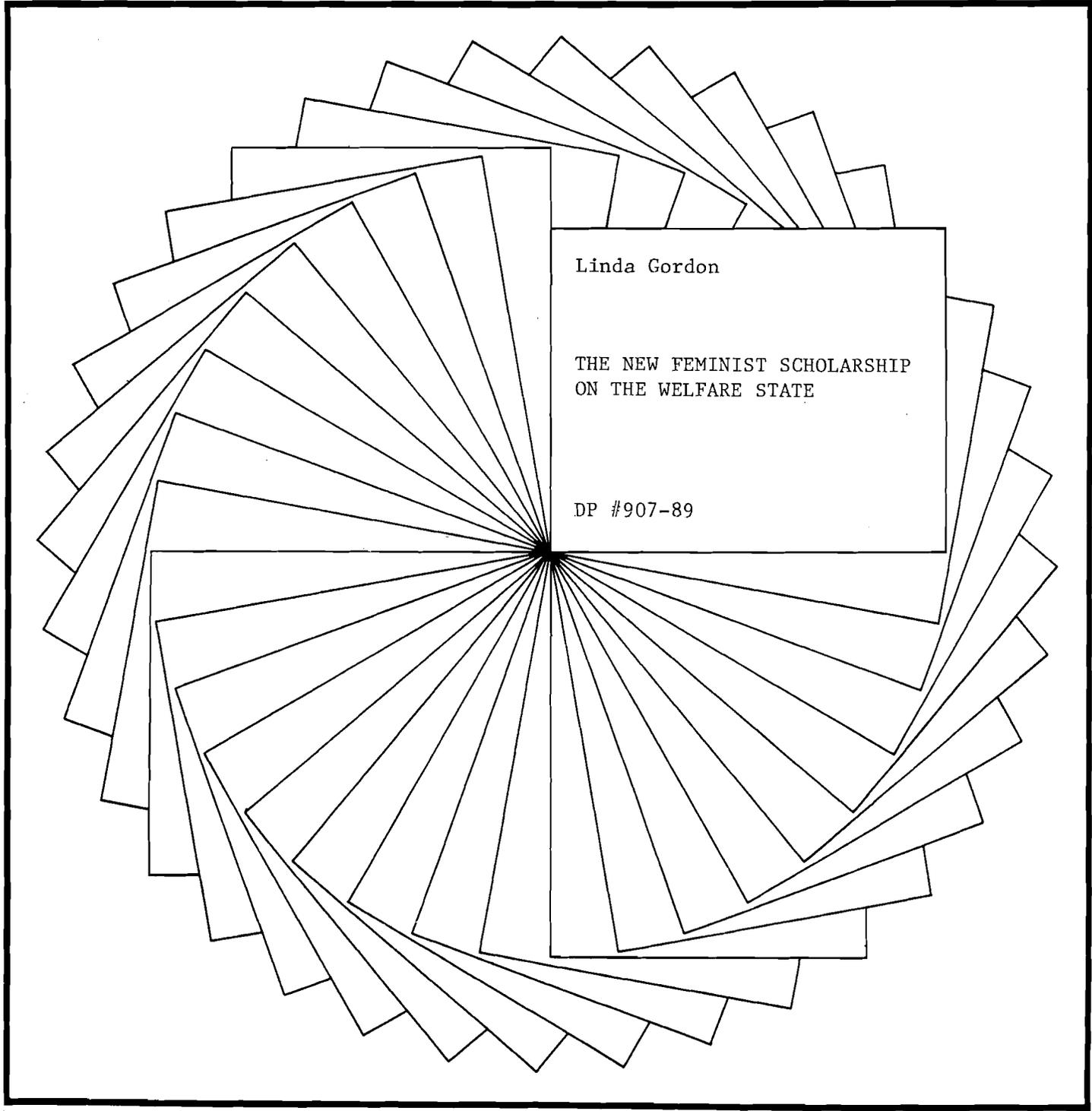

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ON THE WELFARE STATE

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The New Feminist Scholarship on the Welfare State

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Abstract

This paper reviews the scholarship, primarily but not exclusively historical, concerning women and the U.S. welfare state, scholarship that considers both the impact of welfare programs on the gender system and the contributions of women's activism in the creation of welfare programs. A brief review of the traditional historical scholarship on U.S. welfare suggests the limitations that result from the failure to use gender as a category of analysis. The new feminist scholarship is then reviewed. The paper argues that this scholarship developed through several increasingly complex analytic frameworks. These include, first, demonstrating discrimination; second, relating the welfare system to the structure of gender relations; third, incorporating women's political activism and influence in the making of the welfare system.

THE NEW FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP ON THE WELFARE STATE

Linda Gordon

Most Americans think of women--single mothers--when they think of "welfare." Nevertheless, when experts, and especially scholars, have examined welfare they have either described it as an ungendered program or as if the sex of those involved in it made no difference.

Even the rich new feminist scholarship in the United States is just beginning to address the welfare state. Although women's studies began earlier in the United States and has proliferated more than in many other countries, on this topic we are retarded in comparison to the greater quantity of scholarship from other countries.¹ Perhaps this is because the U.S. welfare state has been relatively weak and, even more important, less visible than its European counterparts--less visible because of its decentralization through a federal system, and because of the mystification accomplished through labeling as "welfare" only some of those state programs which contribute to citizens' well-being. Also contributing to disinterest of U.S. feminist scholars has been the tradition of hostility to the state which marked the women's liberation movement here, influenced as it was by the New Left.

Disinterest is no longer the case, and feminist appraisals of the welfare state are increasing. They are able to draw upon the voluminous production of feminist thinking and activism in a variety of fields: history, literary criticism, philosophy, sociology, economics and politics, as well as the longer traditions of liberal and Left scholarship on social welfare. Indeed, the feminist consideration of the welfare state stands in a complex relation to the older scholarship:

bewildered and critical because of its neglect of women and gender, sharing the general perspective of support for state responsibility for the public welfare, and appreciating also the contrasting tradition of suspicion of the controlling power the state gains in the very act of assuming that responsibility. These authors are also conducting a critical dialogue with other feminist scholars and activists, complaining about their neglect of the state, criticizing them for their avoidance of politics. There are many silent presences in this discourse: British academic and political defenders of the Labour Party's welfare programs, such as T. H. Marshall and R. M. Titmuss; Marxist political economists (Ian Gough, Claus Offe, and James O'Connor might be mentioned); critical historians and social workers (such as James Weinstein, Anthony Platt, Michael Katz, Clarke Chambers, Jeffrey Galper) who deflated claims about the altruistic purposes of welfare provision; the Afro-American scholars, feminist and nonfeminist, from W.E.B. DuBois to William Julius Wilson, who taught white feminists so much about discrimination, domination, and control of the state; hundreds of feminist writers who rendered visible women's work, women's nurturance, women's aspirations.

Most of the articles in this collection are documented, but, especially in an anthology, footnotes cannot adequately describe traditions of debate and/or the inheritance of shared values. In this essay I want to trace some of those missing lines of connection. I hope to help the reader place what follows on a map of welfare-state and feminist scholarship. My map is, like all maps, only a projection, a representation of how people have interpreted geography, and makes no claims to "objective" presentation of this world of thought. My

"projection", like all projections, is designed to highlight what is salient for me: historical scholarship and U.S. scholarship.²

THE GENDER-BLIND SCHOLARSHIP ON THE WELFARE STATE

Most scholarship concerning the welfare state does not use gender as a category of analysis (by contrast, most of its scholars do understand welfare to reflect and form the class system).³ Some of the more recent historians of the U.S. welfare state, such as Robert Bremner, James Patterson, Walter Trattner, John Ehrenreich, David Rochefort, and Michael Katz, do notice and specify women's particular welfare situation at times, but they do not consider it a major organizing principle of the system.⁴

The omission of a gender analysis distorts our understanding of the welfare state through many levels. Sometimes it obscures the existence of a policy altogether, since the policy is not spelled out at a general level but emerges from the intersection of many constrictions on women's lives. One author, for example, recently concluded that the United States has no policy towards pregnancy,⁵ a mistake that results from the tendency to perceive women's reproductive activity as "natural," from failure to understand that policy is as much constructed by denials of needs as by meeting them, and, because of the nature of the state in the United States, from the difficulty of identifying policy that is constructed of the practices of private employers, educational institutions, medical insurance carriers, town, country, state, and federal taxation, employment, welfare, and family law. In this volume

the article by Nancy Fraser* calls our attention to the varying languages of policy. For example, an examination of U.S. policy towards pregnancy would have to consider the period in which pregnant women were excluded from certain jobs, such as teaching, and the evolution towards a standard that no longer considers pregnant women as symbols of or stimuli for immorality; the fact that U.S. employers today provide virtually no paid and few unpaid maternity leaves; the fact that public funds will pay for childbirth but not for abortion.

Several authors in this volume, notably Barbara Nelson and Diana Pearce**, show that there is a double standard of welfare provision for men and women. One source of this differential treatment is our gender system, including norms that women, especially mothers, should be primarily domestic and supported by men. The failure of several decades of "workfare" programs can only be explained in terms of fundamental ambivalence on the part of legislators, welfare professionals, and voters about whether public support of single mothers is better or worse than sending mothers into the labor force. As waves of recent welfare reform have tried to get AFDC recipients to "work"--i.e., take wage-labor employment--the lack of gender analysis obscures the labor-market sex segregation that makes it difficult for women to get jobs that provide as good an income as welfare provision. Lack of gender analysis has also hidden the fact that even identical welfare programs would have

*Fraser, "Struggle over Needs: Outline of a Socialist-Feminist Critical Theory of Late-Capitalist Political Culture."

**Nelson, "The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State: Workmen's Compensation and Mother's Aid"; Pearce, "Welfare Is NOT for Women: The War on Poverty, Legal Services, and an Alternative Model of Advocacy for Poor Women."

different meanings and consequences for men and for women, especially mothers, who already do the vast majority of parenting and housework labor, which must then be added to whatever wage work they do. Assumptions about masculinity have equally affected the welfare system, as it has been mainly unthinkable for able male welfare recipients not to work, while welfare workers made it a priority to protect men's egos from the damages of being unable to support a family.

Moreover, gender distinctions helped create the meanings of welfare. In an insightful study of German welfare history, Heide Gerstenberger showed that just as welfare rested on a worthy/unworthy distinction, so it helped define the bounds of the "respectable," drawing a circle that excluded those who needed help.⁶ There has been too little examination of the gender sources of the stigma attached, both for men and for women, to receiving welfare.⁷ Since so many women's major work is taking care of children, it has been harder to define, perhaps, whether AFDC recipients are working or malingering; since their singleness usually involves an appearance of sexual freedom, the sexual double standard is easily exploited to label them immoral. Definitions of "respectability" have been deeply gendered, and there appears to be some sexual as well as sexist content to taxpayers' hostility to independent women. For example, in my own recent study of the history of family violence, I found that although social work agencies accepted in theory a deserving/undeserving distinction which put widows in the former and illegitimate mothers in the latter category, in practice they did not necessarily treat the widows better than the "immoral" women. This was because in practice any female-headed family seemed to them to threaten immorality.⁸

Even more fundamentally, lack of gender analysis obscures the roots of poverty, the inequitable distribution and production that create the need for welfare programs in the first place. Much of our welfare expenditure goes to AFDC, which is a program founded on the principle that the norm is for mothers and children to be supported by men; that norm is, of course, the product of our particular sex/gender system--it is not a biological or divine given. A different sex/gender system might require men and women to share in child care and in earning; yet another might assume that the state should take all responsibility for the financial support of children. The sex/gender system is responsible for women's low wage rates and segregation in low-status jobs.

The contemporary discussion of the underclass in the United States is dulled by lack of a gender analysis. "Underclass" is, of course, a vague and highly ideological term used in a variety of ways--stirring up fears of crime, supporting the "war" on drugs--but also uncritically mixing into this amalgam hostilities to minorities, single-mother families, taxes, and welfare provision in general. There are serious and answerable questions about whether there is a shift among the very poor towards more criminal, self-destructive, exploitive, sexually irresponsible behavior. It is difficult in any case to examine a topic about which there is so much hysteria, but lack of sex distinctions makes the discussion even more murky. Criminality, drug business, sexual and physical violence are overwhelmingly male; more, they are associated specifically with assertions of masculinity. When women participate in these behaviors it is usually as followers of men, a pattern associated precisely with one sense of femininity, as being both nurturant and loyal to men. Thus it is reasonable to hypothesize that

this kind of increasing underclass, if it exists, is associated with crises of gender identity. Meanwhile many women, particularly single mothers, are often included in generalizations about the underclass even though they do not engage in violent or criminal behavior; they are so categorized either because they are welfare recipients or because they are single mothers, making of "underclass" just another rhetorical device in the attack on social provision and depriving us of categories which might illuminate specific problems.

Not only problem definitions, but also their solutions, have been gendered. Most welfare programs have been designed to shore up male-breadwinner families or to compensate--temporarily--for their collapse. But welfare clients must work to collect their entitlements, and women do a disproportionate amount of this work too. Medical aid, aid for the disabled, programs for children with special needs, indeed educational institutions altogether assume that women will be available to make it possible for the aid to be delivered: to drive, to care, to be at home for visits, to come to welfare offices. Just as in the market economy women translate between the paycheck--that is, money as an abstract token of exchange--and the meeting of material needs of their families--for example, buying the food, cooking it, cleaning so that new food can be cooked the next day--so too in the "welfare" economy women translate between the entitlement and the actual giving of nurture.⁹

Blindness to gender exists in a sometimes contradictory but nevertheless mutually reinforcing relation to ignorance of the racial bases of the modern welfare state. This is particularly true in the United States, where, as Gwendolyn Mink argues in this volume, economy and government have been from the beginning of the state organized

around black subordination and the expropriation of Indians and Mexicans. The assumptions and priorities which guided the welfare system here, since the seventeenth century, have been as fundamentally white as they have been male. The vision of republicanism that underlies both United States resistance to public welfare programs and the design of those programs was based not only on "manly" definitions of dignity and independence, but also on co-existence with a slave society, with black servitude as a foil against which (white) citizenship and self-respect were defined. In the New Deal period, for example, the exclusion of Afro-Americans from welfare benefits was not peripheral to the new federal programs but a fundamental part of their construction, part of the basic political realignment that created the New Deal.¹⁰ Most welfare programs of good quality were designed as emergency wage-replacement provisions for those accustomed to (at least) upper-working-class wages. For different reasons and in different ways, virtually all but white men were excluded from these jobs and thereby from the better welfare programs.

The relation of the welfare state to both gender and race as fundamental social divisions is bilateral. These divisions have helped create the need for welfare by creating poverty, and then shaped its nature and distribution, but the welfare programs in turn have influenced the nature of the divisions. The situation of women and of minority men has been affected, for better and for worse, by the structure of the welfare state. Indeed the very meanings of femininity, masculinity, blackness and other racial stereotypes in the United States today derive in part from the shape and administration of these programs. The exclusions and limits of unemployment insurance, which

thereby force many onto general relief or AFDC, create negative attitudes about the high levels of minority unemployment, for example. The definition of masculinity as breadwinning and independent is reinforced by the assumption, long present in AFDC, for example, that men should be responsible for the children of the women they live with. The consensus about women's normative domesticity has been shaped in a double-binding way by the structure of AFDC (keeping women at home but inadequately supported, thereby forcing them into the underground wage labor market, but declining to provide for child care).

Similarly contradictory is the rhetoric that welfare represents deplorable "dependence," while women's subordination to husbands is not registered as unseemly. This contradiction should not be surprising, for the concept of dependence is an ideological one that reflects particular modes of production. For example, in traditional societies only men of substantial property were considered independent, and not only women and children but all men who worked for others were considered dependents. Only in the modern era, where wage labor became the norm for men and voting rights were extended to all men, did employed men begin to be "independent." Women, for whom wage labor was not the majority experience until recently, and whose earnings are on average much less than men's, continued considered as dependent. Indeed, women's dependence (e.g., their unpaid domestic labor) contributed to men's "independence." Only in the last half-century has the term "dependent" begun to refer specifically to adult recipients of public aid, while women who depend on husbands are no longer labeled as dependents (except, of course, for purposes of the IRS). There is also a class double standard for women: the prosperous are encouraged to be

dependent on their husbands, the poor to become "independent."¹¹ Public dependence, of course, is paid for by taxes, yet it is interesting that there is no objection to allowing husbands tax exemptions for their dependent wives. As Virginia Sapiro points out in this volume, the anti-dependence ideology then penalizes those who care for the inevitably dependent--the young, the sick--who are, of course, disproportionately unpaid women and low-paid service workers.* In fact, the entire discourse about dependence masks the evident interdependence of vast numbers of the population in modern societies.

The gendered design of welfare programs is by no means simply a matter of male policymakers keeping women subordinate. Few scholars have noted the disproportionate influence of women in envisioning, lobbying for, and then administering welfare programs, especially at the state and local levels, where most programs are located. This is not only a matter of giving recognition where it is due, although that is in itself important to compensate for patterns of systematically depriving women of credit for their work. It also requires incorporating the fact that women have often been influential in campaigning for welfare provisions that turned out to be quite discriminatory against women, as in the case of protective legislation or AFDC itself. An analysis of women's activism requires understanding the complex relation that women, especially reformers, have had to conventional gender and family arrangements--often seizing upon what is beneficial to women in those arrangements, often distancing themselves from and seeking to control the needy quite as much as did men, often negotiating delicate

*Sapiro, "The Gender Bias of American Social Policy."

compromises hoping to shift slightly the sexual balance of political and economic power.

Meanwhile theoretical debates about the nature of modern welfare states have been similarly impoverished by the lack of gender analysis. Among historians two rather polarized perspectives competed throughout much of the mid-twentieth century. One is affectionately known to those who use a British model as Whig history,¹² although the American Talcott Parsons was an able advocate of it. Jill Quadagno characterizes this view thus: "As industrialization proceeds, it ... reduc[es] the functions of the traditional family and ... [dislocates] certain categories of individuals whose labor becomes surplus--the very young, the old, the sick, and the disabled."¹³ Quadagno is here correct to leave out women, for the theories she is describing do so. And yet without women the theory is mushy, to say the least. These lost "functions" of the "traditional" family were mainly women's labor, and modern welfare systems do not in fact replace them with anything except differently organized women's labor: women are the main workers in the welfare system, still badly underpaid, performing labor that the current tax system could not support if living wages prevailed; and women continue to do the work of consuming welfare, always vastly underestimated--waiting in lines, making phone calls, processing applications, scrimping when checks are late, begging help and favors when checks are inadequate, etc.

This Whig view often assumed a kind of gradual progress that specified no agent, other than sympathetic and wise legislators. A social-democratic version specified organized labor as the agent,¹⁴ but this was rarely argued historically. Most of these arguments were based

on static sociological operations that correlated welfare programs with union membership or some similar index of labor strength; few offered an actual historical narrative of union campaigns for welfare programs. Moreover, without taking gender into consideration, none of this scholarship is correct. In the United States and probably elsewhere as well, organized women, feminist and nonfeminist, devoted a higher proportion and sometimes absolutely more energy to campaigning for welfare programs than did unions, and in certain periods--for example, the Progressive era--were more influential. These were largely elite women and their class assumptions marked our welfare system indelibly. Furthermore a gender analysis of trade union activity is needed, to determine which unionists made welfare high priority, and which programs aroused the most union support.

Opposing the Whig interpretation were both Left and Right-wing criticisms of welfare programs as controlling: suppressing individual freedom, weakening resistance, and/or distracting the citizenry from the fundamental issues of power. The Left version of this "social control" argument, discussed in my essay in this volume,* views welfare provisions (like higher wages) as encouraging workers to accept the capitalist economy and the liberal governmental system, essentially trading political power for a higher standard of living.¹⁵ This perspective has many problems but foremost is its hidden assumption that the workers making this bad bargain are male. Frances Fox Piven** and I both argue in this volume that working-class women, who received much

*Gordon, "Family Violence, Feminism, and Social Control."

**Piven, "Ideology and the State: Women, Power, and the Welfare State."

less money from the welfare system, actually gained more power from it, because they could use different "systems" against each other, e.g., welfare provision against domestic male supremacy.¹⁶

Both these perspectives, as Theda Skocpol has argued, tended to remove politics from consideration, and to render the state merely an abstraction or at best a homogeneous and passive tool of larger interests. In the last two decades there has been a renaissance of theorizing about the state, particularly among Marxists,¹⁷ and its richness has drawn some feminist theorists to appropriate this argumentation to welfare and gender issues. Ralph Miliband argued an important modification of instrumentalist theory, the relative autonomy of the state, showing that the capitalist class, if it does not literally staff the state, nevertheless retains power to influence it from without.¹⁸ But what has great explanatory power about class relations by no means works equally well for gender. If we attempt to insert gender into this model we meet trouble: it is difficult to specify what "male" interests are, and if we argue that "men" (a dubious category as a universal) have the preservation of women as their long-term interest and will therefore support measures at least to keep them alive, then the theory becomes so vague as to be not disprovable.¹⁹

Nicos Poulantzas met some of these objections with his functionalist view, arguing that direct participation of capitalists is not crucial in understanding state functions, but that the state is objectively bourgeois and definitionally committed to maintaining those values and structures. Here the state become abstract; it has no necessary connection with any particular capitalists at all, but serves to retain unity among them (and to promote disunity among the working

class).²⁰ Can gender be added to this model? It has indeed been argued that the maleness of the state comes not only from its personnel, but is embedded in its nature, in bureaucratic and hierarchical forms. And in fact Poulantzas' emphasis on unity would find more evidence if it were understood as a class and gendered unity. But to argue that the state objectively functions to maintain male dominance either suggests that women have never advanced their position, that we are no better off now than a century ago, which is patently counterexperiential; or defines male supremacy in such a way as to include all concessions to women, in which case the premise is tautological.

Those interested in gender analysis might do better to work with a conflict model of the state such as that suggested in Fred Block's class-struggle approach. He postulates a group of state managers, separate from capitalists; but the managers' fortunes depend on a healthy economy which, given the real alternatives available to managers, can only be capitalist. Block rejects the view that the state can become a tool of working-class goals, as in the social-democratic model of the welfare state, but he also rejects "social-control" theories on the grounds that capitalists are usually far too short-sighted to trade concessions for long-term stability. Instead these concessions represent victories for workers; but in making them, managers accumulate more power for the state, which then, in periods of working-class weakness, allows it to re-form these concessions into structures that support the economic as well as the political system.²¹ Organized feminists, too, have won major concessions, only to have these reshaped in periods of feminist decline. But of course those concerned with gender must also consider the possibility that the group of mana-

gers, being male and being influenced by its maleness, is in that respect similar to the ruling group, also male. Furthermore, Block's theory involves a fairly economic, mechanistic determination of when the "working class" will be weak and when strong, and certainly there is no such model for predictions with respect to gender relations.

"State-centered" theories of welfare state development are most associated with Theda Skocpol, who has argued for the influence of particular political configurations. Theoretically it is not difficult to acknowledge the importance of such political factors on policy development, and historians in particular welcome this directive to return to narrative, detailed, causal explanations. Unfortunately in Skocpol's own historical work, the notion of state "capacity" and the study of the decision-making processes of its operators--bureaucrats and politicians--tends to occlude evidence of nongovernmental activism.²² Skocpol wavers in how much she claims for her politics-centered approach: to the extent that it calls for a more complex explanatory theory, adding political complications to simplified class models it is evidently reasonable; but in other places Skocpol seems to want to substitute politicians for class (or gender, or race), elite for mass, political conflict for social struggle; her work seems to erase the labor movement from the history of the New Deal, for example. Since there has been little previous acknowledgment of the role of organized women, or of social change with respect to gender, in the history of welfare programs, here she is not erasing but merely continuing to paint around big blank spots.

Another set of relevant debates took place in England among those directly involved in the establishment of its welfare programs.²³ The

reformer often most credited for the British welfare state, Beveridge, assumed women's domesticity and dependence on the male ("family") wage, but acknowledged a need to compensate for the failure or inadequacies of that system. T. H. Marshall, a political theorist justifying these welfare innovations, constructed an influential theory of the evolution of citizenship rights, arguing that "social" citizenship, what FDR called "freedom from want," was a third stage following the guarantee of political citizenship, i.e., the vote. Marshall's theory did not challenge women's dependence on the male wage. As Gillian Pascall has argued, according to Marshall women's marital dependency should be called feudal because it is an ascribed rather than an achieved status, a relic that subverts his theory of the development of citizenship rights.²⁴ Marshall's periodization also ignores the history of women's relation to the state. His stages of citizenship (first due process rights, then political rights, or the franchise, then social citizenship, or welfare entitlements) only describe the male experience; throughout the world women won important "social" rights from the state before they got the vote.

The British welfare discourse was transformed by the work of Titmuss, in which women were clearly visible. Rejecting grand theorizing, he went in for empirical examination of the welfare services and the needs for them, and observed the gendered relations in both.²⁵ Nevertheless Titmuss was Whiggish in his view that industrialization was responsible for (temporary) family problems which could be corrected by a good welfare system; he saw women but did not see male supremacy.

THE NEW FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP

With the renaissance of women's studies in the 1970s, feminist thinking turned to welfare. There has been a remarkably international coherence to the scholarship--if not the activism--as will be evidenced by the many references below to foreign, especially British and Australian, work. The lowest common denominator of this new work shows that the premise with which I (deliberately) began, that previous scholarship about welfare had been gender-blind, is too simple. However "blind," that scholarship was hardly disabled, for it functioned effectively to mystify and thus defend a gendered and unequal society. In exposing that defensive function, the new feminist scholarship about welfare moved through discernible stages, albeit they are not neatly consecutive and the "progress" involves no consensus but disagreement. These "stages" exist only as analytic categories, but perhaps useful ones.

First there was a great deal of work that demonstrated the discriminatory character of welfare programs, and their function to reinforce sexist arrangements in domestic and public life.²⁶ In a rich article on the British poor laws in the nineteenth century, Pat Thane showed how the traditional distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor was drawn for women in terms of their relations to men: widows were always deserving, deserted or unmarried mothers nearly always condemned.²⁷ We have learned how Social Security discriminates against women²⁸--how many women have been excluded from unemployment compensation because of the kinds of jobs they do, for example.²⁹ Analysts learned to recognize policies where they seemed invisible, such

as Irene Diamond's work on discrimination against women in housing.³⁰

The critique of discrimination quickly developed into a structural critique of welfare, in what I consider a second stage of development of the feminist scholarship. A recent sustained example of this sort of approach is Mimi Abramovitz's Regulating the Lives of Women, the first book-length feminist analysis of the history of welfare to appear in the United States. Abramovitz moves beyond concern with discrimination to demonstrate how welfare policy functioned to reinforce the entire social system of women's subordination, particularly their constriction within the family and dependence on men.³¹ Barbara Nelson's article in this volume continues this kind of analysis still further; through a close study of two welfare programs, she shows that gender assumptions about women's dependence were part of the historical bases of welfare policy. Several scholars have noted the existence of inequalities within the welfare system, most commonly described as a double standard between privileged and nonstigmatized programs such as Old Age and Survivors Insurance (commonly called Social Security) and stingy and humiliating ones such as AFDC, but most have viewed these as class divisions.³² Others, such as Haze Sorel Tishler, thought the mothers' aid payments were small because the group of "dependent mothers" was insignificant in comparison to unemployed or injured men or the aged--an absolute myth based on the social invisibility of single mothers.³³ Several feminist scholars have interpreted these inequalities in gender terms, including both Nelson and Pearce in this volume.*

*Nelson, "The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State: Workmen's Compensation and Mothers' Aid"; Pearce, "Welfare Is Not for Women: The War on Poverty, Legal Services, and an Alternative Model of Advocacy for Poor Women."

Nelson's work is part of a new school of analysis that sees welfare programs as having the function not only of keeping women subordinate, but, perhaps more important, of supporting a whole social system. I prefer to call this system the family wage, since it rests on a familial organization in which the husband/father is supposed to be the exclusive breadwinner and the wife/mother responsible for the large quantities of unpaid domestic labor which are essential to every aspect of human life, including the continuation of a capitalist economic system.³⁴

Internationally, feminist analyses have noted that the only explanation that can make sense of seemingly contradictory welfare policies is their function to keep this system (women's economic dependence on men, men's monetary dependence on wages and personal dependence on women) in place. Many students of welfare policy, including Jill Roe writing about Australia, Hilary Land, Jane Lewis, and Mary McIntosh writing about Britain, Mimi Abramowitz and myself writing about the United States, have all argued this perspective.³⁵ Indeed in England, where family allowance programs were adopted after World War II, the payments were originally made to male heads of families and women could collect them only after considerable feminist campaigning.

Making the family-wage assumptions behind welfare programs even more pernicious is the fact that few men have ever actually been able to earn a family wage, that is, a wage large enough single-handedly to support a family. Full dependence on husbands has actually been a "privilege" of a minority of women. Thus negotiations between women and welfare givers have become ritualized exchanges of fictional slogans, with both parties aware that women's likelihood of stable reliance on male wages is not great. Furthermore, women may be coerced by welfare

requirements into following paths of action which are least conducive to achieving ultimate independence of welfare--by pursuing men instead of their own upward mobility, or by accepting low-wage, unskilled, part-time jobs with terrible working conditions instead of holding out for education, quality child care, and better jobs.

The family-wage assumption on which the welfare system has been predicated expresses some of the economic assumptions of industrial capitalism. In this century government intervention into stabilizing relations of productions has been more widely accepted--as in worker's and unemployment compensation, industrial health and safety laws, agricultural stabilization programs, even labor relations acts guaranteeing union recognition, for example--while the domestic sphere remains ideologically "private."³⁶ In fact, as I will argue below, domestic, reproductive life is indeed governmentally regulated, certain forms of it supported and others penalized. Michael Walzer has argued slightly differently: that in the United States governmental regulation of distribution--i.e., welfare--is more accepted than is governmental control of production.³⁷ This is true ideologically only, because in fact there is extensive state control of production. The differences concern the degree to which such controls are mystified, and the distributional results of both--not only in cash benefits but in power. With respect to welfare, the ideology of the privateness of reproduction is itself an influence, and one disadvantageous to those who do reproductive work, for it undermines their formation of a sense of entitlement to public help.

In its most extreme form, women's responsibility for domestic, reproductive work has deprived them of citizenship. Carole Pateman has

argued that in liberal theory, the first criterion for "citizenship," as that concept evolved, was some form of "independence," defined in terms of the characteristic male experience--for examples, property ownership, bearing arms, self-employment. Hegel was one of many who found a way to acknowledge women's membership in the human and national community without attributing to them citizenship by viewing women as members of families, i.e., nonindependent members.³⁸ The very concept of modern citizenship (in contrast to that of the rights of the subject) arose along with the public/private distinction that ideologically separated women from public life. Of course women were rarely effectively cut off from public activity, and were active political and commercial figures long before the beginning of legal citizenship entitlements in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless the view of women as private noncitizens, added to the expectation that they should be the dependents of men, made it difficult to conceive that they should have entitlements to state support.

Some versions of these critiques of the welfare state looked more to its contemporary functions than to its original assumptions, and adopted and adapted the New Left social-control model. They reflect the antistatist, anti-expert, participatory-democracy values characteristic of the late 1960s/early 1970s women's liberation movement, originating in the New Left but also in individualist values and middle-class experience of many women's liberation theorists, and the anger of the welfare rights movement. A classic example was Barbara Ehrenreich's and Deirdre English's For Her Own Good, an indictment of physicians, psychoanalysts, child psychologists, and home economists for usurping women's traditional autonomous skills and then using their newly

professional "expertise" to control women's work and even identity.³⁹ Another is Alicia Frohman's analysis of day care. Following James O'Connor's Fiscal Crisis of the State, which argues that such services function to regulate the labor market, subsidize the costs of production, legitimize the system ideologically, and provide social control, Frohman denies that day care programs serve women in any way. Rather she relies on a reserve-army-of-labor theory to explain that such programs emerge when needs for women's labor are paramount and contract at other times.⁴⁰ Others used social-control assumptions to challenge the Whiggish view that the state functioned to protect the weaker social groups: for example, Diana Leonard Barker's article on the regulation of marriage argues that the primary effect of marriage law is to perpetuate the exploitive entitlements of the stronger spouse, the husband.⁴¹ A more complex form of social control argument, and one that made many feminists uncomfortable, called attention to the role women reformers played in disciplining men, and to women's influence in definitions of "respectability," recognizing the socially conservative content of some feminist reform work.⁴² Equally unsettling to a simple social-control model has been the evidence of women's choice in the family wage system--not only accepting it, but agitating for it. Patricia Tulloch, writing about Australia, concluded that care-giving was often women's chosen preference, notwithstanding its disadvantaged economic consequences.⁴³ (In scholarship outside the area of welfare--in labor history, for example--a great deal of evidence has accumulated that working-class married women would have preferred a family wage system had it been available, because they preferred a chance to devote themselves full-time to domestic labor.)

A common feminist theorization of the social control inherent in the welfare system was the notion of a public or state patriarchy as opposed to private, familial patriarchy. This perspective rested in part on the interpretations of Talcott Parsons, influential in work on the sociology of the family several decades ago, that family functions had been transferred to the state. Parsons and his predecessors, such as W. I. Thomas, had been positive about this transfer, for they believed that the state could provide experts who were needed to socialize citizens in our modern, complex societies; and indeed the strongest critique of this transfer-of-functions tendency came from those, Left, liberal, or Right, who sought to support a family erroneously identified as traditional and who did not notice, or mind, the suppression of women it entailed. Feminists, by contrast, attacked both old and new forms. Carol Brown argued that patriarchy is an umbrella system in which there are public aspects, controlled by men collectively, and private aspects, run by men individually. Since male-headed families are no longer needed to maintain the overall patriarchy, men's individual powers in familial matters have been increasingly delegated, so to speak, to the state.⁴⁴ Political theorist Zillah Eisenstein has conceptualized a "capitalist patriarchal state." States are patriarchal, she argues, because the "distinction between public (male) and private (female) life has been inherent in the formation of state societies."⁴⁵ She too describes a transition from husband/father's control to state control, but sees the nature of the social control of women as continuous and essentially similar.

The "state patriarchy" analysis was extremely useful in pointing to the growing independence of some women from fathers and husbands, but

its way of seeing the state did not hold up in the face of mounting historical scholarship about women and family. In the first place, this school of analysis relied on the feminist appropriation of the word "patriarchy" from an older and richer historical usage. Deriving from the Greek, the first English usage, in the sixteenth century, referred to an ecclesiastical hierarchy. By the early seventeenth century "patriarchy" was being used to describe a societal form whose organization was based on, and analogous to, a father's control over his family. It is of course logical that this meaning of the word developed precisely as patriarchal society was beginning to erode in the face of commercial capitalism and the individualist values it promoted. By using a word so filled with fatherly, familial, organic, fixed hierarchical relations to describe today's male supremacy, situated in a nonfamilial, inorganic, meritocratic society, we lose much of its power and nuance, and we mask significant historical change. In the second place, the emphasis on the continuity of "patriarchy" obscures from view the gains of women, or, at best, represents them as an inevitable epiphenomenon of modernization or secularization rather than as the result of collective political struggle, i.e., of feminism.

Another feminist scholar of the welfare state, Eli Zaretsky, broke with the emphasis on the continuity of patriarchy and argued, to the contrary, the transformative effect of capitalism on gender, through inventing the public/private distinction. Following from the important insight that only in modern society do we find intense subjectivity and consciousness of private life, Zaretsky argued (like Abramovitz and Nelson and many others) that the welfare state served to reinforce, not to subvert, the private family. Indeed, the very inadequacies of

welfare programs, as my own article in this collection shows, grew from the reluctance of welfare agencies and their leaders to undermine the male-headed nuclear family.⁴⁶ As Zaretsky noticed, the form of the welfare state--bureaucratized provision for strangers--is public, but its content--individual family "independence" and women's responsibility for childraising and domestic work--private; the result was an alienated public life and an alienated private life.⁴⁷ But while Zaretsky recognized historical change, he too argued primarily functionally, neglecting the political struggles over welfare policy and particularly the influence of organized women in the growth of welfare policies, the notion of the private, and the resultant alienation.

All these structural critiques of welfare policy, emphasizing social control, share a major limitation: they rely only on functionalist argumentation, focusing on the rationality of welfare programs for those in power. This is a limitation, not a defect; functionalist analyses are often illuminating. Just as any good detective must ask "who benefits?" so that question when posed historically is often an important step towards an explanation. But functionalist explanations assume that welfare policy is coherently beneficial to some group or groups. Thus they cannot explain its often contradictory, even self-defeating aspects. These emerge both from the fragmented and inconsistent goals of policymakers, but also, most important, from the fact that most welfare policies represent the jerry-built compromises which are the artifacts of political and social conflict.

It is not surprising then that the major critique of this social control model came from scholars looking at welfare historically.

Carole Pateman, for example, despite her insistence on the patriarchal nature of welfare, recognizes that dependence on the state may be preferable to dependence on individual men; since women do not "live with the state" as they do with men, they are better able to make collective struggles about their entitlements.⁴⁸ Frances Fox Piven in this volume points out a remarkable and constructive contradiction in the welfare system: that this form of support for "dependent" women has in fact made many of them "independent" by giving them employment in the welfare system.*

At a certain point the efflorescence of empirical, historical scholarship about welfare created a third "stage," documenting women's political activism and influence in the making of that system. At first this work, unlike the critical theoretical work, was primarily celebratory, and rightly so. Historians, on the basis of archival research, uncovered a virtually lost history of women's leadership in welfare, arising from such organizations as the National Consumers' League, the Women's Trade Union League, the National Association of Colored Women, and the YWCA. But much of the feminist critique of these Progressive-era liberal programs was lost in this work. Paula Baker's article in this anthology was one of the first to transcend the celebratory model, to synthesize the effects and meanings of this intense, committed work by thousands of women and then to examine its meanings.** She illuminates with historical specificity some of the

*Piven, "Ideology and the State: Women, Power, and the Welfare State."

**Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920."

male aspects of the state, such as the fraternalism of political parties. She argues that women engaged in political activity long before they won suffrage, a point which adds to a growing theoretical understanding that we must enlarge what counts as politics and the political far beyond electoral activity.⁴⁹ But Baker, synthesizing a great deal of historical scholarship about women, in fact argues much more: that this women's politics fundamentally changed the nature of the U.S. state. She concludes that in the Progressive era, reaping the harvest from their cultivation of a new kind of state responsibility, women's very successes permanently ended the separate male and female political cultures that had characterized the previous centuries of U.S. history. In the early twentieth century middle-class men too began to take up the kinds of single-issue, extra-electoral agitating and lobbying campaigns around welfare issues and, indeed, soon came to dominate at least the leadership of this politics.

At first this history, written by white women, recognized only white women's contributions. This omission was not only a matter of undervaluing the history of minorities, but resulted from the very definitions of what constituted welfare and welfarist work, developed from the white experience. A more complex, nonexclusive historical understanding of welfarist work is beginning to emerge, especially on the part of Afro-Americans, thanks to the development of black women's historical scholarship; the histories of Asian-American, Hispanic-American, and Native-American women are also gaining momentum. The new historical scholarship suggests that women played a particularly influential role among Afro-Americans, as among whites, in providing for

the public welfare, but with considerable differences in form and content.

White women's strategies were often based on the substantial political influence, economic resources, and social mobility which many had, relying on wealth and connections to lobby for legislation and win administrative power through jobs and appointment to committees and commissions. Minority women, especially women of color, usually lacking influence on government at any level, had to turn to "private" welfare provision. (Ultimately studying this activity may contribute to an expanded and developed theory of the state, as constituting more than government.) Excluded from private and governmental white welfare programs, minority welfare activity was often indistinguishable from civil rights activity.⁵⁰

Out of the minority experience also came different welfare priorities. Particularly influential was the fact that black women were more likely to be employed than white women, black mothers especially more than white mothers; statistically black women were less able and possibly less willing to depend on male wages than were whites. Minority women in general worked in very different jobs from those of whites, as domestics, agricultural laborers, and laundresses, for example. These limits and choices were partly shared by working-class and other poor white women, but there were also considerable cultural differences. Afro-American reformers were also committed to the family wage ideal, but minority women activists were considerably more likely than whites to accept women's and even mothers' employment as a long-term reality and to seek programs that would make it easier, such as child care facilities or protection against sexual harassment. This

history suggests how racially specific have been what whites regard as mainstream welfare proposals; how deeply our welfare debates have taken place within a uniquely white set of political, economic, and familial assumptions. Moreover, the white women's welfarist activity played a role in maintaining, even reinforcing, class and race exclusions. Their organizations remained all white, not only because they had little interest in or sensitivity to women in other circumstances, but because on occasion they acted to exclude black women. Equally important, the white vision of public welfare--aid to needy children, replacement of male wages for dependent wives, protection for working women in industrial and urban enterprises--took as given the structures that not only excluded blacks but confirmed them in subordination.⁵¹

For white, even working-class white, women, the history of their work for public welfare confirms the notion that they were struggling within a masculine state, leaving aside the issue of how that maleness was structured and expressed. Even poor immigrant white women were often operating in cities in which their men were organized, albeit as vassals, into party politics. For black women it is not clear that this conceptualization--a male state--holds. The modifier "white," as in a white male state, was in fact far more than a modifier; it was an absolutely fundamental structuring principle, as Gwendolyn Mink argues in this volume.*

Historians have more often recognized the influence in welfare policy of a class perspective--that of the charity workers who were the direct antecedents of today's welfare policymakers. This is a

*Mink, "The Lady and the Tramp: Gender, Race and the Origins of the American Welfare State."

perspective that, as Michael Katz puts it in his recent book, The Undeserving Poor, sees the poor as "them" rather than "us."⁵² From Charles Loring Brace and the "rescue" or "kidnapping" of poor children (depending on one's point of view) in the 1870s to today's concern of large agribusiness employers for their migrant labor force, welfare policies have been powerfully influenced by the needs of capital and capital/labor relations. However, in the United States this class "otherness" became by the late nineteenth century indivisible from an ethnic/religious/"racial" otherness, because of the heavy immigration of southern and eastern Europeans coincident with peak rates of urbanization and impoverishment. Thus even the class character of a welfare system will be more fully revealed by the growth of scholarship about minorities.

Scholarship about class differences in women's visions of and campaigns for social provision is even less developed than that about race. The standard view regarding working-class views on welfare in the welfare-state histories relies on Gompers' pronouncements in opposition to governmental programs; the opinions of rank-and-file unionists remain unexplored, and evidence that union locals often supported welfare campaigns neglected. Working-class women, unionized and not, seem unlikely to have been faithful devotees of Gompers' anti-public welfare attitudes.

These class, race, and gender structures have been constantly contested. A framework for understanding the historical development of the welfare state, if it is to have actual explanatory power, must keep in focus not only the powerlessness but also the challenges and occasionally power of the resistant and sometimes organized

subordinates. Moreover, these subordinates are not a homogeneous group: some are controlling, some controlled; alliances among these various subordinated groups may be tactical and shifting, dependent on momentary common enmities to those with more power who are also divided. This approach has at times yielded conclusions that are unexpected and, to some feminists, even threatening, for if women's power is to be recognized, their responsibility must be also; and not only distinctions but even relations of domination among women become influential. Nancy Hewitt's study of women's activism in nineteenth-century Rochester, New York, is a good example of feminist critique of the universality of sisterhood and the often dominant influence of women's class allegiances in their reform activity.⁵³ Similarly, my studies of family violence showed women charity and case workers as controllers of poor women, cast doubt on whether there were any distinctions between the approaches of male and female child protectors, and showed women "clients" actively struggling against efforts to "help" them by their wealthier, altruistic "sisters."⁵⁴

Lisa Peattie and Martin Rein have offered a conceptual approach to the contestation over welfare that makes gender central, and their perspective is valuable and underrecognized. They want to develop a notion of claims (to goods, services, resources) that does not privilege wages but considers the wage form merely one variety of claiming. Industrial societies have, they argue, three realms within which claims are generated: family, economy, government.⁵⁵ These have different logics: family claims rest on assumptions of what they call "solidarity"; wage claims on assumptions of exchange; and the basis of claims on government is precisely the subject of dispute. Women's

methods of claiming have been based more on familial assumptions--not literally kinship solidarity but acceptance of interdependence--because family work has been more important and wage labor less important in most women's histories. The Peattie/Rein approach rejects the dominant view of wages or "earnings" as somehow naturally deserved, but tries to situate wages as one among several potentially legitimate claims for goods and services, such as those arising from kinship or friendship obligations or from a welfare system. Peattie and Rein's discussion has the particular value of identifying what has been a Marxist, liberal and conservative consensus in privileging the wage form as the means of providing for the citizenry and the implications of this assumption for welfare and for women: dependence on men, with welfare functioning to replace the male wage when it is not forthcoming. (Most feminists who have recognized and criticized this assumption have concluded from this critique that women were only victims, missing the mixture of women's support for the family wage system and their resistance to it, and especially missing women's successes.)

Peattie and Rein's concept of solidarity-based claims has something in common with the new discourse of "needs," discussed by Nancy Fraser in this volume.* Neither are based on principles of exact exchange or meritocracy. Both Marxist and conservative social critics have remained suspicious of needs as a base of political struggle, because they are so obviously constructed historically by hegemonic cultural and economic powers.⁵⁶ Feminists are only just beginning to examine how a "needs" discourse can remain a democratic, oppositional one. The Italian

*Fraser, "Struggle over Needs: Outline of a Socialist-Feminist Critical Theory of Late-Capitalist Political Culture."

sociologist Laura Balbo is one who has recognized the importance of women in the creation of a "needs-oriented culture," and that women have gained thereby a position of unprecedented strategic political strength and public importance.⁵⁷

But Peattie and Rein's perspective, although coming from a very different intellectual tradition, has some of the weaknesses of Foucault, another interpreter of welfare measures. In his work on, for example, prisons, Foucault was a member of the social-control group of theorists; in other respects--notably in the work on sexuality--Foucault argues for a multiplicity of competing discourses constructing needs. The Peattie and Rein view of competing claims is like Foucault's view of swirling discourses, tending towards pluralism, suggesting at times an indeterminacy so total as to deny the possibility of identifying any particular structures of hegemonic power. (In fact at other times Foucault returns to a quite conventional Marxist view that specific discourses express the material relations of specific historical stages.) The historical evidence will not confirm such an open-ended, power-agnostic view. Not everything is possible at every historical moment. Just as definitions of poverty have changed as minimal standards of living grew, so too aspirations and expectations of entitlement have grown. One hundred years ago many single mothers accepted--albeit with agony and fury--that they might have to lose their children in order to support them. Today single mothers feel entitled to raise their own children. This transformation of hopes, indeed of "needs," is an historical artifact, explicable through the study of social and political movements. Histories that trace only legislation

and political alliances, and explanations on the basis of some abstract "modernization," are not adequate to chart such transformations.

TOWARDS A NEW WELFARE HISTORY

Gender is thus also involved in welfare history through the personal and collective transformation of its recipients--their increased aspirations. These higher hopes developed, in turn, both from large-scale socioeconomic changes which brought more women into wage earning and independence from men, and from women's movements which formulated new experiences into greater demands for power and autonomy. The scholars who examine welfare arrangements, in this volume and elsewhere, are also affected by these changes. That is, the critical view of welfare reflects our own high aspirations for ourselves and other women. Histories of welfare lack explanatory power if they do not include the surrounding context of options for women--contraception; deindustrialization and the relative increase in low-wage, unskilled, service jobs; the masses of women now in higher education; the conservative and religious revival which threatens many women's rights and benefits.

It is clear that an accurate welfare history must not only incorporate racial and gender relations of power as fundamental, but must also register the agency of these subordinated groups in the construction of programs and policies. It must recognize the "relative autonomy" of the welfare state from direct control by a unified ruling group and register instead that the state is an arena of conflict with a particularly influential role played by social-service professionals.

The 1988 welfare reform (the Family Support Act) reflects, indeed, a strange and novel combination of conservative motives (tax-cutting, hostility to single mothers and women's sexual and reproductive independence, racism) with an acceptance of women's employment. Indeed, the newest reform rests on an alliance between those who believe that employment and reliance on wages is on the whole strengthening to women and those who would use employment as a punishment for deviant women. Diana Pearce, in this volume, argues that the liberal as well as the conservative perspective is potentially injurious to women, based as they are on two alternative models, both male: woman as dependent or woman as second-class worker.* The only effective and just reform of welfare would require as preconditions an entirely different valuation of the work of child-raising and nurturance of dependents, an end to discrimination against women and minorities in the labor force, and a radical increase in employment opportunities overall.

Recent welfare reform should also be examined in the context of the decline of a welfare rights movement and a lack of unity among welfare "experts" about what should be the content of such rights if there are any. Oddly, welfare rights is a subject being discussed now not by historians but by legal scholars, and they examine not the social movements for welfare rights but their legal tracks. These "tracks" are ambiguous. Somewhere between the mothers' pensions of the early twentieth century and the workfare programs of today, recipients gained some kind of legal claim to this "welfare" and to judicial recourse if grants are denied without due process.⁵⁸ This recourse is of course

*Pearce, "Welfare Is Not for Women: The War on Poverty, Legal Services, and on Alternatives Model of Advocacy for Poor Women."

largely theoretical, since most welfare recipients by their very need for welfare are unable to mount suits to claim the rights. Moreover some scholars, notably those identified with the "critical legal studies" movement, have taken a pejorative view of this rights discourse altogether, not only because the claimants are so often unable to make them real, but also because the claims are by nature individualized and individualizing, perhaps even antagonistic to collective action. An historical view belies that criticism, since there are many past instances of rights claims provoking, rather than dampening, collective militance. Elizabeth Schneider illustrates such cases in this volume while also constructing a general argument about rights discourse.* In the National Welfare Rights Organization the discourse that named AFDC a right was enormously important in shaping not only the political potential of welfare recipients--their sense of self as citizen--but also their personal identities.⁵⁹ (Although an increasing cross-section of Left, feminist, and liberal welfare policy experts are calling for universal grants as a means of getting rid of the stigma attached to means-tested payments, such a reform seems unlikely in the absence of a strong movement of welfare recipients themselves.)

The most sophisticated studies of welfare will have to improve on what is now available in several respects. One need is a better specification of the balance between "structure and agency," that is, between the long-term economic and ideological patterns that organize societies and the more short-term influence of political elites and political subordinates. More particularly this will require

*Schneider, "The Dialectic of Rights and Politics: Perspectives from the Women's Movement."

synthesizing structural and functionalist critiques of the operation of welfare programs with histories of their development. It will require rejecting determinist models of historical narrative which assume that final outcomes were somehow inevitable and that defeated proposals were ipso facto impossible;⁶⁰ it means writing history with foresight as well as hindsight, so to speak, from the vantage point of participants who did not already know the outcome. Another need in welfare scholarship is the fuller integration of activity among minority groups and the influence of racial attitudes and practices throughout the society. This must, furthermore, identify the important differences among the experiences of various minority groups; to the extent that we have made any progress in this area so far, it has been primarily about Afro-Americans and there has been a tendency to use the terms "minority" and "black" interchangeably. These two needs in turn suggest a needed advance in gender analysis: examining not only the relationships between women and other family members, and between women and the state, but among women as well. Women are not only divided by class, race, and other "differences," but may enter actual conflicts of interest with other women that directly affect their views on welfare policy.⁶¹ The concept of "difference" does not capture what is at issue because it implies a pluralist multiplicity of stories which benignly coexist or interact; it may obscure relations of inequality, domination, and even exploitation among women.

Specifying these goals for a more complex analytic framework should not diminish the need for more of the same as well. Gender-conscious scholarship on this topic is flourishing, but "gender-blind" (or really, gender-obscuring) scholarship is also. It will take a long time,

perhaps even another whole "wave" of a women's movement and a women's studies renaissance, to teach everyone that welfare as an academic topic or a social issue cannot be understood without particular attention to the situation of women and the gender system of the society.

Notes

¹There are already several collections of feminist articles on welfare from the United Kingdom, Norway, and Australia--for example, Cora V. Baldock and Bettina Cass, Women, Social Welfare, and the State in Australia (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1983); H. Holter, ed., Patriarchy in a Welfare Society (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1984); Jane Lewis, ed., Women's Welfare Women's Rights (London: Croom Helm, 1983); Jennifer Dale and Peggy Foster, Feminists and the Welfare State (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986). In Britain a stronger radical social-work perspective has produced more feminist scholarship on social welfare. There are excellent books, such as Gillian Pascall's Social Policy: A Feminist Analysis (London: Tavistock, 1986) and Elizabeth Wilson's Women and the Welfare State (London: Tavistock, 1977).

²For an introduction offering a British social work perspective, see Pascall, Social Policy.

³Jill Quadagno, "Theories of the Welfare State," Annual Reviews in Sociology 13, 1987, pp. 109-128.

⁴Robert Bremner, From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States (New York: New York University Press, 1956); James T. Patterson, America's Struggle Against Poverty, 1900-1985 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2nd ed., 1986); Walter I. Trattner, From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America (New York: Free Press, 1974, 4th ed., 1989); John Ehrenreich, The Altruistic Imagination: A History of Social Work and Social Policy in the United States (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985); David A.

Rocheftort, American Social Welfare Policy: Dynamics of Formulation and Change (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986); Michael B. Katz, In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America (New York: Basic Books, 1986). This omission is primarily characteristic of liberals; conservatives have been more likely to talk openly about the fact that their goals include the maintenance of certain non-neutral gender patterns, especially the division of labor in the family. See Allen Hunter, "Children in the Service of Conservatism: Parent-Child Relations in the New Right's Pro-Family Rhetoric," University of Wisconsin, Institute for Legal Studies, Working Paper 2-8, April 1988, for references, especially George Gilder, Wealth and Poverty (New York: Basic Books, 1981) and Charles Murray, Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980 (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

⁵Patricia Huckle, "The Womb Factor: Pregnancy Policies and Employment of Women," in Women, Power and Policy, ed. Ellen Boneparth (New York: Pergamon, 1982), pp. 144-161.

⁶Heide Gerstenberger, "The Poor and the Respectable Worker: On the Introduction of Social Insurance in Germany," Labour History 48, May 1985, pp. 69-85.

⁷For example, Patrick M. Horan and Patricia Lee Austin in their "The Social Bases of Welfare Stigma," Social Problems 21, 1974, pp. 648-657, virtually ignore gender.

⁸Linda Gordon, Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston, 1880-1960 (New York: Viking/Penguin, 1988), chapter 4.

⁹For examples see Emily I. Abel, "Adult Daughters and Care for the Elderly," Feminist Studies 12, no. 3, Fall 1986, pp. 479-497; Laura Balbo, "The Servicing Work of Women and the Capitalist State," in Political Power and Social Theory, ed. Maurice Zeitlin (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1982), pp. 251-270. On women as translating between money and needs, see Batya Weinbaum and Amy Bridges, "The Other Side of the Paycheck: Monopoly Capital and the Structure of Consumption," in Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism, ed. Zillah Eisenstein (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), pp. 190-205.

¹⁰Jill Quadagno, "From Old Age Assistance to Supplemental Security Income: The Political Economy of Relief in the South, 1935-1972," in The Politics of Social Policy in the United States, ed. Margaret Weir, Ann Shola Orloff, and Theda Skocpol (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988); Jerry Cates, Insuring Inequality: Administrative Leadership in Social Security, 1935-1954 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983); Harvard Sitkoff, A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Raymond Wolters, Negroes and the Great Depression: The Problem of Economic Recovery (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970); Wolters, "The New Deal and the Negro," in John Braeman et al., eds, The New Deal: The National Level (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1975).

¹¹Martha Ackelsberg, "Dependency, Resistance and the Welfare State: Contributions and Limits of Feminist Theory," in Gender and the Origins of the Welfare State, Proceedings of Conferences at the Harvard Center for European Studies, 1987-88.

¹²The first to apply the characterization "Whig" to a view that the progress of representative government led inevitably to the welfare state was probably Asa Briggs, in "The Welfare State in Historical Perspective," Archives Européennes de Sociologie, 2, no. 2, 1961, 221-258.

¹³Jill Quadagno, "Theories of the Welfare State," American Review of Sociology 13, 1987, p. 112.

¹⁴Michael Shalev, "The Social Democratic Model and Beyond: Two Generations of Comparative Research on the Welfare State," in Comparative Social Research 6, 1983, pp. 315-351; Quadagno, p. 115.

¹⁵This model is used by John Ehrenreich, The Altruistic Imagination.

¹⁶This point is also extremely well argued in a review of my book by Ann Withorn, "Radicalizing History: Writing about Women's Lives and the State," Radical America 22, nos. 2-3, 1989, pp. 45-51.

¹⁷In the following discussion I am indebted to Theda Skocpol's "Political Response to Capitalist Crisis: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the Case of the New Deal," Politics and Society 10, no. 2, 1980, 155-201.

¹⁸Ralph Miliband, The State in Capitalist Society (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969).

¹⁹The difficulty in positing a homogeneous set of interests among men has been a problem for all theorizing about "patriarchy" or male supremacy. This difficulty is one reason that I prefer an historical approach to conceptualizing male power, describing its actual operations

in specific historical circumstances, examining class and ethnic groups among men as well as particular relations between men and women.

²⁰Nicos Poulantzas, "The Problem of the Capitalist State," in Ideology in Social Science, ed. Robin Blackburn (New York: Random House, 1973).

²¹Fred Block, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule: Notes on the Marxist Theory of the State," in Revising State Theory: Essays in Politics and Postindustrialism, ed. Fred Block (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), pp. 51-68.

²²Skocpol and John Ikenberry, "The Political Formation of the American Welfare State in Historical and Comparative Perspective," Comparative Social Research 6, 1983, pp. 87-148, for example.

²³In the following discussion about British social welfare theory I am indebted to Pascall, Social Policy.

²⁴Pascall, Social Policy, p. 9.

²⁵Hilary Rose, "Re-reading Titmuss: The Sexual Division of Welfare," Journal of Social Policy 10, no. 4, 1981, pp. 477-502.

²⁶Sylvia Law, "Women, Work, Welfare, and the Preservation of Patriarchy," University of Pennsylvania Law Review 131, no. 6, May 1983, pp. 1251-1331; Joan Cummings, "Sexism in Social Welfare: Some Thoughts on Strategy for Structural Change," Catalyst, no. 8, 1980, pp. 7-34; Hilary Land, "Women: Supporters or Supported?" in Sexual Divisions and Society: Process and Change, ed. Diana Leonard Barker and Sheila Allen (London: Tavistock, 1979), pp. 108-132; Land, "Who Still Cares for the

Family? Recent Developments in Income Maintenance, Taxation and Family Law," in Journal of Social Policy 7, no. 3, July 1978, pp. 275-284.

²⁷Pat Thane, "Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England," History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist Historians, no. 6, Autumn 1978, pp. 29-51.

²⁸Gail Bushwalter King, "Women and Social Security: An Applied History Overview," in Social Science History 6, no. 2, Spring 1982, pp. 227-232.

²⁹Diana M. Pearce, "Toil and Trouble: Women Workers and Unemployment Compensation," Signs 10, no. 3, Spring 1985, pp. 439-459.

³⁰Irene Diamond, "Women and Housing: The Limitations of Liberal Reform," in Women, Power and Policy, ed. Ellen Boneparth (New York: Pergamon, 1982), pp. 109-117.

³¹Mimi Abramovitz, Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present (Boston: South End Press, 1988).

³²For example Katz, In the Shadow of the Poorhouse, pp. 238-239.

³³Hace Sorel Tishler, Self-Reliance and Social Security, 1870-1917 (Port Washington, New York: National University Publications, 1971), p. 142.

³⁴See my "What Does Welfare Regulate?" Social Research 55, no. 4, Winter 1988, pp. 609-630.

³⁵Hilary Land, "The Family Wage," Feminist Review 6, 1980, pp. 55-77; Jill Roe, "The End Is Where We Start From: Women and Welfare since

1901," in Women, Social Welfare and the State in Australis, ed. Cora V. Baldock and Bettina Cass (Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), pp. 1-19; Jane Lewis, "Dealing with Dependency: State Practices and Social Realities, 1870-1945," in Women's Welfare, Women's Rights, ed. Jane Lewis (London: Croom Helm, 1983), pp. 17-37; Mary McIntosh, "The Welfare State and the Needs of the Dependent Family," in Fit Work for Women, ed. Sandra Burman (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), pp. 153-172; Mimi Abramowitz, Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy From Colonial Times to the Present (Boston: South End Press, 1988), esp. chapters 1 and 3; Linda Gordon, "What Does Welfare Regulate?"

³⁶Helene Silverberg, "Women, Welfare and the State," Cornell Journal of Social Relations 18, Spring 1985, pp. 1-12.

³⁷Michael Walzer, "Socializing the Welfare State," in Democracy and the Welfare State, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 13-26.

³⁸Carole Pateman, "The Patriarchal Welfare State," in Gutmann, ed., Democracy and the Welfare State, pp. 231-260. See also Pateman, The Sexual Contract (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988). On issues of citizenship see also Susan Moller Okin, Justice, Gender, and the Family (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

³⁹Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women (New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1978).

⁴⁰Alicia Frohman, "Day Care and the Regulation of Women's Labor Force Participation," Catalyst, no. 2, 1978, pp. 5-17. She does not

seem aware that Ruth Milkman has demonstrated that the reserve-army-of-labor hypothesis does not work for women, because the labor market is so sexually segregated that it has little flexibility to exchange women's and men's jobs. See Milkman, "Women's Work and the Economic Crisis: Some Lessons from the Great Depression," Review of Radical Political Economics 8, no. 1, Spring 1976, 73-97.

⁴¹Diana Leonard Barker, "The Regulation of Marriage: Repressive Benevolence," in Power and the State, ed. Gary Littlejohn et al. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), pp. 239-266. Libba Gaje Moore's dissertation, "Mothers' Pensions: The Origins of the Relationship between Women and the Welfare State," University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1986, comes to similar conclusions.

⁴²Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Knopf, 1977); William Leach, True Love and Perfect Union: The Feminist Reform of Sex and Society (New York: Basic Books, 1980); Ellen DuBois and Linda Gordon, "Seeking Ecstasy on the Battlefield: Nineteenth-century Feminist Views of Sexuality," Feminist Studies, 9, no. 1, Spring 1983; Linda Gordon, Heroes of Their Own Lives; Gordon, "Women and the Creation of Public Welfare, 1890-1945," paper given at AHA/Smithsonian Institution conference on the Progressive Era, March 1988, unpub.

⁴³Patricia Tulloch, "Gender and Dependency," in Unfinished Business: Social Justice for Women in Australia (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), pp. 19-37.

⁴⁴Carol Brown, "Mothers, Fathers and Children: From Private to Public Patriarchy," in Women and Revolution, ed. Lydia Sargent (Boston: South End Press, 1981), pp. 239-67. Norwegian scholar Helga Maria

Hernes conceptualizes this as a transition from private to public dependence; see her "Women and the Welfare State: The Transition from Private to Public Dependence," in Holter, Patriarchy in a Welfare Society. U.S. feminist philosopher Ann Ferguson makes a finer and somewhat different distinction between "father patriarchy," "husband patriarchy" in the modern period, and "public (capitalist) patriarchy." See her "On Conceiving Motherhood and Sexuality: A Feminist Materialist Approach," in Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory, ed. Joyce Trebilcot (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Allanheld, 1984), pp. 153-182.

⁴⁵Zillah R. Eisenstein, Feminism and Sexual Equality (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), p. 89.

⁴⁶For more on this see my "Single Mothers and Child Neglect," American Quarterly 37, no. 2, Spring 1985, pp. 173-192.

⁴⁷Eli Zaretsky, "The Place of the Family in the Origins of the Welfare State," in Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions, ed. Barrie Thorne (New York: Longman, 1982), pp. 188-224.

⁴⁸Pateman, "The Patriarchal Welfare State."

⁴⁹A welcome addition to Baker's work will be Theda Skocpol's Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Politics of Social Provision in the United States, 1870s-1920s, forthcoming. On enlarging the notion of the political, see Linda Gordon, "What Should Women's Historians Do: Politics, Social Theory, and Women's History," Marxist Perspectives, no. 3, Fall 1978, pp. 128-136.

⁵⁰For a good overview of this activity, see Paula Giddings, When

and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America (New York: William Morrow, 1984).

⁵¹Linda Gordon, "Race and Class Divisions in Women's Welfare Activism," unpublished.

⁵²Michael Katz, The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare (New York: Pantheon, 1989), Epilogue.

⁵³Nancy Hewitt, Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1972 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984).

⁵⁴Gordon, Heroes of Their Own Lives; and Gordon, "The Frustrations of Family Violence Social Work: An Historical Critique," Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare 15, no. 4, December 1988, pp. 139-160.

⁵⁵Lisa Peattie and Martin Rein, Women's Claims: A Study in Political Economy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), esp. pp. 9 ff.

⁵⁶See Agnes Heller, "Can 'True' and 'False' Needs be Posited?" chapter 5 in The Power of Shame: A Rational Perspective (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), for just one example.

⁵⁷Laura Balbo, "Family, Women, and the State: Notes Towards A Typology of Family Roles and Public Intervention," in Changing Boundaries of the Political, ed. Charles S. Maier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 201-219.

⁵⁸There is an interesting legal debate about when the rights claim emerged. Sylvia Law, "Women, Work, and Welfare"; Rand E. Rosenblatt, "Legal Entitlement and Welfare Benefits," in David Kairys, ed., The Politics of Law: A Progressive Critique (New York: Pantheon, 1982), pp.

262-278; William H. Simon, "The Invention and Reinvention of Welfare Rights," Maryland Law Review 44, no. 1, 1985, pp. 1-37; and Simon, "Rights and Redistribution in the Welfare System," Stanford Law Review 38, no. 143, 1986, pp. 1431-1516.

⁵⁹Guida West, The National Welfare Rights Movement: The Social Protest of Poor Women (New York: Praeger, 1981).

⁶⁰For an egregious example of this kind of thinking, see Daniel Levine, Poverty and Society: The Growth of the American Welfare State in International Comparison (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1988.)

⁶¹For example, Deborah G. White, "Fettered Sisterhood: Class and Classism in Early Twentieth Century Black Women's History," unpublished; Linda Gordon, "Race and Class Divisions in Women's Welfare Activism, 1890-1945," unpublished.