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Ron Haskins

Haskins vs. Primus at Welfare Forum

A senior White House advisor and a Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) scholar exchanged opening salvos in the post-election welfare reform debate in a Nov. 13 forum co-sponsored by IPR.

Ron Haskins, who advises the Bush administration on welfare policy, praised the 1996 reforms for pushing people off the welfare rolls, into work, and out of poverty. Wendell Primus, director of income security at CBPP, agreed there have been important gains in employment, but criticized conservative spending priorities for leaving some behind.

"It made the lives of these families making ten, twelve thousand dollars a year harder," Primus said. He pointed to a \$727 drop in the bottom fifth's disposable income and said declining benefits offset most of the income gains made by the next fifth.

Haskins highlighted TANF's work requirements and the abolition of cash entitlements. "Welfare reform did exactly what it was supposed to do. [Welfare recipients] have more money because they earned it," Haskins said. He also pointed to Congressional Budget Office estimates that work-support pro

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New Census Research Data Center Opens Doors to Chicago Scholars

A new research center, sponsored in part by IPR, is offering qualified Chicago-area researchers access to a rich, relatively untapped source of Census Bureau economic micro-data.

The Chicago Research Data Center (CRDC), housed at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago in the Loop, is now up and running after two years of planning. Researchers with approved projects — after a stringent review process — will gain access to longitudinal data sets that cover business establishments and firms, as well as households and individuals.

Northwestern and the Federal Reserve Bank will share costs through 2004 with a consortium of Chicago research institutions that includes the



CRDC Executive Director
Bhash Mazumder

University of Chicago, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Argonne National Laboratory.

The National Science Foundation has awarded a \$300,000 grant to IPR to help support the CRDC over its first three years. After that, the planners expect the center to become self-sustaining.

"The center paves the way for new explorations of countless subjects, from the effects of neighborhoods on family well-being to the relationship between medical expenditures and health," said IPR Director Fay Lomax Cook. "For the first time, researchers will be able to delve into key data that just haven't been available in the Chicago area."

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IPR Briefs Mayor's Office on High School Shortcomings

High schools are not giving students realistic information about what colleges require. Many unprepared students go on to college, get stuck in remedial courses, and drop out without having earned any college credits at all.

These students need "backup options," said James Rosenbaum, who delivered this pointed message to a group of Chicago school and workforce officials at a late September policy briefing in the Mayor's office.

The hour-long session was the first in a new series of policy briefings by IPR faculty organized by Mayor Richard Daley's Deputy Chief of Policy Jill Wineman to cull ideas for new city programs from the expertise of scholars.

"College for all is a dangerous myth," Rosenbaum cautioned the group. He said the open admissions policy of Chicago city colleges has caused many students — in the suburbs as well as the city — to "blow off" high school in the mistaken belief that their grades make no difference. Not only are high school students poorly informed about their likelihood of success in college, they are unaware of the value to prospective employers of non-cognitive skills — attendance, effort, deportment, and perseverance — and the many opportunities for good jobs that require only 10th grade reading and writing proficiency.

Rosenbaum, a professor of education
(continued on page 2)

Gloomy Prospects for Chicago's Welfare Reform

"The story of welfare reform in Illinois now, if not before, is what is going on in Chicago," Dan Lewis told city administrators in the second in a series of briefings by IPR faculty organized through the Mayor's office. Lewis, who heads up the Illinois Families Study (IFS), a six-year panel study of welfare reform effects on families, painted a gloomy picture of what former recipients may be facing as the economy continues to weaken.

Based on a sample of 555 welfare recipient families in Chicago, Lewis reported that poverty is now dispersed throughout the city, rather than concentrated in public housing areas. He pointed to a "disjuncture between programs and needs of the population," especially those of the 30,000 families still on TANF. Though early results of the IFS study (1999-2001) showed family well-being improving slightly, more recent trends in 2001 and 2002 point to a large increase in the group neither working nor receiving welfare, Lewis said.

Results after the study's second wave for example, showed an increase in housing problems among those unable to pay their mortgage, while evictions tripled. Health status and health insurance for adults also remained a big problem (see p. 3), though children's health showed improvement.

Among the positive outcomes, hardships did not show much of an increase, he said, and relatively few people had reached the 60-month time limits. However, since the number of "no work/no welfare" families is rising, he named this as "the number one problem the city will have to face."

Results from the third wave of the study will be available in February.

P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, professor of human development and social policy, cited some disturbing results from the Three Cities Study, which is monitoring changes in the welfare system for children and families in Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio. Though the numbers of children in poverty are flattening out, she reported that 28% of these adolescents showed behavior problems, 43% of which were serious, and 36% of preschoolers had serious behavior problems.

Those in sanctioned families are most problematic, she said, noting that more than half (56%) of preschoolers in sanctioned families showed serious behavioral and emotional problems. "Though sanctions are not causing these problems, sanctioned families need help now," she said.

She recommended to the group that they consider ways to assist families to bring them into compliance before sanctioning occurs and follow this by closer monitoring of sanctioned families once they rejoin the welfare rolls. "This is an incredible opportunity for the mayor's office," she said, citing a variety of psychological services and academic enrichment activities, afterschool programs, and assistance with mental health issues it could support.



Lewis at briefing

Mayor's Briefings (continued from page 1)

and social policy and IPR faculty fellow, said a staggering 95% of high school seniors in a recent national survey said they planned to attend college. Yet less than 50% will actually get a degree, a figure that drops to 14% of those with C or lower high school grades. What is worse, half of the low-achieving graduates, who are forced to take remedial courses before they can enter a college-level course, will drop out without earning a single college credit.

"It's amazing that these students think it is not important to work in high school," said Rosenbaum. "It should be made a lot clearer to them that the work they do in high school is crucial."

The schools need to do a better job of offering practical career information. It is a misconception that all good jobs require a college degree, Rosenbaum

said. There are clear needs in the labor market in areas such as metalworking, tool and dye, heating, air conditioning, and clerical and administrative work that offer good pay and opportunities for advancement for people who can read and write on a 10th grade level.

"These students know very little about anything between a job at McDonalds and a professional career as a doctor or lawyer," he said.

What Schools Can Do. Many Chicago vocational high school teachers have helped their students get jobs through their contacts in the labor market, Rosenbaum said. This helps motivate students to put in the effort in school. He considers these teachers "a hidden asset within the schools," and a model that other schools can emulate.

High schools can also make better use

of evaluation data from tests, Rosenbaum said. Instead of just passing along numbers, counselors and teachers should interpret the results for students to give them a more realistic assessment of whether college is the right path for them.

One school official pointed out that many minority families think it boosts the self-worth of a student to even enter college, regardless of what happens later. "But dropping out of college is not a prize," said Rosenbaum. "It is better to tell a student that dropping out or getting no credit because of remedial courses is likely to happen."

The second in the series of fall policy briefings was held on October 3. It focused on the effects of welfare reform on families and children. (see box).

Illinois Families Study Briefs: New Findings on Food Insecurity and Health Insurance

Illinois families who have left welfare are faring better over time in some respects, but other indicators point to areas of concern. Findings from the Illinois Families Study, conducted by a consortium of researchers from five Illinois universities and tracking how Illinois families have been faring under welfare reform, show that more children are covered by health insurance since 1999–2000, and food insecurity has not worsened. However, more adults are uninsured.

One of welfare reform's goals was to encourage families to move from welfare to work and in doing so gain economic independence. Illinois has adopted several features designed to support families during the transition from welfare to work, including stopping the clock on cash assistance time limits when families are working, and extending Medicaid coverage during the first year after leaving welfare for work.

However, even with the extension of Medicaid for an interim, many families who are "playing by the rules" and leaving welfare for work are going without health insurance. Medicaid coverage declined by 11 percentage points among welfare leavers between 1999–2000 and 2001 while employee-sponsored insurance packages increased by only 5 percentage points, resulting in a 6 percentage point rise in the number of uninsured adults (or 25% of respondents). Fewer than half of the working parents said their employer offered coverage, and

among those offered coverage, only one-third signed up for it.

The picture is brighter for children of current and former welfare recipients, the study finds. The proportion of children covered by health insurance rose 4 percentage points (9% to 13%) between 1999–2000 and 2001.

"It looks like outreach campaigns to expand coverage for low-income children through KidCare and Medicaid have been somewhat successful in Illinois, said Jane Holl, IPR faculty associate and principal investigator of the Child Well-Being component of the IFS. "It's now time to turn our attention to the insurance needs of parents. Hopefully some of the lessons learned from insuring low-income children can now be applied to their parents."

The study also asked families about any difficulties securing enough food. Results indicate no erosion of food security over the two years, with about one-third of the 1,183 respondents reporting food insecurity in both 1999 and 2001, despite drops in TANF and food stamp use. This positive news, however, is tempered by the fact that families who are not working continue to struggle.

Nearly 40% of nonworking families reported food insecurities in 2001, compared with 27% of working families. The authors also point to some troubling indicators of future hardship. Between 1999 and 2001, significantly more families sought informal support from

churches and other private charities.

The trends being tracked in the Illinois Families Study are taking place amid, and because of, dramatic changes in public policy in the United States. As Dan Lewis, IPR faculty fellow and principal investigator of the IFS explains, social policy reforms at the end of the twentieth century in America were premised on the notion that large government programs were the cause of, rather than the solution to, many of the most pressing social problems. The new policies, as exemplified by welfare reforms in 1996, have separated individuals from federally supported programs and services.

"The call for personal responsibility has legitimized inclusionary efforts that place many people at risk of serious hardship, while at the same time freeing them from dependency on governmental services," Lewis says.

"Some people will do well under these new arrangements, and some will do poorly. As our economy slows, we anticipate that the labor market will be less capable of absorbing those who need jobs. Those individuals who depended on welfare and public housing will be at substantial risk of food insecurity and homelessness. I hope that the information provided here will allow policymakers to see who is at risk and how that risk changes over time."

The findings are reported in four new policy briefs, available at www.northwestern.edu/ipr/research/IFS.html.

Conference on Health Policy and the Underserved

In 2000, 39 million Americans had no health insurance for the entire year. Research has found that the uninsured get less care and have worse health outcomes than those with coverage. And even those who have some insurance lack coverage for important components of health care or receive inadequate care. To examine a wide range of issues related to the lack of insurance and access to health care, IPR and the Joint Center for Poverty Research are hosting a conference May 8 and 9, 2003 in Washington, DC. The theme is "Health Policy and the Underserved."

Among the topics to be considered are why individuals are uninsured and underinsured; the causes of gender and race differences in health; what the uninsured do for health care and the consequences of that care; potential reforms; political forces shaping health policy; effects of recent policy changes; new programs and reforms; and historical and comparative lessons.

Economist Bruce Meyer, an IPR faculty fellow, is organizing the conference along with Peter Budetti, director of Northwestern's Institute for Health Research and Policy Studies; IPR Director Fay Lomax Cook, IPR Research Associate Professor Tony LoSasso, and Colleen Grogan, Helen Levy, and Willard Manning at the University of Chicago.

Housework in Double-Income Marriages Still Divides Unevenly

This may come as no surprise to women readers, but husbands are not picking up the slack in housework when a wife goes to work. As Faculty Fellow Paula England finds in her IPR working paper, *When Gender Trumps Money: Bargaining and Time in Household Work*, women who enter the workforce do cut back on the hours spent attending domestic chores. However, men do not compensate by adding significantly to theirs. In Australia, one of the countries examined in the study, women who earn more than their husbands actually do more housework than those whose earnings are equal.

England uses a 1992 time diary survey conducted in Australia and compares the findings to two U.S. data sets (the 1985 Panel Study of Income Dynamics and the 1987 National Survey of Families and Households) that contain information on time use among families with children. Both data sources are national probability samples that include men of all classes in rough proportion to their representation in the population.

Housework included meal preparation and clean-up, laundry, housecleaning, paying bills, lawn, yard, pool and pet care, home maintenance, and car care. Child care and shopping were excluded so that the two datasets remained comparable. Australian men contributed 11.4 hours (mean) to housework per week while Australian women contributed 23 hours. American men did 16.8 hours (mean) and American women did 34.8 per week.

The patterns of household work were compared along a scale from the wife earning no income to earning all the household's income. In the Australian sample, 20% of women were employed full-time, 39% were employed part-time, and 40% were not employed. In the United States, 40% of women worked full-time, 25% were employed part-time, and 35% not employed.

Money Talks in Marriage...to a Point. In the United States, women do less housework as they earn a higher proportion of income. Those contributing half the income do about 6 hours less housework than those contributing very little income, net of market hours worked. For the majority of Australian women, this is the case as well. However, between the point where women contribute about half the income and the point at which they provide all of it, more money does not mean less housework. On the contrary, their housework increases by about 5–6 hours per week. However, it should be noted that only 14% of the Australian women earned more than half the household income.

Increasing housework, England suggests, might be an attempt to neutralize the reversal of gender roles. Past research, for example, finds that women who earned more than their husbands admitted that they felt the need to devise strategies to make him feel less stigmatized, including adding more housework to her routine.

Although women are using employment as a bargaining chip for less housework, men are not altering their contribution. Australian men, especially, are impervious to their wives' earnings. They do not increase housework, regardless of the hours their spouses work. American men, on the other hand, tend



Paula England, professor of sociology at Northwestern and IPR faculty fellow, focuses much of her work on gender, work, and family, with a special interest in a subset of “women’s work”— care work — that includes paid child care, nursing, social work, and teaching. “In ‘When gender trumps money,’” says England, “I was interested in how couples are negotiating changing gender roles in the household, and whether men’s roles are more resistant to change than women’s.”

Her interests in gender dynamics in families are further explored in the *Time, Love, Cash, Couples, and Children (TLC3)* study, where she is a co-principal investigator with IPR colleagues Kathryn Edin, Greg Duncan, and Lindsay Chase-Lansdale. England is particularly interested in the interplay between economically-based power, gender norms, and emotional skills in the dynamics between married and cohabiting couples.

to increase their housework, but by only a few hours per week.

Clearly, money talks in marriage. However, gender roles still pervade in many respects. Even when women and men agree in theory that a more egalitarian division of labor should prevail, their actual behavior is much less egalitarian. Although women can and do use income as a bargaining chip to reduce housework, they either cannot or do not attempt to use it to increase their husband's work. For the most part, they replace their time with purchased services, or the housework simply goes undone.

Perhaps, England argues, it is more acceptable for women to adapt more masculine roles, but it is less acceptable for men to adapt the more feminine role of housework.

“Women and everything associated with them is devalued in society,” say England, “so it is easier for people to accept women taking on traditionally men’s activities than for men to take on traditionally female. But of course the ‘gender revolution’ won’t work unless it is a two-way street. The female activities that are necessary and important, such as child rearing and household work, need to be degendered as women take on more traditionally male responsibilities or women will either work more than men, or these important tasks simply won’t get done.”

England argues that policymakers that the value of household should be counted in measures analogous to the gross national product. In current policy, she says, “accounting for how women’s unpaid child care is going to be replaced should be a more important consideration in welfare reform than it has been to date.”

Work Stability Threatened by Domestic Violence: Findings from the Three-City Study

Domestic violence hinders many aspects of a woman's life, from her physical and mental health to her ability to keep a job. Research has shown that poor women are more likely to be abused than those more affluent, and women receiving public assistance are even more likely than other low-income women to be in abusive relationships.

With welfare reform and its current work mandates, domestic abuse has been a cause of concern for policymakers hoping to move women from public assistance into the workforce. New research by IPR scholars Elizabeth Votruba-Drzal, Brenda Lohman, and P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale takes a closer look at this issue using data from *Welfare, Children, and Families: A Three-City Study*.

Incidence of Domestic Violence

In their IPR working paper, "Violence in Intimate Relationships as Women Transition from Welfare to Work," Votruba-Drzal and coauthors find that a startling 75% of the roughly 2,100 low-income women interviewed had experienced domestic violence in their life, while 30% reported recent domestic violence (within the prior 12 months).

Moderate forms of abuse, including being pushed, slapped, or threatened, were the most common. Roughly one-fourth of the women interviewed had experienced moderate violence in the recent past. Severe violence, which includes being beaten, burned, threatened with a weapon, or having a weapon used against the woman, was less common, with roughly 10% reporting such violence in the recent past. However, nearly half (44%) of the women reported experiencing extreme violence at one point in their life.

Effects on Work and Welfare. Despite the recent growth in research on



(L to R) IPR Researchers P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, Elizabeth Votruba-Drzal, and Brenda Lohman

the topic, various study limitations have made it difficult to draw firm conclusions about the associations between domestic violence, work patterns, and welfare receipt. The research by Votruba-Drzal and coauthors extends past work by taking into account the influence of other characteristics that may confound associations between work, welfare, and domestic violence. The study also accounts for the possibility that the same characteristics that put a woman at risk for domestic violence also may make her less likely to maintain a job and become economically self-sufficient.

Using this more nuanced approach, the authors find that domestic violence did not impede a woman's ability to find a job. However, keeping the job was problematic for many. Women who experienced increases in domestic violence during the 16-months of the study were less likely to maintain employment for at least 30 hours a week for six months a year.

The authors also find that women who remained on welfare during the 16 months of the study saw modest increases in domestic violence compared with women who were not on welfare. Women who reported a decline in domestic violence also left welfare more readily than those who did not report a decline. Entry into welfare was not related to domestic violence.

Unfortunately, the authors were unable to determine the order of events—whether the women left work because of domestic violence, or whether they left work and then experienced violence, owing, for example, to being home more or from the stress stemming from lack of income.

Domestic violence and its deterrence to work has been a concern since the initiation of welfare

reforms in 1996 that mandated work in exchange for cash assistance. Recognizing the difficulty that victims of domestic violence may have finding and keeping a job, policymakers adopted the Family Violence Option in 1996, which gives states the ability to waive federal TANF work requirements to meet the needs of women suffering from domestic abuse.

Although a positive step, more is needed, the authors argue. "If women are being forced out of employment as a consequence of domestic violence, work requirements and time limits may need to be reconsidered," says Chase-Lansdale. Caseworkers should also be better trained in identifying domestic violence and making women feel comfortable enough to reveal the patterns of abuse.

"Alternatively," says Votruba-Drzal, "independent assessments of domestic violence should be considered since the conflict of interest between welfare offices and the needs of low-income battered women is too large." The importance of making resources available and accessible to aid welfare-reliant women who are also domestic violence victims cannot be underestimated, the authors argue, if these women are to take steps toward economic self-sufficiency.

The paper may be ordered from IPR's publications department for \$5.00.

Debate (continued from page 1)



Wendell Primus (L) and IPR panelists

grams have increased to \$52 billion, versus a projected \$5.6 billion absent any reform after 1984. "The idea that we're cutting spending and starving children will not wash," he said.

Primus, a former chief economist for the House Ways & Means Committee, said work-support programs are not keeping pace with inflation and will be hurt by the administration's tax cuts. He recommended that Congress increase program funding, reduce the focus on marriage, emphasize employment of non-resident fathers, and restore eligibility to immigrants, especially for health needs. "We need to focus on families that have lost ground," he said.

After the debate Haskins and Primus joined a panel discussion with IPR faculty fellows Greg Duncan, director of the Joint Center for Poverty Research; Kathryn Edin, associate professor of sociology; and Dan Lewis, professor of education and social policy.

"Something has gone horribly right in the last five years," Duncan said. "None of the dire predictions we all made have come to pass." He said "smaller proportions of blacks and

Hispanics are poor today than in our nation's history, fewer families are food insecure and hungry, and the birth rate for teens is lower than in 15 years. [But] we've got a long way to go." Noting that over 11 million children are poor, he stressed the need for universal health insurance for kids, and a viable safety net for families.

"Some of the success of welfare reform must be attributed to these mothers who wholeheartedly bought into the goals of welfare reform and tried to make it succeed," Edin said. "But the states have not fulfilled their promises to these new workers." Results from her ethnographic study of 120 families under TANF indicate that "the implementation of transitional benefits has been an unmitigated disaster," she said. "These mothers cannot deal with the paperwork and are falling off the rolls through case-closure. To comply with all these rules and regulations is too onerous for those who are trying to be a parent and to hold a job."

"It will fall to the states, and to the politics within the states, to figure out what to do," Lewis said.

The debate was conceived by undergraduates Laurie Jaeckel and Dale Vieregge, who proposed the Undergraduate Lecture Series on Race, Poverty and Inequality after a week in the Galbraith Scholar's Program at the Kennedy School of Government last summer.

"We want other students to engage policymakers and to realize the importance of social policy," Vieregge said.



Rural Dimensions of Welfare Reform

Nearly 60% of poor families and nearly half of welfare recipient families live outside the city, yet much of the research and debate on poverty and welfare has centered on urban areas.

A new volume, *Rural Dimensions of Welfare Reform* (W.E. Upjohn Institute, 2002), co-edited by IPR Faculty Fellow Greg Duncan, presents the first comprehensive look at how welfare reforms enacted in 1996 are affecting caseloads, employment, earnings, and family well-being in rural areas. Originating from a May 2000 conference hosted by the Joint Center for Poverty Research and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Services, and the Rural Policy Research Institute, the book provides a sound empirical basis for the design of state policies to increase employment and well-being of low-income families in rural regions.

The book demonstrates how many aspects of rural and urban life are converging, and that their poverty and employment issues can be quite similar when viewed from a national perspective. But a closer look reveals important differences between states, and even within states. These economic and demographic factors unique to rural areas create special challenges to policymakers hoping to move welfare recipients into the workforce.

Rural communities often have higher unemployment, and residents must travel greater distances to jobs and services. Residents often have less education and earn less than urban dwellers. Lower population density makes it difficult to locate services, such as job training and child care, in these areas. "These characteristics all present a unique context in which

to implement welfare reform," according to editors Bruce Weber at Oregon State University, Duncan, and Leslie Whitener, USDA, Department of Economic Research Services.

Among the findings:

- ◆ Cash assistance and food stamp caseloads appear to have declined more in urban than rural areas, but the differences in the declines vary considerably from state to state.

- ◆ Overall, rural mothers have not been left behind in securing employment after welfare reform, although the more disadvantaged group of low-educated, single mothers in rural areas has not shared the employment gains of their urban counterparts.

- ◆ Barriers to work can vary widely from state to state, and persistently poor regions of the country continue to face considerable hardship.

- ◆ Because welfare reform's work mandates do not recognize informal work, some rural residents have experienced considerable economic hardship from losing welfare income without being able to replace it through work in the formal economy.

Given the diversity of the rural experience, the editors conclude, relying on national data to analyze obstacles to employment will often miss critical within-state, regional differences in access to jobs, licensed child care, job training, and other supports as well as the effects of policies on caseloads, employment, and earnings. "Antipoverty policy will be more effective," the editors note, "if it recognizes the diversity in context, resources, and opportunities in different places."

IPR/VISTA Conference Focuses on “Welfare-to-Work”

Challenges contained in two major bills pending in Congress provided impetus for a mid-summer conference on “Welfare-to-Work” sponsored by AmericorpsVISTA in partnership with IPR. The three-day meetings were held July 29-31 at Northwestern in Evanston.

The conference objective — to improve programs that move recipients off welfare and into the workforce — was a key component of the 1996 welfare reform act, which expired on September 30 and is awaiting reauthorization by Congress.

Making such programs accountable is a key ingredient of The Citizen Service Act of 2002, still pending in the House of Representatives. The bill would reform the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), extend its AmericorpsVISTA, Learn and Serve America, and National Senior Service Corps programs for another five years, and make it more accountable for its programs’ outcomes.

The conference brought together 100 VISTA volunteers and supervisors, government and agency officials, and academics to address two overriding goals: to identify promising practices and innovative approaches to move welfare clients out of poverty, and to learn how to measure program outcomes more effectively. By bringing poverty researchers into direct contact with practitioners, the conference provided a reality check for the researchers and some helpful evidence for the VISTA volunteers to carry back to their programs.

Panels organized by IPR Director Fay Lomax Cook, Joint Center for Poverty Research Director Greg Duncan, and Professor of Education and Social Policy James Rosenbaum presented some of the latest research on opportunities and barriers to moving people off welfare. They also assessed educational and training programs and offered insights on welfare-to-work programs at the local level.

The government view. From the perspective of the federal government, welfare reform has been markedly successful, according to keynote speaker Don Winstead, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Services Policy. Winstead laid out the Bush administration proposals for reauthorizing PRWORA and chalked up its positive outcomes over the past five years. He pointed to a drop in welfare caseloads from 4.5-million to 2.1 million from 1996 to 2001 and a decrease in child poverty from 20.5% in 1996 to 16.2% in 2000.

Nonetheless, the VISTA volunteers were less sanguine. “We need to push for a livable wage,” said one Ohio worker. “We may have gotten people off welfare, but we’ve put them in a worse situation than before.” A Utah volunteer estimated that an employed worker in Salt Lake City “needs \$13.50 an hour to make it.”

Mixed results for education and job training. One of the most contentious issues raised was the value of education for those trying to move off welfare. Winstead argued that “evaluations have shown that what works is work. Education just delays work.” Tom Brock, senior research associate at the Manpower Development Research Corporation, (MDRC), concurred that mandatory education programs had proved ineffective among low-skilled people, though they were more successful when combined with job search programs. These find-

ings were based on MDRC’s five-year National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS), which evaluated 11 national programs.

However, University of Chicago economist Robert LaLonde estimated that though the government spends \$3,000 per person on job training compared to \$8,000 for a year of education, job training programs do not increase people’s wages as much as education.

Training vs. Work. Larry Mead, professor of politics at New York University, advocated mandatory participation in available jobs, as opposed to work-based training, and close supervision of clients.

But “Work First Programs don’t work for everybody,” cautioned Debra Strong at Mathematica. Her research indicates that “the groups we need to care about are non-custodial parents and the working poor who get off TANF,” she said.

Sandra Danziger, who heads The Women’s Employment Study at the University of Michigan, delineated the many barriers to employment that make it difficult for welfare recipients to enter or remain in the labor force.



Feedback session for VISTA volunteers

Her study has found that factors such as high school dropout, child health problems, and mental health, especially depression, are associated with longer stays on welfare. “Welfare-reliant women had seven or more barriers in 50% of the months studied,” Danziger reported. Since most work programs don’t address these barriers, she urged that employers be made more aware of these problems. Among steps that could be taken are more exemptions for work requirements when a mother must take time off to take a sick child to the doctor.

Problems in the field. In the small group sessions, the VISTA volunteers and supervisors exchanged experiences and ideas about problems they encounter and possible solutions. A typical concern was the need for holistic support services for clients, who lack life skills as well as job skills, and should be included in the planning process and goal-setting. Teaching life skills is also important, one pointed out, so the client doesn’t become dependent on the service provider.

David Reingold, CNCS director of research and policy development, told the volunteers that the corporation is shifting its focus to measuring outcomes. “We need to provide a scientifically valid way to measure outcomes across a range of activities,” he said.

To improve the role of CNCS in the VISTA programs, the volunteers suggested that the corporation use higher education resources to develop evaluation tools; involve VISTA volunteers in the evaluation process; and measure the empowerment of clients and the positive steps they have taken.

Policy Perspectives on Housing



To Demolish Or Rehabilitate?

by Alexander Polikoff

Housing policy finds itself between a rock and a hard place as, one after another, Robert Taylor Homes and other CHA projects are felled in yet another long-sought solution to the social pathologies of high-rise public housing.

Ten years ago, one could not demolish a public housing building without replacing it, unit for demolished unit. But outcry over the death of Dantrell Davis, a seven-year-old resident of Cabrini Green, shot and killed in October 1992 as he walked through the project with his mother on the way to school, and new national legislation enacted that same month, helped initiate a policy about-face. Today, high-rise demolition is actually mandated for buildings that fail a Congressionally prescribed financial test. Chicago, home to more high-rise public housing than any other U.S. city, is now experiencing the consequences of this profound policy change.

Here and elsewhere the wrecking balls have already begun to swing, with the promise of economically integrated replacement communities to come. The going formula for the latter is one-third public housing, one-third affordable housing, usually financed with a low-income housing tax credit, and one-third unsubsidized, market-rate housing. If 300 public housing apartments are torn down, they will be replaced by 100 public housing units, 100 affordable units, and 100 units commanding market rates. Some 200 public housing units are lost in the process, reducing — at a time of an excruciating shortage of housing for the very poor — our supply of affordable apartments.

In addition, from the dust of the 14,000 Chicago public housing apartments now being razed, a group of families is being forcibly relocated who face some of life's most daunting obstacles: joblessness, education deficits, substance abuse, and mental illness, among them. For these families it is difficult or impossible to pass screening for entry to the diminished supply of public housing in replacement mixed-income communities,

or — even with the rent subsidy housing vouchers they are offered — for entry to decent neighborhoods in the private market. Such “vulnerable” families are often relegated to other (low- or mid-rise) public housing projects, or to private market neighborhoods, nearly as bad as the ones they left. Some may be forced into homelessness.

It is argued that, at this time of great shortage of housing for the very poor, we should not be tearing down any affordable housing; instead, we should rehabilitate what we have and encourage self-sufficiency among vulnerable high-rise residents by providing jobs, training, child care, and other services. Unhappily, creating such well working communities “from within” is a pipe dream. History does not provide a single example of the successful redevelopment of an impoverished public housing high-rise community through improved social services.

The research of Harvard's William Julius Wilson and other scholars has demonstrated conclusively that concentrated poverty environments blight the lives of most residents. It cannot be sound public policy to perpetuate through physical rehabilitation the gang-controlled, drug-infested conditions of our public housing high-rise enclaves. If as a society we are forced to choose between perpetuating such conditions through rehabilitation, or tearing down our high-rises at the cost of a reduction in available public housing units, I believe we are making the correct, albeit painful choice. It is a given that we should provide the social services that will ameliorate the hardships imposed on so many families and maximize their chances to improve their life circumstances. But even should we fail to do so effectively, I believe that, not just for the benefits that accrue to the larger society from their elimination, but for the long run benefit of the residents themselves, we should seize the moment and tear down the concentrated poverty enclaves of our public housing high-rises.

Alexander Polikoff, senior staff counsel and former executive director of Business and Professional People for the Public Interest, is an IPR Visiting Scholar. He is currently working on a book, Waiting for Gautreaux: Will the Door To Mainstream America Open for Black Americans? This article is based on a talk by Polikoff at a November 4, 2002, IPR Colloquium.

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The Effects of High Stakes Testing in Low- and High-Performing Schools

by John Diamond and James Spillane

High stakes testing, or linking student performance on examinations to consequences for schools, has received widespread attention and debate. Proponents argue that testing offers an objective source of information for decision-making, and thus will reduce subjective assessments that contribute to stratification. Critics, in contrast, argue that these policies can marginalize low-performing students by focusing on those performing near national norms, whose success can raise the school over the threshold. In addition, they argue, high-stakes testing can limit teaching to only the material covered on standardized tests.

John Diamond and James Spillane, in their IPR working paper, "High Stakes Accountability in Urban Elementary Schools," offer an in-depth look at how four public elementary schools in Chicago—two high-performing and two low-performing schools—responded to high-stakes testing. They find that advocates' claims are best met in the high-performing schools while critics' warnings play out more often in the low-performing schools. These results, in turn, may further cement the educational stratification that occurs in many urban school systems. Family background shapes where one lives, and where a family lives, in turn, affects where their children go to school, and ultimately their educational opportunities.

Study Background

Chicago represents one of the first urban school districts to adopt high-stakes testing, with its 1996 reforms that make schools accountable for their performance. Consistently low-performing schools, as measured by students' standardized test scores, are put on "probation" and threatened with reconstitution if they do not improve. The low-performing schools in Diamond and Spillane's study were on probation, while the high-performing schools were not.

The authors draw on interview and observation data from the four Chicago elementary schools from September 1999 to June 2000. The schools were predominately minority (African American and Hispanic), and they were stratified economically; the high-performing schools had more middle-income and white students.

All four of the schools, both high- and low-performing, responded in broadly similar ways to the accountability measures by paying more attention to exams and seeking explicit improvement in students' outcomes. However, the implementation of the accountability measures varied greatly between the high- and low-performing schools.

School-wide Accountability Goals

Administrators in schools on probation focused, quite naturally, on getting off probation. They attempted to motivate teachers with both carrots and sticks, and they worked hard to control the impressions of external observers assigned to monitor their progress. However, the changes were often cosmetic, from stressing classroom management at the expense of instruction to changing school décor.

High-performing schools faced less clear-cut incentives, given that probation was not a direct threat. As a result, they took a different approach to accountability by working to reinforce pride in the schools' academic performance and urging teachers not to rest on their laurels. The administrators of these schools took great pains to repackage standardized test data in ways that captured teachers' attention, transforming massive spreadsheets into relatively easy-to-read charts. To maintain a focus on constant improvement, they created a template that connected teachers' daily lesson plans to the material tested, district standards, and the level of mastery for each student.

Use of Test Data

High-performing schools invested much effort in data interpretation, analyzing movement of students between performance quartiles for the entire school and for specific grade levels. Data were also disaggregated to pinpoint trouble areas within a subject. In math, for example, tests scores were broken down into problem-solving, concepts and estimation, and computation. Weaknesses in any one area were then addressed. In schools on probation, in contrast, much less was done with the data. The data were used in the form in which they arrived from the district and were not further parsed to specific purposes.

Focus on Instruction

Low-performing schools targeted students, grade levels, and subjects based on testing parameters. Teachers, for example, were encouraged to focus on students in the benchmark grades who were scheduled to be tested that year. Particular students were also targeted. One school identified those students who were close to reaching national norms and provided them with additional help. Thus, most effort was expended on those students who were close to making the cut-off for the probation requirement, and often at the expense of the lowest performing students in the school.

The findings from this study suggest that the effectiveness of high-stakes testing may depend on the status of the school.

High-performing schools, in contrast, sought to enhance learning opportunities for all. Test score data were used to diagnose the effectiveness of certain teaching approaches. In one school, for example, the data showed that instruction had likely focused in the prior year on the middle range of students, potentially missing the needs of the lowest- and highest-performing students. As a result, teaching was redirected to “teach high and then re-teach to the middle and lower” performers in the classroom.

The high-performing schools, in other words, were more likely to use high-stakes testing in ways that were consistent with arguments put forth by proponents. The test results were used objectively to define students’ specific instructional needs and provide a basis for school-level instructional decision-making. In contrast, probation schools had a less systematic strategy for turning test results into useful infor-

mation, and relied more on managing the impressions of external stakeholders. They were also more likely to target interventions to specific students and grade levels.

Policy Implications

Policy implementation is very much a local process, and understanding the variation in context even within districts is critical. The findings from this study, for example, suggest that the effectiveness of high-stakes testing may depend on the status of the school.

In low-performing schools, such testing can lead to practices that increase, rather than decrease, gatekeeping. Students identified as near the national norm, for example, can be targeted for intense instruction at the expense of other students. Improved academics in schools on probation may only apply to a subset of students and within the subset of topics tested.

From a broader perspective, accountability may work against increased educational equality. There are several types of schools in contemporary urban school systems, from private schools, to magnet schools (often considered the “elite” public schools), to neighborhood schools, which can be further divided by low- and high-performing schools. Social class and race are important factors in determining which school a child attends, with the better schools often more available to middle-class children and less available to low-income African American students. As the authors show, the different types of public schools are likely to implement the testing policy differently.

In other words, policies could unwittingly exacerbate, rather than challenge, educational stratification between high- and low-performing schools—and by extension, lower and middle-income schools. If policymakers fail to attend to these issues, middle-income schools (and those serving fewer students of color) are likely to benefit more, further sharpening the divide between poor and wealthier schools.

John Diamond is assistant research professor in Northwestern’s Graduate School of Education and Social Policy. James Spillane is associate professor in the Graduate School of Education and Social Policy and a faculty fellow at the Institute for Policy Research. The paper may be ordered from IPR’s publications department for \$5.00 or downloaded from www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/papers/2002/WP-02-22.pdf. 00/ ..

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U.S. Public Rejects “Go It Alone” Foreign Policy



Ben Page

Despite a post-Sept. 11 consensus that terrorism threatens the country, a freshly engaged American public is concerned with foreign issues above and beyond the fate of Osama bin Laden, according to a survey published by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations in October.

The Worldviews 2002 report, co-edited by IPR Faculty Associate Benjamin Page, reveals a public widely supportive of military action against terrorists, but also concerned with world hunger, environmental issues, regional conflicts, and job protection. The public diverges sharply from White House and congressional “go it alone” attitudes, offering instead overwhelming support for joint action (especially with European allies).

“To me, the most remarkable findings of the study involve Americans’ strong favorability toward the United Nations, their approval for using force only with the support of the UN and allies, and the large majorities that favor participating in international treaties like the International Criminal Court and the Kyoto agreement on global warming that the Bush administration has opposed,” Professor Page said. “The public’s reluctance to ‘go it alone’ in Iraq or elsewhere is quite striking.”

The study was based on the Council’s most extensive round of interviews ever, involving 3,200 people personally and on the telephone in June. Partial results were released to coincide with the anniversary of the terrorist attacks.

The report says Sept. 11 jolted Americans into an appreciation of the world stage unprecedented in the last decades of the Cold War. While domestic issues are still paramount, more Americans are interested in foreign news than at any other time in the last 28 years. Terrorism — seen as a “critical threat” by 91% — is the first international issue to top the list of the public’s worries since the quadrennial survey of prevailing opinion was inaugurated in 1974.

In response, the public expects the United States to maintain, indeed, expand, its superpower role. Support for an active foreign policy is up ten points to 71%. Support for increased foreign intelligence spending is at 66%, up from 27% in 1998 and support for an increased defense budget, though still short of a majority, is at an all-time high.

But this “refocused internationalism” falls short of a desire for world hegemony. While 83% consider strong U.S. leadership desirable, fully 62% reject the task of “world’s policeman.” Despite support for Saddam Hussein’s ouster, only 20% of the public would back an invasion without UN approval and allied support. The use of troops to defend Israel, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and South Korea in various “invasion scenarios” is similarly contingent upon international support.

Attitudes toward NATO and the UN are cited as further evidence of the public’s multilateralism. The Cold War over, 68% of Americans would welcome Russia into the alliance.

More than three-quarters of the public backs a continued or expanded presence in NATO, an eight point jump since 1998. A similar fraction wants a stronger UN. The majority favors paying US dues and letting the organization tax international oil and arms sales.

Internationalism carries into economic issues, where, despite some reservations, only 9% express opposition to “free trade.” Support for trade is highly conditional, however: 73% of the public wants the government to help workers who lose their jobs to international competition.

The public also sees a need for engagement with unfriendly nations. Majorities favor diplomatic relations with two of the nations in the president’s “axis of evil,” North Korea and Iran. Majorities favor diplomatic contact with Cuba and China, and a slight plurality (49% versus 47% opposed) would have diplomatic relations with Iraq.

The survey also found the public at odds with the president on several policy issues, despite a positive perception of the war on terrorism. The president’s foreign policy in general receives a 53% “good” or “excellent” rating; however, majorities or pluralities gave “fair” or “poor” ratings to the administration’s handling of Iraq, China, trade policy, global warming, the Middle East peace process, immigration, nuclear proliferation and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

The complete report is available on the Internet at www.worldviews.org.

Study of Chicago’s Juvenile Well-Being

Local action is critical in solving the problems confronting children and adolescents in Chicago, according to a recent report co-authored by IPR faculty associate Jenifer Cartland.

Child and Adolescent Well-Being in Chicago, 2002, released by the Child Health Data Lab at Children’s Memorial Hospital, is the first such study done at the neighborhood level in Chicago. Stark disparities between different neighborhoods call for responses by local groups, the report says.

For example, while Chicago’s overall infant mortality rate fell 6% from 1995 to 1999 to 11.5 deaths per 1,000 live births, individual communities at the ends of the spectrum registered more than tenfold differences between them, ranging from 1.6 to 29.2. Even greater disparity turned up in elevated blood lead levels in children ages 6 years or younger. Again, the overall city average fell between 1996 and 2000. But 1998 figures show a range of children affected, from zero in the O’Hare area to 46% in Fuller Park.

Chicago’s high school drop-out rate, which is three times the national average, and more than twice the Illinois rate, varies by community by more than 30 percentage points, with a peak of 32.9% in Austin and an overall average of 15.8%.

Because many of these problems affect more than one area, however, there is a need for broader, citywide action (in partnership with community groups) to address issues such as gun violence and KidCare’s failure to enroll significant numbers of eligible youths, the report concludes.

Pager Tackles Immigration and Law Enforcement Links in France

Having wrapped up a major study of the consequences of U.S. crime policy for rising inequality, sociologist Devah Pager left for Paris this fall to examine another nation beset with problems of social inequality exacerbated by law enforcement practices.

A newly appointed IPR faculty fellow, Pager was set to join Northwestern's sociology department when she was awarded a Fulbright to conduct research in France. She is spending the year investigating how the French criminal justice system, at a time of economic instability, is responding to an influx of immigrants from developing countries, primarily Algeria and Morocco.

In recent years, France has intensified its crime control measures in response to a perceived increase in social disorder in immigrant neighborhoods. As a result, "France's foreign and immigrant residents, while representing only about 6% of the population overall, comprise nearly 30% of the French prison population," Pager says.

By conducting a systematic analysis of the social correlates of crime policy in France, she hopes to untangle the complex relationships among immigrant status, national origin, and economic standing as they relate to trends in law enforcement and criminal justice.

Pager considers immigration and ethnic conflict "one of the most important issues European nations such as Germany, the Netherlands, and France will have to face in the coming decades." With very low birthrates and a consequent shortage of workers, these countries will need large-scale immigration, which must blend with "a fierce sense of national culture." The problem is how to accommodate these large waves of immigration, she says.

Pager is particularly concerned with institutions such as education, labor markets, and the criminal justice system that affect racial inequality both in the United States and abroad. Her recent research has demonstrated that the criminal justice system has emerged as a major mechanism of stratification in contemporary American society. Given the vast numbers of individuals now processed



Devah Pager

through the criminal justice system, Pager believes "we are in danger of producing a 'criminal underclass,' whose social, economic, and political opportunities are severely constrained."

Pager received her PhD in sociology from the University of Wisconsin in August. Her dissertation research provided evidence that a criminal record severely limits employment opportunities for both races, but even more so for African Americans.

Currently, there are 12-million ex-felons in the United States, nearly 8% of the working age population. Over half a million inmates are released from prison each year. Roughly two-thirds will be charged with new crimes and more than 40% will return to prison within three years, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The numbers are particularly staggering for young black men, who have a 28% likelihood of incarceration during their lifetime and a 50% likelihood if they drop out of high school.

To test her hypothesis that a criminal record differentially affects the outcomes of black and white job applicants, Pager developed an experimental "audit" design to compare the experiences of equally qualified black and white men in the context of real job searches. She found that a criminal record is associated with a 50% reduction in employment opportunities for whites and a 64% reduction for blacks.

"In our frenzy of locking people up, our 'crime control' policies may in fact exacerbate the very conditions that lead to crime in the first place," she con-

cluded. Noting that the inability to find good steady employment is one of the strongest predictors of recidivism, her work suggests that those who've served time are left with few viable alternatives.

In a co-authored paper with Eric Grodsky (*American Sociological Review* 2001), Pager found significant variation in the magnitude of black-white earnings inequality across occupations in the private sector, even after controlling for a variety of individual attributes. Occupations with large racial disparities tended to be client-based professions that rely on social networks for success. They concluded that segregated social networks, combined with the racial disparity in assets, are an important source of earnings inequality for blacks and whites in the same occupation.

Pager also co-authored a study with Lincoln Quillian (*American Journal of Sociology*, 2001) that found the percentage of young black men in a neighborhood is positively associated with perceived crime among neighborhood residents, even after controlling for the neighborhood's official crime and victimization rates.

Pager's international interests were stimulated by a fellowship in 1995 that took her to South Africa a year after Nelson Mandela's election effectively marked the end of apartheid. While studying educational reform in a black township outside of Capetown, she got a front-row view of the dismantling of the structures of apartheid.

When Pager returns to Northwestern in the summer of 2003, she is contemplating several projects for future study. Among them are replicating her dissertation audit design in other cities such as Chicago, New York, and Oakland, and extending her earnings inequality work to learn how these trends differ by gender and over time. She also is considering a more in-depth investigation into client-based occupations, such as the legal profession, which had one of the largest racial earnings gaps in her study.

Pager's latest working paper, "The mark of a criminal record," is posted on the IPR Web site at www.northwestern.edu/ipr.

Study Finds Most Americans Support Voting Rights for Ex-Felons

Tough-on-crime attitudes don't translate into support for a "civil death" penalty, according to a new study that finds the public is receptive to voting rights for ex-felons and convicts living in the community.

The study, by IPR faculty fellow Jeff Manza, Clem Brooks at Indiana University, and Christopher Uggen at the University of Minnesota, shows that only 31% of the public would allow current prisoners to vote — but up to 80% would restore the franchise to ex-felons. Similarly, 61%-68% do not believe in disenfranchising felony probationers and parolees who are not currently in prison.

Data for the study were drawn from a national telephone survey of 1,000 adults ages 18 and older conducted by Harris Interactive in July 2002. It is the first national level data collected to systematically assess American public opinion on issues of voting rights for criminal offenders.

Convicted felons who are not currently incarcerated make up approximately 75% of the disenfranchised population — more than 3 million Americans. In earlier work, the authors found that about 4.7 million, or 2.3% of the voting age population, were disenfranchised in the last presidential election by virtue of a felony conviction.

The study found support for enfranchisement drops considerably when the specific nature of a crime is incorporated into the survey question. But majorities still back voting rights in cases of violent crime (66%) and white collar crime (63%). The weakest candidates for enfranchisement seem to be sex



Jeff Manza

offenders, but even in this case a majority (52%) favored extending voting rights to sex offenders who have completed their sentences.

The drop-off in support for voting rights in the case of specific categories of crimes (as compared to the "generic ex-felon" question) suggests that politicians and activists could shape public attitudes by framing the debate in terms of specific offenses.

However, the similar levels of support — over 60% — for enfranchising white-collar and violent offenders, as well as for probationers and parolees, points to a strong fundamental preference for civil rights over the harsh punishment of criminals, the authors suggest. This conclusion squares with another survey finding that the public is no more opposed to generic civil rights for criminals than for other historically unpopular groups.

In fact, the survey found no statistically significant difference between public acceptance of an atheist's freedom of speech (82%) and an ex-felon's (85%). The authors consider this "prima facie evidence of Americans' willingness to extend civil liberties to criminal offenders."

Even in the specific case of a drug offender advocating legalization of controlled substances, some 72% were supportive of the hypothetical ex-felon's civil liberties. This is a striking level of support for a particularly unpopular form of speech by a particularly mistrusted group of individuals, and illustrates the broader sentiment toward welcoming ex-felons back into civil society.

The working paper is available at www.northwestern.edu/ipr.

Tracking The Road to Disenfranchisement

A new statistical analysis of the adoption of laws disenfranchising felons in the United States finds that these laws are rooted in a backlash against access to the ballot box on the part of African Americans.

The study, by sociologists Angela Behrens and Christopher Uggen at the University of Minnesota and IPR's Jeff Manza, traces the rise of state disfranchisement laws from 1850 to the present, illuminating the racial motivations behind statutes that still have a profound impact on the national political landscape.

While criminal disfranchisement is hardly an American invention, two-thirds of the states had no such laws in 1850. But by 2000, only Maine and Vermont had failed to restrict felon voting rights. The most restrictive form of disenfranchisement — ending suffrage for all ex-felons — expanded from

just over one-third of the states in 1850 to more than 75% in 1920, before a period of liberalization in the 1970s.

This critical change was largely a product of the period from the 1850s through the early 1900s, as the states grappled with the requirements of the 14th and 15th Amendments, which defined citizenship and brought suffrage to black males.

While ostensibly "race neutral," these laws were in many cases the product of explicitly racist arguments, including, in Alabama in 1901, a calculation of how many African Americans would be disenfranchised by crimes of "moral turpitude," such as wife-beating.

In the post-Jim Crow era, this overt racism was replaced with more subtle expressions of the same sentiments — the hostility described by "racial threat" theory (in simplest terms, the fear of loss of power a dominant group harbors for a significant minority) endured.

The influence of racial threat is demonstrated, according to the study, in the strong relationship between the composition of prison populations and the passage of disfranchisement laws. More than any other factor, the number of non-whites in a state's prisons is directly related to the probability that that state will restrict felon voting rights.

But more than an historical process, the evolution of disenfranchisement laws is a current event, something now contested on the state and national levels. In recent years, both conservative and liberal laws have been passed by the states, with liberalization of the right to vote the more prevalent outcome.

For example, three states curtailed their voting restrictions in 2001 and a bill to ban ex-felon disenfranchisement in federal elections reached the floor of the Senate in February 2002, although it was defeated.

Brooks Explores Race, Class, and Legal System



Research has shown that African-Americans are more likely than whites to be sentenced to death and executed. But law professor Richard Brooks has unexpectedly found that historically a person is 15% more likely to receive the death penalty in a judge's election year.

"This finding is really robust," explained Brooks, a new IPR faculty fellow and assistant professor of law at Northwestern. He believes his results make a persuasive case that decisions about life and death are responsive to politics.

Brooks' finding is contained in a new paper with Steven Rafael at UC-Berkeley entitled "Life terms or death sentences: The uneasy relationship between judicial elections and capital punishment" forthcoming in the *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*. It is based on 1870-1930 data on Chicago murders gathered by law school colleague Leigh Bienen, who is collecting new data through 1960. Brooks is even more interested in post-1960 data that would track all Chicago murders, disposition of those cases, and the judges that hear them.

This work is one aspect of Brooks's research on race, class, and perceptions of the American legal system. He is working on a book that focuses on African-American participation in the legal system, particularly their perceptions of fairness. A key finding so far is that better-off African Americans are more distrustful of the legal system than poor blacks, a situation he attributes to "relative deprivation."

His argument is based in part on the social and spatial mobility of wealthier African Americans who often move into

integrated settings where their higher visibility may subject them to racial profiling. But this is only part of the story. Brooks also maintains that better-off blacks, often in the minority in their communities, tend to identify more with their racial group, who in comparison are less fortunate than they.

Brooks is coediting the book with George Washington University sociologists Ronald Weitzer and Steven Tuch.

In 1998, Brooks earned both his PhD in economics from the University of California at Berkeley and his JD from the University of Chicago. While at Chicago, he studied with Nobel Prize winner and economist Ronald Coase, who steered Brooks into his second major line of research on organizational and institutional responses to laws and legal rules.

Part of this work concerns the way in which economic agents such as auto manufacturers, coal and oil suppliers, and electric power utilities organize themselves in response to changes in laws and regulations. A paper on the oil shipping industry, appeared in the *Journal of Law and Economics* in 2002.

Brooks is continuing to study the role of the black church in urban community development, especially in providing housing, reducing crime and developing businesses in poor neighborhoods. He is concerned that rushing into federal programs that support faith-based initiatives without proper attention to the churches' institutional norms and cultural history may be counterproductive and interfere with the commitment and incentives that motivated their efforts in the past.

Brooks also is examining how racial housing covenants have affected individual behavior, both before and after such covenants were ruled unconstitutional. Though covenants are no longer legal, they may be still operating as a convention that effectively promotes racial segregation in housing.

McGuire's Tax Research Aids Cities and States

Public finance expert Therese McGuire spent much of the fall editing a forum on public economics and health policy for the December issue of the *National Tax Journal*, for which she serves as co-editor. Among the issues raised in the forum is how health insurance is currently provided in the United States, the problems it faces, and the policy options for changing it.

McGuire is now editing a forum on research advances in education financing for the June '03 issue of the NTJ. She also is organizing a series of policy conferences "with William Gale at Brookings on "State Fiscal Crises: Causes, Consequences, Solutions that will be co-sponsored by The Urban Institute.

"We need a better understanding of how state spending and revenues react to changes in the business cycle, she said.

McGuire, who joined IPR as a faculty fellow this fall, is a professor of management and strategy at the Kellogg School of Management, and co-chair of IPR's Urban Policy Working Group. She specializes in state and local public finance, fiscal decentralization, property tax limitations, education finance, and regional economic development.

Much of her work has focused on tax policy, particularly as it affects regional economic development. Some of her earliest publications dealt with the effect of tax regimes in the local decisions of firms, and the effects of firm locations on

local taxes. More recently, she has been concerned with the effects of tax incentives for attracting business firms.

"A hallmark of my career has the symbiotic relationship between my research and my forays into public service and outreach," McGuire said. A former senior economist for the Minnesota Tax Study Commission, McGuire worked with a similar commission for the state of Arizona where she directed a study of the state's revenues and expenditures.

McGuire is co-authoring a paper that revisits her earlier research on the long-run impact of the Illinois tax caps on local government property taxes and school district funding.

She also is participating in a large comparative study of how a country's institutional setup affects spending at the state and local level. McGuire's focus is Spain, where she is examining the demand for public goods in a country where fiscal responsibility has devolved from a centralized system to autonomous communities who have spending authority but receive nearly all of their funding from grants.

Previously, McGuire was a professor of urban planning and public affairs and associate director of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



Yoon Examines Tort Reform, Juvenile Sentencing



Newly appointed IPR Faculty Fellow Albert Yoon's research stands at the intersection of law and policy to ask the questions: How does tort reform affect a patient's ability to recover damages in malpractice cases? What does adult sentencing do to juvenile offenders? How does non-resident voting do to local government tax rates and services?

Yoon, now in his first quarter at the IPR, plans to write a book on tort reform incorporating his published research on the impact of malpractice damage caps in Alabama with new work on malpractice arbitration laws and offer-of-settlement rules in automotive insurance disputes. Yoon's investigation compares the speed and efficacy of out-of-court proceedings under Nevada's mandatory arbitration laws with the same sort of disagreements in neighboring states. Are plaintiffs and defendants better off taking this out-of-court route?

The last part of his planned tort-reform "trilogy" will move away from medical malpractice to test empirically the oft-made claim that offer-of-settlement rules shorten costly litigation in automotive insurance disputes.

Moving beyond his current work on torts, Yoon proposes research into juvenile sentencing and the emergence of non-resident voting as a force in local elections.

Laws governing the sentencing of juveniles have evolved in the last decade and the rate of incarceration in state prisons for offenses by minors has increased significantly. Yoon plans to delve into the issue by examining the changes in sentencing that followed New York State's switch to a non-discretionary waiver process (one that doesn't allow prosecutors to decide when to waive cases from juvenile into adult criminal courts).

Yoon's proposed voting study would focus on laws in Colorado and elsewhere allowing non-residents to vote in elections for municipalities and other local taxing districts where they own property. Yoon plans to research both the existing scholarship on the constitutional issues of standing in local elections and the empirical implications of non-resident voting, such as changes in taxation and public services.

Yoon teaches torts and business associations at the School of Law, which he joined in 2001, and has a courtesy appointment as Assistant Professor of Political Science. He wrote briefs and drafted opinions for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, and analyzed truth-in-sentencing policies for the RAND corporation before beginning his research into malpractice litigation as a Robert W. Johnson Scholar at U.C. Berkeley in 1999. He holds a J.D. and Ph.D. in political science from Stanford University.

Explaining the Test Score Gap For Biracial Youth

Do biracial students fare differently in school than their monracial peers? If so, how much can be explained by the racial group with which they identify?

Using data from a survey of 10,275 students from nine high schools (17% of whom were biracial) in California and Wisconsin between 1987 and 1990, IPR sociologist Melissa Herman finds that biracial students with some black or Latino ancestry have significantly lower grades than those with no black or Latino ancestry. Furthermore, grades for the black-Latino group are considerably below the average of both monracial black and monracial Latino groups.

The race with which adolescents identify proves to be important in explaining achievement for some biracial students. Although there were no significant differences between black-white students who identify as black versus white, black-Asian students who report being black on surveys have significantly lower grades (average GPA of 2.14) than those who report being Asian (average GPA of 3.5). The grades of Asian-whites who identify as Asian are also significantly higher than those who identify as whites (GPAs of 3.15 versus 2.76). Latino-white students who identify as Latino have significantly lower grades than those who identify as white. In short, part-black and part-Latino youth who identify as black or Latino fare poorly compared with those who identify as white or Asian.

Factors that affect grades. Even after controlling for socioeconomic status and many environmental factors, the performance gap between white and minority youth cannot be

fully explained. Additional factors such as a student's optimism for securing future employment, having peers with high aspirations, fearing the consequences of failing in school, parenting styles, and placing importance on one's ethnic background all can affect performance.

Yet, except among monracial Latino youth, Herman finds little support for the theory that racial identity plays a large role in school achievement. This important and controversial result supports other recent findings demonstrating the fallibility of oppositional culture theory. Biracial youth, like monracial youth, achieve more in school when they have peers who are invested in the education system and when they fear the long-term consequences of failing in school.

Only black-whites and black-Asians are significantly different from their respective monracial counterparts. This may be because part-black youth have less choice in their ethnic identity. The "one-drop rule" suggests that multiracial individuals are assigned by society to the group with the lowest social value among the race groups they represent. Black Americans fall at the bottom of this ranking, followed by Latinos and Asians, with non-Hispanic northern Europeans at the top.

Herman concludes that culturally specific theories only explain a small portion, if any, of the achievement gap between racial groups. Theories that consider factors such as motivation, encouragement, and evaluation styles may be more productive avenues in advancing understanding of this crucial question, she suggests.

Research Data Center (continued from page 1)

U.S. law requires that the census microdata be kept confidential, restricting use of the data to secure RDC sites.

Approved research projects must demonstrate scientific merit, satisfy stringent confidentiality requirements, and provide valuable feedback to the Census Bureau in order to improve its data programs. RDC operating procedures, strict security, and strong legal safeguards are designed to protect the confidentiality of these data. Researchers must obtain special sworn status and become officers of the Census Bureau.

A governing board chaired by Argonne economist Gale Boyd will review proposed projects for scientific merit, potential breaches of confidentiality, and other concerns.

"The CRDC will enable area scientists to conduct more powerful social research while protecting the confidentiality of data," said IPR faculty fellow and statistics professor Bruce Spencer, principal investigator of the NSF grant.

Spencer points to a vast array of potential research topics that can benefit from use of the RDC. Among them are energy, the environment, and economic activity; changes in the structure of the U.S. and the Chicago economy; technological and organizational change; information dissemination; jobs, unemployment, and work retraining; crime, health, and child care; and immigration.

Several RDCs have been established since the Census Bureau's Center for Economic Studies (CES) was created to handle access to microdata on businesses in 1982, but this is the first in the Chicago area. Other RDCs are located in California (at Berkeley and UCLA), Pittsburgh (at Carnegie Mellon), Durham (at Duke), and Boston (in partnership with the National Bureau of Economic Research). Earlier this fall,



CRDC Chair Gale Boyd at data center briefing for Northwestern researchers

an RDC was opened in Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan.

CRDC Executive Director Bhash Mazumder describes the new facility as "a win-win situation for researchers and the bureau." The center will develop new data products and documentation for the bureau, while providing researchers with access to previously unavailable microdata.

Mazumder has used the Census microdata in his own research to create a large intergenerational sample with earnings histories for fathers and their children for a project on intergenerational mobility. Another researcher used block-level data from a

West Coast city that explained a large amount of observed racial segregation using characteristics of households, income, education, and language proficiency.

New projects starting shortly in the Chicago RDC will tackle health insurance and immigrant assimilation in the U.S. labor market.

Former IPR Associate Director Joseph Altonji was instrumental in bringing the center to Chicago. Altonji was principal investigator for the NSF grant before accepting an appointment as DeWitt Cuyler Professor of Economics at Yale University this fall.

The RDC has three review cycles a year: January 15, May 15, and September 15. CRDC Administrator Lynn Riggs is the liaison between the researchers and the Census Bureau and will help scholars with proposals.

The \$1.3-million in funding by the consortium is expected to cover the fees of approved researchers at their institutions over the next three years.

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