing in mind when approaching this issue with other data sets, is that the introduction of the black population density variable consistently changed the sign of the relationship. Without the density variable, WELFARE has a negative coefficient throughout the time series under various combinations of independent variables. With the density variable, the coefficient for WELFARE is positive for all replications since 1970 and all but two since 1960.

A final use of the results in table 3 is to illustrate why some of the cross-sectional analyses (e.g., Bernstam 1988) have indeed found that welfare payments do have an effect on black illegitimacy, as well as illustrating why others have not found such an effect.

VI. Conclusion

The topic of welfare and illegitimacy in the United States has become so highly politicized that even with the best of intentions it has been difficult for investigators to build block by block. As the review of literature indicated, it is difficult to point to any major causal issues on which consensus has been reached. The depiction of some basic trend lines and relationships across states and over time as presented here highlights some areas in which more consensus ought to be possible in the U.S. debate and perhaps will suggest ways in which the developing debate in Canada might avoid reinventing controversies that ought to be resolvable through data.

The debate over whether illegitimacy has been increasing among blacks, which has tended to compare a rising illegitimacy ratio with a falling birth rate among single women, misconstrues the issue. It is not just the ratio which has increased. The production of black illegitimate children per unit population per year has increased substantially since 1960, and this increase was concentrated noticeably in the last half of the 1960s and the early 1970s.

The size of the welfare package is difficult to measure precisely, especially across different localities, and this remains a genuine obstacle in analyzing the relationship of welfare benefits to any change in family structure. But the shape of the national trend line in welfare benefits is reasonably clear. There was a very large increase in the size of the package from the last half of the 1960s through the early 1970s. Subsequent inflation eroded the

value of this package during the rest of the 1970s but left the size of the package well above the levels that obtained until 1966.

Given the nature of the national trend lines in illegitimacy and welfare benefits over time, the plausibility of any given model depends crucially on its underlying assumptions about the lag times between changes in benefits and changes in behavior and the lag time between changes in nominal value and perceived real value. These assumptions are virtually never stated.

A bivariate relationship exists between AFDC payments across states and white illegitimacy. It developed during the 1960s and has continued subsequently, attenuating somewhat during the 1980s. Whether it is causal remains an open question, but the existence of the relationship is clear.

An unusually strong cross-state relationship exists between measures of the density of the black population within communities in a state and the black illegitimacy ratio. The correlation between the black illegitimacy ratio and an index of such indicators has consistently been above .8 since the early 1970s. The relationship is robust, persisting after controlling for a variety of demographic and economic variables and persisting across time. The existence of the relationship is consistent with a view of illegitimacy as a function of the "proximate culture" and offers promising theoretical leverage in analyzing illegitimacy in black communities.

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June 22, 1993

Prevention issue group

The Challenge:

- A. How do we design a welfare policy that is pro-family and encourages personal responsibility for the bearing and rearing of children?

Many policies in the welfare and work sections of Putting People First promote parental responsibility - employment for custodial parents and support by absent parents. Some policies are intended to encourage and support intact families, as well as single-parents and children - EITC and training initiatives. Are these policies likely to deter out-of-wedlock childbearing and the growth of single parent families? What is the evidence about the importance of two-parent families for child health and development? What additional policy options or ~~retirements~~ ^{retirements} might reduce the growth of single-parent families?

- B. The Types of Policy Option that might be Examined:

Conditioning Welfare Receipt, ^{Benefit} Birth Levels, or the EITC on:

- Establishment of paternity
- Willingness of a minor to live with a parent
- Whether additional children born on welfare
- Marital status

Preventing unintended childbearing, especially among unmarried teens

- Family planning, abortion, and adoption assistance
- ← Jobs and post-secondary education guarantees for teen who "do the right thing" or young men and women in High-risk neighborhoods

C. Process

Issue group membership Suggestions from steering group members. Outside experts?

Initial Meeting: Early next week.

Products: One or more background papers on questions listed under A. above.

← One or more policy papers assessing the pros and cons of the most promising specific policy options (or new ideas) listed under B. above.

The social-science evidence is in: though it may benefit the adults involved, the dissolution of intact two-parent families is harmful to large numbers of children. Moreover, the author argues, family diversity in the form of increasing numbers of single-parent and stepparent families does not strengthen the social fabric but, rather, dramatically weakens and undermines society

DAN QUAYLE WAS RIGHT

BY BARBARA DAFOE WHITEHEAD

DIVORCE AND OUT-OF-WEDLOCK CHILDBIRTH ARE TRANSFORMING THE LIVES of American children. In the postwar generation more than 80 percent of children grew up in a family with two biological parents who were married to each other. By 1980 only 50 percent could expect to spend their entire childhood in an intact family. If current trends continue, less than half of all children born today will live continuously with their own mother and father throughout childhood. Most American children will spend several years in a single-mother family. Some will eventually live in stepparent families, but because step-

families are more likely to break up than intact (by which I mean two-biological-parent) families, an increasing number of children will experience family breakup two or even three times during childhood.

According to a growing body of social-scientific evidence, children in families disrupted by divorce and out-of-wedlock birth do worse than children in intact families on several measures of well-being. Children in single-parent families are six times as likely to be poor. They are also likely to stay poor longer. Twenty-two percent of children in one-parent families will experience poverty during childhood for seven years or more, as compared with only two percent of children in two-parent families. A 1988 survey by the National Center for Health Statistics found that children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems. They are also more likely to drop out of high school, to get pregnant as teenagers, to abuse drugs, and to be in trouble with the law. Compared with children in intact families, children from disrupted families are at a much higher risk for physical or sexual abuse.

Contrary to popular belief, many children do not "bounce back" after divorce or remarriage. Difficulties that are associated with family breakup often persist into adulthood. Children who grow up in single-parent or stepparent families are less successful as adults, particularly in the two domains of life—love and work—that are most essential to happiness. Needless to say, not all

children experience such negative effects. However, research shows that many children from disrupted families have a harder time achieving intimacy in a relationship, forming a stable marriage, or even holding a steady job.

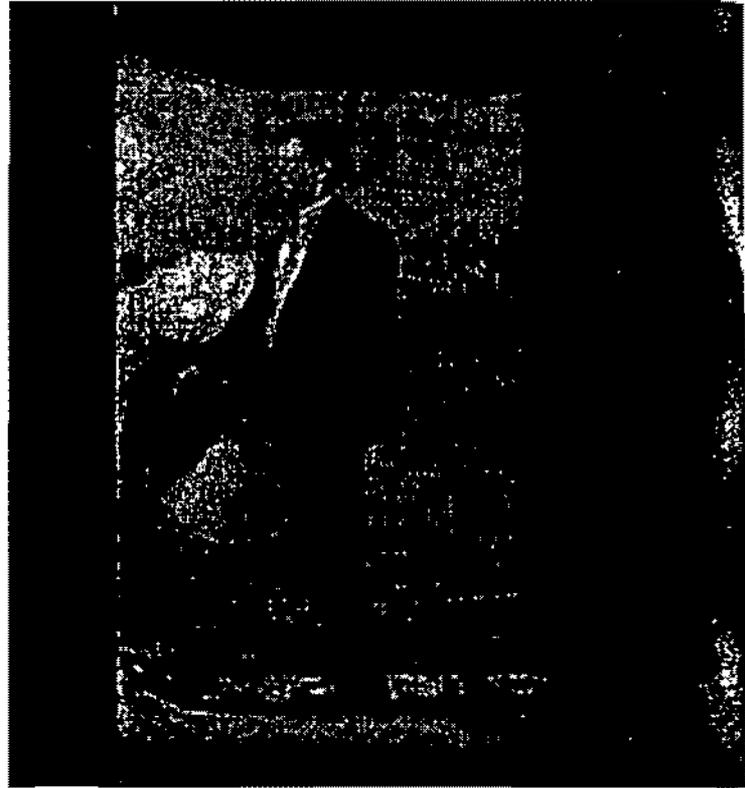
Despite this growing body of evidence, it is nearly impossible to discuss changes in family structure without provoking angry protest. Many people see the discussion as no more than an attack on struggling single mothers and their children: Why blame single mothers when they are doing the very best they can? After all, the decision to end a marriage or a relationship is wrenching, and few parents are indifferent to the painful burden this decision imposes on their children. Many take the perilous step toward single parenthood as a last resort, after their best efforts to hold a marriage together have failed. Consequently, it can seem particularly cruel and unfeeling to remind parents of the hardships their children might suffer as a result of family breakup. Other people believe that the dramatic changes in family structure, though regrettable, are impossible to reverse. Family breakup is an inevitable feature of American life, and anyone who thinks otherwise is indulging in nostalgia or trying to turn back the clock. Since these new family forms are here to stay, the reasoning goes, we must accord respect to single parents, not criticize them. Typical is the view expressed by a Brooklyn woman in a recent letter to *The New York Times*: "Let's stop moralizing or blaming single parents

and unwed mothers, and give them the respect they have earned and the support they deserve."

Such views are not to be dismissed. Indeed, they help to explain why family structure is such an explosive issue for Americans. The debate about it is not simply about the social-scientific evidence, although that is surely an important part of the discussion. It is also a debate over deeply held and often conflicting values. How do we begin to reconcile our long-standing belief in equality and diversity with an impressive body of evidence that suggests that not all family structures produce equal outcomes for children? How can we square traditional notions of public support for dependent women and children with a belief in women's right to pursue autonomy and independence in childbearing and child-rearing? How do we uphold the freedom of adults to pursue individual happiness in their private relationships and at the same time respond to the needs of children for stability, security, and permanence in their family lives? What do we do when the interests of adults and children conflict? These are the difficult issues at stake in the debate over family structure.

In the past these issues have turned out to be too difficult and too politically risky for debate. In the mid-1960s Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then an assistant secretary of labor, was denounced as a racist for calling attention to the relationship between the prevalence of black single-mother families and the lower socioeconomic standing of black children. For nearly twenty years the policy and research communities backed away from the entire issue. In 1980 the Carter Administration convened a historic White House Conference on Families, designed to address the growing problems of children and families in America. The result was a prolonged, publicly subsidized quarrel over the definition of "family." No President since has tried to hold a national family conference. Last year, at a time when the rate of out-of-wedlock births had reached a historic high, Vice President Dan Quayle was ridiculed for criticizing Murphy Brown. In short, every time the issue of family structure has been raised, the response has been first controversy, then retreat, and finally silence.

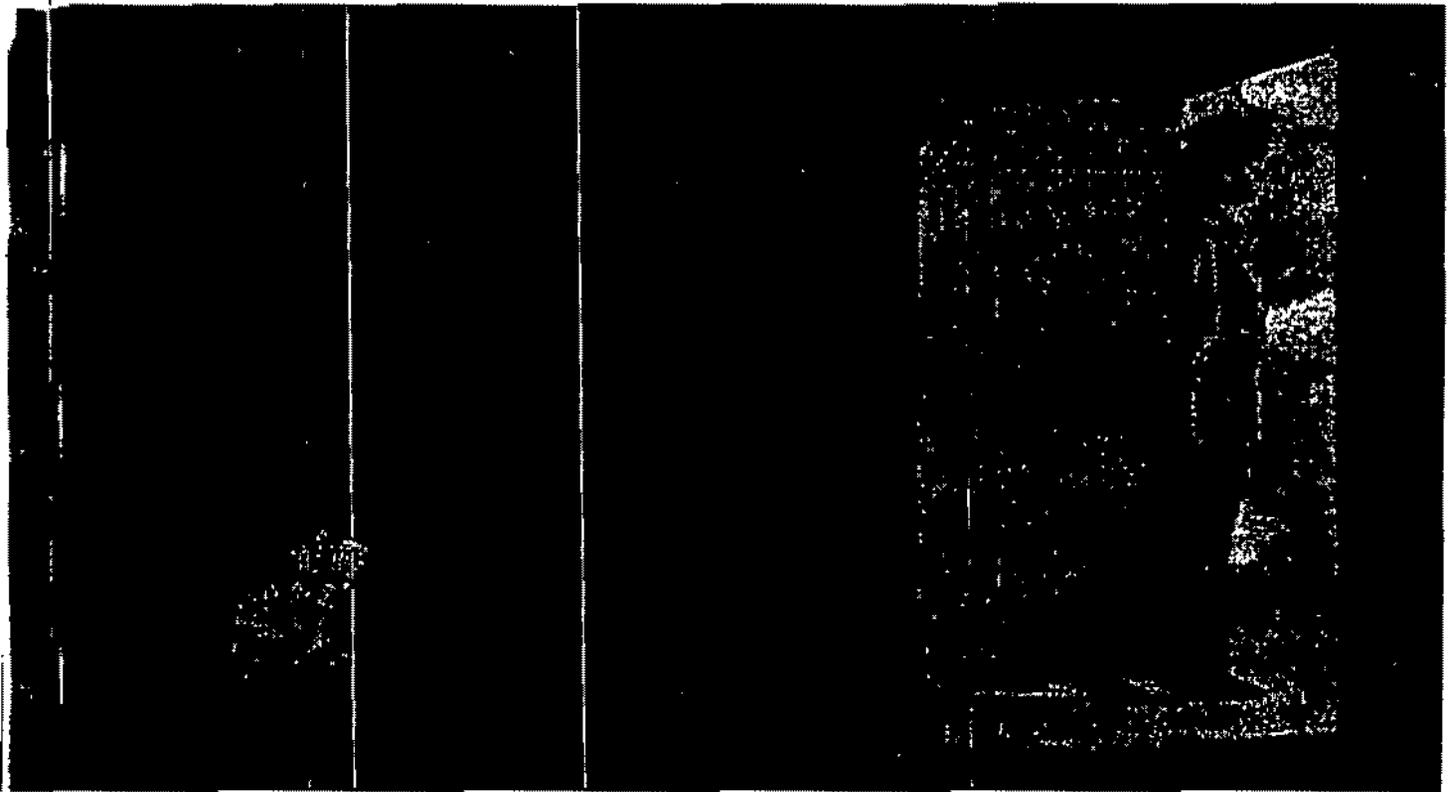
Yet it is also risky to ignore the issue of changing family structure. In recent years the problems associated with family disruption have grown. Overall child well-being has declined, despite a decrease in the number of children per family, an increase in the educational level of parents, and historically high levels of public spending. After dropping in the 1960s and 1970s, the proportion of children in poverty has increased dramatically, from 15 percent in 1970 to 20 percent in 1990, while the percentage of adult Americans in poverty has remained roughly constant. The teen suicide rate has more than tripled. Juvenile crime has increased and become more violent. School performance has continued to decline. There are no signs that these trends are about to reverse themselves.



If we fail to come to terms with the relationship between family structure and declining child well-being, then it will be increasingly difficult to improve children's life prospects, no matter how many new programs the federal government funds. Nor will we be able to make progress in bettering school performance or reducing crime or improving the quality of the nation's future work force—all domestic problems closely connected to family breakup. Worse, we may contribute to the problem by pursuing policies that actually increase family instability and breakup.

From Death to Divorce

ACROSS TIME AND ACROSS CULTURES, FAMILY DISRUPTION has been regarded as an event that threatens a child's well-being and even survival. This view is rooted in a fundamental biological fact: unlike the young of almost any other species, the human child is born in an abjectly helpless and immature state. Years of nurture and protection are needed before the child can achieve physical independence. Similarly, it takes years of interaction with at least one but ideally two or more adults for a child to develop into a socially competent adult. Children raised in virtual isolation from human beings, though physically intact, display few recognizably human behaviors. The social arrangement that has proved most successful in ensuring the physical survival and promoting the social development of the child is the family unit of the biological mother and father. Consequently,



any event that permanently denies a child the presence and protection of a parent jeopardizes the life of the child.

The classic form of family disruption is the death of a parent. Throughout history this has been one of the risks of childhood. Mothers frequently died in childbirth, and it was not unusual for both parents to die before the child was grown. As recently as the early decades of this century children commonly suffered the death of at least one parent. Almost a quarter of the children born in this country in 1900 lost one parent by the time they were fifteen years old. Many of these children lived with their widowed parent, often in a household with other close relatives. Others grew up in orphanages and foster homes.

The meaning of parental death, as it has been transmitted over time and faithfully recorded in world literature and lore, is unambiguous and essentially unchanging. It is universally regarded as an untimely and tragic event. Death permanently severs the parent-child bond, disrupting forever one of the child's earliest and deepest human attachments. It also deprives a child of the presence and protection of an adult who has a biological stake in, as well as an emotional commitment to, the child's survival and well-being. In short, the death of a parent is the most extreme and severe loss a child can suffer.

Because a child is so vulnerable in a parent's absence, there has been a common cultural response to the death of a parent: an outpouring of support from family, friends, and strangers alike. The surviving parent and child are united in their grief as well as their loss. Relatives and friends share in the loss and provide valuable emotional

and financial assistance to the bereaved family. Other members of the community show sympathy for the child, and public assistance is available for those who need it. This cultural understanding of parental death has formed the basis for a tradition of public support to widows and their children. Indeed, as recently as the beginning of this century widows were the only mothers eligible for pensions in many states, and today widows with children receive more-generous welfare benefits from Survivors Insurance than do other single mothers with children who depend on Aid to Families With Dependent Children.

It has taken thousands upon thousands of years to reduce the threat of parental death. Not until the middle of the twentieth century did parental death cease to be a commonplace event for children in the United States. By then advances in medicine had dramatically reduced mortality rates for men and women.

At the same time, other forms of family disruption—separation, divorce, out-of-wedlock birth—were held in check by powerful religious, social, and legal sanctions. Divorce was widely regarded both as a deviant behavior, especially threatening to mothers and children, and as a personal lapse: "Divorce is the public acknowledgment of failure," a 1940s sociology textbook noted. Out-of-wedlock birth was stigmatized, and stigmatization is a powerful means of regulating behavior, as any smoker or overeater will testify. Sanctions against nonmarital childbirth discouraged behavior that hurt children and exacted compensatory behavior that helped them. Shotgun marriages and adoption, two common responses to nonmari-

tal birth, carried a strong message about the risks of premarital sex and created an intact family for the child.

Consequently, children did not have to worry much about losing a parent through divorce or never having had one because of nonmarital birth. After a surge in divorces following the Second World War, the rate leveled off. Only 11 percent of children born in the 1950s would by the time they turned eighteen see their parents separate or divorce. Out-of-wedlock childbirth barely figured as a cause of family disruption. In the 1950s and early 1960s, five percent of the nation's births were out of wedlock. Blacks were more likely than whites to bear children outside marriage, but the majority of black children born in the twenty years after the Second World War were born to married couples. The rate of family disruption reached a historic low point during those years.

A new standard of family security and stability was established in postwar America. For the first time in history the vast majority of the nation's children could expect to live with married biological parents throughout childhood. Children might still suffer other forms of adversity—poverty, racial discrimination, lack of educational opportunity—but only a few would be deprived of the nurture and protection of a mother and a father. No longer did children have to be haunted by the classic fears vividly dramatized in folklore and fable—that their parents would die, that they would have to live with a stepparent and stepsiblings, or that they would be abandoned. These were the years when the nation confidently boarded up orphanages and closed foundling hospitals, certain that such institutions would never again be needed. In movie theaters across the country parents and children could watch the drama of parental separation and death in the great Disney classics, secure in the knowledge that such nightmare visions as the death of Bambi's mother and the wrenching separation of Dumbo from his mother were only make-believe.

In the 1960s the rate of family disruption suddenly began to rise. After inching up over the course of a century, the divorce rate soared. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s the divorce rate held steady at fewer than ten divorces a year per 1,000 married couples. Then, beginning in about 1965, the rate increased sharply, peaking at twenty-three divorces per 1,000 marriages by 1979. (In 1974 divorce passed death as the leading cause of family breakup.) The rate has leveled off at about twenty-one divorces per 1,000 marriages—the figure for 1991. The out-of-wedlock birth rate also jumped. It went from five percent in 1960 to 27 percent in 1990. In 1990 close to 57 percent of births among black mothers were nonmarital, and about 17 percent among white mothers. Altogether, about one out of every four women who had a child in 1990 was not married. With rates of divorce and nonmarital birth so high, family disruption is at its peak. Never before have so many children experienced family breakup caused by events other than death. Each year a million

children go through divorce or separation and almost as many more are born out of wedlock.

Half of all marriages now end in divorce. Following divorce, many people enter new relationships. Some begin living together. Nearly half of all cohabiting couples have children in the household. Fifteen percent have new children together. Many cohabiting couples eventually get married. However, both cohabiting and remarried couples are more likely to break up than couples in first marriages. Even social scientists find it hard to keep pace with the complexity and velocity of such patterns. In the revised edition (1992) of his book *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage*, the sociologist Andrew Cherlin ruefully comments: "If there were a truth-in-labeling law for books, the title of this edition should be something long and unwieldy like *Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce, More Cohabitation, and Probably Remarriage.*"

Under such conditions growing up can be a turbulent experience. In many single-parent families children must come to terms with the parent's love life and romantic partners. Some children live with cohabiting couples, either their own unmarried parents or a biological parent and a live-in partner. Some children born to cohabiting parents see their parents break up. Others see their parents marry, but 56 percent of them (as compared with 31 percent of the children born to married parents) later see their parents' marriages fall apart. All told, about three quarters of children born to cohabiting couples will live in a single-parent home at least briefly. One of every four children growing up in the 1990s will eventually enter a stepfamily. According to one survey, nearly half of all children in stepparent families will see their parents divorce again by the time they reach their late teens. Since 80 percent of divorced fathers remarry, things get even more complicated when the romantic or marital history of the noncustodial parent, usually the father, is taken into account. Consequently, as it affects a significant number of children, family disruption is best understood not as a single event but as a string of disruptive events: separation, divorce, life in a single-parent family, life with a parent and live-in lover, the remarriage of one or both parents, life in one stepparent family combined with visits to another stepparent family; the breakup of one or both stepparent families. And so on. This is one reason why public schools have a hard time knowing whom to call in an emergency.

Given its dramatic impact on children's lives, one might reasonably expect that this historic level of family disruption would be viewed with alarm, even regarded as a national crisis. Yet this has not been the case. In recent years some people have argued that these trends pose a serious threat to children and to the nation as a whole, but they are dismissed as declinists, pessimists, or nostalgists, unwilling or unable to accept the new facts of life. The dominant view is that the changes in family structure are, on balance, positive.

A Shift in the Social Metric

THESE ARE SEVERAL REASONS WHY THIS IS SO, but the fundamental reason is that at some point in the 1970s Americans changed their minds about the meaning of these disruptive behaviors. What had once been regarded as hostile to children's best interests was now considered essential to adults' happiness. In the 1950s most Americans believed that parents should stay in an unhappy marriage for the sake of the children. The assumption was that a divorce would damage the children, and the prospect of such damage gave divorce its meaning. By the mid-1970s a majority of Americans rejected that view. Popular advice literature reflected the shift. A book on divorce published in the mid-1940s tersely asserted: "Children are entitled to the affection and association of two parents, not one." Thirty years later another popular divorce book proclaimed just the opposite: "A two-parent home is not the only emotional structure within which a child can be happy and healthy. . . . The parents who take care of themselves will be best able to take care of their children." At about the same time, the long-standing taboo against out-of-wedlock childbirth also collapsed. By the mid-1970s three fourths of Americans said that it was not morally wrong for a woman to have a child outside marriage.

Once the social metric shifts from child well-being to adult well-being, it is hard to see divorce and nonmarital birth in anything but a positive light. However distressing and difficult they may be, both of these behaviors can hold out the promise of greater adult choice, freedom, and happiness. For unhappy spouses, divorce offers a way to escape a troubled or even abusive relationship and make a fresh start. For single parents, remarriage is a second try at marital happiness as well as a chance for relief from the stress, loneliness, and economic hardship of raising a child alone. For some unmarried women, nonmarital birth is a way to beat the biological clock, avoid marrying the wrong man, and experience the pleasures of motherhood. Moreover, divorce and out-of-wedlock birth involve a measure of agency and choice; they are man- and woman-made events. To be sure, not everyone exercises choice in divorce or nonmarital birth. Men leave wives for younger women, teenage girls get pregnant accidentally—yet even these unhappy events reflect the expansion of the boundaries of freedom and choice.

This cultural shift helps explain what otherwise would be inexplicable: the failure to see the rise in family disruption as a severe and troubling national problem. It explains why there is virtually no widespread public sentiment for restigmatizing either of these classically disruptive behaviors and no sense—no public consensus—that they can or should be avoided in the future. On the contrary, the prevailing opinion is that we should accept the changes in family structure as inevitable and devise new forms of public and private support for single-parent families.

The View From Hollywood

WITH ITS AFFIRMATION OF THE LIBERATING effects of divorce and nonmarital childbirth, this opinion is a fixture of American popular culture today. Madison Avenue and Hollywood did not invent these behaviors, as their highly paid publicists are quick to point out, but they have played an influential role in defending and even celebrating divorce and unwed motherhood. More precisely, they have taken the raw material of demography and fashioned it into a powerful fantasy of individual renewal and rebirth. Consider, for example, the teaser for *People* magazine's cover story on Joan Lunden's divorce: "After the painful end of her 13-year marriage, the *Good Morning America* cohost is discovering a new life as a single mother—and as her own woman." *People* does not dwell on the anguish Lunden and her children might have experienced over the breakup of their family, or the difficulties of single motherhood, even for celebrity mothers. Instead, it celebrates Joan Lunden's steps toward independence and a better life. *People*, characteristically, focuses on her shopping: in the first weeks after her breakup Lunden leased "a brand-new six-bedroom, 8,000 square foot" house and then went to Bloomingdale's, where she scooped up sheets, pillows, a toaster, dishes, seven televisions, and roomfuls of fun furniture that was "totally unlike the serious traditional pieces she was giving up."

This is not just the view taken in supermarket magazines. Even the conservative bastion of the greeting-card industry, Hallmark, offers a line of cards commemorating divorce as liberation. "Think of your former marriage as a record album," says one Contemporary card. "It was full of music—both happy and sad. But what's important now is . . . YOU! the recently released HOT, NEW, SINGLE! You're going to be at the TOP OF THE CHARTS!" Another card reads: "Getting divorced can be very healthy! Watch how it improves your circulation! Best of luck! . . ." Hallmark's hip Shoebox Greetings division depicts two female praying mantises. Mantis One: "It's tough being a single parent." Mantis Two: "Yeah . . . Maybe we shouldn't have eaten our husbands."

Divorce is a tired convention in Hollywood, but unwed parenthood is very much in fashion: in the past year or so babies were born to Warren Beatty and Annette Bening, Jack Nicholson and Rebecca Broussard, and Eddie Murphy and Nicole Mitchell. *Vanity Fair* celebrated Jack Nicholson's fatherhood with a cover story (April, 1992) called "Happy Jack." What made Jack happy, it turned out, was no-fault fatherhood. He and Broussard, the twenty-nine-year-old mother of his children, lived in separate houses. Nicholson said, "It's an unusual arrangement, but the last twenty-five years or so have shown me that I'm not good at cohabitation. . . . I see Rebecca as much as any other person who is cohabiting. And *she* prefers it. I think

most people would in a more honest and truthful world." As for more-permanent commitments, the man who is not good at cohabitation said: "I don't discuss marriage much with Rebecca. Those discussions are the very thing I'm trying to avoid. I'm after this immediate real thing. That's all I believe in." (Perhaps Nicholson should have had the discussion. Not long after the story appeared, Broussard broke off the relationship.)

As this story shows, unwed parenthood is thought of not only as a way to find happiness but also as a way to exhibit such virtues as honesty and courage. A similar argument was offered in defense of Murphy Brown's unwed motherhood. Many of Murphy's fans were quick to point out that Murphy suffered over her decision to bear a child out of wedlock. Faced with an accidental pregnancy and a faithless lover, she agonized over her plight and, after much mental anguish, bravely decided to go ahead. In short, having a baby without a husband represented a higher level of maternal devotion and sacrifice than having a baby with a husband. Murphy was not just exercising her rights as a woman; she was exhibiting true moral heroism.

On the night Murphy Brown became an unwed mother, 34 million Americans tuned in, and CBS posted a 35 percent share of the audience. The show did not stir significant protest at the grass roots and lost none of its advertisers. The actress Candice Bergen subsequently appeared on the cover of nearly every women's and news magazine in the country and received an honorary degree at the University of Pennsylvania as well as an Emmy award. The show's creator, Diane English, popped up in Hanes stocking ads. Judged by conventional measures of approval, Murphy Brown's motherhood was a hit at the box office.

Increasingly, the media depicts the married two-parent family as a source of pathology. According to a spate of celebrity memoirs and interviews, the married-parent family harbors terrible secrets of abuse, violence, and incest. A bumper sticker I saw in Amherst, Massachusetts, read UNSPOKEN TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES: ABUSE, ALCOHOLISM, INCEST. The pop therapist John Bradshaw explains away this generation's problems with the dictum that 96 percent of families are dysfunctional, made that way by the addicted society we live in. David Lynch creates a new aesthetic of creepiness by juxtaposing scenes of traditional family life with images of seduction and perversion. A Boston-area museum puts on an exhibit called "Goodbye to Apple Pie," featuring several artists'

visions of child abuse, including one mixed-media piece with knives poking through a little girl's skirt. The piece is titled *Father Knows Best*.

No one would claim that two-parent families are free from conflict, violence, or abuse. However, the attempt to discredit the two-parent family can be understood as part of what Daniel Patrick Moynihan has described as a larger effort to accommodate higher levels of social deviance. "The amount of deviant behavior in American society has increased beyond the levels the community can 'afford to recognize,'" Moynihan argues. One response has been to normalize what was once considered deviant behavior, such as out-of-wedlock birth. An accompanying response has been to detect deviance in what once stood as a social norm, such as the married-couple family. Together these responses reduce the acknowledged levels of deviance by eroding earlier distinctions between the normal and the deviant.

Several recent studies describe family life in its postwar heyday as the seedbed of alcoholism and abuse. Ac-

Research shows that many children from disrupted families have a harder time achieving intimacy in a relationship, forming a stable marriage, or even holding a steady job.

According to Stephanie Coontz, the author of the book *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*, family life for married mothers in the 1950s consisted of "booze, howling, bridge, and boredom." Coontz writes: "Few would have guessed that radiant Marilyn Van Derbur, crowned Miss America in 1958, had been sexually violated by her wealthy, respectable father from the time she was five until she was eighteen, when she moved away to college." Even the budget-stretching casserole comes under attack as a sign of culinary dysfunction. According to one food writer, this homely staple of postwar family life brings back images of "the good mother of the 50's . . . locked in Ozzie and Harriet land, unable to move past the canvas of a Corning Ware dish, the palette of a can of Campbell's soup, the mushy dominion of which she was queen."

Nevertheless, the popular portrait of family life does not simply reflect the views of a cultural elite, as some have argued. There is strong support at the grass roots for much of this view of family change. Survey after survey

shows that Americans are less inclined than they were a generation ago to value sexual fidelity, lifelong marriage, and parenthood as worthwhile personal goals. Motherhood no longer defines adult womanhood, as everyone knows; equally important is the fact that fatherhood has declined as a norm for men. In 1976 less than half as many fathers as in 1957 said that providing for children was a life goal. The proportion of working men who found marriage and children burdensome and restrictive more than doubled in the same period. Fewer than half of all adult Americans today regard the idea of sacrifice for others as a positive moral virtue.

Dinosaurs Divorce

IT IS TRUE THAT MANY ADULTS BENEFIT FROM divorce or remarriage. According to one study, nearly 80 percent of divorced women and 50 percent of divorced men say they are better off out of the marriage. Half of divorced adults in the same study report greater happiness. A competent self-help book called *Divorce and New Beginnings* notes the advantages of single parenthood: single parents can "develop their own interests, fulfill their own needs, choose their own friends and engage in social activities of their choice. Money, even if limited, can be spent as they see fit." Apparently, some women appreciate the opportunity to have children out of wedlock. "The real world, however, does not always allow women who are dedicated to their careers to devote the time and energy it takes to find—or be found by—the perfect husband and father wanna-be," one woman said in a letter to *The Washington Post*. A mother and chiropractor from Avon, Connecticut, explained her unwed maternity to an interviewer this way: "It is selfish, but this was something I needed to do for me."

There is very little in contemporary popular culture to contradict this optimistic view. But in a few small places another perspective may be found. Several racks down from its divorce cards, Hallmark offers a line of cards for children—To Kids With Love. These cards come six to a pack. Each card in the pack has a slightly different message. According to the package, the "thinking of you" messages will let a special kid "know how much you care." Though Hallmark doesn't quite say so, it's clear these cards are aimed at divorced parents. "I'm sorry I'm not always there when you need me but I hope you know I'm always just a phone call away." Another card reads: "Even though your dad and I don't live together anymore, I know he's still a very special part of your life. And as much as I miss you when you're not with me, I'm still happy that you two can spend time together."

Hallmark's messages are grounded in a substantial body of well-funded market research. Therefore it is worth reflecting on the divergence in sentiment between the divorce cards for adults and the divorce cards for kids. For grown-ups, divorce heralds new beginnings (A HOT NEW

SINGLE). For children, divorce brings separation and loss ("I'm sorry I'm not always there when you need me").

An even more telling glimpse into the meaning of family disruption can be found in the growing children's literature on family dissolution. Take, for example, the popular children's book *Dinosaurs Divorce: A Guide for Changing Families* (1986), by Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Brown. This is a picture book, written for very young children. The book begins with a short glossary of "divorce words" and encourages children to "see if you can find them" in the story. The words include "family counselor," "separation agreement," "alimony," and "child custody." The book is illustrated with cartoonish drawings of green dinosaur parents who fight, drink too much, and break up. One panel shows the father dinosaur, suitcase in hand, getting into a yellow car.

The dinosaur children are offered simple, straightforward advice on what to do about the divorce. *On custody decisions*: "When parents can't agree, lawyers and judges decide. Try to be honest if they ask you questions; it will help them make better decisions." *On selling the house*: "If you move, you may have to say good-bye to friends and familiar places. But soon your new home will feel like the place you really belong." *On the economic impact of divorce*: "Living with one parent almost always means there will be less money. Be prepared to give up some things." *On holidays*: "Divorce may mean twice as much celebrating at holiday times, but you may feel pulled apart." *On parents' new lovers*: "You may sometimes feel jealous and want your parent to yourself. Be polite to your parents' new friends, even if you don't like them at first." *On parents' remarriage*: "Not everyone loves his or her stepparents, but showing them respect is important."

These cards and books point to an uncomfortable and generally unacknowledged fact: what contributes to a parent's happiness may detract from a child's happiness. All too often the adult quest for freedom, independence, and choice in family relationships conflicts with a child's developmental needs for stability, constancy, harmony, and permanence in family life. In short, family disruption creates a deep division between parents' interests and the interests of children.

One of the worst consequences of these divided interests is a withdrawal of parental investment in children's well-being. As the Stanford economist Victor Fuchs has pointed out, the main source of social investment in children is private. The investment comes from the children's parents. But parents in disrupted families have less time, attention, and money to devote to their children. The single most important source of disinvestment has been the widespread withdrawal of financial support and involvement by fathers. Maternal investment, too, has declined, as women try to raise families on their own and work outside the home. Moreover, both mothers and fathers commonly respond to family breakup by investing more heavily in themselves and in their own personal and romantic lives.

Sometimes the tables are completely turned. Children are called upon to invest in the emotional well-being of their parents. Indeed, this seems to be the larger message of many of the children's books on divorce and remarriage. *Dinosaurs Divorce* asks children to be sympathetic, understanding, respectful, and polite to confused, unhappy parents. The sacrifice comes from the children: "Be prepared to give up some things." In the world of divorcing dinosaurs, the children rather than the grown-ups are the exemplars of patience, restraint, and good sense.

Three Seventies Assumptions

AS IT FIRST TOOK SHAPE IN THE 1970S, THE OPTIMISTIC view of family change rested on three bold new assumptions. At that time, because the emergence of the changes in family life was so recent, there was little hard evidence to confirm or dispute these assumptions. But this was an expansive moment in American life.

The first assumption was an economic one: that a woman could now afford to be a mother without also being a wife. There were ample grounds for believing this. Women's work-force participation had been gradually increasing in the postwar period, and by the beginning of the 1970s women were a strong presence in the workplace. What's more, even though there was still a substantial wage gap between men and women, women had made considerable progress in a relatively short time toward better-paying jobs and greater employment opportunities. More women than ever before could aspire to serious careers as business executives, doctors, lawyers, airline pilots, and politicians. This circumstance, combined with the increased availability of child care, meant that women could take on the responsibilities of a breadwinner, perhaps even a sole breadwinner. This was particularly true for middle-class women. According to a highly regarded 1977 study by the Carnegie Council on Children, "The greater availability of jobs for women means that more middle-class children today survive their parents' divorce without a catastrophic plunge into poverty."

Feminists, who had long argued that the path to greater equality for women lay in the world of work outside the home, endorsed this assumption. In fact, for many, economic independence was a stepping-stone toward freedom from both men and marriage. As women began to earn their own money, they were less dependent on men or marriage, and marriage diminished in importance. In Gloria Steinem's memorable words, "A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle."

This assumption also gained momentum as the meaning of work changed for women. Increasingly, work had an expressive as well as an economic dimension: being a working mother not only gave you an income but also made you more interesting and fulfilled than a stay-at-home mother. Consequently, the optimistic economic

scenario was driven by a cultural imperative. Women would achieve financial independence because, culturally as well as economically, it was the right thing to do.

The second assumption was that family disruption would not cause lasting harm to children and could actually enrich their lives. *Creative Divorce: A New Opportunity for Personal Growth*, a popular book of the seventies, spoke confidently to this point: "Children can survive any family crisis without permanent damage—and grow as human beings in the process. . . ." Moreover, single-parent and stepparent families created a more extensive kinship network than the nuclear family. This network would envelop children in a web of warm and supportive relationships. "Belonging to a stepfamily means there are more people in your life," a children's book published in 1982 notes. "More sisters and brothers, including the step ones. More people you think of as grandparents and aunts and uncles. More cousins. More neighbors and friends. . . . Getting to know and like so many people (and having them like you) is one of the best parts of what being in a stepfamily . . . is all about."

The third assumption was that the new diversity in family structure would make America a better place. Just as the nation has been strengthened by the diversity of its ethnic and racial groups, so it would be strengthened by diverse family forms. The emergence of these brave new families was but the latest chapter in the saga of American pluralism.

Another version of the diversity argument stated that the real problem was not family disruption itself but the stigma still attached to these emergent family forms. This lingering stigma placed children at psychological risk, making them feel ashamed or different; as the ranks of single-parent and stepparent families grew, children would feel normal and good about themselves.

These assumptions continue to be appealing, because they accord with strongly held American beliefs in social progress. Americans see progress in the expansion of individual opportunities for choice, freedom, and self-expression. Moreover, Americans identify progress with growing tolerance of diversity. Over the past half century, the pollster Daniel Yankelovich writes, the United States has steadily grown more open-minded and accepting of groups that were previously perceived as alien, untrustworthy, or unsuitable for public leadership or social esteem. One such group is the burgeoning number of single-parent and stepparent families.

The Education of Sara McLanahan

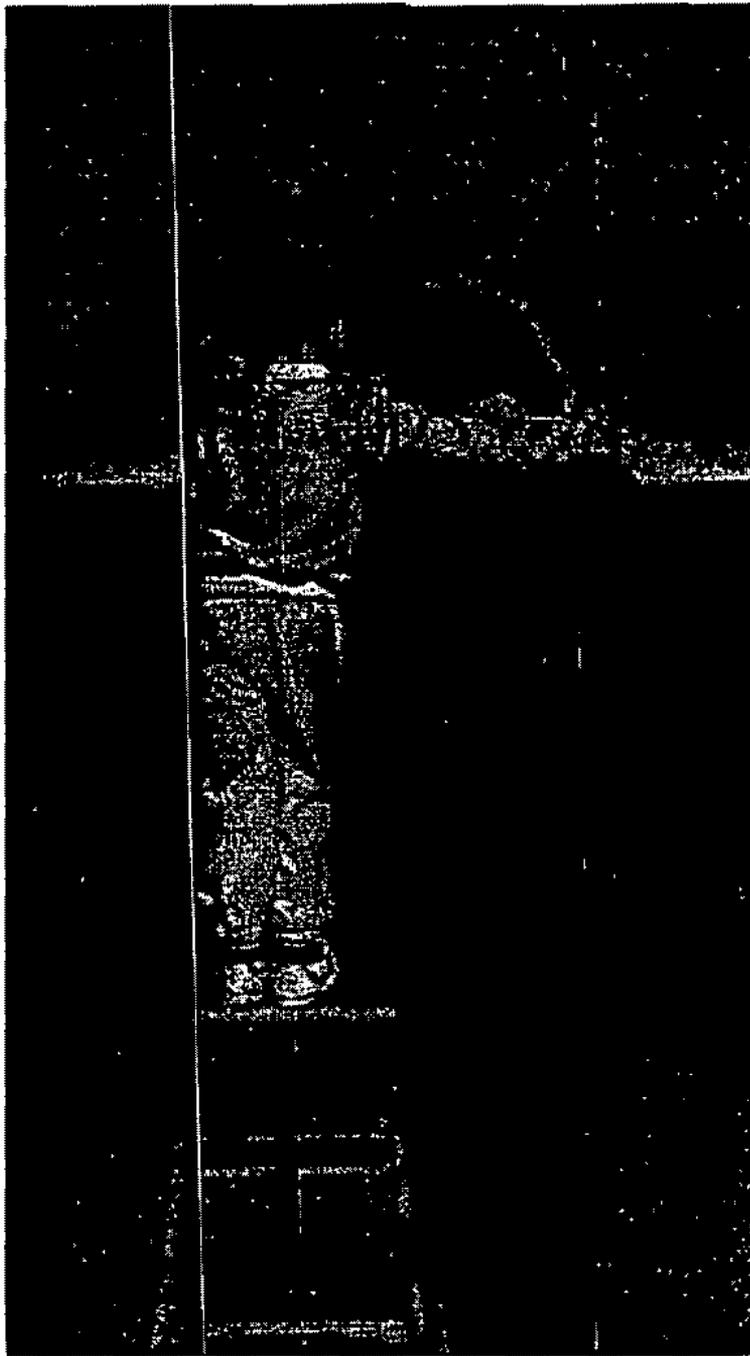
IN 1981 SARA McLANAHAN, NOW A SOCIOLOGIST AT Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School, read a three-part series by Ken Auletta in *The New Yorker*. Later published as a book titled *The Underclass*, the series presented a vivid portrait of the drug addicts, welfare mothers, and school dropouts who took part

in an education-and-training program in New York City. Many were the children of single mothers, and it was Auletta's clear implication that single-mother families were contributing to the growth of an underclass. McLanahan was taken aback by this notion. "It struck me as strange that he would be viewing single mothers at that level of pathology."

"I'd gone to graduate school in the days when the politically correct argument was that single-parent families were just another alternative family form, and it was fine," McLanahan explains, as she recalls the state of social-scientific thinking in the 1970s. Several empirical studies that were then current supported an optimistic view of family change. (They used tiny samples, however, and did not track the well-being of children over time.)

One, *All Our Kin*, by Carol Stack, was required reading for thousands of university students. It said that single mothers had strengths that had gone undetected and unappreciated by earlier researchers. The single-mother family, it suggested, is an economically resourceful and socially embedded institution. In the late 1970s McLanahan wrote a similar study that looked at a small sample of white single mothers and how they coped. "So I was very much of that tradition."

By the early 1980s, however, nearly two decades had passed since the changes in family life had begun. During the intervening years a fuller body of empirical research had emerged: studies that used large samples, or followed families through time, or did both. Moreover, several of the studies offered a child's-eye view of family disruption. The



National Survey on Children, conducted by the psychologist Nicholas Zill, had set out in 1976 to track a large sample of children aged seven to eleven. It also interviewed the children's parents and teachers. It surveyed its subjects again in 1981 and 1987. By the time of its third round of interviews the eleven-year-olds of 1976 were the twenty-two-year-olds of 1987. The California Children of Divorce Study, directed by Judith Wallerstein, a clinical psychologist, had also been going on for a decade. E. Mavis Hetherington, of the University of Virginia, was conducting a similar study of children from both intact and divorced families. For the first time it was possible to test the optimistic view against a large and longitudinal body of evidence.

It was to this body of evidence that Sara McLanahan turned. When she did, she found little to support the optimistic view of single motherhood. On the contrary. When she published her findings with

Irwin Garfinkel in a 1986 book, *Single Mothers and Their Children*, her portrait of single motherhood proved to be as troubling in its own way as Auletta's.

One of the leading assumptions of the time was that single motherhood was economically viable. Even if single mothers did face economic trials, they wouldn't face them for long, it was argued, because they wouldn't remain single for long: single motherhood would be a brief phase of three to five years, followed by marriage. Single mothers would be economically resilient: if they experienced setbacks, they would recover quickly. It was also said that single mothers would be supported by informal networks of family, friends, neighbors, and other single

mothers. As McLanahan shows in her study, the evidence demolishes all these claims.

For the vast majority of single mothers, the economic spectrum turns out to be narrow, running between precarious and desperate. Half the single mothers in the United States live below the poverty line. (Currently, one out of ten married couples with children is poor.) Many others live on the edge of poverty. Even single mothers who are far from poor are likely to experience persistent economic insecurity. Divorce almost always brings a decline in the standard of living for the mother and children.

Moreover, the poverty experienced by single mothers is no more brief than it is mild. A significant number of all single mothers never marry or remarry. Those who do, do so only after spending roughly six years, on average, as single parents. For black mothers the duration is much longer. Only 33 percent of African-American mothers had remarried within ten years of separation. Consequently, single motherhood is hardly a fleeting event for the mother, and it is likely to occupy a third of the child's childhood. Even the notion that single mothers are knit together in economically supportive networks is not borne out by the evidence. On the contrary, single parenthood forces many women to be on the move, in search of cheaper housing and better jobs. This need-driven restless mobility makes it more difficult for them to sustain supportive ties to family and friends, let alone other single mothers.

Single-mother families are vulnerable not just to poverty but to a particularly debilitating form of poverty: welfare dependency. The dependency takes two forms: First, single mothers, particularly unwed mothers, stay on welfare longer than other welfare recipients. Of those never-married mothers who receive welfare benefits, almost 40 percent remain on the rolls for ten years or longer. Second, welfare dependency tends to be passed on from one generation to the next. McLanahan says, "Evidence on intergenerational poverty indicates that, indeed, offspring from [single-mother] families are far more likely to be poor and to form mother-only families than are offspring who live with two parents most of their pre-adult life." Nor is the intergenerational impact of single motherhood limited to African-Americans, as many people seem to believe. Among white families, daughters of single parents are 53 percent more likely to marry as teenagers, 111 percent more likely to have children as teenagers, 164 percent more likely to have a premarital birth, and 92 percent more likely to dissolve their own marriages. All these intergenerational consequences of single motherhood increase the likelihood of chronic welfare dependency.

McLanahan cites three reasons why single-mother families are so vulnerable economically. For one thing, their earnings are low. Second, unless the mothers are widowed, they don't receive public subsidies large

enough to lift them out of poverty. And finally, they do not get much support from family members—especially the fathers of their children. In 1982 single white mothers received an average of \$1,246 in alimony and child support, black mothers an average of \$322. Such payments accounted for about 10 percent of the income of single white mothers and for about 3.5 percent of the income of single black mothers. These amounts were dramatically smaller than the income of the father in a two-parent family and also smaller than the income from a second earner in a two-parent family. Roughly 60 percent of single white mothers and 80 percent of single black mothers received no support at all.

Until the mid-1980s, when stricter standards were put in place, child-support awards were only about half to two-thirds what the current guidelines require. Accordingly, there is often a big difference in the living standards of divorced fathers and of divorced mothers with children. After divorce the average annual income of mothers and children is \$13,500 for whites and \$9,000 for nonwhites, as compared with \$25,000 for white nonresident fathers and \$13,600 for nonwhite nonresident fathers. Moreover, since child-support awards account for a smaller portion of the income of a high-earning father, the drop in living standards can be especially sharp for mothers who were married to upper-level managers and professionals.

Unwed mothers are unlikely to be awarded any child support at all, partly because the paternity of their children may not have been established. According to one recent study, only 20 percent of unmarried mothers receive child support.

Even if single mothers escape poverty, economic uncertainty remains a condition of life. Divorce brings a reduction in income and standard of living for the vast majority of single mothers. One study, for example, found that income for mothers and children declines on average about 30 percent, while fathers experience a 10 to 15 percent increase in income in the year following a separation. Things get even more difficult when fathers fail to meet their child-support obligations. As a result, many divorced mothers experience a wearing uncertainty about the family budget: whether the check will come in or not; whether new sneakers can be bought this month or not; whether the electric bill will be paid on time or not. Uncertainty about money triggers other kinds of uncertainty. Mothers and children often have to move to cheaper housing after a divorce. One study shows that about 38 percent of divorced mothers and their children move during the first year after a divorce. Even several years later the rate of moves for single mothers is about a third higher than the rate for two-parent families. It is also common for a mother to change her job or increase her working hours or both following a divorce. Even the composition of the household is likely to change, with other adults, such as boyfriends or babysitters, moving in and out.



All this uncertainty can be devastating to children. Anyone who knows children knows that they are deeply conservative creatures. They like things to stay the same. So pronounced is this tendency that certain children have been known to request the same peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich for lunch for years on end. Children are particularly set in their ways when it comes to family, friends, neighborhoods, and schools. Yet when a family breaks up, all these things may change. The novelist Pat Conroy has observed that "each divorce is the death of a small civilization." No one feels this more acutely than children.

Sara McLanahan's investigation and others like it have helped to establish a broad consensus on the economic impact of family disruption on children. Most social scientists now agree that single motherhood is an important and growing cause of poverty, and that children suffer as a result. (They continue to argue, however, about the relationship between family structure and such economic factors as income inequality, the loss of jobs in the inner city, and the growth of low-wage jobs.) By the mid-1980s, however, it was clear that the problem of family disruption was not confined to the urban underclass, nor was its sole impact economic. Divorce and out-of-wedlock childbirth were affecting middle- and upper-class children, and these more privileged children were suffering negative consequences as well. It appeared that the problems associated with family breakup were far deeper and far more widespread than anyone had previously imagined.

The Missing Father

JUDITH WALLERSTEIN IS ONE OF THE PIONEERS IN RESEARCH on the long-term psychological impact of family disruption on children. The California Children of Divorce Study, which she directs, remains the most enduring study of the long-term effects of divorce on children and their parents. Moreover, it represents the best-known effort to look at the impact of divorce on middle-class children. The California children entered the study without pathological family histories. Before divorce they lived in stable, protected homes. And although some of the children did experience economic insecurity as the result of divorce, they were generally free from the most severe forms of poverty associated with family breakup. Thus the study and the resulting book (which Wallerstein wrote with Sandra Blakeslee), *Second Chances: Men, Women, and Children a Decade After Divorce* (1989), provide new insight into the consequences of divorce which are not associated with extreme forms of economic or emotional deprivation.

When, in 1971, Wallerstein and her colleagues set out to conduct clinical interviews with 131 children from the San Francisco area, they thought they were embarking on a short-term study. Most experts believed that divorce was like a bad cold. There was a phase of acute discomfort, and then a short recovery phase. According to the conventional wisdom, kids would be back on their feet in no time at all. Yet when Wallerstein met these children for a second interview more than a year later, she was

"The child of divorce faces many additional psychological burdens in addition to the normative tasks of growing up," she says.

Divorce not only makes it more difficult for young adults to establish new relationships. It also weakens the oldest primary relationship: that between parent and child. According to Wallerstein, "Parent-child relationships are permanently altered by divorce in ways that our society has not anticipated." Not only do children experience a loss of parental attention at the onset of divorce, but they soon find that at every stage of their development their parents are not available in the same way they once were. "In a reasonably happy intact family," Wallerstein observes, "the child gravitates first to one parent and then to the other, using skills and attributes from each in climbing the developmental ladder." In a divorced family, children find it "harder to find the needed parent at needed times." This may help explain why very young children suffer the most as the result of family disruption. Their opportunities to engage in this kind of ongoing process are the most truncated and compromised.

The father-child bond is severely, often irreparably, damaged in disrupted families. In a situation without historical precedent, an astonishing and disheartening number of American fathers are failing to provide financial support to their children. Often, more than the father's support check is missing. Increasingly, children are bereft of any contact with their fathers. According to the National Survey of Children, in disrupted families only one child in six, on average, saw his or her father as often as once a week in the past year. Close to half did not see their father at all in the past year. As time goes on, contact becomes even more infrequent. Ten years after a marriage breaks up, more than two thirds of children report not having seen their father for a year. Not surprisingly, when asked to name the "adults you look up to and admire," only 20 percent of children in single-parent families named their father, as compared with 52 percent of children in two-parent families. A favorite complaint among Baby Boom Americans is that their fathers were emotionally remote guys who worked hard, came home at night to eat supper, and didn't have much to say to or do with the kids. But the current generation has a far worse father problem: many of their fathers are vanishing entirely.

Even for fathers who maintain regular contact, the pattern of father-child relationships changes. The sociologists Andrew Cherlin and Frank Furstenberg, who have studied broken families, write that the fathers behave more like other relatives than like parents. Rather than helping with homework or carrying out a project with their children, nonresidential fathers are likely to take the kids shopping, to the movies, or out to dinner. Instead of providing steady advice and guidance, divorced fathers become "treat" dads.

amazed to discover that there had been no miraculous recovery. In fact, the children seemed to be doing worse.

The news that children did not "get over" divorce was not particularly welcome at the time. Wallerstein recalls, "We got angry letters from therapists, parents, and lawyers saying we were undoubtedly wrong. They said children are really much better off being released from an unhappy marriage. Divorce, they said, is a liberating experience." One of the main results of the California study was to overturn this optimistic view. In Wallerstein's cautionary words, "Divorce is deceptive. Legally it is a single event, but psychologically it is a chain—sometimes a never-ending chain—of events, relocations, and radically shifting relationships strung through time, a process that forever changes the lives of the people involved."

Five years after divorce more than a third of the children experienced moderate or severe depression. At ten years a significant number of the now young men and women appeared to be troubled, drifting, and under-achieving. At fifteen years many of the thirtyish adults were struggling to establish strong love relationships of their own. In short, far from recovering from their parents' divorce, a significant percentage of these grownups were still suffering from its effects. In fact, according to Wallerstein, the long-term effects of divorce emerge at a time when young adults are trying to make their own decisions about love, marriage, and family. Not all children in the study suffered negative consequences. But Wallerstein's research presents a sobering picture of divorce.

Apparently—and paradoxically—it is the visiting relationship itself, rather than the frequency of visits, that is the real source of the problem. According to Wallerstein, the few children in the California study who reported visiting with their fathers once or twice a week over a ten-year period still felt rejected. The need to schedule a special time to be with the child, the repeated leave-takings, and the lack of connection to the child's regular, daily schedule leaves many fathers adrift, frustrated, and confused. Wallerstein calls the visiting father a parent without portfolio.

The deterioration in father-child bonds is most severe among children who experience divorce at an early age, according to a recent study. Nearly three quarters of the respondents, now young men and women, report having poor relationships with their fathers. Close to half have received psychological help, nearly a third have dropped out of high school, and about a quarter report having experienced high levels of problem behavior or emotional distress by the time they became young adults.

Survey after survey shows that Americans are less inclined than they were a generation ago to value sexual fidelity, lifelong marriage, and parenthood as worthwhile personal goals ■

Long-Term Effects

SINCE MOST CHILDREN LIVE WITH THEIR MOTHERS after divorce, one might expect that the mother-child bond would remain unaltered and might even be strengthened. Yet research shows that the mother-child bond is also weakened as the result of divorce. Only half of the children who were close to their mothers before a divorce remained equally close after the divorce. Boys, particularly, had difficulties with their mothers. Moreover, mother-child relationships deteriorated over time. Whereas teenagers in disrupted families were no more likely than teenagers in intact families to report poor relationships with their mothers, 30 percent of young adults from disrupted families have poor relationships with their mothers, as compared with 16 percent of young adults from intact families. Mother-daughter relationships often deteriorate as the daughter reaches young adulthood. The only group in society that derives any benefit from these weakened parent-child ties is the

^{longer} therapeutic community. Young adults from disrupted families are nearly twice as likely as those from intact families to receive psychological help.

Some social scientists have criticized Judith Wallerstein's research because her study is based on a small clinical sample and does not include a control group of children from intact families. However, other studies generally support and strengthen her findings. Nicholas Zill has found similar long-term effects on children of divorce, reporting that "effects of marital discord and family disruption are visible twelve to twenty-two years later in poor relationships with parents, high levels of problem behavior, and an increased likelihood of dropping out of high school and receiving psychological help." Moreover, Zill's research also found signs of distress in young women who seemed relatively well adjusted in middle childhood and adolescence. Girls in single-parent families are also at much greater risk for precocious sexuality, teenage marriage, teenage pregnancy, nonmarital birth, and divorce than are girls in two-parent families.

Zill's research shows that family disruption strongly affects school achievement as well. Children in disrupted families are nearly twice as likely as those in intact families to drop out of high school; among children who do drop out, those from disrupted families are less likely eventually to earn a diploma or a GED. Boys are at greater risk for dropping out than girls, and are also more likely to exhibit aggressive, acting-out behav-

iors. Other research confirms these findings. According to a study by the National Association of Elementary School Principals, 33 percent of two-parent elementary school students are ranked as high achievers, as compared with 17 percent of single-parent students. The children in single-parent families are also more likely to be truant or late or to have disciplinary action taken against them. Even after controlling for race, income, and religion, scholars find significant differences in educational attainment between children who grow up in intact families and children who do not. In his 1992 study *America's Smallest School: The Family*, Paul Barton shows that the proportion of two-parent families varies widely from state to state and is related to variations in academic achievement. North Dakota, for example, scores highest on the math-proficiency test and second highest on the two-parent-family scale. The District of Columbia is second lowest on the math test and lowest in the nation on the two-parent-family scale.

Zill notes that "while coming from a disrupted family

significantly increases a young adult's risks of experiencing social, emotional or academic difficulties, it does not foreordain such difficulties. The majority of young people from disrupted families have successfully completed high school, do *not* currently display high levels of emotional distress or problem behavior, and enjoy reasonable relationships with their mothers." Nevertheless, a majority of these young adults do show maladjustment in their relationships with their fathers.

These findings underscore the importance of both a mother and a father in fostering the emotional well-being of children. Obviously, not all children in two-parent families are free from emotional turmoil, but few are burdened with the troubles that accompany family breakup. Moreover, as the sociologist Amitai Etzioni explains in a new book, *The Spirit of Community*, two parents in an intact family make up what might be called a mutually supportive education coalition. When both parents are present, they can play different, even contradictory, roles. One parent may goad the child to achieve,

while the other may encourage the child to take time out to daydream or toss a football around. One may emphasize taking intellectual risks, while the other may insist on following the teacher's guidelines. At the same time, the parents regularly exchange information about the child's school problems and achievements, and have a sense of the overall educational mission. However, Etzioni writes,

The sequence of divorce followed by a succession of boy or girlfriends, a second marriage, and frequently another divorce and another turnover of partners often means a repeatedly disrupted educational coalition. Each change in participants involves a change in the educational agenda for the child. Each new partner cannot be expected to pick up the previous one's educational post and program. . . . As a result, changes in parenting partners mean, at best, a deep disruption in a child's education, though of course several disruptions cut deeper into the effectiveness of the educational coalition than just one.

The Family and Public Policy

A NUMBER OF NEW PROPOSALS ADDRESS the problem of family disruption. Generally speaking, they have a single objective: to ensure that children have the support and commitment of both biological parents.

• The Family Support Act of 1988, which represents the culmination of a fifteen-year trend toward stricter child-support enforcement, has enabled states to impose legal child-support obligations on a greater number of absent fathers and to increase the percentage of absent fathers who actually meet their obligations.

For example, the Family Support Act contains the strongest legislation to date on paternal identification, the essential first step toward making a legally binding child-support award. In the cases of about three out of every four children born to unwed mothers, fathers have not been legally identified. Similarly, in the cases of

the great majority of mothers receiving AFDC benefits, the father is never identified or known to public agencies or officials. In the past many people reasoned that it was better to ignore the father—he was probably unable to support the child anyway, and might cause more trouble if he were around than if he remained absent. The 1988 legislation requires states to get the Social Security numbers of both parents when a birth certificate is issued. If paternity is in doubt or contested, the federal government will pay for 90 percent of the cost of genetic testing. Irwin Garfinkel, who has written a study of child support, estimates that this approach will establish paternity for half of the nation's nonmarital births by the turn of the century.

• The most comprehensive and most controversial proposal is one for a child-support-assurance program—a universal, non-means-tested entitlement plan akin to Survivors Insurance for widows. Child-support assurance would guarantee a standard level of child support—some propose \$2,500 a year for the first child in a family, and \$1,000, \$1,000, and \$500 for the second, third, and fourth children—to all single parents whose children live with them. The federal government would

serve as a collection agency for the support payments, withholding income from the nonresidential parent and mailing a monthly check to the parent with the children. In cases where the parent failed to meet the full support obligation, taxpayers would make up the difference. According to its advocates, the child-support-assurance plan would reduce the welfare burden in three ways: it would prevent some mothers from going on welfare, since they would be assured of regular support; it would reduce AFDC benefits dollar for dollar as support was collected from the father; and it would provide various incentives for mothers on welfare to get off it. For example, unlike a mother receiving AFDC, a working mother would be able to keep the full child-support benefit in addition to her working income. Consequently, child-support-assurance benefits would boost a family's income only if the mother went out and got a job. Moreover, this plan would create incentives for establishing legal paternity, since doing so would be necessary to qualify for benefits. And, the plan's advocates say, it would provide a nonstigmatizing, regularized system of guaranteed child support for all single parents. However, critics say that a plan of guaran-

The Bad News About Stepparents

PERHAPS THE MOST STRIKING, AND POTENTIALLY disturbing, new research has to do with children in stepparent families. Until quite recently the optimistic assumption was that children saw their lives improve when they became part of a stepfamily. When Nicholas Zill and his colleagues began to study the effects of remarriage on children, their working hypothesis was that stepparent families would make up for the shortcomings of the single-parent family. Clearly, most children are better off economically when they are able to share in the income of two adults. When a second adult joins the household, there may be a reduction in the time and work pressures on the single parent.

The research overturns this optimistic assumption, however. In general the evidence suggests that remarriage neither reproduces nor restores the intact family structure, even when it brings more income and a second adult into the household. Quite the contrary. Indeed,

children living with stepparents appear to be even more disadvantaged than children living in a stable single-parent family. Other difficulties seem to offset the advantages of extra income and an extra pair of hands. However much our modern sympathies reject the fairy-tale portrait of stepparents, the latest research confirms that the old stories are anthropologically quite accurate. Stepparent families disrupt established loyalties, create new uncertainties, provoke deep anxieties, and sometimes threaten a child's physical safety as well as emotional security.

Parents and children have dramatically different interests in and expectations for a new marriage. For a single parent, remarriage brings new commitments, the hope of enduring love and happiness, and relief from stress and loneliness. For a child, the same event often provokes confused feelings of sadness, anger, and rejection. Nearly half the children in Wallerstein's study said they felt left out in their stepfamilies. The National Commission on Children, a bipartisan group headed by Senator John D. Rockefeller, of West Virginia, reported that children

need child support would do nothing to reduce nonmarital births or to reinforce the principle of ultimate parental responsibility.

- In the meantime, several states have revived stigma as part of a larger effort to improve child-support collection. Massachusetts, a state with some experience in the public shaming of criminals, has replaced stocks on the common with posters of "deadbeat dads" on the six o'clock news.

- Changes in divorce law, too, can help children. Mary Ann Glendon, a professor at Harvard Law School, has proposed a "children first" principle in divorce proceedings. Under this rule, judges in litigated divorce cases would determine the best possible package of benefits, income, and services for the children. Only then would the judge turn to other issues, such as the division of remaining marital assets.

- Policy experts offer several proposals to reduce the likelihood of divorce for parents in low-conflict situations. One is to introduce a two-tier system of divorce law. Marriages between adults without minor children would be easy to dissolve, but marriages between adults with children would not. Another idea is to reintroduce some measure of fault in divorce, or to allow no-fault

divorce but establish marital fault in awarding alimony or dividing marital property.

- Economic forces significantly affect marriage-related behavior. With the loss of high-paying jobs for high school graduates and the disappearance of good jobs from many inner-city neighborhoods, the ability of young men to provide for a family has been declining. Improving job opportunities for young men would enhance their ability and presumably their willingness to form lasting marriages. Expanding the earned-income tax credit would also strengthen many families economically. According to one recent estimate, an expanded tax credit would lift a million full-time working families out of poverty. Still other proposals include raising the personal exemption for young children in lower- and middle-income families and increasing the value of the marriage deduction in the tax code by allowing married couples to split their incomes.

- Changing the welfare system to eliminate its disincentives to marry would help reduce out-of-wedlock motherhood, many experts suggest. New Jersey, for example, has proposed a plan to encourage marriage by continuing AFDC benefits to children if

their natural parents marry and live together in the home, as long as their income does not exceed state eligibility standards. Another idea, not yet tried in any state, is to provide a large one-time bonus to any woman who marries, leaves the AFDC rolls, and stays off for an extended period. Many people, including President Clinton, have called for the imposition of strict two-year time limits for AFDC.

- At least as important as changes in the law and public policy are efforts to change the cultural climate, particularly the media's messages about divorce and nonmarital childbirth. Parents consistently cite television, with its increasing use of sex, violence, or the two combined, as one of their strongest adversaries. One way to improve television programming would be to fully implement the provisions of the 1990 Children's Television Act, including the establishment of the National Endowment for Children's Educational Television. It would also be valuable to enlist the support of leaders in the entertainment industry—particularly sports and movie stars—in conveying to children that making babies out of wedlock is as stupid as doing drugs or dropping out of school. This might, of course, await more exemplary behavior by some of those stars.

from stepfamilies were more likely to say they often felt lonely or blue than children from either single-parent or intact families. Children in stepfamilies were the most likely to report that they wanted more time with their mothers. When mothers remarry, daughters tend to have a harder time adjusting than sons. Evidently, boys often respond positively to a male presence in the household, while girls who have established close ties to their mother in a single-parent family often see the stepfather as a rival and an intruder. According to one study, boys in remarried families are less likely to drop out of school than boys in single-parent families, while the opposite is true for girls.

A large percentage of children do not even consider stepparents to be part of their families, according to the National Survey on Children. The NSC asked children, "When you think of your family, who do you include?" Only 10 percent of the children failed to mention a biological parent, but a third left out a stepparent. Even children who rarely saw their noncustodial parents almost always named them as family members. The weak sense of attachment is mutual. When parents were asked the same question, only one percent failed to mention a biological child, while 15 percent left out a stepchild. In the same study stepparents with both natural children and stepchildren said that it was harder for them to love their stepchildren than their biological children and that their children would have been better off if they had grown up with two biological parents.

One of the most severe risks associated with stepparent-child ties is the risk of sexual abuse. As Judith Wallerstein explains, "The presence of a stepfather can raise the difficult issue of a thinner incest barrier." The incest taboo is strongly reinforced, Wallerstein says, by knowledge of paternity and by the experience of caring for a child since birth. A stepfather enters the family without either credential and plays a sexual role as the mother's husband. As a result, stepfathers can pose a sexual risk to the children, especially to daughters. According to a study by the Canadian researchers Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, preschool children in stepfamilies are forty times as likely as children in intact families to suffer physical or sexual abuse. (Most of the sexual abuse was committed by a third party, such as a neighbor, a stepfather's male friend, or another nonrelative.) Stepfathers discriminate in their abuse: they are far more likely to assault nonbiological children than their own natural children.

Sexual abuse represents the most extreme threat to children's well-being. Stepfamilies also seem less likely to make the kind of ordinary investments in the children that other families do. Although it is true that the stepfamily household has a higher income than the single-parent household, it does not follow that the additional income is reliably available to the children. To begin with, children's claim on stepparents' resources is shaky. Stepparents are not legally required to support stepchil-

dren, so their financial support of these children is entirely voluntary. Moreover, since stepfamilies are far more likely to break up than intact families, particularly in the first five years, there is always the risk—far greater than the risk of unemployment in an intact family—that the second income will vanish with another divorce. The financial commitment to a child's education appears weaker in stepparent families, perhaps because the stepparent believes that the responsibility for educating the child rests with the biological parent.

Similarly, studies suggest that even though they may have the time, the parents in stepfamilies do not invest as much of it in their children as the parents in intact families or even single parents do. A 1991 survey by the National Commission on Children showed that the parents in stepfamilies were less likely to be involved in a child's school life, including involvement in extracurricular activities, than either intact-family parents or single parents. They were the least likely to report being involved in such time-consuming activities as coaching a child's team, accompanying class trips, or helping with school projects. According to McLanahan's research, children in stepparent families report lower educational aspirations on the part of their parents and lower levels of parental involvement with schoolwork. In short, it appears that family income and the number of adults in the household are not the only factors affecting children's well-being.

Diminishing Investments

THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS FOR THIS DIMINISHED interest and investment. In the law, as in the children's eyes, stepparents are shadowy figures. According to the legal scholar David Chambers, family law has pretty much ignored stepparents. Chambers writes, "In the substantial majority of states, stepparents, even when they live with a child, have no legal obligation to contribute to the child's support; nor does a stepparent's presence in the home alter the support obligations of a noncustodial parent. The stepparent also has . . . no authority to approve emergency medical treatment or even to sign a permission slip. . . ." When a marriage breaks up, the stepparent has no continuing obligation to provide for a stepchild, no matter how long or how much he or she has been contributing to the support of the child. In short, Chambers says, stepparent relationships are based wholly on consent, subject to the inclinations of the adult and the child. The only way a stepparent can acquire the legal status of a parent is through adoption. Some researchers also point to the cultural ambiguity of the stepparent's role as a source of diminished interest, while others insist that it is the absence of a blood tie that weakens the bond between stepparent and child.

Whatever its causes, the diminished investment in children in both single-parent and stepparent families has

a significant impact on their life chances. Take parental help with college costs. The parents in intact families are far more likely to contribute to children's college costs than are those in disrupted families. Moreover, they are usually able to arrive at a shared understanding of which children will go to college, where they will go, how much the parents will contribute, and how much the children will contribute. But when families break up, these informal understandings can vanish. The issue of college tuition remains one of the most contested areas of parental support, especially for higher-income parents.

The law does not step in even when familial understandings break down. In the 1980s many states lowered the age covered by child-support agreements from twenty-one to eighteen, thus eliminating college as a cost associated with support for a minor child. Consequently, the question of college tuition is typically not addressed in child-custody agreements. Even in states where the courts do require parents to contribute to college costs, the requirement may be in jeopardy. In a recent decision

man, Terry, twenty-one, who had been tested as a gifted student, was doing blue-collar work irregularly.

Sixty-seven percent of the college-age students from disrupted families attended college, as compared with 85 percent of other students who attended the same high schools. Of those attending college, several had fathers who were financially capable of contributing to college costs but did not.

The withdrawal of support for college suggests that other customary forms of parental help-giving, too, may decline as the result of family breakup. For example, nearly a quarter of first-home purchases since 1980 have involved help from relatives, usually parents. The median amount of help is \$5,000. It is hard to imagine that parents who refuse to contribute to college costs will offer help in buying first homes, or help in buying cars or health insurance for young adult family members. And although it is too soon to tell, family disruption may affect the generational transmission of wealth. Baby Boomers will inherit their parents' estates, some substantial, accumulated over a lifetime

by parents who lived and saved together. To be sure, the postwar generation benefited from an expanding economy and a rising standard of living, but its ability to accumulate wealth also owed something to family stability. The lifetime assets, like the marriage itself, remained intact. It is unlikely that the children of disrupted families will be in so favorable a position.

Moreover, children from

disrupted families may be less likely to help their aging parents. The sociologist Alice Rossi, who has studied intergenerational patterns of help-giving, says that adult obligation has its roots in early-childhood experience. Children who grow up in intact families experience higher levels of obligation to kin than children from broken families. Children's sense of obligation to a nonresidential father is particularly weak. Among adults with both parents living, those separated from their father during childhood are less likely than others to see the father regularly. Half of them see their father more than once a year, as compared with nine out of ten of those whose parents are still married. Apparently a kind of bitter justice is at work here. Fathers who do not support or see their young children may not be able to count on their adult children's support when they are old and need money, love, and attention.

In short, as Andrew Chedlin and Frank Furstenburg put it, "Through divorce and remarriage, individuals are related to more and more people, to each of whom they

Even if single mothers escape poverty, economic uncertainty remains a defining condition of life. And uncertainty about money triggers other kinds of uncertainty

in Pennsylvania the court overturned an earlier decision ordering divorced parents to contribute to college tuition. This decision is likely to inspire challenges in other states where courts have required parents to pay for college. Increasingly, help in paying for college is entirely voluntary.

Judith Wallerstein has been analyzing the educational decisions of the college-age men and women in her study. She reports that "a full 42 percent of these men and women from middle class families appeared to have ended their educations without attempting college or had left college before achieving a degree at either the two-year or the four-year level." A significant percentage of these young people have the ability to attend college. Typical of this group are Nick and Terry, sons of a college professor. They had been close to their father before the divorce, but their father remarried soon after the divorce and saw his sons only occasionally, even though he lived nearby. At age nineteen Nick had completed a few junior-college courses and was earning a living as a sales-

owe less and less." Moreover, as Nicholas Zill argues, weaker parent-child attachments leave many children more strongly exposed to influences outside the family, such as peers, boyfriends or girlfriends, and the media. Although these outside forces can sometimes be helpful, common sense and research opinion argue against putting too much faith in peer groups or the media as surrogates for Mom and Dad.

Poverty, Crime, Education

FAMILY DISRUPTION WOULD BE A SERIOUS PROBLEM even if it affected only individual children and families. But its impact is far broader. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to characterize it as a central cause of many of our most vexing social problems. Consider three problems that most Americans believe rank among the nation's pressing concerns: poverty, crime, and declining school performance.

More than half of the increase in child poverty in the 1980s is attributable to changes in family structure, according to David Eggebeen and Daniel Lichter, of Pennsylvania State University. In fact, if family structure in the United States had remained relatively constant since 1960, the rate of child poverty would be a third lower than it is today. This does not bode well for the future. With more than half of today's children likely to live in single-parent families, poverty and associated welfare costs threaten to become even heavier burdens on the nation.

Crime in American cities has increased dramatically and grown more violent over recent decades. Much of this can be attributed to the rise in disrupted families. Nationally, more than 70 percent of all juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes. A number of scholarly studies find that even after the groups of subjects are controlled for income, boys from single-mother homes are significantly more likely than others to commit crimes and to wind up in the juvenile justice, court, and penitentiary systems. One such study summarizes the relationship between crime and one-parent families in this way: "The relationship is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature." The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family breakup as the most important source of rising rates of crime.

Terrible as poverty and crime are, they tend to be concentrated in inner cities and isolated from the everyday experience of many Americans. The same cannot be said of the problem of declining school performance. Nowhere has the impact of family breakup been more profound or widespread than in the nation's public schools. There is a strong consensus that the schools are failing in their historic mission to prepare every Ameri-

can child to be a good worker and a good citizen. And nearly everyone agrees that the schools must undergo dramatic reform in order to reach that goal. In pursuit of that goal, moreover, we have suffered no shortage of bright ideas or pilot projects or bold experiments in school reform. But there is little evidence that measures such as curricular reform, school-based management, and school choice will address, let alone solve, the biggest problem schools face: the rising number of children who come from disrupted families.

The great educational tragedy of our time is that many American children are failing in school not because they are intellectually or physically impaired but because they are emotionally incapacitated. In schools across the nation principals report a dramatic rise in the aggressive, acting-out behavior characteristic of children, especially boys, who are living in single-parent families. The discipline problems in today's suburban schools—assaults on teachers, unprovoked attacks on other students, screaming outbursts in class—outstrip the problems that were evident in the toughest city schools a generation ago. Moreover, teachers find many children emotionally distracted, so upset and preoccupied by the explosive drama of their own family lives that they are unable to concentrate on such mundane matters as multiplication tables.

In response, many schools have turned to therapeutic remediation. A growing proportion of many school budgets is devoted to counseling and other psychological services. The curriculum is becoming more therapeutic: children are taking courses in self-esteem, conflict resolution, and aggression management. Parental advisory groups are conscientiously debating alternative approaches to traditional school discipline, ranging from teacher training in mediation to the introduction of metal detectors and security guards in the schools. Schools are increasingly becoming emergency rooms of the emotions, devoted not only to developing minds but also to repairing hearts. As a result, the mission of the school, along with the culture of the classroom, is slowly changing. What we are seeing, largely as a result of the new burdens of family disruption, is the psychologization of American education.

Taken together, the research presents a powerful challenge to the prevailing view of family change as social progress. Not a single one of the assumptions underlying that view can be sustained against the empirical evidence. Single-parent families are not able to do well economically on a mother's income. In fact, most teeter on the economic brink, and many fall into poverty and welfare dependency. Growing up in a disrupted family does not enrich a child's life or expand the number of adults committed to the child's well-being. In fact, disrupted families threaten the psychological well-being of children and diminish the investment of adult time and money in them. Family diversity in the form of increasing numbers of single-parent and stepparent families

does not strengthen the social fabric. It dramatically weakens and undermines society, placing new burdens on schools, courts, prisons, and the welfare system. These new families are not an improvement on the nuclear family, nor are they even just as good, whether you look at outcomes for children or outcomes for society as a whole. In short, far from representing social progress, family change represents a stunning example of social regress.

The Two-Parent Advantage

ALL THIS EVIDENCE GIVES RISE TO AN OBVIOUS CONCLUSION: growing up in an intact two-parent family is an important source of advantage for American children. Though far from perfect as a social institution, the intact family offers children greater security and better outcomes than its fast-growing alternatives: single-parent and stepparent families. Not only does the intact family protect the child from

ciated with family disruption. Others, including Judith Wallerstein, caution against treating children in divorced families and children in intact families as separate populations, because doing so tends to exaggerate the differences between the two groups. "We have to take this family by family," Wallerstein says.

Some of the caution among researchers can also be attributed to ideological pressures. Privately, social scientists worry that their research may serve ideological causes that they themselves do not support, or that their work may be misinterpreted as an attempt to "tell people what to do." Some are fearful that they will be attacked by feminist colleagues, or, more generally, that their comments will be regarded as an effort to turn back the clock to the 1950s—a goal that has almost no constituency in the academy. Even more fundamental, it has become risky for anyone—scholar, politician, religious leader—to make normative statements today. This reflects not only the persistent drive toward "value neutrality" in the professions but also a deep confusion about the purposes of

public discourse. The dominant view appears to be that social criticism, like criticism of individuals, is psychologically damaging. The worst thing you can do is to make people feel guilty or bad about themselves.

When one sets aside these constraints, however, the case against the two-parent family is remarkably weak. It is true that disaggregating data can make family structure less significant as a factor, just as dis-

The debate about family structure is not simply about the social-scientific evidence, although that is important. It is also a debate over deeply held and often conflicting values □

poverty and economic insecurity; it also provides greater noneconomic investments of parental time, attention, and emotional support over the entire life course. This does not mean that all two-parent families are better for children than all single-parent families. But in the face of the evidence it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain the proposition that all family structures produce equally good outcomes for children.

Curiously, many in the research community are hesitant to say that two-parent families generally promote better outcomes for children than single-parent families. Some argue that we need finer measures of the extent of the family-structure effect. As one scholar has noted, it is possible, by disaggregating the data in certain ways, to make family structure "go away" as an independent variable. Other researchers point to studies that show that children suffer psychological effects as a result of family conflict preceding family breakup. Consequently, they reason, it is the conflict rather than the structure of the family that is responsible for many of the problems asso-

aggregating Hurricane Andrew into wind, rain, and tides can make it disappear as a meteorological phenomenon. Nonetheless, research opinion as well as common sense suggests that the effects of changes in family structure are great enough to cause concern. Nicholas Zill argues that many of the risk factors for children are doubled or more than doubled as the result of family disruption. "In epidemiological terms," he writes, "the doubling of a hazard is a substantial increase. . . . the increase in risk that dietary cholesterol poses for cardiovascular disease, for example, is far less than double, yet millions of Americans have altered their diets because of the perceived hazard."

The argument that family conflict, rather than the breakup of parents, is the cause of children's psychological distress is persuasive on its face. Children who grow up in high-conflict families, whether the families stay together or eventually split up, are undoubtedly at great psychological risk. And surely no one would dispute that there must be societal measures available, including divorce, to remove children from families where they are in

danger. Yet only a minority of divorcees grow out of pathological situations; much more common are divorcees in families unscarred by physical assault. Moreover, an equally compelling hypothesis is that family breakup generates its own conflict. Certainly, many families exhibit more conflictual and even violent behavior as a consequence of divorce than they did before divorce.

Finally, it is important to note that clinical insights are different from sociological findings. Clinicians work with individual families, who cannot and should not be defined by statistical aggregates. Appropriate to a clinical approach, moreover, is a focus on the internal dynamics of family functioning and on the immense variability in human behavior. Nevertheless, there is enough empirical evidence to justify sociological statements about the causes of declining child well-being and to demonstrate that despite the plasticity of human response, there are some useful rules of thumb to guide our thinking about and policies affecting the family.

For example, Sara McLanahan says, three structural constants are commonly associated with intact families, even intact families who would not win any "Family of the Year" awards. The first is economic. In intact families, children share in the income of two adults. Indeed, as a number of analysts have pointed out, the two-parent family is becoming more rather than less necessary, because more and more families need two incomes to sustain a middle-class standard of living.

McLanahan believes that most intact families also provide a stable authority structure. Family breakup commonly upsets the established boundaries of authority in a family. Children are often required to make decisions or accept responsibilities once considered the province of parents. Moreover, children, even very young children, are often expected to behave like mature adults, so that the grown-ups in the family can be free to deal with the emotional fallout of the failed relationship. In some instances family disruption creates a complete vacuum in authority; everyone invents his or her own rules. With lines of authority disrupted or absent, children find it much more difficult to engage in the normal kinds of testing behavior, the trial and error, the failing and succeeding, that define the developmental pathway toward character and competence. McLanahan says, "Children need to be the ones to challenge the rules. The parents need to set the boundaries and let the kids push the boundaries. The children shouldn't have to walk the straight and narrow at all times."

Finally, McLanahan holds that children in intact families benefit from stability in what she neutrally terms "household personnel." Family disruption frequently brings new adults into the family, including stepparents, live-in boyfriends or girlfriends, and casual sexual partners. Like stepfathers, boyfriends can present a real threat to children's, particularly to daughters', security and well-being. But physical or sexual abuse represents

only the most extreme such threat. Even the very best of boyfriends can disrupt and undermine a child's sense of peace and security, McLanahan says. "It's not as though you're going from an unhappy marriage to peacefulness. There can be a constant changing until the mother finds a suitable partner."

McLanahan's argument helps explain why children of widows tend to do better than children of divorced or unmarried mothers. Widows differ from other single mothers in all three respects. They are economically more secure, because they receive more public assistance through Survivors Insurance, and possibly private insurance or other kinds of support from family members. Thus widows are less likely to leave the neighborhood in search of a new or better job and a cheaper house or apartment. Moreover, the death of a father is not likely to disrupt the authority structure radically. When a father dies, he is no longer physically present, but his death does not dethrone him as an authority figure in the child's life. On the contrary, his authority may be magnified through death. The mother can draw on the powerful memory of the departed father as a way of intensifying her parental authority: "Your father would have wanted it this way." Finally, since widows tend to be older than divorced mothers, their love life may be less distracting.

Regarding the two-parent family, the sociologist David Popenoe, who has devoted much of his career to the study of families, both in the United States and in Scandinavia, makes this straightforward assertion:

Social science research is almost never conclusive. There are always methodological difficulties and stumblers left unturned. Yet in three decades of work as a social scientist, I know of few other bodies of data in which the weight of evidence is so decisively on one side of the issue: on the whole, for children, two-parent families are preferable to single-parent and stepfamilies.

The Regime Effect

THE RISE IN FAMILY DISRUPTION IS NOT UNIQUE to American society. It is evident in virtually all advanced nations, including Japan, where it is also shaped by the growing participation of women in the work force. Yet the United States has made divorce easier and quicker than in any other Western nation with the sole exception of Sweden—and the trend toward solo motherhood has also been more pronounced in America. (Sweden has an equally high rate of out-of-wedlock birth, but the majority of such births are to cohabiting couples, a long-established pattern in Swedish society.) More to the point, nowhere has family breakup been greeted by a more triumphant rhetoric of renewal than in America.

What is striking about this rhetoric is how deeply it reflects classic themes in American public life. It draws its language and imagery from the nation's founding myth.

It depicts family breakup as a drama of revolution and rebirth. The nuclear family represents the corrupt past, an institution guilty of the abuse of power and the suppression of individual freedom. Breaking up the family is like breaking away from Old World tyranny. Liberated from the bonds of the family, the individual can achieve independence and experience a new beginning, a fresh start, a new birth of freedom. In short, family breakup recapitulates the American experience.

This rhetoric is an example of what the University of Maryland political philosopher William Galston has called the "regime effect." The founding of the United States set in motion a new political order based to an unprecedented degree on individual rights, personal choice, and egalitarian relationships. Since then these values have spread beyond their original domain of political relationships to define social relationships as well. During the past twenty-five years these values have had a particularly profound impact on the family.

Increasingly, political principles of individual rights and choice shape our understanding of family commitment and solidarity. Family relationships are viewed not as permanent or binding but as voluntary and easily terminable. Moreover, under the sway of the regime effect the family loses its central importance as an institution in the civil society, accomplishing certain social goals such as raising children and caring for its members, and becomes a means to achieving greater individual happiness—a lifestyle choice. Thus, Galston says, what is happening to the American family reflects the "unfolding logic of authoritative, deeply American moral-political principles."

One benefit of the regime effect is to create greater equality in adult family relationships. Husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, enjoy relationships far more egalitarian than past relationships were, and most Americans prefer it that way. But the political principles of the regime effect can threaten another kind of family relationship—that between parent and child. Owing to their biological and developmental immaturity, children are needy dependents. They are not able to express their choices according to limited, easily terminable, voluntary agreements. They are not able to act as negotiators in family decisions, even those that most affect their own interests. As one writer has put it, "a newborn does not make a good partner." Correspondingly, the parental role is antithetical to the spirit of the regime. Parental investment in children involves a diminished investment in self, a willing deference to the needs and claims of the dependent child. Perhaps more than any other family relationship, the parent-child relationship—shaped as it is

by patterns of dependency and deference—can be undermined and weakened by the principles of the regime.

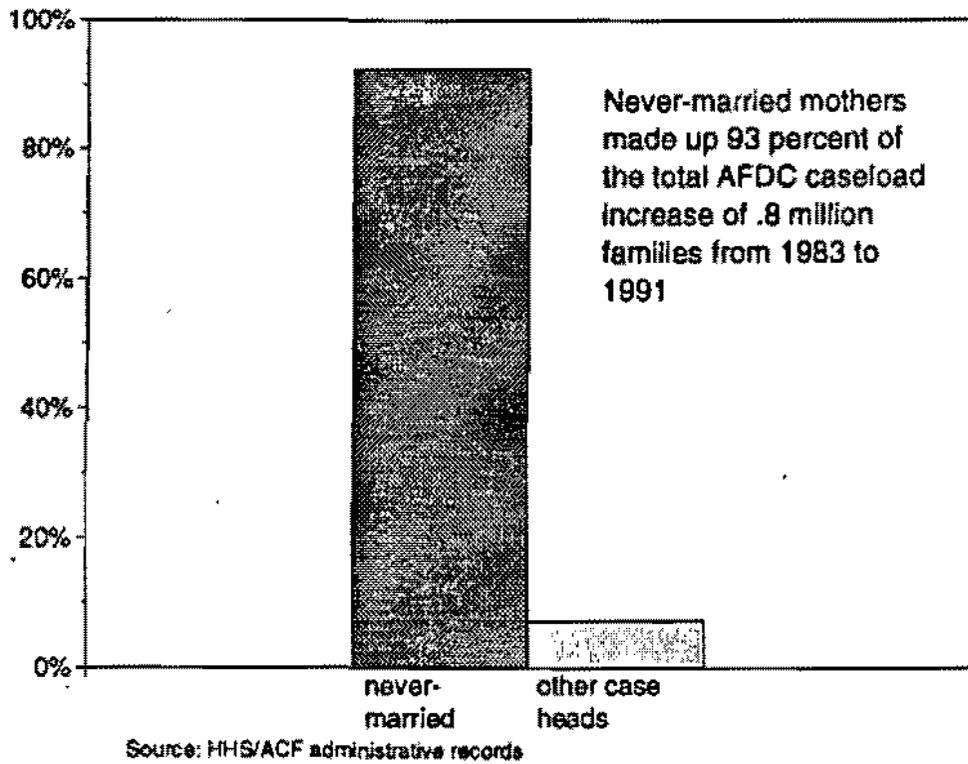
More than a century and a half ago Alexis de Tocqueville made the striking observation that an individualistic society depends on a communitarian institution like the family for its continued existence. The family cannot be constituted like the liberal state, nor can it be governed entirely by that state's principles. Yet the family serves as the seedbed for the virtues required by a liberal state. The family is responsible for teaching lessons of independence, self-restraint, responsibility, and right conduct, which are essential to a free, democratic society. If the family fails in these tasks, then the entire experiment in democratic self-rule is jeopardized.

To take one example: independence is basic to successful functioning in American life. We assume that most people in America will be able to work, care for themselves and their families, think for themselves, and inculcate the same traits of independence and initiative in their children. We depend on families to teach people to do these things. The erosion of the two-parent family undermines the capacity of families to impart this knowledge; children of long-term welfare-dependent single parents are far more likely than others to be dependent themselves. Similarly, the children in disrupted families have a harder time forging bonds of trust with others and giving and getting help across the generations. This, too, may lead to greater dependency on the resources of the state.

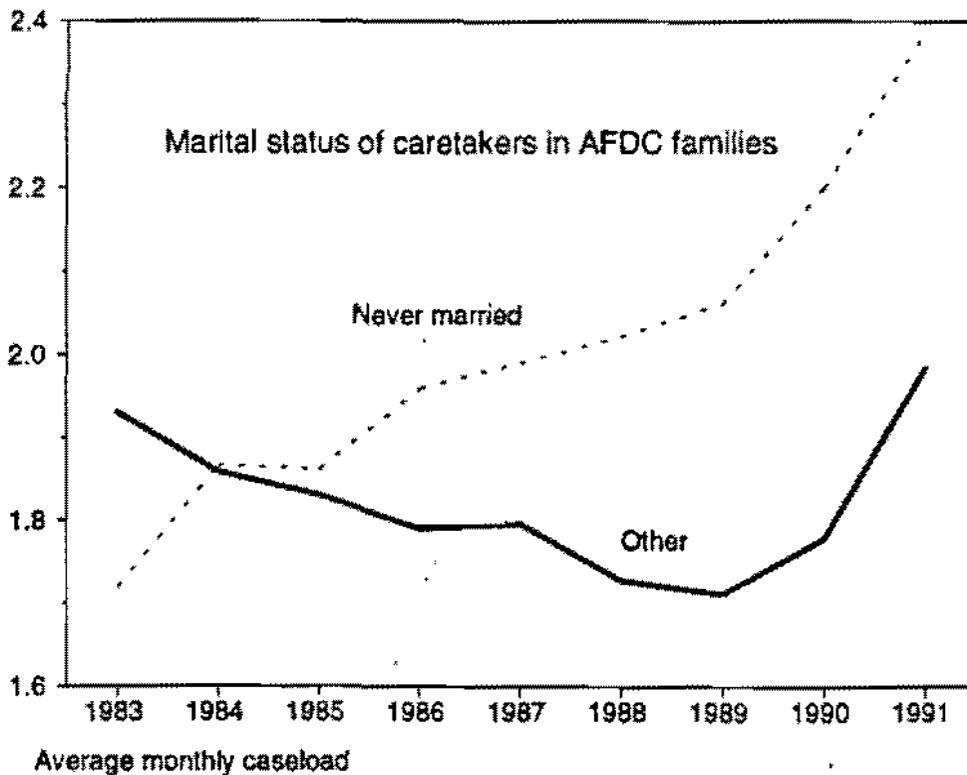
Over the past two and a half decades Americans have been conducting what is tantamount to a vast natural experiment in family life. Many would argue that this experiment was necessary, worthwhile, and long overdue. The results of the experiment are coming in, and they are clear. Adults have benefited from the changes in family life in important ways, but the same cannot be said for children. Indeed, this is the first generation in the nation's history to do worse psychologically, socially, and economically than its parents. Most poignantly, in survey after survey the children of broken families confess deep longings for an intact family.

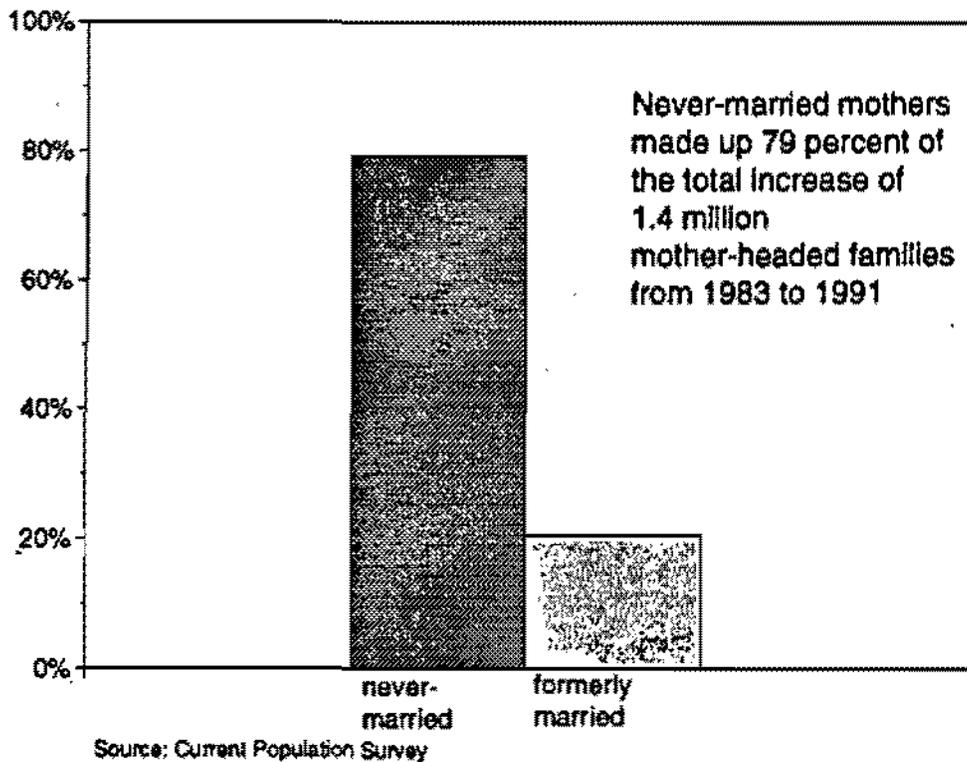
Nonetheless, as Galston is quick to point out, the regime effect is not an irresistible undertow that will carry away the family. It is more like a swift current, against which it is possible to swim. People learn; societies can change, particularly when it becomes apparent that certain behaviors damage the social ecology, threaten the public order, and impose new burdens on core institutions. Whether Americans will act to overcome the legacy of family disruption is a crucial but as yet unanswered question. □

Will Ravection

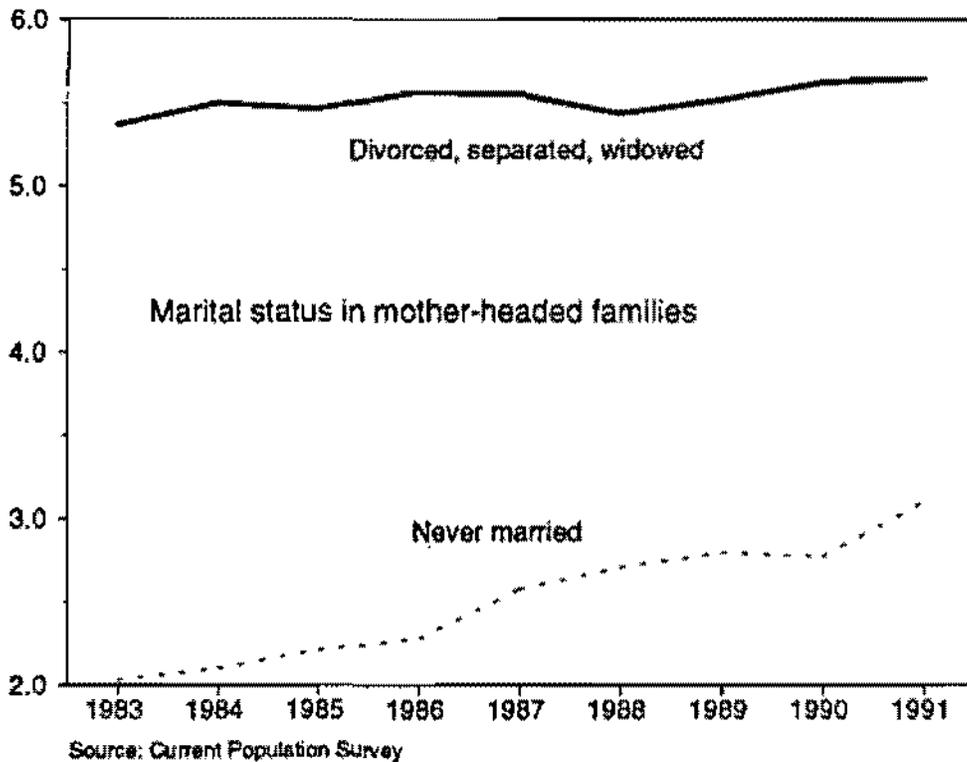


Millions of families

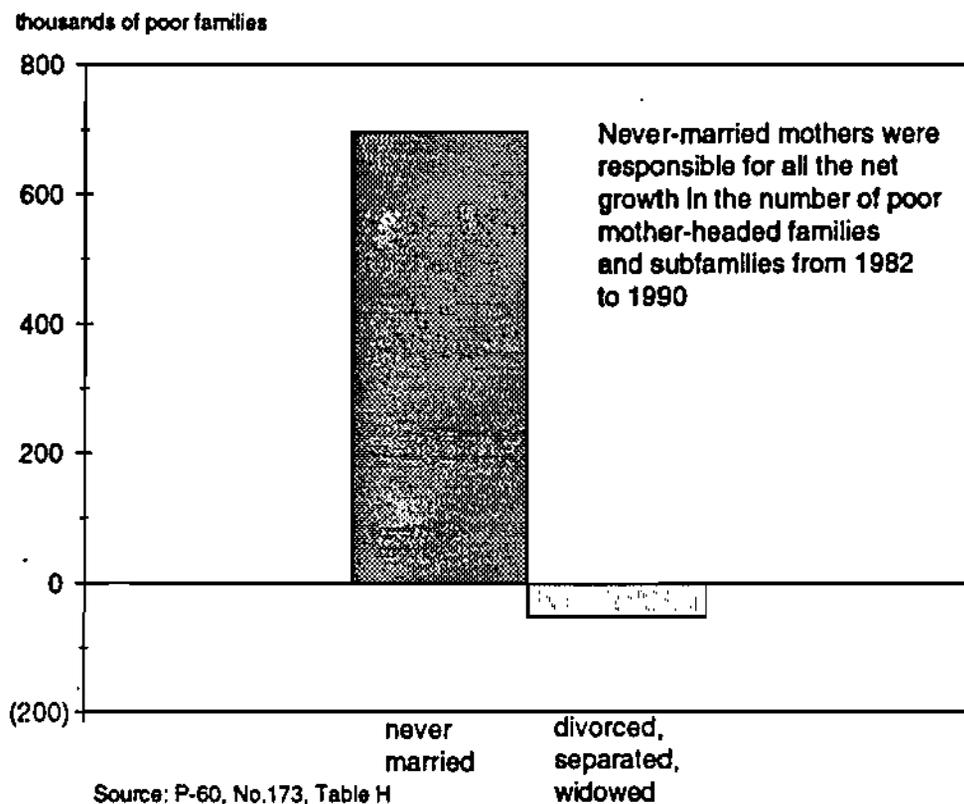


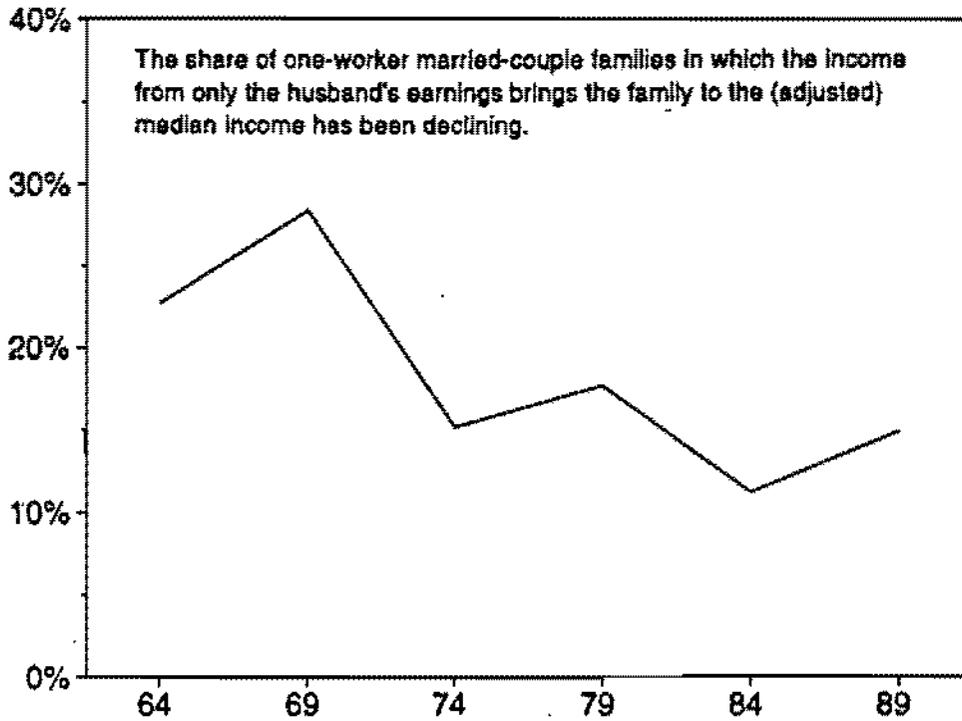


Millions of families



17-Jun-93





Source: P-60, No.177, p.22

WFL - Prevention

July 2, 1993

Welfare Prevention Issue Group

3:00 p.m. July 2, 1993

Other groups
Existing initiatives
- Public housing

Discussion topics

Introductory remarks: welfare prevention - responsibility and opportunity.

Paths onto welfare - the growing significance of births to young, unmarried women.

Discussion of scope.

Discussion of tasks.

Brainstorming on prevention policy initiatives.

1/2 of teen pregnancies end in abortion

Declining Opportunity

- HS male wages down 25% in 15 yrs.
- one-earner families don't do well even w/educ.

Kamark: Is this poverty or is this culture? Children of single parents do poorly even in m-c families

→ Mincy: Teen pregnancy; parenting; and paternity - tripartite approach/prevention campaign

- Rights + respons. of parenthood should be taught at an early age; we're not doing that now

Reed: Responsibility Capital - incentive fund for responsible behavior

WR
Intervention

Below are the topics for which rough policy proposals, with pros and cons, are to be drafted by next Monday. Everyone should feel free to develop papers on other policy options as well.

The brief statements about each of these areas in the hand-out yesterday leaves a lot of details to be set out in the papers you are doing. In some cases, it may make the most sense to write up analysis of a couple of major options within each of the main topics. For example, the balance of pros and cons for any of these options could change if they were done as national changes or on a demonstration basis. Similarly, AFDC rule changes could be implemented as options for States or as requirements for all States.

Clearly, not everyone assigned to help in the drafting is fully behind these options. Strong, sound arguments against the options are encouraged. On the other hand, it is not productive to spend time hitting straw men. Please flesh out the options in a strongest fashion you can.

Belle's remarks that the papers should lay out pros and cons, with emphasis on what we know from the research, is probably all the format instruction anyone needs. Also, please be sure to focus on the extent to which, and how, the interventions you are discussing have been shown to be appropriate for the target group of adolescents most at-risk. The targeting paper in the package distributed on July 13 provides a good sketch of this target group.

Possible policy option areas

1. A comprehensive attempt to change the opportunity structure in a few neighborhoods -- possibly using Empowerment Zones as a vehicle or Youth Fair Chance. This should probably include more structured recreational opportunities and peer group activities directed toward reinforcing positive goals, such as responsible sexual behavior, for teens in high-risk neighborhoods. (Bordes - ACF, Lah - DoL, Mincy - ASPE)
2. Doing more to help youth who are at risk via school-to-work programs, Job Corps, tuition guarantees and the like, drawing on the Administrations's existing initiatives or modifications of them. (Baviera - OMB, an initial draft to be circulated to DoL, DoEd)
3. Family planning services would be beefed up and better integrated with above. (Bennett and Cohen - PHS)
4. Minors with children would not be eligible for AFDC. Instead, they would be expected to live with parent (or other supervising adult) who would receive AFDC only on behalf of the minor's children. (ACF - Bordes and Maniha)

5. Non-minors with children would be expected to work or participate in training from day one. There would be few exemptions for either the participation requirement during the time-limited period of eligibility or the time-limit itself. (Bavier to develop coordination with other issue groups)
6. Federal match rate for AFDC would be conditional on establishment of paternity and a child support award. States, in turn, might be given option to vary AFDC benefits with award status. (Mincy to be liaison with child support issue group, with a first step being a report on where their policy planning stands with respect to this issue)
7. Interventions with pre-adolescents to increase educational and career aspirations and address school failures. (Pendelton - DoEd, Lah, and Bennett)

WR - Transition

FAX

TO: Mr. Bruce Reed
Deputy Assistant to the President
Domestic Policy Council

FROM: Amitai Etzioni

DATE: July 20, 1993

RE: July 16th Meeting

This is page 1 of 10 pages. Please call (202) 994-6663 if there is any difficulty with the transmission of this document.

TO: Mr. Bruce Reed
Deputy Assistant to the President
Domestic Policy Council

Dr. Isabel Sawhill
Associate Director of Human Resources
Office of Management and Budget

cc: Dr. David T. Ellwood
Assistant Secretary, Planning & Evaluation
Health and Human Services

FROM: Amitai Etzioni

DATE: July 20, 1993

There follows some of my observations of what one might conclude from the July 16 meeting.

1. In introducing the welfare reform, one needs to make clear that the attack on irresponsible behavior, culture of dependency, etc. is not a criticism of any one group but of a form of behavior. As Eli Anderson put it, there are many decent, hard working African Americans in the inner city. And I would add, there are quite a few irresponsible white people. One might add some statistics that the people on welfare come from all racial backgrounds and the majority are not African Americans. However, I strongly recommend that the President himself stay above this issue, that some cabinet member or key staff person clarify this issue as the welfare discussion heats up, as it most assuredly will.

2. The theme of the "scope" paper, prepared by OMB, which combines responsibility with opportunity seems to me to strike a good balance.

3. Herman Kahn raised a question about nuclear war: will the survivors envy the dead? We face the need to reform the system so that those not on welfare will not envy those who are. This was referred to during the meeting as the Susie/Debbie problem. At the moment, the "Susies", high school girls who become pregnant and semi-drop out, get a variety of streams of services, while the "Debbies", those who study hard and do not allow themselves to become pregnant, those who act responsibly, get nothing. This must be changed both to be fair and to discourage people from moving into welfare if they can avoid it.

Sandy Jencks' solution to this problem is to give benefits to all. This is not practical, necessary or just. The main alternative is to add requirements to those now on welfare, which would make it less attractive (while it lasts).

Note that some requirements work very well and will be well received by the more conservative parts of the public and not unduly exercise the others. Key example: require that minors who receive welfare will live with one of their parents. Aside from discouraging people from accepting welfare unless they really need it, it also encourages family togetherness and saves resources. Increasing the penalties or disincentives on those who do not act responsibly and increasing the rewards for those who do, requires

stronger sanctions than those used so far because whatever changes one makes in cash flows -- the recipients still have the full flow of other streams such as food stamps, Medicaid, housing allowances, etc. Recommendation: reduce cash flows gradually (meter off rather than cut off) by up to forty percent if no compliance with norms that are set is achieved. However, limit the norms to those matters the person has control over, such as showing up at training or work sites but not concerning the behavior of teenage children.

New idea (courtesy of my Yale Law summer intern, Gayton Gomez): when students apply for certain kinds of scholarships they have to file a budget; require the same of welfare recipients. It would help make welfare somewhat less attractive and encourage those involved to plan their expenses, etc. Note that in the past some social workers objected to such approaches on the ground that "we should not impose our values on these people" and that if they wish to spend their money on say, booze, that was their right. A return to the requirement of filing a budget will signify that society does seek to restore the claim of some core values, at least if you wish public help. (For the same reason, the less cash one provides and the more one grants whatever help is given in goods and services, the more one moves toward reducing the Susie/Debbie problem).

4. A strong national (inter-state better than federal) child support collection system is important because it provides

incentives to young men and not only women to act responsibly. As Christopher Jencks commented ["Can We Put A Time Limit on Welfare?" in The American Prospect, Fall 1992], until the 1960's "a lot of young men used condoms because they knew that an unplanned pregnancy meant a shotgun wedding." A strong child support enforcement program will send the "shotgun" message to young men: irresponsible sex has dire consequences for them and not just for young women.

Rules which exempt non-custodial parents from paying child support whose income is below, for example, \$10,000 a year should be modified to include this population. Even if the non-custodial parent makes only \$3000, some of it should go to the children. He would be sharing his income with his children if he lived with them. Even if the amount collected is only a token sum, it would get him in the habit of supporting his children and give him the pride of doing so.

To the extent that some rules have only \$50 a month of collected child support going to the custodial parent, and the rest to the state to reduce welfare costs, there is little incentive for mothers to collaborate in finding the fathers. This rule should be modified so that women receive a higher percentage of the money collected.

5. The work requirement is of course the main force that will end welfare as we know it. The relationship of work to training and education, though, requires urgent reconsideration. I urge that instead of talking about providing people with a two

that reference is to two years on average which of course ^{Extended Page} ~~means~~ 5.1
that many would be off much sooner and others may stay on longer.
In this way one avoids completely the question what you do after
two years. It will depend on the individual.

The idea of training is usually discussed in terms of train and
place (somehow) or train and economic development (to ensure jobs).
Please do reconsider this line of thinking and do not be swayed by
those who assume a job-rich economy in the foreseeable future. No
one at the meeting saw a hope for such an environment. Even if
somehow one would place two million people now on welfare in the
private sector, it would mean that some other two million people
would be added to the unemployment or welfare rolls. True, there
are some unfilled jobs and some new ones will be created, but
despite the claims of a few studies (e.g. "Riverside") there are
not many such jobs and most studies, including the Riverside one,
do not examine who was displaced as the welfare people were hired.
I checked with MDRC and they agree that most welfare people who are
hired "redistribute" the jobs, i.e., gain them at the expense of
others. In short, train and place is not going to work for most
people. Also it rains most of its funds on people not on welfare
(the trainers).

The other approach, train and create jobs is workable by
definition (if you create a job, a person will have one) but very
costly. It also raises the question why create jobs for those on
welfare and not for the able-bodied, already trained, people who

line up the unemployment lines, actively seeking work.

Working off welfare will hence have to be a main stay of the program. (By the way, community service is a much better term for this approach than work relief!)

The best community service welfare clients can do is to keep others off welfare or help get them off welfare, which could result in significant savings in public expenditures. Recommendations: teenage mothers who receive welfare will be required to do x hours per week of peer counseling for others who are not pregnant or on their first pregnancy.

HHS is correct in pointing out that (a) those to give counseling will need to be selected (not everybody can do it, etc.); (b) they should be a bit older, e.g. Juniors counseling Sophomores; (c) will need some guidance themselves, and (d) some supervision. These are all quite do-able requirements. Note also that the funds here will be largely spent on welfare clients rather than on trainers. This approach should be able to meet the very tough requirement that savings exceeding the costs would be available within one year of installing this approach.

(Criteria for evaluation and measurement of success of this approach: net savings should result even if the average peer counselor keeps only one other person from becoming pregnant, dropping out, etc. For example, an average welfare person gets \$4500. The peer counselor will receive no additional compensation for doing the counseling. Some funds will be required for professional senior guides to the peer counselors and

7. As a general rule, on-the-job training is preferable to training and placing. To encourage employers to train and hire welfare clients one may provide training bonus to those who train and retain people from an approved list as long as the bonus is granted only if those who hire keep the trained person at least for a given period on their payroll after training is completed.

8. If any of these ideas are of interest, I suggest that we shall provide a small group of outside experts to help work them out. We shall ensure that the planning work is done without attribution to the Administration.