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OPPRESSION WITHIN THE WELFARE STATE: A CASE STUDY OF AN AFDC MOTHER

By

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ABSTRACT

OPPRESSION WITHIN THE WELFARE STATE: A CASE STUDY OF AN AFDC MOTHER

By

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This case study of a single mother living in Northern Michigan explores what it means to be a recipient of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in the contemporary United States. Using participant observation and interviews to capture the daily living experience of welfare recipients, the thesis suggests that the "dependency model" of welfare does not adequately explain the situation of women receiving governmental support.

Rather, the findings of the study suggest that these women are not immobilized within the welfare system. They maintain a critical consciousness of their situation and exercise reasoned action in their daily lives. That is, women may choose to comply or resist within the structural constraints of the welfare system, utilizing resources that are available to them. Both compliance and resistance reflect the conscious choices and the women's decisions are a product of their views of themselves, the context of their activities, the likely outcomes of their choices, and their sense of responsibility for their children.

For Mick

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Women and children are likely to be reduced to serious poverty when they are deprived of men's contribution to the family income. When they become clients of the U.S. welfare system, the system assumes the role of the absent father and husband. By accepting the minimal subsistence provided by the system, women are expected to submit to the rules the system sets for their daily lives, including such essentials as where they live, what medical care they receive, what relationships they have, and what food they eat. The system uses structural constraints to control the daily lives of these women. This paper is about the relationship between women and the welfare system.

Much of the literature on the welfare system emphasizes that "welfare mothers" become dependent on the system and consequently immobilized in their daily lives (Harrington 1962; Piven and Cloward 1979; Seligman 1970; and Sidel 1986). Yet, my actual contact with women on welfare seemed to suggest that they were far from passive and "immobile". Therefore, despite the presence of significant constraints in the system, the dependency model did not seem to adequately explain the life situations of these women. Rather, actual experience with the welfare system raised a

number of questions: How did these women maintain their sense of agency within the structural constraints of the welfare system? In what ways did they avoid immobilization and exercise consciousness and reasoned action in their daily lives? In what ways did they intervene, or refrain from intervention in their daily lives, and how did they respond to this dialectic of compliance and resistance?

In an attempt to answer these questions and to better understand both the types of control and the strategies women employ to function within the welfare system, eight women who are recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) were interviewed. I first met Reba, the main respondent, five years ago when I was a student in her home town. I was living in University Housing and was also an AFDC recipient. Reba was my neighbor and I became a part of a network of single mothers going to school, and subsisting on AFDC. As I became involved in this group, I learned some of the strategies of living within the welfare system which included "working the system," creating cooperative living arrangements and providing each other with mutual support. We had our own subculture, presenting one face to the welfare system, at times compliant and at times resistant, and then coming home to be ourselves and face the realities of motherhood on a limited income, including the demoralization and deprivation that goes hand-in-hand with the welfare check. There was a tacit but clear

goal among the welfare mothers that "we are here to raise our children right now and we will do whatever it takes to do that." Having established that priority, daily life became a process of choice -- choosing to comply with or to resist the welfare system to meet that end.

As a graduate student, I have become increasingly intrigued with oppression, especially the structural constraints of the welfare system, and the ways in which women's lives reflect the dialectic of compliance and resistance necessary to operate within that system. In attempting to better understand this process, I returned to Reba and our network of friends in Worcester.

In this project, I have constructed a descriptive case study, focusing on one woman's daily life but with elements of all eight interviews contained in the narrative. By analyzing this case, it became possible to understand the structural constraints of the welfare system as they affected women's daily lives, and to identify the strategies of compliance and resistance that women employed to meet their needs and those of their children.

The paper begins with a brief review of the welfare system in the U.S., specifically AFDC. Next, the dependency theory of poverty and the significance of individual agency are discussed. Following this discussion, a case study narrative is presented. This narrative is then analyzed in terms of the respondent's strategies of compliance and

resistance within the welfare system. In the final section, the notion of dependency is discussed and its applicability to the respondent and other women on welfare is carefully considered.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The relevant literature for this project included readings on the U.S. welfare system, feminist theory, dependency theory and agency. In order to contextualize the life experiences of women on welfare, literature on the welfare system in the U.S. was the first area of focus. Literature on the welfare system emphasizes that poverty is a problem experienced by many women and children in the United States. The odds that people will be poor at some point in their lives are twice as great if they are female than if they are male (Freeman 1984, 492). Almost two-thirds of the impoverished adults in the U.S. are women, and one out of every three people living below the poverty line is a child (Freeman 1984, 492).

Welfare programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) were designed to deal with this problem. Enacted in 1962, AFDC is an outgrowth of the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) provision of the 1935 Social Security Act. In order for a family to qualify for AFDC cash assistance, there must be children who are deprived of the financial support of one of their parents due to death, disability, absence from the home, or unemployment.[1] In addition, the family's income must fall below a

predetermined needs standard. The actual amount of the AFDC[2] payment depends on the number of persons in the household and the amount of other income and assets. AFDC recipients may be eligible to receive medical services under the Medicaid program (Title IX of the Social Security Act) and other services such as food stamps.

Although AFDC was implemented to "fix" the problem of poverty, even before the Reagan budget cuts, no state in the country provided AFDC payments above the poverty level.[3] A further look at the 1984 system of AFDC reveals these facts:

* Four out of five AFDC families are headed by women.
* Eighty-eight percent of all AFDC recipients, a total of over seven million people, are children.
* Half of these children are eight years old or younger.
* Approximately 45 percent of the children on AFDC are eligible because their parents are divorced or separated.
* One out of every four American children will depend on AFDC at some point in his/her life (Sidel 1987, 84).

Thus, as these statistics indicate, poverty in the U.S. is a significant, ongoing social problem which has a specific impact on women and children.

Other literature documents the fact that poverty weakens physical and emotional strength and perpetuates the conditions of subordination of women and children. For example, poor people may get sick more than anyone else in society, due to inadequate housing and unhygienic conditions, inadequate diets, and lack of decent medical care (Belle 1982; Harrington 1962). When they become sick,

they are sick longer than any other group in society. Because they are sick more often and longer than anyone else, they lose wages and work. And because of this, they cannot pay for good housing, for a nutritious diet, and for doctors.

This is only one example of the vicious circle of dependency described in the literature. Women on AFDC are kept dependent on the welfare system for various reasons. Many welfare programs (such as AFDC) reinforce subordination and dependence. The notion of "welfare" brings to mind notions of care. Yet welfare programs are tainted with stigma and thoughts of "deservingness," and once the welfare aid is received it acts as proof of individual inadequacy. For example, food stamps and/or a medicaid card serve as immediate visual labels that one is "on welfare." The ideas of the "morality of the work ethic" and self-sufficiency, which are parts of the patriarchal ideology in our capitalistic society, reinforce the notion of the pathology of the individual as the cause of poverty (Lee and Colin 1988; Ford 1988).

One of the key issues in the literature is whether the welfare system, as it is currently organized, promotes chronic dependency. There are many authors who say it does (Harrington 1962; Piven and Cloward 1979; Seligman 1970; and Sidel 1987). There are those who claim young women become pregnant in order to qualify for AFDC and then use the money

to set up their households (Seligman 1970). There are those who say that the benefits provided by AFDC are so minimal that it is virtually impossible for a family to ever get ahead (Piven and Cloward 1971; Sidel 1987). There are those who suggest that just being a welfare recipient is so stigmatizing and debilitating that recipients take on a sense of fatalism, of hopelessness and powerlessness (Belle 1982). And there are those who say that AFDC is a system of state paternalism that seeks to control poor women's lives as familial dependence once did (Quick 1977). Each of these analyses suggest that the welfare system is a form of social control over women, in this case, over single women with children, and the inevitable result is dependency and immobilization.

Women's powerlessness also has been found to be both internalized as well as externally imposed. This internalization may account for women's role in their immobilization and compliance within the welfare system. Ortner writes of this enigma, "one of the great puzzles of the women problem - women's nearly universal unquestioning acceptance of her own devaluation" (1976, 76). Thus, individual women may perform individual acts that do not appear to be in their own immediate interests, but seem to maintain the structured relation of men's collective power (via the welfare system) over women.

This compliance is visible, and a lack of direct resistance is a strategy the women use to deal with the welfare system. Women on welfare must abide by certain rules and agree to regulation and social control by the welfare system to receive monthly AFDC benefits. Thus, on the surface, AFDC recipients may appear passive in the face of the persistent intrusions into their personal domain and the suppression of their living standards.

What is less apparent is the fact that these women are also agents within the oppression of the welfare system, and that they have the capacity to make choices. To be able to "act otherwise" means being able to intervene in the world with the result of influencing a specific process. As Giddens writes:

> . . . to be an agent is to be able to deploy (chronically, in the flow of daily life) a range of causal powers, including that of those deployed by others. Action depends upon the capability of the individual to 'make a difference' to a preexisting state of affairs or course of events (1984, 14).

Acknowledging the potential for agency suggests the use of a dialectical approach to analyzing women's poverty. That is, since there may be ways in which women react and interact with the system by complying and resisting within the welfare system, the notion of dependency must be reconsidered. This approach is based in the Marxist conception of powerlessness and dependency, as concrete and materially determined; and the notion that it must be

concretely and externally undone to be changed (MacKinnon 1982).

Women as actors continuously monitor the flow of their activities and maintain an understanding of the grounds of their activity. An AFDC mother is aware of her situation and oppression (many times more so than others who claim to be the "experts"). Though subject to control and oppression, a woman may still make choices, guided by her awareness, to maximize her sense of freedom and autonomy within the structural constraints. Additionally, women act consciously, with an understanding of their situation, even when they may seem to others to be acting against their own interests. They have reasons for their actions, reasons that consistently influence the flow of day-to-day activities. Agents virtually all the time know what their actions are and why it is they carry them out. Yet, the activities of AFDC mothers are embedded within the welfare system, and are elements of, and structured properties of, that institution. Thus, acknowledging that women are agents does not deny that they are agents within structural constraints. Structures limit behavior, although within those limits, the agent may be capable of making choices.

All forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors. This is the "dialectic of control" in social systems (Giddens 1984, 16). Living on welfare

involves a struggle between the system and the individual and results in the synthesis of a daily life of resistance and compliance.

It was my purpose in this project to capture the "active" components of the daily lives of mothers who are AFDC recipients, with the intention of identifying the structural constraints imposed on women's daily lives by the welfare system, as well as the potential for compliance and resistance that is representative of their agency.

CHAPTER THREE

DESCRIPTION OF THE METHOD

The method used to collect data for this paper was a combination of interviews and participant observation. The data are presented in the form of a case study narrative. This method of collecting data was chosen because it has the advantage of experiencing real-life situations. Dorothy Smith argues for a "sociology for women" which, she says,

> preserves the presence of subjects as knowers and actors. It does not transform subjects into objects of study or make use of conceptual devices for eliminating the active presence of subjects (1987, 16).

This method takes the subject's immediate experiences and explores how that experience is extended into social and political realms (Howard 1989, 21). It uses the experienced worlds of the actors (respondents) as a source of concerns, information and understanding and redirects sociology back to its roots in the realm of experience.

To collect the data, I spent three days and two nights with Reba.* About the same time, over a two-week period, I interviewed seven other women who relied on AFDC as their means of support. They were all single mothers who had been divorced, with children ranging in age from three to nineteen.

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* The names of the people in this study have been changed to protect their anonymity. Real names of people and places are not used.

Four of them were attending school and lived at University Housing, the other three lived elsewhere in the town. Reba referred me to each of them.

There were common themes in all of the interviews, but the most prevalent similarity was the women's desire to share their stories. Each interview lasted at least two hours, some continuing up to three or four hours. After I completed the first three interviews, I began to relax and <u>really</u> listen, becoming more interested with the women, as people, and their stories, rather than in adhering to the very well-defined and rigid interview schedule that I anticipated using.

As I listened I began to hear the common themes of the interviews, the similar feelings about the oppression they all shared. By the time I got to my eighth, and final interview with Reba, I was using open-ended questions. I had altered my interview format along the way, and with Reba I had reached a stage where I allowed the daily events of her life, to structure the format of the interview. The case study presented in the form of Reba's narrative is used because her story resonates and reflects the experiences of all eight women. Women need to be heard, women need to articulate and express who they are so they <u>can</u> be heard.

In constructing and analyzing the case study, I am also bringing in my own perspective. As a former client of the

welfare system, I have a heightened awareness of this subject. I believe that this awareness results in added insight to the material, an understanding that goes beyond previous analyses and reaches into the inner lives of women on welfare. At the same time, I realize that my own experiences flavor this research and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDY

In this chapter I first offer a description of the rural region in which Reba lives and discuss elements of rural poverty. Next, I discuss the issue of inter-generational welfare and long-term dependency on the welfare system. Following this is Reba's narrative, her story in her own words, as told to me during the three days that I stayed with her. The narrative consists of those portions of Reba's dialogue that seemed most illustrative of her daily life as a welfare recipient.

Background to the Case Study

It is important to situate Reba's individual story within the context of the region in which she lives. Although poor people live everywhere, some areas and regions have such heavy concentrations of rural poverty that they stand out. The Upper Great Lakes is one such region that contains a distinct concentration of the rural poor.

Reba lives in Worcester, a port town located in a remote area on Lake Superior. This area (which includes the northern parts of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota) is frequently referred to as the "cutover region" and is often described as another Appalachia, or another Ozarks (Seligman

1970) because of its rural isolation and economic deprivation.

The town was founded in the 1840s and enjoyed the prosperity afforded by its rich iron ore and timber resources until the late 1950s when the depletion of these resources threw the area into unemployment and poverty.[4] It seems unlikely that the previous peaks of employment will ever be reached again. Tourism, ski resorts, and new industries appear to be the only way out of the economic decline, yet the future of the area remains unknown.

People are leaving this region. Unemployment has forced them to choose either relief or migration out to search for work. This out-migration is typical in these strictly rural areas that have the lowest incomes (Freeman 1984, 156). This has meant that those left behind are often worse off than before and that their chances of escaping from poverty, or avoiding deeper poverty, have been reduced. This is partly because the areas have too many old people and children for the working-age population to support. Partly, it is because a smaller population, spread too sparsely, cannot support or build a strong, flexible social and economic infrastructure in the area. And largely it is due to the distribution problems inherent in the U.S. capitalist system.

There are not enough new jobs opening up in rural areas to alleviate rural unemployment or make a dent in rural

poverty. Even where new jobs do appear, the applicant needs help in acquiring a new skill for the job, in adjusting to new working conditions, or in moving to a new location.

Most of the rural poor in the cutover region are white (Labadie, Wang and Beegle, 1983). Poverty in Michigan is most severe for female-headed households with young children. White female-headed households with children under the age of six accounted for 52.2 percent of the poor in Michigan in 1980 (Saari 1980).

Long-term dependence on the welfare system is a characteristic of Reba's life. She has been a welfare recipient for seventeen years, and her own mother also raised her while receiving support from the welfare system. When Reba was thirteen years old her mother remarried a man who was employed and could support them.

A common belief is that long-term dependency is less prevalent than short term dependency. It is true that there are a great many more short-term episodes of AFDC use than is commonly assumed. Duncan and Hoffman show that 48 percent of all women beginning a "spell" of AFDC use will remain on the rolls for only 1 to 2 years, and 17 percent for 8 or more years (Block 1986, 63).

However, a different picture is apparent when we ask how many people on the AFDC rolls <u>at a particular point in time</u> are in the midst of a long or short spell. Only 15 percent are undergoing a short spell, but 49 percent are

undergoing one that will last eight or more years (Block 1986, 63). Looking at the rolls over a period of time shows a high degree of transiency, but looking at them at a point in time emphasizes persistent use. At any one time, about two-thirds of the mothers on AFDC are either continuous or multiple recipients.

The longer-term recipients of welfare tend to be younger, unmarried women. For this younger group (older and previously married women remain on welfare less time), welfare provides the financial means to rear children in the absence of male wages and realistic opportunities to work, at least while their children are very young (Sidel 1987).

Reba first became a welfare recipient at the age of eighteen. Although she had her first child at the age of seventeen, her mother supported her and the child until she became eighteen and was no longer a minor. Over the next ten years, Reba went off AFDC and into the work force seven times, each period lasting no longer than eleven months. All of her jobs were minimum wage jobs which offered no benefits. As Reba states it, "I couldn't afford to be employed."

CASE STUDY NARRATIVE

When I went to interview her, Reba was 33 years old and did not have a wage job. She had been camping for one and one-half weeks at a local tourist park. Staying with her

was Carol, a 19 year old woman who had been Reba's roommate for a year. When Reba's baby Coco was born 18 months ago with Down's Syndrome, Reba had advertised for live-in help (in exchange for reduced room and board). Carol waitressed at a local restaurant and also received General Assistance.[5]

Reba's son, John, was camping there also. He was seventeen and would be a high school senior in the fall. Reba's daughter, Coco, was eighteen months old, but developmentally disabled due to Down's Syndrome. She functioned at the six-month level, and had had open heart surgery six months earlier to correct a birth defect in her heart.

Also frequently visiting the campsite was Reba's sister, Jill. Jill was 27 years old and currently attending the university and living in University Housing. She had a seven year old daughter and was also an AFDC recipient.

I met with and interviewed each of these people, as well as seven other welfare mothers in the two weeks I was in Worcester. Three of those days I camped with Reba and participated in her daily life.

When I drove into the tourist park to meet with Reba, the park was packed with campers with out-of-state license plates. Reba had borrowed two tents and had them pitched at a campsite in the middle of the park. One was a four-person tent where she and her baby slept, and where she stored her food and clothing. The other was a pup tent, where her

roommate, Carol, slept. Her son, John, slept in their rusty old '73 Chevy. The campsite also had a picnic table and two cots for lounging (borrowed from a friend). John had rigged up a stereo system with speakers from the car. When I arrived there at noon, the day was hot and humid, in the 90s, and the black flies were biting relentlessly.

Reba had put Coco in a playpen and covered it with a sheet to protect her from the flies. They had just returned from the showers at the campsite's main building (one could purchase 5 minutes worth of hot water for 35 cents). Also there were Reba's sister, Jill, and Reba's roommate, Carol.

Carol was lying on a cot and reading a Self magazine, while Jill and Reba sat at the picnic table and smoked cigarettes and drank pop. When I sat down with them, the conversation turned to welfare. Jill began the dialogue:

> I don't like people who screw-up the system by cheating. It screws it up for everyone else. I work around it so it doesn't affect my assistance.

Carol added:

> I don't report my tips and I only work the minimum amount of hours so I'll still be eligible for assistance.

But Reba explained the problems of working for a wage:

> You get the minimum wage on the job. . . that's $3.35 an hour. Out of this you pay $1.50 an hour for babysitting. That leaves you $1.85 an hour with which you buy and maintain a car to get back and forth to work, plus pay for gas and insurance and buy the license plates. Nothing is left for food, rent, clothes and medical care. No minimum wage job gives you benefits like insurance, either. Even if you work full-time you don't make any money. At least on AFDC, I can be with my

> kids and get Medicaid. Jill, you know how many times I've had to quit working 'cause I couldn't afford it anymore.

Jill added:

> I sure do. I'm forced to keep my hours down myself or they'll yank me off. I wouldn't mind, but I want the Medicaid.

Jill left the campsite with her boyfriend and Carol went to the 35-cent showers to get ready for work. She was waitressing on the afternoon shift.

While Coco slept in the playpen, Reba talked about her homelessness:

> I'll be here for another three or four days, anyways. Until I can move into a new place. I've already been here for a week and a half and I'm completely burnt on it.
>
> We'd been living in a very nice two-story house for seven months. Now I know why they rented it to us right away. . . they were going to sell it and it was hard for them to find tenants that knew their time was limited. It seemed as though I had just settled in when the house was sold. We had been there seven months and I was really starting to feel secure when they told me I would have to move within a month.
>
> I began frantically looking for another place. This was hard for me to do in the first place because Coco has been sick since she was born. . . because she's Down's Syndrome she's always getting a cold or earache. . . and also because our car's screwed up. Anyway, no one on ADC ever has money for gas.
>
> Finally, I found a place I wanted. This is after I was turned down at three other places that I liked. The others wouldn't rent to me, even though I had four excellent references from previous landlords. I pay the rent and I'm clean. I finally had Carol, my roommate, sign the lease 'cause she has a real job as a waitress at a local restaurant.

They don't want to rent to welfare. They immediately think you're irresponsible and dirty. What it boils down to is that you must start lying. If you are honest about AFDC, they won't rent to you. So you learn to lie. Some women call it "working the system." After a while on AFDC, you learn these tricks of the trade.

Well, it's fucked because I believe in God and I also believe in Karma. . . that what you put out is what comes back to you. Although I have to lie, I believe that I make up for it with my daughter, Coco. She is a gift from God because she'll never be able to deceive. . . her life of being Down's Syndrome is a life of pure, clean honesty.

Anyway, I had to be out of our house by July 15... and I couldn't move into this new place until August 1. This was the fourth place I tried and when I finally got it, I was so tired of being put on trial that I took it, even though that left me with two weeks with no place to stay. Thank God it's summertime so I could camp out! I decided to make it an adventure. I like camping, so I borrowed the tents from Bill, and the cookstove from Martha, and Carol had the cots. I decided to look at it like a vacation. People come up here to camp out on vacations all the time, don't they? I am surrounded by tourists. . . just look around. The only thing is, I'm not enjoying it.

The heat and flies are unbearable. The vacation spirit is killed when you worry all the time. I can barely get together the $8.50 a night it costs to stay here. My stomach burns. I feel sick over it and I'm just plain scared. When you have an eighteen month old baby that's sick, you want a roof over her head. It eats away at me. Also, my sign is Cancer, and we like to settle in. . . make a nest for ourselves.

I was just starting to feel settled in at my last place. I put lots of time and energy into that house. Wherever I move, I try to make it a home... I want it cozy and comfortable for me and my family. I painted the downstairs walls white and refinished the staircase. My life is my home, and when I settle in somewhere, I do it with my heart. I feel like my home is my little corner of the world, and I live by that saying, "home is where the heart is!" It was the nicest place I'd

> ever had and now I know why they rented it to me... because they wanted temporary tenants. Still, I think the realtors felt bad because they let me go rent-free this month so that I could afford a security deposit on my next place.

At this time, Reba left in my car to go do the laundry at University Housing (where her sister lives). Reba drove off and as I sat babysitting Coco at the picnic table, I surveyed the campsite. It was obvious that even here, Reba had tried to "nestle in." She had draped the picnic table with a red and white checkered tablecloth. On one of the tables stood various items -- salt and pepper shakers, ketchup, a large plastic bottle of Pepsi, a box of crackers, handiwipes, Coco's baby bottles and a teething ring. On the other end of the table was a mirror, shampoo, bar soap in a soap dish, paper towels and an ashtray. Under the picnic table was a cooler that held ice, luncheon meat, bread, milk, cheese, jars of peanut butter and jelly, and a glass jar of orange juice.

Next to the cooler was a large box of generic disposable diapers and a large plastic jug of water. A playpen and a stroller stood a few feet from the picnic table and in the center of a circle bounded by the two tents, picnic table, and car. Coco slept quietly in the playpen which was covered with a sheet. Between two large jack pines, Reba had hung a clothesline. Towels and jeans hung from it.

On the entrance to the larger tent, Reba had hung a cardboard sign that read "Friends Become our Chosen Families." A broom rested against the side of this tent and, as we talked, Reba would periodically sweep the grounds of the campsite.

In front of the entrances to both tents were rag rugs. Reba would shake these out at times, too. While she talked she would move about doing these domestic chores, often pausing to smoke a cigarette and talk.

When Reba returned after two hours, she began telling me her thoughts on money. She had stopped at the store on the way back and bought chicken and charcoal, and she began to cook dinner on the grill that the campsite provided. Coco woke up and as Reba cooked, I fed her a bottle of milk with two eye-droppers of antibiotic medicine in it. Reba continued her story:

> Well, I don't know if I can keep this meal down. My stomach is really upset. I'll take some Tums, but I think it's just nerves. I wish someone would bring a joint over -- pot seems to settle me down.
>
> Usually I can trade some food stamps for a joint or two. Now I have $200 in my tent that I got back as a security deposit refund from my last place. I could use some of that to buy pot. I was supposed to give all of it to my landlord yesterday. His office is closed now, so I'll go over on Monday and give it to them.
>
> I won't open a bank account because you have to show reports to welfare of any bank accounts that you have. If they see $200 in there, they'll cut my food stamps. But I do worry about it being stolen. When Coco had her heart surgery and was in I.C.U., someone stole my purse from the I.C.U.

waiting room. It had $400 in it that I had borrowed from relatives. After we eat, we'll go to a friend's house and hide it in her potted plants. She's left for the weekend, but she gave me her key.

The thing about money, when you're on welfare is that it's not like real money. To me, it has little value. First, because there's so little of it, and second, because it's never really <u>your</u> money. . . It's the government's money. If anything, money's a hassle.

If you are lucky enough to find a landlord that will rent to you, they will want the rent "vendored." This means that you never even see the money. . . it goes straight from the government's hands to the landlord's. They bypass you entirely. The vendor program makes you feel like you're not even there.

If you screw-up even once on AFDC, they take you off unless you agree to be vendored. They call it voluntary, and you have to sign a paper that you requested it. But it's not a choice. They think they've got us under their thumbs.

They vendor utilities, too. Even with vendoring, there's never enough money to meet the bills. Most months, especially in the winter, I have to go through all the shit of applying for emergency aid.

For example, I can't get my utilities turned on at my next place because the utility company told me that I had $130 in arrearage when I went to transfer my electric from my old place to my new one. I didn't even know this because, like I said, when you're vendored the utility company deals directly with Social Services. I figured I overspent my limit. So the utility company said I would have to pay that bill before I could get my power turned on at my new place.

I called my social worker and she told me that a $40 deposit to the utility company would be enough, but that first I had to go to the power company and get a statement of how much was paid on my last bill. Then I have to make an appointment with a social worker and show all the receipts from the first of the year. She must okay that and then she calls the utility company

> and gives them the go ahead. Then I have to take the utility company the $40 deposit. If it all comes together, then I'll get my power on.

As Reba talked, she reached for a cigarette and after inhaling, set it in the ashtray and picked up her Tums. She put two of these antacids in her mouth and chewed while she smoked:

> Now you figure that out. . . That's four trips -- two to Social Services and two to the utility company, and these places are seven miles apart. I have a car that barely runs, with no insurance, no gas, and a baby that's sick. There is no bus to the utility company that's five miles out of town. Even if I do get my car running, I'm always worried that I'll get stopped for a loud muffler or expired license plates and then they'll see that I have no insurance and I'll get in trouble. Or, worse yet, I'll get in an accident, or maybe I'll run out of gas and there I am, stuck on the road with Coco.
>
> Sometimes I feel like I'm just a puppet on a string. I feel like I'm invisible, like I have no say in anything that goes on. I just do what they say and hope that in the end, I'll have food and shelter for myself and my kids.
>
> At one point my sister, Jill, and I moved in together. We thought that if we shared a house, we could make ends meet better. . . up 'til then Jill had lived in the upstairs apartment and paid $175 a month and one-third of the utilities (Coco was responsible for one-third according to her grant). If we rented under one name instead of two on the lease, we could rent the house for a total of $400 instead of $475. So we called our social workers and they told us to go for it. They told us it would <u>not</u> affect our grants.
>
> The first thing they did was cut our food stamps. When we called the workers back, they said, "How much rent do you pay?" We said, "$200 a piece." My worker said, "There you go -- you could never afford that nice a place if you lived by yourselves." Sure, we had a nice house, but our fucking refrigerators were bare.

The chicken was cooked by now and we ate our dinner. After this, Reba washed up the few dishes with water from a large jug that she'd had John fill at the campsite's main building.

John and three of his friends stopped by and visited for about an hour. John and Reba talked about John babysitting Coco that night so Reba could go out. John wanted to go to a party with his friends so I agreed to babysit. John then left with his friends and Reba and I resumed our discussion. This time the conversation turned to relationships with men. Reba continued:

> Occasionally, I'll see Coco's father. I'll run into him, but I think he's afraid of me. . . He avoids me.
>
> Social Services requires that you give them the father's name and address and then they pursue him through Friend of the Court. That's a legal system where a lawyer goes after the father if they can find him and he doesn't admit paternity, they can force him to have a blood test. If that proves that he's the father, then he's legally required to make child support payments. If he makes the payments, the amount of money he pays is deducted from your grant. Most of us don't care if the Friend of the Court pins down the fathers or not. . . our grants are just decreased is all. They did all this with Ray (Coco's dad). . . he took the blood test and it proved he was the father. But he doesn't have a job either, so he can't make the payments. I still want to be friends with him and have him come see his daughter, but the process has scared him off, I think.
>
> Mike is the man in my life right now, but he has another woman, too. All of my mates have had other women -- every single fucking one of them. It's no wonder my self-esteem is shot. But still, Mike gives me what I call the three S's -- Sympathy, Sincerity and Security.

> He gives me support a lot of the time, but headaches, too. If Social Services finds out that you are having a relationship with a man, they want him to help you right away. You can't have a decent relationship because you are constantly hiding it so they won't cut your benefits. . . it drives the men away and you never get married. I think they [Social Services] like to keep you alone and in their control.

Since Reba had decided that she wanted to go to some bars that night with some of her friends, we agreed to resume our interview the next morning.

The following morning, Reba was very ill. She had severe stomach pains, nausea, and diarrhea. At 9 A.M. I took her to the emergency room at a local hospital. Her roommate, Carol, stayed at the campsite to take care of Coco.

At first, the staff at the emergency room was reluctant to admit Reba because she didn't have her Medicaid card with her. She told them that it was packed in storage in a friend's basement with her other things. We were at the emergency room for three hours, which seemed strange to me as I waited, since there was only one other patient there. Eventually, Reba came out. She was crying. We went to a local restaurant where she talked about her problems in dealing with the medical system.

> They want me to go into treatment for alcoholism because they knew I was hung-over from last night. I think that's why they kept me there so long. . . they were hoping I'd give in. But I held firm. Who would take care of my kids?

They would stick my kids in foster care and then, if they decided I was unfit as a mother, I would never get them back. I'm sure I could just pick up and go into treatment for 30 days. . . frankly, it would be wonderful. . . at least I would have a bed and three meals a day. It would be a rest, actually it would be a luxury. But, I have my kids to take care of.

They said I have an ulcer probably and that I shouldn't drink or smoke. I need to get some medicine but I can't get it without my Medicaid card. Carol is on medicine that's like that. I'll borrow some from her and then pay her back when I get mine.

They want me to get stomach X-rays. Well, I won't drink for a while, although I don't think it's a question of whether I can handle it. The worst part is that I spent $50 out of the $200 deposit fund. I'll just have to see if they can let me pay half of it this month, and the other half next month. Or, I'll take it out of my AFDC check on Monday.

I'm stressed out and drinking helps me relax and forget for a while. It's a diversion. But, in the end it doesn't help matters anyway. I can't afford to be sick. I'll look for support. A lot of times I have to ask for it and now is one of those times. It helps just to have someone listen. When I get stressed, I use sex and drink to deal with it. Talking with someone helps though. . . because they can help problem-solve, give suggestions, or tell me if my ideas are good or not. Or if I'm justified in feeling a certain way. I ask that a lot!

The real trial was when Coco had her heart surgery six months ago. I really had to deal with the whole system then. That was a real eye-opener. I was involved with Mental Health, too, because Coco is mentally disabled. I had worked for them before as an aide, but it's a lot different being on the other side.

Mainly, I get the feeling that Coco was being herded through. She was eligible for services that she frequently didn't receive, simply because I didn't know about them and so didn't ask for them.

> She had her surgery in Lake Park. I stayed at the Ronald McDonald House. . . it was like a tea party when I got together with the other parents. Right there, I felt they didn't feel comfortable with me, because they were afraid I'd rock the boat. I get tired of the bullshit and I'm one to tell people what I think. For example, when my pediatrician would talk to me to advise me on something, she would often begin with. . . "Usually my ADC mothers do this. . ." It's those labels and the attitudes that go with them that get to me. Like we don't have our own minds and our own set of circumstances. Like we're not heard or seen. I wanted to continue on the W.I.C.[6] program, too, but they insisted on examining Coco again and taking her blood, even though I offered to show them her recent medical records from Lake Park Hospital. I told them "no" because I couldn't bear the thought of Coco being poked and prodded again after all she'd been through. They took me off the program. I felt like they just wanted to see her 'cause she was Down's Syndrome. Well, Coco is a gift. A Down's Syndrome child is an entity meeting itself, at the end of a chain of lifetimes.

We finished lunch. Reba looked exhausted and her eyes were red and puffy. We went by a K-Mart to buy her an antacid, and then back to the campsite so Reba could feed Coco and take a nap with her. When she woke up, we resumed our conversation. Reba talked about food stamps:[7]

> Using food stamps is humiliating. My friend, Cheryl Rose, dresses up for her pride when she goes grocery shopping. If she sees someone she knows, she'll go down another aisle. Another friend, Pat, will only shop at a store that stays open all night. She'll go after 10 P.M. to avoid people. I don't care personally -- I just swallow my pride and go when I can get a ride.
>
> You can only buy food with food stamps. You can't get stuff like toilet paper or soap. Also, you can't get prepared food. . . like salads from the Deli. You can't buy alcohol, but you can get candy bars.

> Most stores allow food stamps, but not all stores. They usually have a sign in the window that says, "We Accept Food Stamps". . . if you buy something expensive like a steak, the cashier or the people in back of you in the line get disgusted.
>
> We never have enough food to last us for a month. I'm always short on food the last two weeks.[8] My sister, Jill, and I will go to St. Vincent's [a charitable religious organization] to get free food once a week. They give you surplus food, or food that is past the expiration date.
>
> At the end of the month, we're usually desperate. . . John, my son, is so good about it. He'll just say he forgot to eat. I know he's embarrassed about food stamps, but he won't admit it. He has lots of false pride. If we don't have enough money to go out to eat, he just won't ask. If we don't have enough money to do laundry at the laundromat, he'll wash his clothes out in the bathtub. Part of the problem is that I'll use my food stamps to pay for babysitting and things like storage.

This conversation was interrupted when four of Reba's friends came to the campsite. They brought a six-pack of beer and everyone except Reba drank one. We all sat around the picnic table until it got dark. Soon after, we went to sleep.

The next morning when I awoke, Reba was already at the cookstove making what she called "lumberjack coffee." Reba, John, Carol and I breakfasted on donuts and coffee. It was Monday morning and I offered to drive Reba on her errands, which included Social Services, the utility company and the new landlord's. If she got these things taken care of, she could begin to move. She had to wait until 1 P.M. to get

her AFDC check for the security deposit, but she could take care of some other business until then.

When we left, we first went to her friend Debbie's house so Reba could use her phone (she had to call Social Services, her Mom, and U-Haul). I next drove her to Social Services for an appointment with the social worker, then to the power company where she picked up receipts from the past year. Then we went back to Social Services where she turned in her receipts and signed the forms. After this we returned to Debbie's house (she had been watching Coco). Shortly after this I left and this concluded our interview.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS

In this section, I analyze Reba's narrative by exploring these themes: homelessness, financial problems, relationships with men, medical care, and food stamps. In each area I examine the structural constraints imposed by the welfare system on Reba's daily life, as well as illustrate the choices she makes as she functions within them. My analysis focuses on the dialectic of compliance and resistance that is inherent in Reba's daily life, and the negative and positive consequences that result from the choices she makes. My purpose was to understand Reba's daily life as the synthesis that is a result of the struggle between compliance and resistance.

Homelessness

Reba chose to accept a temporary rental (a house that was up for sale) because it was a nice house, "the nicest place I'd ever had", and making a home was very important to her. She described it as:

> My life is my home, and when I settle in somewhere, I do it with all my heart. I feel like my home is my little corner of the world, and I live by that saying, "Home is where the heart is."

In choosing this rental, the negative consequence was that she had to move in seven months. Still, she was aware that

the house was for sale and complied with the potential short-term rental in order to provide herself and her children with a home. Ironically, her desire for security forced her to settle for less than she wanted.

She was rejected by three potential landlords in her search for a new place:

> . . .I was turned down at three other places that I liked. The others wouldn't rent to me, even though I had four excellent references from previous landlords. . . they don't want to rent to welfare. They immediately think you're irresponsible and dirty.

Despite having four good references from previous landlords, she was rejected as a tenant repeatedly. By being labeled "welfare," she experienced stigmatization and discrimination when they refused to rent to her. This is an example of a latent constraint of the system.

Reba actively resisted this stigma in an attempt to gain control of these contradictory circumstances (she was homeless, yet no one would rent to her). She did this by finally resorting to "lying":

> I finally had Carol, my roommate, sign the lease 'cause she has a real job as a waitress. . . what it boils down to is that you must start lying. If you are honest about AFDC, they won't rent to you. So you learn to lie. Some women call it working the system.

In this instance, Reba's agency meant being able to "act otherwise with the result of influencing a specific process" (Giddens 1984, 14). Reba understood the constraints that resulted from the stigmatization of being "welfare" and she

chose to resist with the intention of achieving a positive result, that being to secure a place to live. The negative consequence that also resulted was that she felt angry and guilty about lying, and worried that her "Karma" would be negatively affected.

Another instance where Reba demonstrated agency was turning her homelessness into a "vacation". She understood that she was homeless, and acted consciously, with an understanding of her situation, to transform this negative consequence into a positive one. Again, she attempted to gain control by taking deliberate action:

> I decided to make it an adventure. I like camping, so I borrowed the tents from Bill, and the cookstove from Martha, and Carol had the cots. I decided to look at it like a vacation.

This decision to "camp" had the positive result of affording her shelter (in the form of tents) and the negative result of causing her frustration, fright ("I'm just plain scared"), stress and illness (her stomach hurt).

Money

Reba understood the structural constraints imposed by the welfare system in terms of the control over money. She felt trapped in that she could not work in the labor force and still meet her expenses. She also stated that the money she received from AFDC is not her money. The money bypasses her entirely. Where money is concerned, she expressed

feelings of "invisibility," referring to herself as being "a puppet on a string" and being "under their thumbs."

The welfare system as a bureaucracy promotes behavior in the welfare caseworkers that includes routinization and control over their clients. Many AFDC recipients feel this control over their personal lives, including their economic situation. The result of Reba's compliance with the system is that she does receive assistance in the form of AFDC cash benefits, food stamps and Medicaid. She has decided to comply so that she can meet her most basic needs. Yet her compliance resulted in negative feelings:

> I feel like I'm invisible, like I have no say in anything that goes on. I just do what they say and hope that in the end, I'll have food and shelter for myself and kids.

Reba's drug use is an example of her resisting the control of the system. She uses "pot" to "settle me down" and the consequence is both positive, as a temporary relaxation strategy, and negative, when it deprives her of money or food stamps. She manipulates the system in this context:

> Usually, I can trade some food stamps for a joint or two. Now I have $200 in my tent that I got back as a security deposit refund from my last place. I could use some of that to buy pot.

Reba also resists the system by refusing to open a bank account. She is aware of the repercussions that could result from this action ("they'll cut my food stamps") and chooses to keep her money in her own possession. This can

be beneficial to her in that her food stamps would not be reduced, or destructive in that it could be stolen as she previously described:

> When Coco had her heart surgery and was in I.C.U., someone stole my purse from the I.C.U. waiting room. It had $400 in it that I had borrowed from relatives.

She is aware of the risk of keeping money in her possession, because she has had it stolen before, yet she makes the choice that she believes most maximizes her opportunities within the oppression of the welfare system.

The system also requires that Reba be "vendored." Reba describes this program:

> This means that you never even see the money. . . it goes straight from the government's hands to the landlord's. . . if you screw-up even once on AFDC, they take you off unless you agree to be vendored. They call it voluntary, and you have to sign a paper that you requested it. But it's not a choice.

By complying with the vendor program, Reba maintains her benefits. She could choose not to comply, but then she would be punished by being discontinued as a client. By choosing to comply, Reba experiences feelings of powerlessness and dependency on the system.

The welfare system also made it very difficult for her to get her utilities turned on -- she had to make four trips (seven miles each way) in an area without bus service. The car she used was unreliable, dangerous, and illegal. Even

though these frustrations angered her, she still chose to comply with them as a strategy for survival.

She expressed agency in that she had learned "to work the system." Because she was a 17-year veteran of the welfare system, she was familiar with such terms as "arrearages" and "vendor." She understood the process extremely well on the one hand (she knew the steps to take to get her power turned on), yet was unaware, on the other ("I don't know why I had $130 in arrearages").

Reba and Jill both took deliberate steps to improve their daily lives by moving in together. They intended for this action to result in decreased rent (which it did) but did not anticipate the negative consequence of having their food stamps reduced. This is another example of the oppressive control of the welfare system and Reba's attempt to work within it.

Relationships With Men

Reba's remarks about her relationships with men emphasized the manner in which Social Services attempts to maintain patriarchal control of its clients. The system becomes "the husband" and institutes deterrents to dissuade "its women" from forming relationships with men. These deterrents include: "pinning down the father" and requiring him "to take blood tests" and legally forcing him to "make

support payments." Reba discusses the results this had in her life:

> . . . I think he avoids me, he's afraid of me. . . But he doesn't have a job either, so he can't make the payments. I still want to be friends with him and have him come see his daughter, but the process has scared him off, I think.

The state, having become "the husband and father," specifies that if a woman wishes to remain eligible for assistance, "no other man may have a relationship with the mother or children (Valentine 1983, 280). Michigan has a rule that "children would not be considered 'deprived' if there was any man with whom the mother had a common-law relationship" (Valentine 1983, 282). Reba discussed how this has affected her daily life:

> If Social Services finds out that you are having a relationship with a man, they want him to help you right away. You can't have a decent relationship because you are constantly hiding it so they won't cut your benefits. . . it drives the men away and you never get married.

Yet Reba chose to resist this control of the welfare system and established a relationship with Mike. She refuses to comply with the system's rules and the positive consequences of this resistance is the support he gives her in the form "of the 3 S's -- Sincerity, Sympathy, and Security."

The Medical System

Physical illness is a significant part of Reba's life, affecting both her and her daughter. The poor get sick more than anyone else in society.[9] Reba demonstrated resistance

when she refused to "give into" treatment for alcoholism and decided to "quit drinking for a while" on her own. In her words:

> They want me to go into treatment for alcoholism because they knew I was hung-over from last night. I think that's why they kept me there so long. . . they were hoping I'd give in. But I held firm. Who would take care of my kids?

When Reba talked about treatment, she was very informed about the positive and negative results that could occur. She realized it would be relaxing, a "luxury" and possibly necessary also, yet she understood the problems she would have with childcare, especially if the system once again stepped in to exert control.

Reba showed compliance by waiting as long as she did in the emergency room, but she realized this was necessary if she were to receive medical care. It is another example of a structural constraint.

Reba was very resourceful by working around the limits set by her Medicaid card. She could not get her prescription filled because the card was in storage, and she resolved the problem by borrowing medicine from her roommate.

Her resourcefulness frequently included asking her friends for support. Poor women will often rely on the cooperative support of the group she lives in (usually a support network of other poor women):

> I'll look for support. A lot of times I have to ask for it and now is one of those times. It

> helps just to have someone listen. . . Talking with someone helps though. . . because they can help problem-solve, give suggestions, or tell me if my ideas are good or not. Or if I'm justified in feeling a certain way. I ask that a lot!

Borrowing and repaying is one method of cooperation the women use. Another strategy is offering support through the channels of listening and giving advice.

When dealing with the medical system, Reba felt "invisible, as though I'm not heard or seen." She felt Coco had been "herded through." The system stripped her of some of her sense of autonomy and she allowed this to happen so that her daughter could receive medical care.

At the Ronald McDonald House, Reba felt like she was attending a "tea party." She was resistant when she said she "gets tired of the bullshit and. . . am one to tell people what I think." She was confronted with a discriminatory attitude from her pediatrician, also, who clearly labeled her an "ADC mother" and apparently had an alternative treatment plan for this set of patients. This confrontation resulted in direct resistance as displayed in her anger.

Reba was also frustrated and angry when the people involved with the W.I.C. program denied her (and Coco) benefits. Again, Reba demonstrated resistance by refusing to comply with their request for more blood tests for Coco, yet, as a result, she suffered the negative consequence of being deprived of this additional source of food.

Food Stamps

Structural constraints are again evident in this category. There is no mass transit system, and Reba has difficulties with transportation. She grocery shops when she can "get a ride." The car she uses, when it runs, is not her own and is registered in a friend's name. The welfare system does not allow a person on AFDC to own a car.

The system also attempts to control its clients' food purchases. Reba gives this account:

> You can only buy food with food stamps. You can't get stuff like toilet paper or soap. Also, you can't get prepared food. . . like salads from the Deli. You can't buy alcohol, but you can get candy bars.

Yet the women frequently use their food stamps for bartering or buying childcare, for example. By using their resourcefulness in this manner, they expand the utility of the food stamps.

Reba also shows awareness of resources and action by "going to St. Vincent's" (a charitable religious organization) to get free food once a week. Although this action involves negative consequences (finding a ride, for example), it also results in the positive consequence of expanding her nutritional resources.

Her son, John, demonstrates a similar resourcefulness when he washes his clothes in the bathtub because he cannot afford to go to a laundromat. He resists the limits of his

financial constraints by actively taking control of his situation, and even though "washing clothes in the bathtub" may not be in accordance with U.S. norms, the practice allows him to meet his needs.

In conclusion, throughout her daily life Reba reacts to the control of the welfare system with either compliance or resistance. Her choices are always made within structural constraints. Yet she knows a great deal about why she acts the way she does, and that knowledge shapes what she does. Although the structures limit her behavior, within those limits she exercises choice in her day-to-day life.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

My analysis illustrates how women on welfare function within the structural constraints of the welfare system. Reba has the choice to comply or resist and, with an awareness of her situation, strategically decides which action will most help her meet her needs.

This research demonstrates that Reba is not immobilized by her oppression, but rather deploys a range of powers in the flow of her daily life. She monitors and understands her situation, and acts consciously to influence it, even when that action means refraining from intervention. Her power lies in her choice to let the welfare system affect or not affect her daily life.

This is not to deny that oppression exists within the welfare system. Reba's activities are embedded within that system, and are elements of, and structured properties of, that system. Structures limit her behavior, although within those limits, she is capable of making choices. Living within the welfare system involves a dialectic between the system and the self and results in deciding between compliance and resistance.

Possible directions for future research could be aimed at understanding the structures of the welfare system. The

insights of both feminist and Marxist theory may be used to analyze the structural constraints of the welfare system and the effect on women. For example, capital creates and is sustained by an ideology -- of individualism, competition, domination, and consumerism. Patriarchy manifests itself, and is supported by, this ideology. Thus the dilemma of women who live on AFDC is that their existence means living within the constraints of this patriarchal ideology.

Part of this ideology's power relies on a division between men and women, including both a sexual division of labor and a sexual division of ideology. The sexual division of labor is the material base of male power that is exercised in our society. The nature of reproduction under patriarchy forces women on AFDC to become the third proletariat, behind women as a class and working women (Quick 1986). Reproduction is an unrewarded human value, and the material basis of patriarchy requires that the work that the women do, both in the reproductive and productive spheres, be devalued. As Shulamuth Firestone writes, "the material basis of patriarchy then, rests largely on childrearing in the home, but also on all the social structures that enable the state to control women's labor" (Hartmann 1981).

Marxist and feminist theories can both be useful in analyzing women's poverty and oppression, and future research could include a dialectical analysis of the AFDC

system. Furthermore, my insights from this case study suggest that the dependency model of welfare clients does not adequately explain the life situation of women on welfare. These women are not immobilized by the welfare system. They exercise consciousness and reasoned action in their daily lives including the choice to comply or resist within the structural constraints of the welfare system. Both intervening and refraining from intervention are conscious choices they make, and they decide on their actions in view of what they know about themselves, the context of their activities, and the likely outcomes. Thus, although women on welfare have frequently been portrayed as passive and dependent, this research suggests that they have the power to exercise choice within their daily lives.

This research demonstrates that there is a dialectical relationship between the client and the system. Women on welfare can and do demonstrate their power via compliance or resistance.

Notes

1. This last program is called AFDC/U.

2. AFDC is funded jointly through the Social Security Act, Title IV-A, and matching state funds. Medicaid and Social Services are funded through the Social Security Administration (Physicians Task Force on Hunger in America 1985, 217).

3. Shortly after Reagan took office in 1981, his administration proposed and the Congress enacted a series of changes in the AFDC program which terminated payments to 400,000 working mothers whose wages were so low as to entitle them to supplementary welfare payments. (An additional 300,000 families had their monthly benefits cut on average between $150 and $200 per month.) In most cases, the cutoffs meant not only that these women would lose their supplementary benefits, but that they and their children would also lose their entitlement to Medicaid. Under these conditions, many women would have been financially better off if they had quit work and subsisted solely on welfare (Sidel 1987).

4. Richard F. Odell describes this area as "one vast wilderness park still defying the spread of cities and highways. . . it furnishes the most graphic setting in the state for part of what may be a final clash in the nation as a whole between the values associated with agrarianism, ruralism, and individualism, on the one hand, and with industrialization, urbanization, and social integration on the other" (Odell 1978).

5. General Assistance (G.A.) are state programs that give money to people ineligible for federal income maintenance programs.

6. W.I.C. -- Women, Infants and Children Special Supplemental Feeding Program (for low-income pregnant women and babies) to insure adequate nutrition.

7. Food stamps are not based on what it actually costs to eat. Benefits are tied to the "thrifty food plan", the cheapest food plan devised by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Physicians Task Force 1985).

8. The fact is that neither food stamps nor AFDC, nor both together, provide American families with the level of support required to eat nutritiously and to maintain health (Physician Task Force on Hunger in America 1985, 134).

9. Refer to previous discussion on page 6 (Literature Review).

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