DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 892 RC 020 649

AUTHOR Baldwin, Barbara, Ed.
TITLE Pathways from Poverty.
INSTITUTION Western Rural Development Center, Corvallis, Oreg.
SPONS AGENCY Extension Service (DOA), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 95
CONTRACT 93-ERRD-1-8502
NOTE 37p.; Photographs will not reproduce adequately.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT Western Wire; Fall 1995

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Capitalism; *Change Strategies; Community Development; Economic Development; *Economic Factors; Higher Education; Indigenous Populations; Minority Groups; One Parent Family; *Poverty; *Poverty Areas; *Public Policy; *Rural Areas; Rural Development; Rural Education; Rural Family; Rural Sociology; Social Change; Social Networks
IDENTIFIERS Latinos; Native Americans; Social Capital; Welfare Reform

ABSTRACT

Articles in this theme issue are based on presentations at the Pathways from Poverty Workshop held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on May 18-25, 1995. The event aimed to foster development of a network to address rural poverty issues in the Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) region. Articles report on outcomes from the Pathways from Poverty workshop including team plans for addressing poverty in their area; the importance of social capital in building community; Native American economic development efforts that incorporate sustainability and cultural relevance; the effect of capitalism on the Palau islands; how sharing resources has enabled low-income families in American Samoa to maintain economic stability; demographic, economic, and educational factors that affect the status of Latinos in the United States, with implications for the American economy; a study of single-parent families and welfare reform; rural minorities and the relationship between employment and poverty; and the importance of rural studies in gaining understanding of rural poverty. Articles include: (1) "Pathways from Poverty" (Jane Brass); (2) "Social Capital" (Marie Cirillo); (3) "The Circle of Development and Indigenous Peoples" (Sherry Salway Black); (4) "Palauan Perspective" (Ayano Baules); (5) "Poverty: A Matter of Values" (Carol S. Whitaker); (6) "Focus on Latinos" (Refugio I. Rochin, Jose A. Rivera); (7) "Is Marriage the Solution? The Single-Parent Family and Welfare Reform" (Janet M. Fitchen); (8) "Employment Hardship and Rural Minorities" (Leif Jensen); and (9) "The Social Scientist and Rural America" (Emery N. Castle). The journal also includes updates on projects sponsored by WRDC and upcoming conferences. (LP)

ERIC

ED 396 892

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
B
Baldwin
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

RC020649

advisory committee

Alaska
Anthony Nakazawa
Cooperative Extension Service
University of Alaska
2221 E. Northern Lights, Suite 132
Anchorage, AK 99508-4143
(907) 276-2433
FAX (907) 279-2139
ANATN@ACAD2.ALASKA.EDU

Arizona
Bruce R. Beattie
Dept. of Ag and Resource Economics
Econ Bldg. # 23 Room 208
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721
(602) 621-2581
FAX (602) 621-6250
BEATTIE@CCIT.ARIZONA.EDU

California
George Goldman
Cooperative Extension
Dept. of Ag. & Resource Economics
207 Giannini Hall
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720
(510) 642-6461
FAX (510) 642-6108
GOLDMAN@ARE.BERKELEY.EDU

Colorado
Sheila Knop, Program Coordinator
Center for Rural Assistance
138 Aylesworth N.W.
Colorado State University
Cooperative Extension
Fort Collins, CO 80523
(303) 491-5579
FAX (303) 491-5108
SKNOP@VINES.COLOSTATE.EDU

Guam
Randy Workman
Community Development Institute
University of Guam
UOG Station
Mangilao, Guam 96923
(671) 734-2506
FAX (671) 734-1462
WORKMANR@UOG9.UOG.EDU

Hawaii
Linda Cox
Dept. of Ag. & Resource Economics
3050 Maile Way, Gilmore 115
University of Hawaii
Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 956-6755
FAX (808) 956-2811
LCOX@UHUNIX.UHCC.HAWAII.EDU

Idaho
Neil Meyer
Dept. of Ag Econ & Rural Sociology
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83843
(208) 885-6263
FAX (208) 885-5759
NMEYER@UIDAHO.EDU

Montana
Dave Sharpe
Montana State University
Cooperative Extension Specialist
112 Taylor Hall
Bozeman, MT 59717
(406) 994-2962
FAX (406) 994-5417
ACXDS@TREX.OSCS.MONTANA.EDU

Nevada
Thomas Harris
Center for Economic Development
Mail Stop 204
University of Nevada-Reno
Reno, NV 89557-0105
(702) 784-1681
FAX (702) 784-1342
HARRIS@UNSSUN.SCS.UNR.EDU

New Mexico
Robert Coppedge
New Mexico State University
Cooperative Extension Service
Box 3AE
Las Cruces, NM 88003
(505) 646-4122
FAX (505) 646-3808
RCOPPEDG@NMSU.EDU

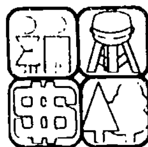
Oregon
Rebecca Johnson
Dept. of Forest Resources
Oregon State University
Peavy Hall, Room 109
Corvallis, OR 97331
(541) 737-1492
FAX (541) 737-3049
JOHNSONR@CCMAIL.ORST.EDU

Utah
David Rogers
Department of Sociology
Utah State University
Logan, UT 84322-0730
(801) 797-1255
FAX (801) 797-1240
DAVER@EXTSPARC.AGSCI.USU.EDU

Washington
Annabel Cook
Dept. of Rural Sociology
Washington State University
Pullman, WA 99164-4006
(509) 335-4519
FAX (509) 335-2125
COOK@WSUVM1.CSC.WSU.EDU

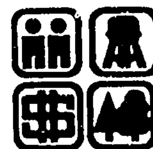
Wyoming
David Taylor
Dept. of Agricultural Economics
University of Wyoming
Box 3354
Laramie, WY 82071
(307) 766-5682
FAX (307) 766-3379
TTAYLOR@UWYO.EDU

Western Rural Development Center
307 Ballard Extension Hall
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331-3607
(541)737-3621 FAX (541)737-1579
WRDC@CCMAIL.ORST.EDU



North Central Regional Center
for Rural Development 317 East Hall
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011-1070
(515)294-8322 FAX (515)294-2303
CFLORA@IASTATE.EDU

Northeast Regional Center for Rural
Development 7 Armsby Bldg
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802-5600
(814)863-4656 FAX (814)863-0586
NECRD@PSUPEN.PSU.EDU



Southern Rural Development Center
Box 9656-6 Montgomery Drive
Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, MS 39762-9656
(601)325-3207 FAX (601)325-8407
BONNIET@MCES.MSSTATE.EDU

Western Wire

Western Rural Development Center

Fall 1995

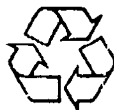
A major function of this newsletter is to disseminate information about Center-funded projects and reseaıch. If you are involved in a project associated with the Center, please send research summaries, event notices, publicity clips, or any pertinent information to the *Wire*. Feel free to include photographs or other graphic illustrations. All materials will be returned to you at your request.

The *Western Wire* is published three times each year. Please send information about forthcoming conferences, workshops, and other events of interest in community development to Editor, *Western Wire*, WRDC, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331-3607.

Barbara Baldwin
Editor

If you receive more than one copy of the Wire, please send the labels from both copies to the WRDC office and indicate your preferred address. If you receive an issue of the Western Wire that is in any way defective, please call or FAX the WRDC and we will send a replacement. Be sure to give your name and address.

The *Western Wire* is printed on acid-free paper which contains a minimum of 50% recycled fibers. Please recycle this copy with your magazines and catalogs.



The mission of the Western Rural Development Center is to strengthen rural families, communities, and businesses by facilitating collaborative socio-economic research and extension through higher education insititutions in the western region.

The Western Rural Development Center offers its programs and materials equally to all people.

Western Rural Development Center
Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon 97331-3607
(541) 737-3621 FAX (541) 737-1579
WRDC@CCMAIL.ORST.EDU

PATHWAYS FROM POVERTY 4
A regional workshop brought together state teams from throughout the West

SOCIAL CAPITAL 7
Lessons from Appalachia for building community

THE CIRCLE OF DEVELOPMENT AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES 10
Development can incorporate sustainability and cultural relevance

PALAUAN PERSPECTIVE 15
Ideas of wealth changed with the introduction of capitalism

POVERTY: A MATTER OF VALUES 17
Aspects of traditional Island values persist

FOCUS ON LATINOS 18
A strong national economy may depend on a thriving Latino community

THE SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY AND WELFARE REFORM 25
Is marriage the answer?

EMPLOYMENT HARDSHIP AND RURAL MINORITIES 29
Minorities in rural areas are at greater economic disadvantage than those in urban areas

THE SOCIAL SCIENTIST AND RURAL AMERICA 32
Budget cutting has weakened the rural social sciences

CENTER PROJECTS: PROGRESS REPORT 34

CONFERENCES 35

Some of the material in this newsletter is based upon work supported by the Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under special project number 93-ERRD-1-8502. Cover: *The Night of the Poor*, fresco by Diego Rivera in the Ministry of Education, Mexico City. Photos pages 4-6 and page 17 by Tomilee Turner.

PATHWAYS FROM POVERTY

Jane Brass
Program Coordinator
Western Rural Development Center

Too many conferences waste time and accomplish nothing. This was the most productive and useful conference I have attended to date.

I really am glad I came. I am by nature a community worker and it was so rewarding to see the various groups who are on target working to empower their communities and individuals.

I'm pleased to have stronger ties with tribal government representatives and community/economic development folks in the state and region. Too often university people talk only to each other.

The western region held its *Pathways from Poverty* work shop in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on May 18-20, 1995 with generous sponsorship from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Farm Foundation, and the Rural Sociological Society. Over 100 people from all 13 states and 4 territories that comprise the Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) region participated in the event designed to foster a network to address rural poverty issues. The overall atmosphere of the workshop was incredibly positive. People expressed a sense of commitment and found inspiration among their fellow participants that motivated them to continue to attend all sessions and to work in the after-hours with their teammates.

The WRDC organized *Pathways from Poverty in the Rural West* to bring together leaders from all sectors of the region in a process of discovery, discussion, and action planning directed toward improving the quality of life for the rural poor. The Albuquerque workshop was an initial effort in what will continue as a WRDC program to create and support networks that join local imperatives and policy decisions with scholarship.

Workshop participants

Participants came to the workshop in state teams ranging in size from 5 to 15 members. Teams were organized with the help of Extension and other contacts to include people from state and local government (elected officials and agency staff), grassroots organizations, tribal government and organizations, higher education (research and extension), and the private sector. The private sector was represented by private non-profit groups and one media representative, but not by private business, utilities, banks, etc. We hope teams are able to recruit members from these important groups, too. The federal government was represented by state directors of the USDA's Rural Economic and Community Development Service.

Participants also reflected the ethnic diversity within the rural west, including American Indians, Native Alaskans and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics. A few participants noted that African Americans were not in attendance and only one Asian American participated. Some teams stated intentions to seek out partnerships with representatives of these groups as they expand their teams.

The future has already begun

The program was designed to increase awareness and understanding of both individual and social aspects of poverty and to stimulate thinking about what state teams can do locally to create pathways from poverty, with the primary objective to build stronger relationships among organizations involved in rural poverty and create a western regional network. This objective was established because more often than not, people responsible for poverty programs in communities, universities, and governments are not in communication with each other even though they are active in the same field of interest. Frequently people do not even know one another, though they may know about the other program.

Time was built into the workshop for participants to work together in expanded partnerships within their state and the region. State teams worked with trained facilitators to develop a vision statement of what they would like to see in place in the next

Right: Participants represented the cultural and ethnic diversity of rural western people and learned from one another as well as from the program presenters. *Far right:* Gene Summers conceived the Pathways from Poverty project after a National Rural Studies Commitee meeting in the Mississippi Delta put him in touch with his childhood struggles.

10 years along the three major pathways. They also brainstormed ideas for working together as a team in the immediate future.

Follow-up activities have already started. Nine states and three territories have submitted proposals to continue working together with the help of small seed grants. All of the state teams are expected to implement efforts during this next year with the currently available funds. These seed monies should help the teams acquire additional funds to undertake broader, more sustained efforts. Some activities already identified are:

AMERICAN SAMOA will develop a home based business program to help women with limited resources increase their incomes through occupations that will allow them to stay at home to care for their families and communities.

ARIZONA's team has worked with a larger forum within the state to develop a consensus document entitled, Block Grants with a Vision, a suggested policy guide for policymakers at both the federal and state levels in the evolving discussion about block grants. Seed grant monies have already helped circulate draft versions to over 200 diverse groups throughout the state.

CALIFORNIA will convene a small workshop, Pathways to Livelihoods: Creating Communities of Learning, to determine what classes/short courses in skills would be necessary for changing livelihood possibilities and ways that those could be delivered to community members at acceptable times and places.

COLORADO's short-term plan addresses concerns for affordable housing for low income families/communities. The team will pursue additional learning opportunities to help them develop creative, holistic approaches for meeting housing and other needs of these citizens and neighborhoods.

GUAM will establish a coalition of public agencies and community service groups to organize a Cooperative Child Care Center for low income/limited resource/single parents. Through this facility they will engage family members in opportunities for personal development and empowerment.

HAWAII team members will contribute to an ongoing review of federally funded food and nutrition programs in the state to provide policymakers with information to help them structure welfare reform responses.

Agenda

THURSDAY, MAY 18TH

1:00 Welcome: *Russell C. Youmans*, WRDC Director

1:15 Laying out the Challenge/Vision
Art Campbell, Deputy Under Secretary, USDA Rural Economic & Community Development Services

2:15 Social Capital:Developing community and institutional capacity to work together
Marie Cirillo, Woodland Community Land Trust

3:35 Pathways from Poverty: History and reflections
Gene Summers, Univ of Wisconsin/Madison
Louise Fortmann, Univ of California-Berkeley
Jose Rivera, University of New Mexico
Sylvia Polacca, Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona
Carol Whitaker, American Samoa
Ayano Baules, Palau
Pat Simpson, Guam

4:45 State Team Initial Get Together

FRIDAY, MAY 19TH

8:30 Concurrent sessions

Work and Income
Ann Tickamyer, University of Kentucky
- Aurora Native Crafts Catalogue project
  Jeanine Kennedy, Director, RurAL CAP
- National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development
  Steve Stallings, President
- Forest Trust
  Jan-Willem Jansens *Thomas Brendlar*
- San Juan Pueblo Gaming Corp.
  Elias Vigil, CEO

Education and Human Capital
Ruy Teixeira, Economic Research Service
- San Cristo Project, Colorado
  Larry Dunn *Louise Stitzel*
  Carol Addo *Gail Rodriguez*
- Schools and Community Development Project
  Bruce Miller, NW Regional Educational Laboratory
  Julie Riley, Powder River (MT) Extension
  Sandra Moody, Liberty Jr/Sr High School

Family and Health
Patricia Garrett, Univ of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Confidence Clinic
  Margaret Ellison, Executive Director
  Allison Green, Clinic staff
  Midge Campbell, Successful graduate
- Espanola Valley High School Teen Clinic, New Mexico
  Kay Sanchez *Dorothy Montoya*
- Las Compañeras
  Roberto Bardelis

1:15 State Teams: Visioning with facilitators

SATURDAY, MAY 20TH

8:30 State Team Meetings
10:30 Reporting Session
Noon Adjourn

ERIC

6

MONTANA is planning a statewide conference for affordable housing which will draw participation from bankers, legislators, human resource professionals, contractors, and the legal community from all regions of the state.

NEVADA will model, develop and expand a holistic approach to sustainable community development and work to enhance community capacity to utilize comprehensive planning documents in decision-making processes.

NEW MEXICO intends to build a business inventory/directory, expand networking capabilities, broaden distance learning opportunities, encourage home-based businesses, and raise the priority of poverty in public policy.

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (Saipan, Rota, Tinian) will work to provide business opportunities to increase the income of women with limited resources through the formation of a Women's Cooperative. Their first effort will be to develop and publish a crafts catalogue and local recipe book.

OREGON's team is designing a strategy to create dialogues throughout rural Oregon that would address perceptions of poverty with the hope of challenging common myths. They are exploring ideas that would provide support for building social capital in rural communities, one of which is to examine Oregon's Benchmarks to see what role social capital might play in achieving them.

UTAH's team is reaching out to the Utah Issues Forum, which has a strong history of involving citizens in public policy education. They aspire to draft a rural poverty statement to bring to the legislature.

More important, really, than any one particular project listed above, is the fact that the state team members have continued to communicate with each other, and in many cases have broadened their core group via networking with other agencies, organizations, and individuals. WRDC will continue to support work by these teams in each state and to facilitate communication and information-sharing across state lines on this important issue of rural poverty.

WRDC will work with the National Persistent Poverty Chair to network the western regional teams with those in other regions of the country.❑

Planning Committee

Herman Agoyo
Picuris Pueblo
Penasco, NM

Kristi Branch
Batelle Institute
Seattle, WA

Flaxen Conway
Oregon State
Extension Service

Mary Lou Cooper
Western Council of
State Governments

Jean Cowan
Commissioner
Lincoln County, OR

Christina Gringeri
Graduate School of
Social Work
University of Utah

Rosanne Turner

Janine Kennedy
Rural Alaska CAP

Kathy James
Idaho Dept. of
Health and Welfare
Idaho Rural
Development Council

John Kusel
Forest Community
Research
Westwood, CA

Mike McMahon
Human Services
Washoe County, NV

Refugio Rochin
Julian Samora Inst
Michigan State Univ

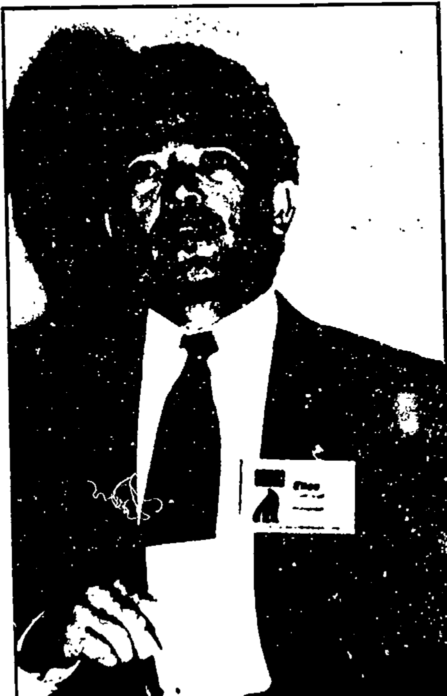
Louise Stitzel
The Resource
Assistance Center

Gene Summers
Rural Sociology
Univ of Wisconsin

Randy Workman
Community
Development Institute
University of Guam

Mary Evans
U.S. West

Louise Fortmann
Environmental Policy
and Management
Univ of California
Berkeley



Elias Vigil explored the implications of gambling as an economic development tool for creating work and income.

Midge Campbell, Allison Green, and Margaret Ellison testified to the positive effect on families and health of programs that develop a sense of self-worth, provide skills training, and lead to self-sufficiency among low-income women.

ERIC

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Marie Cirillo
Woodland Community Trust
Clearfork, Tennessee
Presented by Ms. Cirillo at the Pathways from Poverty Conference sponsored by the Western Rural Development Center in Albuquerque May 18, 1995.

I believe social capital is a fluid, improvisational and skillful interplay among people who live, breathe, give and take from one another and their shared environment. It is a thing of value that penetrates the atmosphere, that builds the spirit, that creates the energy within a neighborhood or community. It is work or labor that does not stand alone but rather is connected to other work or labor in ways that give it cultural integrity, social meaning and community vitality.

Much of what I experienced in the convent was social capital of this kind. We were a group of 105 young women, recently organized city girls who decided to be missionaries to rural America. We went out in bands of four with hardly a roof over our heads, with little money, with the constraints placed on us by a religious group, even if we were professionally trained teachers, nurses, or social workers. We generally had one car with which to move into our various fields of work. There was little money, but we created an energy, a social capital, that was effective. How often do people get the opportunity to experience this? I believe the new government program Americorps, which requires volunteers to work as a team, might be creating such an experience. I expect army life, clubs, non-profit organizations, committees and other groups like these might allow for a first hand experience.

It is very helpful to have experienced the effectiveness of social capital before trying to harvest it or activate it among others.

It is the connectedness of social activities that generates social capital. It is the separateness of institutional, professional activity that costs a lot of money. At a time when our nation is heavily in debt, is there any wonder that we are looking to honor social capital? Those who have it, and those who want it to happen more, are asking the question, "How is it rewarded?" That is a key question for policy makers. At the social summit gathering of the United Nations in March and the planning for the UN women's gathering in September, there are many recommendations coming from the non-government sector on ways to measure the value of social capital. Nations like the United States, Japan and the European Union rejected any strong, binding commitments to this and other actions emerging from the non-government or civic sector of society. Do these power blocks fear losing money? What does money have to do with social capital? Or do they rather fear losing power? If the world plays games other than monetary games, who will win? The issue we are addressing is not politically correct.

How do we harvest social capital so it can be a pathway from poverty in the rural community? Must it be institutionalized? Is it more important that it be internalized by a significant number of people within and outside of institutions? Are financial and/or other rewards necessary if it is to flourish? Where are the freedoms that release the social resources, where are the controls to focus them so that capital can move us out of poverty. Is the "us" being moved out of poverty the poor, the nation, the community, or neighborhood? How much diversity exists within the sphere from which one is trying to mobilize social capital? Each setting will require personalized responses to all of these important questions.

Institutional capacity

I moved into a place called the Clearfork Valley in Tennessee 28 years ago. The immediate and dramatic change for me was that I was no longer a sister—no longer enjoying the social capital we were able to create. I was alone in a community suffering from the great loss of over 80 percent of its population to the industrial midwest. The Clearfork Valley is the space on the other side of the mountain. It is the place you go to get the coal out of the earth for shipment to power companies.

It is clear now that the reason for the 3 million out-migration of the '50s and '60s had everything to do with the capital investment in machinery. Labor was not needed for the production of coal any

ERIC

We must imagine more to life than running to the market place every time life gets boring at home.

longer. Labor was needed in Cincinnati, Chicago and Detroit, where the natural resources of our mountain forest lands were shipped and processed. In Middlesboro, Kentucky, twenty miles from the Clearfork Valley, was the Ford coal camp. Owned by Ford Motors in Detroit, this was security for their production. They had to come to Appalachia for the coal and the labor. Detroit had the capital. Obviously the social capital that builds community had no accounting system in the world of politics and economics. Working as I was now for the church with a $3,000 salary and a $3,000 operating budget, how could I start a self-help effort except through social capital? The community needed it. I needed it for myself.

It is unfortunate that growth policies have moved the markets to the towns. Now everyone needs a car, gas money and insurance just to get food. This seems so foolish it is no wonder that more people in my community are growing gardens today than last year. There are common grounds where food is being produced for the community. Local social capital activists are not thinking about how to sell the produce, but rather, how to have common meals. People need occasions to support the cohesion that turns their efforts into social capital.

It is unfortunate that the instinctual capacities of the human being have been so totally snuffed out of an urban industrial society. Indeed humans, like other living things, were created with the capacity to take care of their needs. They knew how to do this long before money was invented. Now we don't know how to provide for ourselves without money. Who among us could grow our own food, build our own shelter or sew our own clothing? As we lost land, we lost these skills. We lost a kind of social interaction that comes from working together as family and in community. Money created a whole new way of doing development. We have to find ways to start undoing the trap money has built. Now everything that makes life easy comes from the outside—the world market— and social dynamism is limited to the politics and economics of marketing. My community is following the lead of several other communities and establishing a form of local currency that allows for a good mix of social and monetary capital.

We are moving into a very different life as we enter the 21st century. I don't mean to suggest we return to a caveman existence, but as resources are depleted, as humans become less mobile, as there is less money, we will have the challenge to consider another way of being. Considering social capital is an important piece of any forward looking strategy.

Community capacity

Pathways from poverty to what? If we think poverty is caused by a lack of money and can be solved with money, we are barking up the wrong tree. There are few money trees left to climb. We must contemplate each other and consider all the options for making life better. We must imagine more to life than running to the market place every time life gets boring at home. From TV to Market—in this habit we as a society have gotten into there is little hope for social capital. Indeed, such habits detract from social development. One valuable way to develop skills for image and vision making is to learn from those who have been without money and/or escape mechanisms for a long time. You might have to make them believe you trust their ways. You might have to find exercises that return self confidence to them. You might be in a position to consider ways to reward rather than punish people for being more open about the contributions they are making to the social capital within their community.

Women's deprivations are also a strength once we can appreciate the way social capital fits into the scheme of things. Is it not true that women know all about unpaid work? They know what it is because they do it. It might not be recognized because it is not paid for, but women know. Is it a male/ female thing? Is it a socialization process like collective living, like team work that gives one the capacity to mobilize social capital? Is it the absence of other capital that helps develop social capital, just as one who is blind often develops other senses to a greater degree than one who is not blind? Are there other factors that sensitize one to recognizing and moving with the power of social capital?

I want to speak to long term residency in a community as especially important to the development of social capital. Most, but not all, are women who do much of the unpaid work in the world. Women and others who don't have cash are less mobile. If they have children or the elderly or the garden to care for they are less mobile than others. If they keep the house warm in winter and clean and cool in the summer they are less mobile than those without daily maintenance chores. Hence women more than men, in general, are more stable within a community. This provides the opportunity to better connect things going on among people and with nature. Their social activity is connected. A cohesiveness is created and this cohesiveness adds up to social capital. Such awareness can be aided through a group process, but some women, as well as men and children whose security and way of knowing come out of a rootedness in community, can act very independently while being keenly tuned in to the whole, which builds social capital.

New institutions

My experience tells me that once you listen to them, honor them by supporting their dreams, turn over a little money and try to find appropriate experts, local people can move mountains. Our community has health clinics, development corporations, a land trust, an adult higher education program, many child and parent programs, a peer lending program, a plan for forest management and value added products, garden and school activities, fire departments and small church efforts. Only one government building with one staff person is located within the Clearfork Valley.

Working together

Over the years local citizen organizations have established partnerships with the Community Design Center in Knoxville, with several Knoxville and Oak Ridge churches, with TVA. The most committed partnership is between Carson Newman College and Mountain Women's Exchange. They are developing an appropriate adult education program which will give people the knowledge and skills necessary to work in this community (as distinct from those needed in cities to which they might have to migrate).

This year students on campus at Carson Newman College will further explore options for a service learning program with

ERIC

Woodland Community Land Trust. This will be an important exchange since one major initiative is to get back a land base from which social capital can interact. We are not airborne people. We do not live in cities. We need our land, and as we are now initiating a process to dialogue with the absentee land and coal companies we can only hope that they will see some reason to share the mined-out lands with us.

Timber companies have moved in and are clear-cutting our mountains. The only hope we have is that the industrial giants that produce for a world market will come to understand the need for social capital, will contribute to the local efforts by turning over some land, possibly some money, and even some expertise. Would it be too much to imagine that we might do this in partnership with mutual respect for what we each need of the other? Might it be possible that the college partnership is what will in time bring the grassroots efforts the measure of legitimacy that allows them equal respect among the land barons?

We don't have answers, but thanks to a Ford Foundation grant to the East Tennessee Community Foundation, we are one of five rural community groups engaged in a three year planning, action and policy setting effort. This program is functioning in four states and is directed towards an exploration of the capacity community foundations have to serve their rural constituency. I do not know what approach is being used in other states, but the East Tennessee Foundation decided to let the grassroots groups take the initiative. In our case we are planning for the year 2000 and what happens after coal. Another group is planning for community supported agriculture as a solution to what happens after tobacco. Needless to say with a $5,000 planning grant to each community group, much of our success will rest on our ability to generate social capital in the planning and action process.

Myrtle and Uncle Dave Noble, Alpine, Oregon.
Photo © James Cloutier.

Conclusion

One very important reason we are being pushed to consider social capital is depletion of the natural resource base of the U.S., and indeed the world, upon which financial capital is built. Wise use of resources means using what is needed, efficiently, with care and with the intent to cultivate and replace that which is taken so that it remains for future generations. Living in the coal fields provides a particular insight into the dwindling resources of the earth. Of all the Appalachian states, Tennessee is now the smallest producer of coal. We have all but run out of coal. We must finally face the reality of an unrenewable resource that is no longer available to the global market. Local people face other problems. Shall they move away and leave the mountains to the wilds? Shall they look for other ways to live? The problem and opportunity facing the Clearfork Valley is that people are staying. There are no longer cities to run to as there were in the '60s. We can't run from poverty with some illusion that we will find answers in the cities. Many of us found jobs, but we also found family disruption, community disintegration, disinvestment and political ineptness as reported daily on the TV news. A generation of restless, rootless, disturbed, violent people cannot be tamed by capital investments in bigger prisons, especially if only one class of people are subject to punishment for the sins of society.

The social disintegration of American society will take something other than capital investment. It will be the human commitment, the social capital and community cohesiveness that will move us to another intensity. So it is that the end of a coal era and the beginning of a 21st century is causing local residents to look at each other and their land. They are quick to move to the conclusion that they must learn how to live with their forest resources. Forests can bring them recreation, religion, education, economics and politics. Social capital can transform the ruins of the social, political and economic systems of the 20th century into a surprising future. Given the chance, the nameless, faceless communities that once produced fossil fuels might be the people who push the pendulum of change past dead center. Those of you who are professional workers within mainline institutions can provide valuable assistance to such communities. As you come to value the ability of a community to generate social capital—to make separate things part of the whole—you will be intrigued with the way they fit your professional contribution into the scheme of their daily life. This becomes a pathway for all of us, each out of our own experience of personal and social poverty. ❑

ERIC

The Circle of Development and Indigenous Peoples

Sherry Salway Black

An abbreviated version of this article appeared on pages 27-29. Equal Means. *Summer 1992, published by Ms. Foundation for Women, Berkeley, CA.*

The Wall Street Journal recently ran a story describing the resurgence of the Mexican economy. One of the leading indicators of the successful new economic development and its resulting growth in income and purchasing power was the increased number of sushi bars in Mexico City.

Sushi Bars. And we have been struggling to develop new ways to measure economic change that incorporate environmental and social costs. Sushi bars—the answer was right in front of our faces, our mouths actually, all of the time.

Of course, I say this tongue-in-cheek, but the story is true. Unfortunately, it is because this story is true that we are all working in the field of economic justice. An economic system that uses the number of sushi bars as a measure of successful development and the improved well-being of people needs an overhaul of its basic value system and its entire theoretical framework.

Changing the system

Someone important once said, "Admitting that you have a problem is the first step in solving it." There is a development problem in this country and in the world. Women and minorities have been saying it for years; we know the results, up close and personal. The people in power, who own and control the assets for development, do not have a problem. That's the issue.

There are efforts to change the field of economics to consider the environment as more than an externality, to incorporate sustainability and cultural relevance into development, and to find new ways to measure change that are based on a more humane value system.

Indigenous world view

Where do indigenous people fit within development? What can we offer to change and improve the system? A fundamental belief, common to many indigenous tribal people of North America and probably of the world, is that we have survived 500 years because we have traditional knowledge that we must share, knowledge that is critically important to the survival of the world.

We have had this knowledge all along but in the mad rush to take our material resources and to Christianize our souls, the early immigrants to this country overlooked, misunderstood, or de-valued our fundamental beliefs, values and understanding of the world.

Much has been written recently about the indigenous people of the Americas, our contributions and our traditional knowledge. The reasons for this new found interest are important: the quincentennial; the need for a cultural identity in the melting pot of America; the social changes relating to multi-cultural diversity and political correctness; and most importantly, I think, the search for a missing element in people's lives—spirituality.

The indigenous understanding has its basis in spirituality, a recognition of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all living things, a holistic and balanced view of the world. Intrinsic to this view is that the earth is alive and is the Mother, and that human beings are but one part of nature, not dominant over it. In his book *In The Absence of the Sacred: The Failure of Technology and the Survival of the Indian Nations*, Jerry Mander charts the differences between technological people and native people in attitudes about environment, economics, religion and philosophy, architecture, politics and sociocultural demographics. In their approach to life, technological and native peoples are in total contradiction to one another, according to Mander.

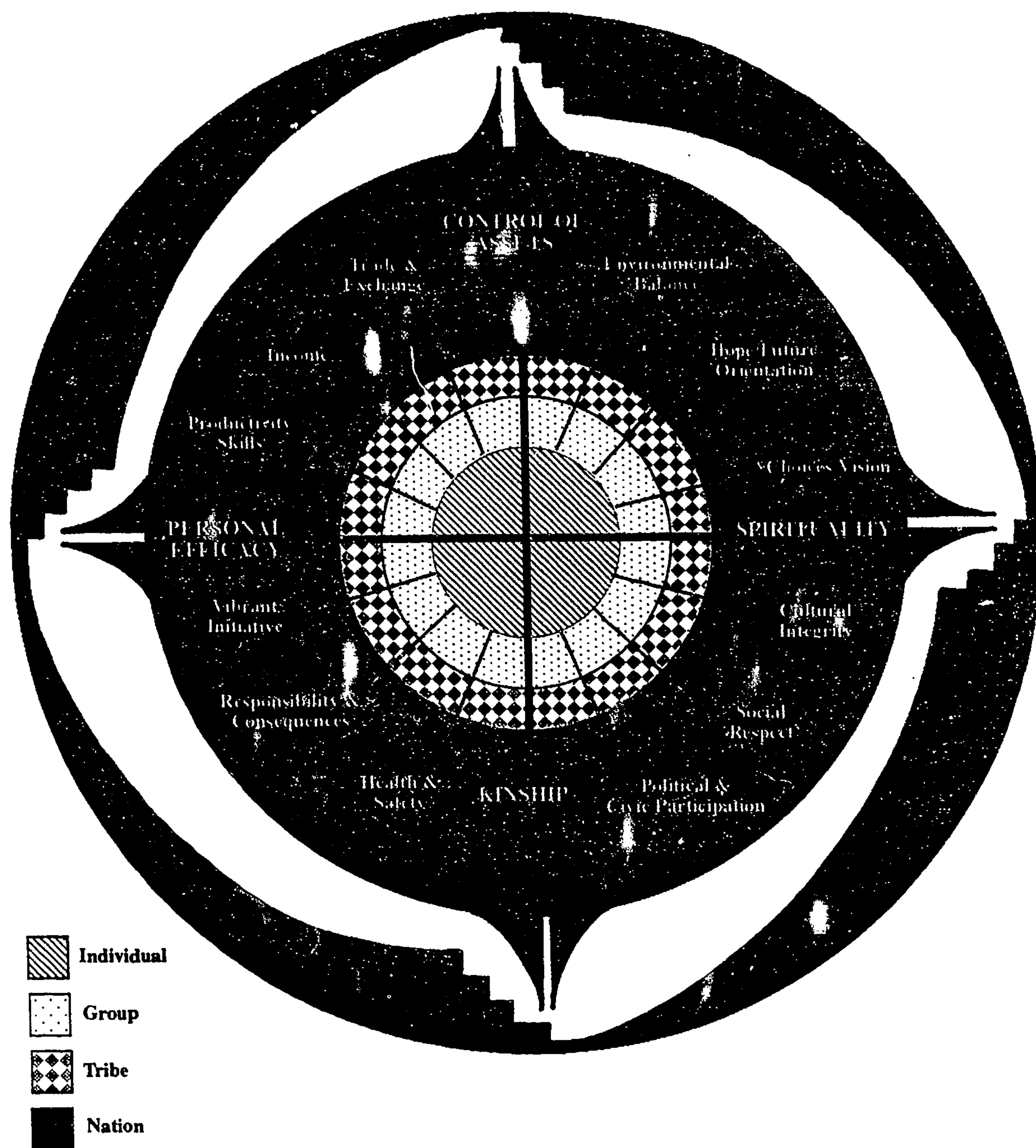
Economic and development implications

For a dozen years, First Nations Development Institute has worked with American Indian tribes and people to develop sustainable models that incorporate traditional knowledge and values. Because our vision is in contradiction with technological civilization, indigenous people have much to offer in lessons of development, as well as survival.

Indigenous people are the original "systems theorists," viewing the world as holistic and interdependent rather than categorical, separate, and linear. The world is in dire straits because Western thinking separates economics from the environment and fails to recognize a relationship.

At first glance, Indian reservations portray a "legacy of failure." In almost 300 reservations and 200 Alaska Native villages, the unemployment rate averages 60 percent. Some places it is as high as 95 percent, and not one reservation has a healthy, indigenous private sector operat-

ERIC



The Elements of Development

Individuals, community organizations, and tribes can use this diagram to formulate their development goals.
By considering each Element, they can direct development in line with their social values, and evaluate their progress over time.
Border Graphic: Karyn Gabaldon
Chart: Kristin Prentice, Sphinx Graphics

ing within the community. This is after $2.4 billion a year throughout the 1980s directed toward the economic development of reservations.

In our work we do not view this as failure but rather as rejection of the inherent values within the economic system. Because the current economic system does not recognize our values, nor have the ability to measure success by our terms and definition, we will never be successful by its standards.

First Nations' effort to develop impact measurement and assessment tools that incorporate social costs started two years ago as we celebrated our first decade of work. Research indicated that the state-of-the-art in evaluating economic development programs had little to do with social change, social or environmental costs, or specific cultural differences, but focused on what could be definitively quantified. Measurements of "successful" economic development included the number of jobs created, number of businesses started, and increases in employment and incomes. While these measurements are valid in a narrow definition of development, they completely ignore other important cultural, personal and spiritual aspects of life, allow little opportunity to incorporate the participants' definitions of success, and fail to include all of the costs associated with economic growth.

First Nations researched other, newly developing measurements of social status,

ERIC

development comes from within —it cannot be done to or for people

social costs, and change, much of which is being done in Third World countries, such as the work in Quality of Life Indicators, Social and Environmental Auditing, and quantifying the unpaid work of women. While this group of measurements provides a more holistic structure, some elements were still missing.

Prior to contact with Westerners, American Indian people had complex social systems which guided every aspect of their lives. First Nation found that many of the values, traditions, and methods for redistributing wealth are still in operation, valid and critically important to the continued well-being of the tribes. Indigenous communities have a fundamental basis in spirituality, a recognition that people exist within and are tied to their environment. Tribal people have their own understandings about assets and wealth and about what constitutes leadership.

Elements of development

The Elements of Development is a framework that First Nations developed based on our research, on established indicators, contemporary barriers and issues facing tribes, the traditional worldview, and principles of development. Not only can tribes develop their own indicators and measurements of success and progress for each of the vectors and axes, but the development principles inherent in the Elements provide a framework to guide decision-making in reservation development.

To understand this framework, it is important to keep in mind some basic assumptions. First, this view of development goes beyond economics; it is the development of a people. Development that focuses on one quadrant of the circle, say economics, and ignores other aspects of human existence, will never provide the necessary balance to improve the quality of life for all and will never work for native people. Balance is a necessary component of native understanding of the world.

Second, development comes from within; it cannot be done *to* people or *for* people but must come *from* people. The Elements are only a guide which can be used by individuals and groups to develop their own measures of success and accomplishment. A first step in empowerment is to recognize that your values, belief system, and traditional knowledge are valid and important.

The two main axes of the circle of development represent significant relationships. Starting with the Control of Assets, we can view the inherent barriers to indigenous development, traditional mechanisms, and potential measurements. American Indian tribes and people seek control of their assets, their land base, natural resources, and financial capital. Without control, long term development cannot occur. The principle of control of assets is applicable to any social and economic program for disenfranchised people. Without control of assets, you lack the ability to create wealth from them, and your life is always in someone else's control.

For individuals, assets can be land, a house, a savings account, an education and job skills, traditional rights to hunt and fish in particular areas, businesses, trust funds and access to credit. For a community, reservation, or tribe, assets can be programs, land, indigenous institutions, environmental quality, trust funds, tribal hunting and fishing rights, access to credit, and natural and human resources. At the national level, for tribes, assets are trust funds, federal programs, their own indigenous institutions and tribal sovereignty.

In traditional systems, assets and wealth were distributed through the Kinship network of extended families, which were the basis for circulation of goods and services. Individual accumulation of material goods was not valued and leadership principles involved sharing wealth with kinship network, and tribe. Western models of distribution and federal programs to acculturate tribes have been superimposed on the traditional kinship systems, undermining their effectiveness but a complex kinship system continues to serve as the basis of tribal life, the creation and circulation of assets, and the method by which generations share the culture and its values.

Barriers to the kinship system as a method of control and creation of assets include the Allotment Act of 1887, which introduced the concept of private property to native peoples and 100 years later continues to wreak havoc with the ability of tribes and individuals to use the land and its resources effectively and to protect it for future generations. The government welfare systems, superimposed on a complex and existing system of giving, sharing and reciprocity have far-reaching effects on the breakdown of the kinship system.

Subsistence activities involving barter and trade can best be tracked through the kinship systems. Traditional redistribution mechanisms such as giveaways and potlatches continue to flourish. Basic services such as child care, car repair, and personal grooming needs are met within the household and extended families.

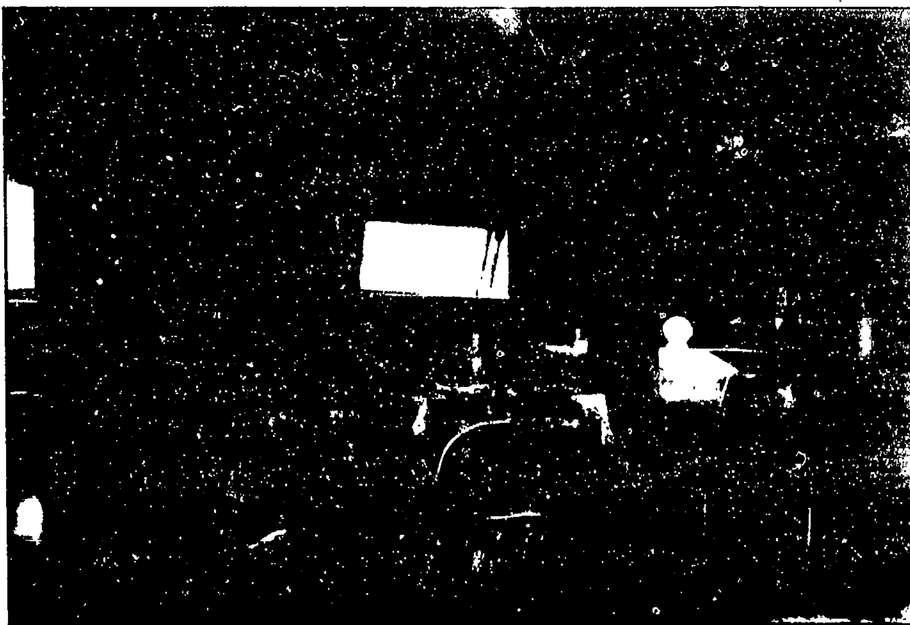
At Taos Pueblo in northern New Mexico, a woman prepares a meal in her outdoor kitchen. Photo © Bruce Gomez.

Recognition of these existing kinship systems and their role in an economic redistribution system can be a first step in a development strategy. For example, some tribes are revising subsistence hunting and fishing codes to use traditional kinship systems for distribution of resources.

The relationship between Control of Assets and Kinship connects the individual, the community, and the tribe to their local resources. Measurements of self-employment can be developed which recognize that a family unit is meeting local needs with local resources. Intra and inter-tribal trade can be developed to reinforce development of the larger family of tribal peoples.

Within the control and distribution of assets, are people. A strong community and economy must have people with a strong sense of Personal Efficacy, a sense of confidence. A judgement we often hear about the poverty and lack of economic development on reservations is that the people have no work ethic, lack a competitive nature, and are self-effacing. Traditionally, individual achievements and accomplishments were critical to the very existence of the tribe, resulting in a respect for others that was misinterpreted as self-effacement and non-competiveness. Native American children were taught from an early age to "think for yourself and act for others." What could be a better starting point for developing entrepreneurs.

In Western society, individual achievements enhance the individual. In tribal life, individual achievements are valued for their benefit to the extended family and to the tribe. Individual roles and responsibilities are taught by the families and defined from an early age. Child raising stresses the importance of building confidence, risk taking, innovation and experience. Traditional societies are not static but are continually improving, not for growth but for improved efficiency—how to do it better



People in the Taos Pueblo use wood fuel exclusively for cooking, indoors and out. Photos © Bruce Gomez

Indicators of improvement in Personal Efficacy for an individual may be self-esteem, the ability to problem-solve, a positive outlook, or increased knowledge and skills. On a community level, indicators are improved tribal leadership, community cooperation, the formation of associations, teamwork, follow-up and reliability. On a national level, indicators of success can be the sense that "we can do it," a pride and joy in our people and our achievements.

Spirituality is the most difficult element to describe. It is from spirituality that one gains a sense of vision, a sense of one's self and one's place within the community and within the larger universe. From that vision one gains an ability to see choices: where to go, what to do with one's life, how to have meaning for one's self and for the larger community. Included within this value system is understanding, tolerance, respect for the earth and all living things, dignity, future orientation, and an ability to see a place for indigenous people and our contributions within that future. Spirituality is a sense of inner-directedness, a basic value system, a cosmology of sorts.

How do you build spirituality into a development framework and how do you measure it? For indigenous people, a return to or rebirth of traditional values and beliefs, a resurgence in ceremonial activities, a healing of our souls must take place. On an individual level, indicators and measurements of spirituality can include instilling traditional teachings in the children, learning the language, practicing the values, creating visions for the future, recognizing and maintaining a balance in life.

For the community and tribe, spirituality can be measured by tribal institutions including cultural programs, traditional methods and teachings which both empower and develop people. Tribes are returning to traditional natural resource management techniques which are now being recognized as effective and valid.

Using the Elements of Development

The circle represents a complete, balanced diagram of the elements of development. First Nations is working with tribes and other native groups in the application of the Elements of Development. We can already see its relevance to the Lakota Fund, a community-developed and controlled microenterprise loan program on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. People who never had access to credit now do and are creating other assets and earning income tied to extended families. The borrowers grow in self-esteem and reliability, and their ability to solve problems individually and collectively has improved. They are more productive and have choices where none existed before. And, critical to development, they can see a vision of themselves as successful.

The Elements can also be used in economic decision making to incorporate ALL of the costs and benefits associated with a strategy. For example, as an increasing number of tribes turn to gaming to earn revenue, they find that tribal members enrolled in higher education programs are returning home to work at casinos, forsaking an education for immediate returns. There is a long term cost to the future of the tribe. This must be factored into decision-making, recognized as a cost, and the consequences of the action considered.

What about the future

I am simultaneously scared and encouraged about the future. Scared, because sushi bars can become measures of success. Indigenous people are not immune. They can also become worshippers of the false idols of materialism and consumerism. Only much later will they recognize that something fundamentally valuable has been lost. We have too many examples in tribes and on reservations where economic growth, per capita payments, capitalism, and consumerism result in short term gains at the expense of long term development and our future generations.

I am encouraged by the rebirth of spirituality among indigenous people, an effort to recapture and live the basic values of the traditional culture and to use these to make more effective decisions about development and the measure of success within our own culture. One example is tribes and Indian people who refuse to be lulled by the prospect of millions of dollars in revenue and employment from waste disposal companies for turning reservations into dumping grounds. The work being done in the area of environmental economics will provide tools for analyzing the true costs of these types of economic ventures.

I am also encouraged by a growing awareness of the problems created for women, for indigenous people, and for the environment by the existing economic system. I am encouraged by efforts to change the system and the measures of success. I see the indigenous worldview providing the framework for that change and believe the legends and stories of the Grandfathers were true—it is truly our destiny to share our knowledge with the world.❑

Home of a Vietnam veteran on the Taos Pueblo. Photo © Bruce Gomez.

Palauan Perspective

by Ayano Baules, Associate Director
Cooperative Extension Service
Palau Community College
Presented by Director Baules at the Pathways from Poverty Conference sponsored by the Western Rural Development Center in Albuquerque May 18, 1995.

Poverty? What poverty? We have more than enough food to eat with extra to share, therefore we are not poor. Poor people do not have anything to eat. People who do not have enough to eat are lazy. Lazy people become poor. Poor people do not share. The more you share, the more you get.

Such was the attitude of Palauans in the old days—as long as you had food on the table and extra to share, you were not considered poor.

As a tropical paradise, the Palau islands were blessed with abundant tropical root crops, fruits, and vegetables, not to mention the rich marine life, which has been recently declared by some world marine authorities as one of the seven undersea wonders of the world. Life was laid-back, without nine-to-five jobs, without schools for children to attend. Life revolved around family and the community in which the family lived. With concerted effort, families were able to grow enough food crops for themselves and to share with others. Sharing was an indication of abundance. Abundance was an indication of industry, resourcefulness, and self-sufficiency.

Ayano Baules, right, reminded participants of the social forces that influence poverty. Elders in Island communities recall a time when wealth meant abundant food and a healthy, loving family rather than material possessions. Professor Baules is shown above with Pat Simpson of Guam at the WRDC Pathways from Poverty workshop.

In our small community, people had large, extended families. It seemed that everyone was related by blood or marriage and shared almost everything from food to garden tools, even to their best clothes for special occasions. As was the custom in our village, my grandmother always shared everything we had. But there were numerous occasions when we had to ask for fish, or borrow things from our relatives. One day I asked my grandmother, "Grandma, are we poor?"

"Hush, little girl," Grandma warned. "Don't even say the word. You see, according to an old Palauan proverb, poverty is like a pillar of smoke. The smoke's pathway is influenced by the wind's direction and the smoke will graze those along its path until the wind changes its course. So poverty is a misfortune that tarries with us but temporarily. It comes and goes according to the winds of change. But if you keep on saying, 'I am poor, I am poor,' you'll invite poverty to come in and stay for good."

With this wisdom of the elders, the indigenous people deemed poverty only a fleeting mishap and went on with daily routines to provide for their immediate families and to fulfill their obligations to the extended families. Palauans have always been ambitious (a trait which is sometimes misinterpreted as being overly aggressive in their dealings with foreigners) for other comforts in life. There were those with special skills in native crafts-making, traditional medicine, canoe building, weaving, etc., who traded goods and services for money, using stone (for men) and turtle shell (for women). They continued to share their wealth with the less fortunate, none-

theless, keeping their trade secrets within the family. The stone and shell money are still used today for cultural or traditional rites associated with childbirth, family relationships and disputes, marriage, death, and real estate property.

On October 1, 1994, the Republic of Palau, an island nation made up of over 200 islands (nine inhabited) regained its independence after more than a century of colonial rule. In the 50 years prior to its independence, Palau was administered as part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands by the United States according to the United Nations mandate. Before the United States, Japan ruled for 30 years, and before that, Germany, which purchased Palau from Spain. Spain is credited with bringing Christianity to the islands. Spain and Germany had little economic impact on the islands. Japan and the United States had the greatest economic impact and cultural influence on the indigenous people. Natives were educated in formal schools at home and abroad and were introduced to the foreign concept of capitalism.

During the U.S. administration of the islands, Palauans were allowed the freedom of entrepreneurship. Many went bankrupt because they could not retain their capital investment while trying to gratify the expectations of the extended families. As another Palauan proverb goes, "If one goes overboard, we'll all go overboard," meaning, we'll share the good fortune while it lasts and when hardship comes, we'll all suffer together. Those who did not have the guts to set boundaries between their business and family affairs, suffered. But a few were able to become successful. Some even became self-made millionaires.

The foreign concepts of capitalism and commercialism began to affect family relationships and people's attitudes toward life achievements. The concept of shared wealth is now diminishing. Free hand-outs from our foreign benefactors have also changed attitudes concerning industry, resourcefulness, and self-sufficiency that were so highly esteemed by the natives. Nowadays, definitions of poverty vary from one person to another depending on what each perceives as the cause of poverty rather than the economic level under which one falls. Poverty is defined in general as a lack of material things and not necessarily the deprivation of the basic necessities in life. One may own a piece of land and a house, but without a car, that person may be considered poor, and vice versa.

Many young people, as well as some adults, could not keep steady jobs. As soon as they got their first paycheck, they got drunk or got high on drugs and failed to report to work. They went back to being dependent on their families and relatives.

The few elders who still hold dear the old traditions are bewildered and worry about the future. Watching their grandchildren, the elders wonder about their own children, who rarely have time to see their parents. The children are either busy with their jobs or out somewhere with friends.

Occasionally, the elders get together and talk about the past with nostalgia and wonder if westernization or the so-called modernization was at all beneficial to the islanders. They also wonder if poverty has been invited in for good for the want of modern conveniences; for the need to nourish bad habits, such as cigarette smoking, alcoholism, and drug abuse; or for the mere expectation of handouts from the government and other would-be benefactors. For others, poverty is defined as the lack of cash to buy what's new in the stores.

As for me, I ponder when the wind of change is blowing. ❑

Above, at a cultural arts festival, Samoan women practice the ancient art of tapa. The women use local dyes to paint traditional designs on pounded mulberry bark.

ERIC

Poverty: a matter of values

Carol S. Whitaker, State Coordinator
Family and Consumer Education
American Samoa Community College

While preparing my comments for both the Pathways from Poverty workship and this article, I talked with my Samoan friends about poverty. There is a consensus of opinion that poverty does not exist in American Samoa. My friends readily admit that incomes are low here. The most often heard comment is, "We have low incomes, but we don't have poverty in American Samoa."

Poverty here is defined in terms of not having food, clothing, and shelter. Samoa is a communal society, and the members are organized into large extended family groups. Family members cooperate with one another and share what they have. The social structure in place insures that members are taken care of. If you do not have money, you can go to your family and expect to be given a meal to eat, a shirt to wear, a place to sleep, or money for school activity fees. This is a reciprocal process and when you have money, your family members come to you for help. There are no homeless people here and everyone has food and clothing.

Following are comments about the way family resources are distributed in Samoa. This sharing enables families to maintain economic stability on low incomes.

Housing

There are no homeless people in American Samoa. People who need housing often stay with relatives, friends, or ministers. One woman had up to eight extra people living with her family during the past year. The two adults were no longer welcome by the family with whom they had been living so the woman and her family made a place for the couple to stay. She observed, "It is hard to say no to people sitting on your doorstep waiting to hear yes." The six children were with her for a variety of reasons ranging from parents with insufficient money for support to inability of the parents to control the child's behavior.

Vehicles

Not all families own a vehicle, and there is bus service covering most of the main island. The small Japanese pickup truck is the most popular vehicle on the island. Those who own trucks loan them to trusted relatives and friends and give rides to others with poor driving skills. Every so often, a vehicle owner can't find the truck when it is needed!

Children

Families are large in Samoa and some couples have more children than they can afford to support. The couple may ask a family member, a close friend, or a minister to raise a child. Those individuals asked to take a child inevitably agree. In some cases, family members who understand a couple's financial situation will offer to take a child. The family may or may not legally adopt the child they are raising.

Food

Food is a very important aspect of the culture. At weddings, graduations, funerals, and other large celebrations, people who attend are always given a plate of food to take home to their families. People always share food, whether it is a sandwich or half of a sandwich from someone else. Those in need can ask and receive food from relatives, close friends, and their ministers. One of my students told me, "If I am hungry, my neighbors are always willing to feed me. Of course, my aunties and uncles are my neighbors."

Strangers often stop to ask if they can pick the fruit from breadfruit, banana, mango, or other fruit trees in private yards. These requests are invariably granted.

Travel

When older parents want to travel, the adult children often pay their fare. Recently, the mother of a friend of mine wanted to visit her daughters in Hawaii. Those daughters purchased a plane ticket and mailed it from Hawaii. My friend's son, who is less than two years old, flew with his grandma so his aunties could spoil him in Hawaii. Six weeks later the mother was ready to return to Pago Pago. My friend sent her mom the return ticket.

Money

When a man's sister died, he took out a loan to help pay the funeral expenses because he was working and could qualify for the financial assistance.

At the grocery store where I often shop on Saturdays, a man volunteers to stand outside, open the door, and carry groceries to the car or bus stop. A few of the shoppers give this man a small tip, which he shares with the young children who don't have enough change for the gum ball machines.

A colleague of mine gave me some money one morning. She had won the church bingo the night before and was sharing her winnings. Very few bingo winners keep the prize money.

ERIC

Focus on

by Refugio I. Rochin, Professor
Michigan State University and
University of California, Davis
and Jose A. Rivera, Professor
University of New Mexico
Presented by Professor Rivera at the Pathways from Poverty Conference sponsored by the Western Rural Development Center in Albuquerque May 18, 1995.

Latino leaders have been grappling with the needs of their communities for decades. Now the time has come for national leaders to foster a public agenda which addresses these needs. As evident throughout the United States, Latinos are becoming a major, yet under-represented, population in a number of critical areas of the economy; their needs are most evident in public schools, in the labor market, in town and city governments, and in the private sectors of most places.

Despite their rapid growth to about ten percent of the U.S. population, accounted for by nearly 25 million persons who classify themselves as Hispanic, many portals of economic opportunity are missing for Latinos. Latinos are not fully accepted into the labor market or into higher education. Latinos are absent in professional spheres, partly because Latino teenagers are dropping out of high school at high rates, limiting their futures to dead end, low wage jobs. School-age Latinos are facing hard times with poverty and unhealthy living conditions.

Neighborhoods are congested and costs of living are more expensive, especially where Latinos are concentrated in barrios and colonias. In these communities, where Latinos are the majority, there are few local businesses or public amenities. The absence of basic necessities forces Latinos to work and shop at distances far from their own homes.

Few Latinos are self-employed relative to non-Latino whites. Business loans are limited and are usually below the amounts needed to help stimulate private investment and entrepreneurial activities among Latinos. Since public safety and life itself is very uncertain for poor Latinos, many respond with short term coping strategies, some of which result in gang activity and crime.

What is alarming for coming generations is the concentration and persistence of Latino poverty. It is particularly evident in the southwestern states along the Mexican-United States border, in both urban and rural areas, but Latino poverty ranges widely throughout America. In the midwestern states, there are close to two million Hispanics (with a huge population in Chicago) and one-fifth of them live in poverty. Poverty is more concentrated among Latino youth: 40 percent of Latino children up to 17 years of age live in poverty, more than twice the national average of 19 percent.

The persistence of poverty is measured by time. In 1992, a full 30 percent of the nation's Latinos were classified as poor. More than seven million Latinos lived in poverty. Ten years earlier, in 1982, 30 percent of all Hispanic persons lived below the poverty level. For more than a decade, three of every ten Latinos has been poor. Latinos are among the nation's poorest people.

Although Latinos are only about ten percent of the total U.S. population, they constitute close to 20 percent of the nation's poor. One of every five poor people in America, is Latino.

Recent surveys reveal a number of controversial and negative perceptions of Latinos. Americans perceive Latinos as second only to blacks in terms of being lazy rather than hard working and living off welfare rather than being self-supporting. White university students in the midwest viewed Latinos as less productive and less intelligent, more physically violent and rebellious, than their white peers (Report No. 10 of the Julian Samora Research Institute, 1995.) Non-Latino whites have also depicted Hispanics as the nation's least patriotic group. Some nationally influential politicians have gone so far as to suggest that Latinos threaten the physical and political integrity of the U.S. (*Latino Voices*, 1992, p.2).

Latino poverty is not an "American" problem, according to many national politicians, because from their standpoint, Latino poor are unworthy immigrants. This position is exemplified in recent passage of the "Welfare Bill" in the U.S. House of Representatives. Within the bill's 415 pages, about 8 pages (sections 400, 403, 421 & 42) exclude immigrants (legal and otherwise) from welfare benefits. This feature of the Republican "Contract with America" would curtail immigrants' rights to

At right: Woman from San Luís Potosi with her daughter born in the U.S., in their home, northern San Diego county. Photo © Ken Light.

ERIC

Latinos

Social Security Benefits and to Medicaid. --Think of the bill as anti-immigrant.

Worse yet, no cohesive agenda exists for public officials, businesses, and community based organizations to address the deprivation and limited horizons of Latinos. On the contrary, high level public officials ignore Latinos' contribution to the economy. What little research and information exists on Latinos is often ignored, discounted, or blended in with other information which denies the unique needs and conditions of impoverished Latinos.

Interestingly, and in apparent contrast to these "American" positions, many businesses in agriculture, textiles, and manufacturing still base production on labor-intensive, low-wage operations, which use Latino workers to a considerable degree.

Forces that affect the status of Latinos

Behind the concerns of Latinos are major forces which affect their status in the United States and which alter the American economy. Three forces in particular call into question the policies and practices of ignoring Latino poor.

Demographic forces

Growth of the national labor force has slowed since the 1970s, largely as a result of declining birth rates and smaller families within the white, non-minority population. At the same time, the composition of the labor force has been changing to include more women and ethnic minorities.

Soon, only six workers will support each retired couple, down from the 1970s figure of 30 workers per pair of retired people. One of these six workers will be Latino. Latino workers, however, are likely to lag behind others in their educational attainment. Their children attend preschool at half the rate of non-Latino white children. In 1993, 30 percent of Latinos aged 16 to 24—the ones who should be most productive when baby-boomers start retiring—were high school dropouts, compared with 10 percent of whites and 14 percent of blacks. Despite recent increases, Latinos earned less than 4 percent of all undergraduate, graduate, and initial professional degrees. At risk is American competitiveness and the health of our retirement system. In terms of the country's future, a strong national economy may depend on a strong, thriving Latino community.

Technological forces

Electronic technology is quickly changing the workplace. It is a force that moves independently and ahead of solutions to employment security. A workforce is required that is both highly skilled and adaptive to new forms of technology. If Latino youth are not trained to qualify for emerging jobs, they will be left in greater numbers to fight among themselves for lower paying alternatives. This is not far from current reality.

Global forces

The expanding globalization of trade and communication also affects Latinos. International competition is continually challenging businesses to maintain a well-educated, highly skilled, experienced workforce. Latino youth are not being prepared for the international economy.

Ironically, most Latinos are already bilingual, have multicultural skills, and know something of global competition for jobs. Businesses and higher education should feel compelled to recruit and develop Latino talent. Without urgent attention to the persistent poverty of Latinos, these forces portend a critically heightened problem in a few short years. The forces at work are rapid and impinge especially on poor Latinos.

Knowledge of these forces and their affect on Latinos should allow development of improved pathways from poverty. Latino numbers are growing rapidly. If schooling, relevant skills, and better jobs are more available, the abilities of all Latinos will be strengthened to rise above poverty and to contribute to future generations.

The challenge for a Latino pathway

The challenge before us is NOT that Latinos will be a growing presence in the workforce. Rather, the challenge is, will Latinos be able to do the kind of jobs the United States needs most, and will they have the opportunity to prepare for the future?

Because the next generation of American workers will include so many more Latinos, it will inevitably include a disproportionate number of poor Latinos, high school drop-outs, even functionally illiterate men and women. Between now and 2000, nearly one out of three of the new workforce entrants will come from single-parent homes. Two out of five Latinos will have grown up in families below the poverty line. According to the Children's Defense Fund, poor youths are almost three times more likely to drop out of high school than their peers who are not poor.

When we look at today's poorest Latinos, particularly in the so-called underclass in our communities, we must ask ourselves some questions.

- Do early lives of Latino children lay the groundwork for a future with an ever-higher premium on education and technical know-how?
- How and where will low income children develop the necessary skills and attitudes to take advantage of the dynamic forces of the economy?
- Will Latino youth have positive, reinforcing social capital and healthy environments to enhance their capabilities and ambitions for a global, competitive world?

Americans in general should respond to the particular needs of U.S. Latinos and should work swiftly and positively toward improved conditions. If a pathway is not established soon to prepare Latinos as future workers for and contributors to America, the country's future prospects will be dim.

Basics for addressing Latino poverty

To effectively address Latino poverty, it is essential that the following four prominent issues be thoroughly understood.

Heterogeneity and identity

Latinos are very distinct from populations of African, Asian, and Native-Americans. Since the advent of Affirmative Action programs, the federal government has prevailed with the blanket concept of "Hispanics," i.e. people who self-proclaim their origin or heritage as coming from the Latin American region originally colonized by Spain and Portugal. As such, Latinos constitute a diverse collection of national and racial origin stemming from Mexico, Central and South America, and Spanish language nations of the Caribbean.

Non-Latinos tend to lump Latinos into broad-based programs for "Hispanics" and fail to treat serious conditions of poverty among significant Latino sub-groups, such as *Chicanos* or Central American refugees, who experience more poverty on average than, for example, Cuban Americans or immigrants from South America. Lumping all Latinos as Hispanic misses important sub-cultural traits. Latinos, for example, include mixed blood African descendants whose ancestors were slaves on the sugar plantations of Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic; descendants of Spaniards whose families intermarried with American Indians; Chinese descendants whose forebears went to Cuba and Central America as contract laborers; and full blooded Native American Latinos, such as the *Mixtecos* of Mexico who speak Spanish as a second language. Ethnic and cultural differences affect the way Latinos view social programs.

The Latino population also differs in terms of historical incorporation into the United States. Some Latinos' heritage dates back several generations, preceding the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, when most of the southwest belonged to Mexico. Other Latinos trace their family's arrival in the United States to the post-Mexican Revolution, to the beginning of the 20th Century when many entered this country to take jobs in mining, agriculture, and railroad construction. Many rural Hispanics trace their U.S. roots to post World War II and the recruitment programs of U.S. farmers for labor. Today, there are many first generation Hispanics (i.e. foreign born) who are recent immigrants. Various legacies create characteristic differences and each group attaches distinct values to their personal identification as American. These differences in heritage help to explain why Latinos prefer to be called variously as either Mexican-American, mejicano, Chicano, Cuban-American, *cubano*, *salvadoreno*, *raza*, etc.

Diversity of heritage, however, does not necessarily preclude common experiences of poverty. Although Latinos are not all alike and do not comprise a single, monolithic community in the United States, there are many situations when Latinos rally together. The presence of Spanish language materials, bilingual programs, and Spanish heritage music, arts, etc., can generate a Latino call to a common cause. Other factors for unification are issues of family (*familia*), immigration, work ethic and community (*la comunidad*). The following basic traits offer a clearer understanding of how these factors generate the Latino identity.

Family values and structures

A recent book (*Who Prospers: How Cultural Values Shape Economic and Political Success* by Lawrence E. Harrison, a former U.S. official in Central America, Basic Books, 1992) notes that while strong Hispanic family values lead to what is perhaps the world's most humane treatment of the aged by subsequent generations, "The radius of trust and confidence ends with the family, and that means that the sense of community ends with the family. It leads to nepotism, corruption." Obviously we do not agree with this blanket description of Latino families. Understanding the heterogeneity of the Latino population should lead readers to discount Harrison's depiction.

IN TERMS OF THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE, A STRONG NATIONAL ECONOMY MAY DEPEND ON A STRONG, THRIVING LATINO COMMUNITY.

Nonetheless, psychologists, social scientists, and some anthropologists ascribe to Latinos various shades of adherence to certain family values. The traits most commonly attributed to Latinos, as compared to non-Latino whites, are: (a) allocentrism, group-orientation, less individualism and competitiveness; (b) sympathetic, congenial, relatively respectful of the needs and behaviors of others; (c) familistic, showing a relatively strong attachment to and solidarity among extended families; and (d) social closeness, enjoyment of personal associations and close distance in conversation.

In addition to these traits, we would add a unique form of trust, or *confianza*, that Latinos experience between themselves and with regard to non-Latinos. To a certain degree Latinos are "cooperative soldiers" joining common causes like marches for the United Farmworkers or protests against discrimination. This sense of trust or cooperation, however, is not always understood or appreciated by non-Latino whites, so when a thin line of trust is broken between Latinos and non-Latinos, often suspicion and non-cooperation results. A lie or a sense of distrust can destroy commitment and interest among Latinos who work with non-Latino groups. Although the degree of cooperation, or *confianza*, may vary widely among Hispanics themselves, the knowledge that such feelings exist in general should be factored into anti-poverty work with Latino poor.

Anti-poverty campaigns tend to focus exclusively on female-headed households, assuming that they constitute the core of persistent poor. To be sure, the poverty rate among Latino female-headed households is critical. Almost 50 percent are poor. The number of female heads of household in poverty among Latinos increased more than among non-Latinos. However, the largest share of the increase in Latino poverty can be attributed to married couples. The poverty rate of families of Latino married couples was 18.5 percent in 1992, six percentage points higher than in 1979. Moreover, Latino married couples accounted for 49 percent of the total increase in the number of poor Latino families during the 1980s, increasing in number from 298,000 impoverished couples in 1979, to 680,000 in 1992.

It is important to remember that Latino poor are found in all types of households, single female as well as married couple. When it comes to addressing Latino poverty in general, whole families can be very poor and just as needy as the female-headed Latina households.

Immigrant status

To work effectively with Latino poor is to understand how immigration and immigrant status are associated with Latino conditions. Immigrant status and questions of immigration are sensitive matters, calling for an informed understanding of civil rights and protective labor laws.

Only a fraction of Latinos, albeit a significant fraction, are directly affected by

ERIC

For more than a decade, three of every ten Latinos has been poor.

immigrant status. That is, 36 percent of all Latinos were born outside the United States or its territories. Two-thirds, the majority, are native born or U.S. citizens by right of birth. Of the 25 million Hispanics in the United States today, only about nine million are foreign born. Of these, approximately 30 percent of the foreign born are naturalized U.S. citizens. When we talk about Latinos as an immigrant population, we should not lose sight of the fact that about 18.7 million Latinos (75 percent) of the total 25 million, are U.S. citizens. Moreover, of the foreign born population of Latinos who are not yet naturalized citizens, the overwhelming majority are legal residents, living and working in the United States as legitimate taxpayers.

Mexican Americans, the largest group of Latinos, currently bear the brunt of immigrant bashing in California. Only about 33 percent (out of 14 million) were born in Mexico; the rest, or 67 percent, were born in the United States.

No wonder that attacks on Mexican immigrants in general, and related measures for English-only documents, are rallying cries for most Latinos. Attempts to force assimilation on Latinos are being met with resistance. Instead of backing down to California's Proposition 187, for example, Latinos are registering to vote in record numbers, applying for U.S. citizenship, and reinforcing their interests in i-lingual education, multiculturalism, reform of school curriculum, etc. The resistance does not include, however, resistance to learning English or to working hard in the American economy. As highlighted in *Latino Voices*, a recent book by Latino scholars (Westview Press 1992) Latinos prefer reading and watching news in the English media.

The driving force behind the increase of the Latino population is immigration. In fact, the Latino foreign-born population grew by 84 percent between 1980 and 1990, while the native population of Latinos grew by 31 percent. And 50 percent of the Mexican foreign born came to the U.S. between 1980 and 1990. Immigration from other parts of Latin America also reached new highs during the 1980s. In short, immigration is a growing phenomenon, even among Latinos. The connection to Latino poverty is simply that recent immigrants earn less and have higher jobless rates than do earlier, postwar immigrants and U.S. natives. Educational attainment and English fluency are important factors to the success of Latinos in the labor market.

In this decade, Latino poverty cannot be separated from immigrant status because many foreign born Latinos are recent arrivals who carry the burden of under- and unemployment, limited education, and inadequate proficiency in the English language. But it is a mistake to say that Latino poverty is due to immigrants and illegal aliens alone, when it is clear that the overwhelming majority of domestic Latinos are U.S. citizens who are also experiencing under- and unemployment as well as limited human capital development.

Work ethic and labor force participation

No government account can claim that Latinos are lazy or inactive workers. On the contrary, with few exceptions, Latinos are the most active participants in the American labor market, beginning employment at an early age and working well into the usual years of retirement.

While studies of labor force participation show a general trend toward declining rates of people at work or looking for work, Latino men, especially Mexican men, consistently present a higher rate of labor force participation than the non-Latino population in general. Unfortunately, Latinos also spend a great deal of time unemployed and looking for work, due in part to the precarious nature of their employment in industries which provide few worker protections or fringe benefits of employment and health insurance. Consequently, the median earnings for Latino males who work full-time year-round, have been less than that for non-Latino white males.

In 1991, the median earnings of Hispanic males ($20,054) was about 63 percent that of non-Latino white males ($31,765), while the median earnings of Hispanic females ($17,124.) was about 78 percent that of non-Latino females ($21,930).

Several factors may account for some of these trends and differences. First, there are the individual characteristics that workers bring with them to the labor market, such as education, English language proficiency, and work experience. Second, there are the characteristics of the labor markets within which workers must function. Third, there are differences in how workers are treated/hired by employers, referring to the traditional discrimination against Latinos based on skin color, nationality or immigrant status. Such factors, of course, should be considered in anti-poverty campaigns.

These factors reflect two conflicting characteristics of Latinos. Latinos work hard but do not earn enough to escape poverty. Latinos are concentrated in low-wage jobs with few fringe benefits or opportunities for employment security and upward mobility. In either case, Latino workers do not receive recognition for the work they do or adequate attention to their work-related poverty.

A necessary agenda

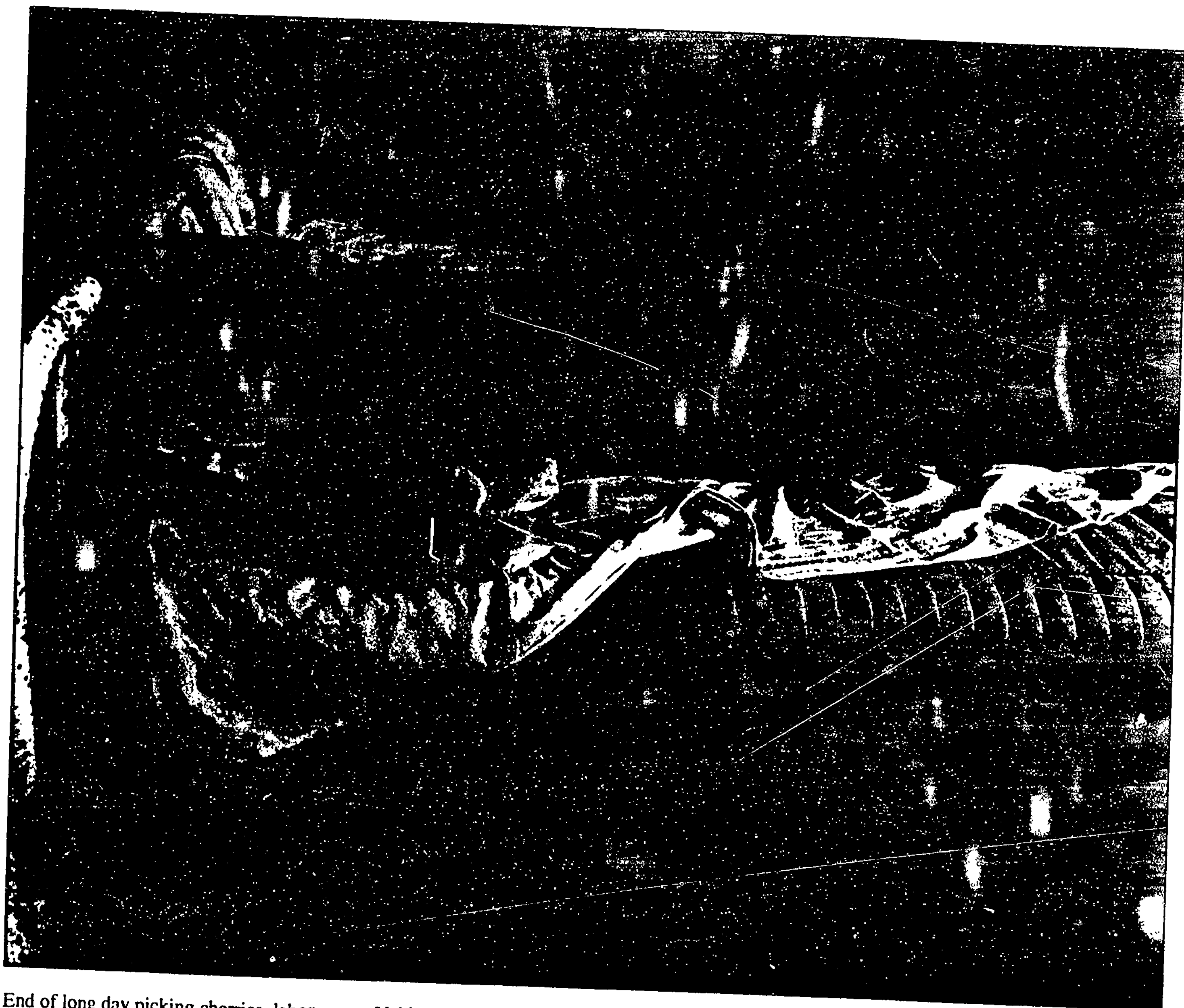
A successful agenda for alleviating Latino poverty must reflect experience and insights from virtually everyone—from public officials and private citizens, from government, business, and non-profit institutions, and particularly from scholars and professionals. The agenda must increase educational opportunities for Latinos and upgrade skills, improve worker productivity, social capital, health, and income of Latinos. The agenda must give strategic importance to ethnic and cultural dimensions. The problems Latinos face must be addressed from a variety of angles.

High school graduation rates

Latino schooling from K-12 and high school graduation rates have recently improved, but drop-out percentages remain appallingly high, particularly in inner-city school systems and rural areas. After years of concerted effort to improve completion rates, a large gap remains between the Latino rate of high school completion and the white rate. The black rate of high school graduation is higher than that of Latinos.

In low income school districts, Latino students receive an inadequate basic education, including limited instruction in language, mathematics, and science. Low income districts are less equipped to meet basic student needs. Often the schools are unable to teach English language to Spanish speaking students. These difficulties must be considered in a pathway for change.

ERIC



End of long day picking cherries, labor camp, Yakima, Washington. Photo © Ken Light.

Teenage full employment

Teenage unemployment is a crippling problem for Latinos, especially in the cities and rural areas, where the shortage of after-school, weekend and summer jobs sustains the poverty cycle of the so-called underclass. Joblessness prevents young Latinos from contributing to their family income and from setting aside money for other purposes, such as future schooling.

Idle teenagers may come to see the underground economy, welfare dependency, or petty or serious crime as their only real choices. This can be countered by after-school and summer jobs that help teenagers contribute to family support, build good work habits, and that provide on-the-job training. Likewise, financial awards to students who show considerable academic promise must be continued. Linking future awards and job opportunities with staying in and graduating from high school is a promising way to reduce the drop-out rate for Latinos. It is certainly a way to develop the educational pipeline for Latinos who want to enter higher education, but who lack the income for schooling.

To that end, the "pathway" agenda should pursue ways to expand student experience and incomes by assisting Latino youth with scholarships and/or entry-level jobs, work-study, and internships. With relatively decent work experience and income, associated schooling could be the incentive for the economically disadvantaged Latino to prepare for the future. In the process, higher education would provide Latinos with better employment opportunities in the changing economy.

College attendance and professional development

College attendance rates are lowest for Hispanic-Americans. Nationally, fewer than five percent of Hispanics attend college, and most of those are in two-year schools. The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) estimates that its membership of 120 campuses (out of 3,500 in the United States) enrolls 50 percent of all Hispanic college students. HACU's membership consists primarily of schools with more than a 25 percent Latino enrollment. In other words, Latinos are concentrated in a few places, mostly in community colleges.

Once in college, staying there can be even tougher for Latino students, who are only half as likely as white non-Latinos to finish college. Up to half leave as freshmen or sophomores; the loss continues afterward at a somewhat slower rate. Too many do not transfer from community colleges to four year colleges and universities. Too many stop schooling with only limited vocational training and options for work.

Colleges, universities, and professional schools shape America's future professionals, leaders, and role models and have a responsibility to strengthen their efforts to increase Latino recruitment, retention, and graduation. State legislators must demand more cooperation between K-12 and university educators to improve the training and preparation of Latino students.

Private and voluntary organizations

Because government initiatives fall short of reaching the poor, private and voluntary organizations must join the cause of anti-poverty. Where such programs exist, they must be extended to Latinos.

If organizations can generate millions of dollars for buildings, equipment, art, etc. can't programs for Latino poor be generated? Nearly all fund raising programs of universities avoid campaigns for Latinos. Worse yet, on hardly any campuses are Latinos in charge of working with private and voluntary organizations. Legislators should look into this situation.

Corporate and executive leadership

U.S. corporations, administrations, and big businesses have, with few exceptions, been less than successful in bringing Latinos into executive and policymaking roles. Looked at another way, CEOs have been most successful in patenting unbreakable glass ceilings against Latinos. There are, of course, some firms and administrators with strong affirmative action records for entry-level and middle management. Even there, however, Latino administrators are under represented. Any company or administration that eschews Latino leadership will be at risk in a society where one-third of consumers and workers will soon be non-white, and where up to one-third of all new workers will be black, Latino, or Asian.

Individual leadership

Gradually, but too slowly, Latinos are occupying positions of influence and leadership in government, business, and academia. Leadership brings with it the added responsibility of setting an example. It is a responsibility none of us can ignore. We must identify and motivate the gifted to pursue higher education and leadership roles. Developing future leaders is an area which must always be improved. Latino professionals (especially professors) should be encouraged by their supervisors to develop leadership, and maybe political skills. Without such leadership, our agendas will not be heard.

Two possibilities

The current situation of impoverished Latinos translates broadly into two possible scenarios: one bad, one good. The worst case scenario could be catastrophic not only for Latinos, but for the country as a whole.

In this scenario, the nation is caught unprepared by the major changes in the workforce and the international economy. Government, academic, and corporate efforts to respond remain isolated and inadequate, in effect, placing band aids over gaping wounds. As the wounds go untreated, infection sets in, and the patient slowly deteriorates until there is no hope.

In real life, those wounds take the form of desperate family lives, crumbling school systems, soaring dropout rates, unemployment, crime, and drug addiction. The infections are endemic hopelessness and violence, despair and desolation. For many, all hope truly is lost. If the unskilled are not trained, if steps are not taken to raise the abilities of growing numbers of today's youth, we can expect the following consequences.

- Business and industry will lack prepared workers in key industries and regions.
- It may be necessary to employ immigrants with the appropriate skills, even if many U.S. workers remain idle or unemployed.
- The nation's international competitive position may deteriorate, resulting in a multiplier effect.
- Larger numbers of under-employed, low-paid workers will also affect consumer markets, local businesses, retailers, and providers of goods and services. Again, jobs will be affected.
- Lower incomes and greater poverty will add burdens to the public sector. The Social Security system will be placed at greater risk.
- Finally, we can expect more social and political tensions or more passivity and reduced moral spirit, as witnessed today in Eastern Europe.

Leaders of the United States must realize that, as disastrous as it sounds, the worst case scenario could be the terrifying reality in the years ahead.

But there is another scenario, one of promise, hope, and true opportunity. It does not take a great deal of imagination to realize that if Latinos will account for much of the growth in the workforce, they will have a great opportunity to move ahead. As this scenario unfolds, leaders recognize that technological and demographic changes have created the absolute necessity to bring Latinos and other minorities into the mainstream of the U.S. workforce.

Latinos are brought into higher education in greater numbers and achieve a keen sense of participation in the development of America. Latino youth are instilled with a sense of competence and ability and are motivated to develop the skills to rise successfully to the challenges of international competition.

In this scenario, higher education responds to every rung of the education ladder, to the employment needs of Latinos, and to the forces driving society. Higher education also manifests a clear commitment to individual students, to our diverse society, and to curiosity, creativity, and culture.

During these troubling times of fiscal pressure, a great deal of imagination and leadership is required to develop and implement an agenda that will make the second scenario a reality. The challenge is to create a blueprint for investing in youth and in higher education. The legislature alone cannot implement such an agenda. Too much is at stake in the economy. All sectors must be involved to make this agenda a reality. ❑

ERIC

Is marriage the solution?

The single-parent family and welfare reform

by Janet M. Fitchen, deceased
Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Anthropology
Ithaca College

Professor Fitchen was a Center Associate with the Western Rural Development Center under the auspices of the National Rural Studies Committee in 1992-93. This article originally appeared as Vol. 3, No. 1, of Community Development: Research Briefs and Case Studies *published by Cornell Community and Rural Development Institute in January 1995.*

Poverty and single-parent families

Over one-fifth of the nation's children are living in poverty, but recent public and political dialogue has focused less on the poverty than on the cost of providing welfare for those children. The Clinton administra..on vowed to "end welfare as we know it," and the debate over how to reform the welfare system has heated up since the 1994 elections. Many proposals center on the issue of single-parenthood. Marriage-based welfare reform is attractive because of its common sense appeal: two earners are better than one; two parents are better than one. But it overlooks the comple^ities of stucture anc. family dynamics, and oversimplifies the relationship between single-parenting and poverty.

Janet Fitchen studied rural poverty in the western region during her tenure as Center Associate of the National Rural Studies Committee.

I do not intend to downplay the risks for children growing up in low-income families with only one parent, nor the economic and social costs society bears for these children. Rather, my purpose is to ask policy-relevant questions concerning the core concept underlying marriage-based welfare reform: *What is tne single parent family? Would single-parent families no longer need public assistance if their female heads were to marry the fathers of their children?*

Research among rural low income families

Single parenthood is still less common among the rural poor than the urban poor, but it has become increasingly common, characterizing 39 percent of rural poor households with children in 1987. Poverty analysts have found that rural single-parent families face a triple poverty risk: they are more likely than metropolitan single parent families to be poor, to be in deep poverty, and to stay poor for a longer time.

The study area

Upstate New York, though neither the most isolated nor the poorest of rural areas, provides a useful research site for considering the appropriateness of various welfare-reform strategies. Between 1990 and 1992 I conducted field research among low-income families in the same upstate rural communities where I had previously explored poverty and other rural issues. This extensive field research included an exploratory examination of single-parent families.

Methodology

I began by reviewing written records of schools, welfare departments, community action agencies, and other publ c and private social agencies, then followed with interviews and focus group sessions with their staffs. These practitioners referred me to local low-income families with whom I conducted focus group sessions and 20 unstructured in-depth interviews.

On the basis of this research, I designed a detailed questionnaire on residential and household history that was used in

ERIC

child support will be forthcoming only if the father has an adequate income

interviews with 40 additional low-income mothers. Analysis of the histories, supported and augmented by the other interviews and by institutional data, raises some questions about the common conceptualization of single parenthood and the policy thrust to reduce welfare rolls by focusing on "the single-parent family."

Synopsis of findings

No overall aversion to marriage

Out of the questionnaire sample, fully one-fourth (ten women) were married and living with husbands at the time of interview. Of the 30 who weren't, 70 percent (21 women) had already been married, but their marriages had not worked out. Thus, over three-fourths of the sample (31 of the 40) had at least given marriage a try.

Similarities between single-parent and two-parent families

Personal and economic characteristics of married and single women in the sample are surprisingly similar. The women were similarly distributed across the age range of 17 to 44; average age at birth of the first child was 19; and they had approximately the same number of children: 2.4 children per single mother as compared to 2.2 per married mother.

The ten women who were married nonetheless reported household incomes near or below the poverty line (a criterion for inclusion in the study). Significantly, in each case the woman was the primary earner in her family since the husband lacked stable or adequately paid employment. At least two of the husbands were not employed due to disabilities, a few were in part-time or seasonal work, two were low-paid farm laborers, and two were self-employed in marginal or occasional work. In these cases, the determining factor in family poverty was clearly not single parenting, but low and unsteady earning capacity of husbands.

Differences among single-parent families

A close look at the 30 cases in the sample that would usually be classified as "single-parent families" reveals significant variation, primarily on the basis of age and marital history. In age, the women ranged from 17 to 43, half of them 26 and younger, half 27 and older. In marital history, nine of the women had never been married and 21 were separated or divorced. Cross-tabulating age and marital variables sorts these households into four distinct groups, and suggests that a menu of different ameliorative strategies would be needed to reduce their reliance on public assistance.

Group I: Young and never married (n = 5)
Strategies: Integrated case management to build personal maturity, effective parenting and workplace preparation.

These women became mothers between age 17 and 21, are currently between 17 and 23, and have not yet married. Individual and group interviews revealed that a paramount interest in their lives is their relationship with men; but accompanying life-history materials suggest that the relationships they form tend to be unsatisfactory, unstable, and short-lived.

Policy initiatives to entice these women into marrying their current boyfriends as a requirement for maintaining welfare benefits or obtaining benefits for their next child would be unwise. Rather than encouraging dependence on a man as a route off of welfare, an integrated case management approach is needed that will focus on building personal maturity, effective parenting, and workplace preparation to reduce the risk of long-term welfare dependency.

Group II: Young and separated or divorced (n = 10)
Strategies: Personal and parenting development, child support from fathers, education and employment training.

The women of this group married young, either before or soon after having their first child, and are still in their early- and mid-20s (21 to 26). Several now have, and others are seeking, a replacement partner, though not necessarily a husband. Three of these 10 women have children by other men than their former husbands, in addition to one or more children from the marriage. As one might expect, these women voice skepticism about the benefits marriage would bring for themselves and their children. Several appear to lack self-esteem and a sense of direction, and may not yet be ready to sustain lasting relationships with partners.

Appropriate intervention strategies for these women, as for those of Group I, might include personal and parenting development combined with greater child support from the children's father(s). Education and employment training can be quite effective for these women although they will continue to need partial welfare assistance until they can obtain an adequate income on their own.

Group III: Older and never married (n = 4)
Strategies: Training for employment which utilized nurturing tendencies.

These women, ages 27 to 35, represent an interesting and quite distinct situation. They have lived with a series of men, and have had sufficiently difficult partner experiences, or have observed such negative marriage experiences among friends and relatives, that they vow never to get married. They may still be attracted and attractive to men and may bear the children of a series of partners. They tend to see their main role in life as mother; and they appear to be warm, competent mothers, extending this role to the children of relatives or neighbors, or to foster children.

For these women, training and certification for employment that utilizes their nurturing tendencies, such as home daycare, para-professional classroom assistant, or care of the sick or elderly, would be more appropriate than marriage incentives.

Group IV: Older and separated or divorced (n = 11)
Strategies: Assistance to minimize duration of poverty, such as New York's Child Assistance Program.

The women in this group, like those in Group II, had been married but they became single later in life and are currently between 29 and 43. A few had only become poor after separation or divorce. Most view their extrication from a bad marriage, usually after several attempts, as a very positive change in their lives, stating emphatically that leaving the marriage was the best thing that ever happened to them and their children, even if it threw them into or deeper into poverty, because it freed them

ERIC

from a husband who had been violent, alcoholic, or unable to keep a job.

Over half of these women subsequently went back to school, earned a GED or an associate degree from a community college, or took job training to upgrade their employment options. Their long-term prospects, with or without eventual marriage, appear strong, and would be enhanced by timely and adequate assistance to minimize the duration of their poverty and to cushion its effects on their children.

An innovative New York "alternative to welfare" program being piloted in selected counties may be particularly appropriate for this group of women. In the Child Assistance Program, the mother can retain a larger share of her paycheck from employment while still receiving assistance: food stamp benefits are cashed out, paperwork and casework are streamlined, and the client has greater opportunity to make her own decisions as well as to take responsibility for their consequences.

From flawed "explanation" to illusory "cure"

Misdiagnosed problems and conceptual muddles may lead to inappropriate or ineffective policy responses. Though the sample described here is a small one, the in-depth nature of field research—combined with my extensive study of rural families and the weight of other studies—suggests that we should question the wisdom of marriage-based welfare reform.

If single-parenthood is not a monolithic, undifferentiated phenomenon, and single-parent families are actually quite diverse, it is doubtful that marriage would be appropriate for all or effective in moving all families off welfare.

Brenda with her father, Alpine, Oregon. Photo © James Cloutier

Policy recommendations

Reducing birthrates among single women

As many analysts have suggested, welfare policy should focus less on increasing the marriage rate of single mothers and more on reducing the birth rate among women who have not yet married, especially adolescents. However, popular proposals to deny public assistance for children born to non-married mothers on welfare and to mothers under age 18 would be more punitive than preventive in their effect. Reducing pregnancies among unmarried teens requires a long-range effort that would be comprehensive, intensive, and expensive—but in the long run far more effective.

Marriage may not end poverty

Before enticing women on AFDC to marry the fathers of their children, it is essential to know whether the men they might marry would actually bring about an economically uplifting effect. As several poverty scholars have pointed out, the critical questions are: Who are the men in the marriage pool, and what are their economic prospects? A look at the 30 "single" mothers in this sample indicates that marriage to the current men in their lives would not likely lead them off welfare or out of poverty. This doubt is confirmed by looking at the economic situation of the 10 married women in the sample, each of whom was serving as her family's primary earner. For a woman receiving AFDC to marry an inadequate earner may bring rather minimal economic improvement to the household. The policy implication of this is that low and unsteady earning capacity of *men* must also be addressed—before urging more marriages.

ERIC

Child support requires jobs for men

Full and regular payment of child support would lift many children off of welfare and above the poverty line—even if not a single marriage took place. However, despite court orders and national legislation, child support will be forthcoming only if the father has an adequate income; and so again, it is essential to raise the ability of men to obtain and keep good jobs.

Marriage can create problems

Household income should not be the only criterion for assessing children's well-being. Even in cases where marriage to the child's father would lift a woman off welfare, it would not improve the child's well-being if it leads to abuse and violence. Reducing welfare rolls by urging women to marry absent fathers of their children could be inappropriate or harmful.

Extended families are an overlooked resource

Policy emphasis on the number of resident parents derives from a nuclear family model, and totally overlooks the extended family from which many single women derive housing, financial and social support, and child care. It also denies ethnic diversity in family patterns. Rather than ignoring the extended family, welfare reform should encourage and strengthen the support single mothers and their children may be able to derive from extended family networks.

Looking beyond marriage

Focusing on marriage as a way to reduce welfare rolls perpetuates a model of individual or family deficit, and entirely misses systemic economic, racial-ethnic, and locational factors that contribute to the growing need for public assistance. Especially in rural areas, weak employment opportunities may contribute more than "weak family values" to rising welfare rolls.

Addressing rural needs

Because of weak economies, single-parent families living in rural areas are even more likely to be poor than comparable urban (metropolitan) families. The relevant question, then, is: What can be done in rural economies to level the playing field so that rural single mothers are no more jeopardized than their urban counterparts? To lift rural women and their children from poverty, a more promising strategy than marriage incentives already exists in the many local comprehensive employment training programs and in new, broad-based educational opportunities for women on welfare. Ultimately, though, *keeping* single mothers and their children out of poverty requires strengthening the economy so that adequate jobs are available for women and for men, reducing the gender-based earnings gap, and providing more opportunities for advancement above starting wage levels.

Most scholars, policy-makers, and practitioners agree that some form of public assistance will continue to be necessary, and that the present system needs change; but beyond that, there is little consensus. On all sides, however, it must be recognized that a pro-marriage policy, or any other welfare reform, is no substitute for an anti-poverty policy. ❑

Conceptual issues
Critique of the single-parent family as a category of analysis

On the basis of these household histories and additional individual and group interviews, I suggest that the widely accepted paradigm of "the single-parent family" and the classification of families as either "two-parent" or "single-parent" has four policy-relevant shortcomings.

1. It sets up a misleading contrast between the two opposed categories. This exaggerates differences between poor households with unmarried mothers and those with married mothers.
2. It implies a uniformity among families within each category. This glosses over significant differences among single-parent families in terms of family situation and household structure.
3. It lacks a temporal dimension. In so doing, it fails to capture the dynamic nature of family composition and partnering relationships over time as households slide back and forth between having a single-parent, two resident parents, or one parent and a non-marital partner.
4. It lacks a qualitative dimension. As a result, both the weakness of many two-parent homes and the stability and strength of some non-marital partner relationships are obscured, and the quality of relationships children have with a mother's non-marital live-in partner is ignored.

These conceptual problems have real-life consequences. Program eligibility is often limited to single parents, but it is difficult to decide if an applicant is "single," for example, in the common case of women on AFDC still legally married but no longer living with their husbands, or women living with a long-term non-marital partner. Many families do not fit the overly simplistic classification system, and the categories fail to reflect real-life complexities.

References

Fitchen, Janet M. 1991. Endangered Spaces, Enduring Places: Change, Identity and Survival in Rural America. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Lichter, Daniel T. and David J. Eggebeen. 1991. "Children Among the Rural Poor, 1960-1990." Paper presented at the annual meetings of the rural Sociological Society, Columbus, OH, August 1991.

Lichter, Daniel T., Felicia B. LeClere, and Diane K. McLaughlin. 1991. "Local Marriage Markets and the Marital Behavior of Black and White Women." American Journal of Sociology 16:843-867.

Ross, Peggy J. and Elizabeth S. Morrissey. 1989. "Rural People in Poverty: Persistent Versus Temporary Poverty." In Proceedings of National Rural Studies Committee. pp. 59-73. Corvallis, OR: Western Rural Development Center.

The research reported here was supported by the Ford Foundation through the Aspen Institute's Rural Economic Policy Program.

ERIC

Employment hardship and rural minorities

by Leif Jensen
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
The Pennsylvania State University

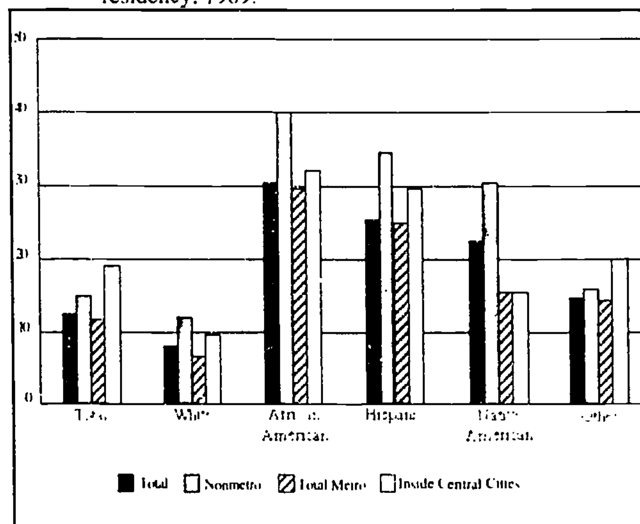
This article is excerpted from an article of the same title which appeared in a special issue of The Review of Black Political Economy, *Spring 1994, pp 125-144.*

When people think about the economic difficulties besetting racial and ethnic minorities in the United States, they often visualize the plight of the ghetto poor in America's inner cities. Recent research and media interest in the so-called urban underclass has only intensified this image and highlighted the unmistakable links between race, class and poverty in urban America. It may come as a surprise that in many ways minorities in rural areas of the United States are at a greater economic disadvantage than their counterparts in urban areas.

Figure 1 shows the percent of Americans with incomes below the official poverty threshold. It is based on data from the 1990 Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The first set of four bars shows poverty rates for (1) all individuals, (2) people living outside metropolitan (metro) counties, (3) people living inside metro counties, and (4) that subset of metro residents living within central cities. Together, they tell a story familiar to many. The nonmetropolitan poverty rate (15.9%) is much higher than that for all metro areas (12.1%), but is not as high as that among central city residents (18.7%).

The other sets of bars indicate poverty rates separately for five basic race/ethnic groups: whites, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and all others combined (mostly Asian). Glancing across this graph also reveals another familiar story. The poverty rates among African Americans (30.8%), Hispanics (26.3%), and Native Americans (22.9%) far exceed that for non-Hispanic whites (8.4%). Perhaps surprising, however, is that when these key race and ethnic groups are considered separately, poverty rates are appreciably higher in nonmetro areas than in central cities. For example, the poverty rate for nonmetro blacks is 40.0 percent (two out of every five nonmetro blacks live below the poverty line), which compares to "only" 33.2 percent among central city blacks. In short, rural Native Americans, African Americans, and Latin Americans perennially rank among the poorest of the poor, a fact that poverty researchers and policy makers often neglect.

Figure 1. Poverty rates for individuals by race/ethnicity and residency, 1989.



What is employment hardship?

Economic deprivation in the United States is due largely to employment hardship of one sort or another. Employment hardship is defined by both job quality and access to employment. First, for those who are fully employed, earnings vary widely in response to many factors such as occupation and labor market conditions. In particular, workers in certain occupations are known to have higher poverty risks than others. Second, poverty also is related to the degree of attachment to the labor force. Other things equal, those who are laid off or who endure cutbacks in the number of hours of work available will experience greater deprivation than those employed full-time, full-year. In both respects nonmetro minorities are worse off than either nonmetro whites or central city minorities.

Employment hardship greatest among rural minorities

Nonmetro minorities are especially likely to be sorted into what might be called "poverty prone occupations." These are occupations whose full-time, full-year workers have above average poverty rates. They include such jobs as private household service workers, food service workers, and machine operators. Overall, about one third of full-time workers are in these occupations, but within each race/ethnic group, the percent in poverty prone occupations is higher among nonmetro than central city workers. Nonmetro African Americans (67.7%) and Hispanics (62.2%) are especially disadvantaged in this regard.

Underemployment. One broad approach to employment hardship concerns access to adequately paying full-time, full-year employment in the first place. While the majority of workers are adequately employed, some workers are said to be underemployed. Technically, the underemployed include those out of work and actively seeking a job (the unemployed); those who are out of work, would like a job, but have

ERIC

the plight of the working poor is inescapably rooted in the structure of the U.S. economy

given up trying to find one (discouraged workers); those who would like to work more hours if their employer had the hours (involuntary part-time workers); and those whose full-time wages are insufficient to bring them much over the poverty threshold (the working poor). Underemployment is more prevalent among minorities than among non-Hispanic whites, and is especially severe among nonmetro minorities (even in comparison to inner city minorities).

The working poor. Recent years have seen increasing popular alarm over the working poor. In a country where lack of initiative and other personal deficiencies are common explanations for the existence of poverty, the plight of the working poor is inescapably rooted in the structure of the U.S. economy. They are poor, but it is not for a lack of trying. Figure 2 shows rates of working poverty—the percent of full-time, full-year workers whose income is below 125 percent of the poverty line. Compared to metro areas or their central cities, working poverty is particularly prevalent in nonmetro areas, and is especially apparent among nonmetro minorities.

Explaining the plight of rural minorities

Rural minorities have less human capital. Human capital theory holds that the wages workers capture in the labor market are determined in part by their value to employers. This value is reflected by the bundle of skills—education, training, and work experience—that workers have to offer. Many studies have found a positive effect of skills on income.

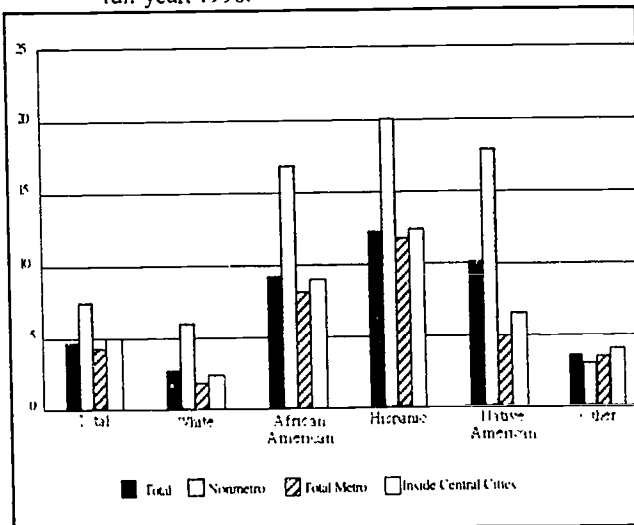
According to human capital theory, wage differences between population groups (e.g., between African Americans and whites), should be traceable to gross human capital differences. Rural minorities do have comparatively low levels of human capital. The percent of individuals who have completed high school is lower among African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans than non-Hispanic whites, and minorities in nonmetro areas are especially disadvantaged in this regard. More sophisticated analyses of poverty indicate that these lower skill levels partly, but do not completely, explain the higher poverty rates of non-whites.

Problems with the human capital idea. Human capital theory can go only so far in explaining employment hardship among rural minorities. First, this theory does not say much about the mechanisms that give rise to group-wide disadvantages in human capital endowments in the first place. Second, it also does not say much about why some groups, nonmetro women for example, get less in return for the human capital endowments they do have. Finally, human capital theory fails to account for why, with human capital and other correlates of poverty controlled, racial and ethnic minorities continue to have higher poverty rates than non-Hispanic whites. In short, it does not recognize the possibility that there are structural features of the labor market and stratification system that work against people of color. Consequently, the policy recommendations that evolve tend to emphasize raising the human capital of individual workers, and to ignore (if not council against) efforts to engineer the economy and society itself.

Status attainment, discrimination, and the life course. Status attainment research holds that an individual's socioeconomic status in adulthood is the result of a lifelong process. This process begins with the circumstances of birth and then operates through such things as grades in school, educational and occupational aspirations, the influence of significant others on these aspirations, educational attainment, and the status of one's first job. Status attainment models have important implications for ethnic stratification and the intergenerational persistence of poverty among rural minorities. These models specify how poverty in childhood can act as a detriment throughout life. Research shows that those with low status origins are less likely to be encouraged or expected by parents and teachers to go on to college, and they are less likely themselves to aspire to greater education or occupational status. Other studies show that there is a close association between children's perceptions of their life chances and how meritocratic they feel society is on the one hand, and how hard they try in school and the stability of their post-schooling employment on the other. Also, there appears to be a strong association between beliefs about local employment opportunities, feelings of self-efficacy, level of effort, and labor force attachment. The implication is clear. Rural minorities tend to begin the game at an economic disadvantage, and tend to be at a disadvantage throughout life for that reason.

Apart from the effects of disadvantaged circumstances of birth, status attainment theory and evidence helps identify points in the achievement process where racial and ethnic discrimination can enter. Evidence suggests that minority youth face all manner of biases, resulting in lower educational attainment. With schooling completed, discrimination may circumscribe employment chances. A recent study shows that African Americans have lower socioeconomic status than whites partly because, other things equal, they are more likely to experience underemployment. Many inner city employers avoid hiring African American workers fearing they may lack good work habits, sufficient devotion to the firm, or adequate skills. Recent research shows that given a choice between an equally qualified white and black applicant, employers are significantly more likely to choose the white. The result

Figure 2. Near-poverty rates among those employed full-time, full-year, 1990.



ERIC

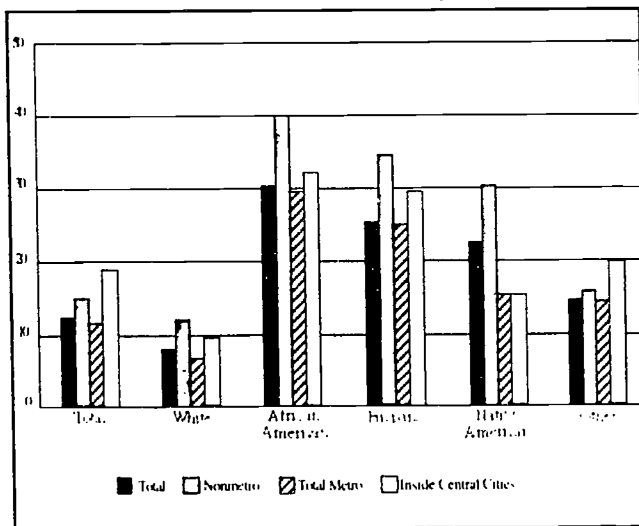
is a checkered work history that may be misconstrued by prospective employers as a lack of work commitment. Unemployment and displacement seem to have long-term 'scarring' effects on labor market prospects. Less research has examined whether and how these processes operate in rural areas.

Economic segmentation: Dual labor markets. Some researchers theorize that the U.S. labor market has two identifiable and distinct sectors—primary and secondary—that differ by the set of occupations within each. Jobs in the primary labor market are characterized by high wages and job security, good benefits, and ample opportunities for advancement. Conversely, secondary labor market jobs have low wages and poor benefits, are unstable and unskilled, and offer little chance for skill acquisition or upward mobility (including movement into the primary labor market). Figure 3 shows that, compared to both metro workers generally and those in central cities, nonmetro workers are more likely to have secondary occupations. More important, nonmetro Native, Hispanic and African Americans are particularly likely to have secondary jobs—both in comparison to whites and to their counterparts in more urban places. Those in secondary occupations are more than twice as likely to be poor than those in the primary sector (11.6% vs. 4.4%, respectively).

Factors affecting demand for labor: Uneven development. As the above data on underemployment attest, racial and ethnic minorities have more limited access to well-paying work. Even in the best of circumstances, employment generation in nonmetro areas is problematic, especially if the goal is well-paying jobs. To attract new industries, nonmetro communities compete with one another and must offer incentives—such as tax breaks or infrastructure development—that can put the communities at risk. Once an enterprise moves in, the new jobs, particularly salaried positions, may not go to local residents.

At a theoretical level, there is reason to believe rural places with high minority concentrations may be particularly disadvantaged in their efforts to generate or maintain local employment, in all likelihood they would have lower levels of both investment and human capital and would therefore have a harder time attracting new economic enterprises or retaining existing ones. They may also have poor community services, infrastructure and other amenities in demand by firms. Regardless of economic concerns, some firms may prefer to avoid locating in areas of high minority concentration altogether. If true, this scenario would lead to highly uneven patterns of economic development across space—patterns that are stratified along racial and ethnic lines. Research shows that recent industrial restructuring in the southern United States typically resulted in employment gains in predominantly white counties, and employment losses in black counties.

Figure 3. Percent whose current or longest held occupation is in the lower tier of the secondary labor market.



Research & policy implications

Rural racial and ethnic minorities are among the poorest of all Americans. To the extent that the nation feels this is a problem that deserves attention, government policies will need to be comprehensive and multifaceted. First, because rural minorities suffer disproportionate employment hardship, they have more to gain from generic policies to help the low-income worker. The minimum wage, for example, should be raised to the point where full-time, full-year workers earn at least poverty-level wages. So that this is not a one-time fix, the minimum wage should also be indexed to inflation. By reducing their tax liability, an increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit also would put more money in the pockets of workers. In addition to the obvious and immediate benefits to the working poor, these measures could heighten aspirations and school achievement by providing realistic hope for all future workers.

Labor supply policies seek to get people working by raising human capital and breaking down barriers to employment. To help rural minorities, policies need to address the special problems that arise from rural residence and minority group status. For example, policies need to address the lack of public transportation systems and inadequate day care facilities that typify many rural areas.

With respect to human capital development several initiatives should be considered. Head Start programs prepare youngsters for school and they can enhance academic performance, reduce drop-out rates, and improve ultimate employability. Unfortunately, because Head Start is not a nationwide entitlement program, it is unavailable in many rural areas. Giving Head Start entitlement status would disproportionately benefit rural minority children. Policies also need to address disparities across rural and urban districts in their ability to support quality education. Mechanisms to channel state and federal funds to disadvantaged school districts need to be developed or enhanced. These monies should be used innovatively, for example, to help pay off the college loans of promising young teachers who settle in rural areas; to provide incentives for high school completion (e.g., college tuition assistance); or to develop education programs to retrain adult workers.

Discrimination did not end with the Civil Rights Movement. Evidence suggests that racial and ethnic minorities continue to be treated unfairly in the pursuit of education and good jobs. More controversial but no less necessary, therefore, are preferential policies that offer rural racial and ethnic minorities special benefits. Rural minorities, for example, could be

ERIC

The social scientist and rural America

Emery N. Castle, Professor Emeritus
Oregon State University and Chair
National Rural Studies Committee
Excerpted from remarks made at the awards ceremony, Rural Sociological Society, August 19, 1995, Alexandria, Virginia.

A decade ago I wrote an essay entitled "The Forgotten Hinterlands: Rural America."[1] My message was that rural America had been neglected in the scholarly literature. One consequence was that we knew less than it would have been desirable to know about 97 percent of the nation's land and approximately one-fourth of its population. Another was that there was only a small cadre of people able to contribute to debate and discussion about the public policy issues affecting rural America.

When making this argument, I was respectful of the high quality research in the Economic Research Service of the USDA. I was also familiar with the rural program then emerging at the Aspen Institute financed by the Ford Foundation. Nor was I ignorant of excellent scholarship within rural sociology, agricultural economics, and geography. My argument was a relative one. It was that rural America had been neglected relative to such subjects as urban affairs, agricultural policy, natural resource and environmental policy, and monetary and fiscal policy.

Before proceeding to my main message, it is appropriate to ask if there has been significant change in the described situation during the past decade.

On the discouraging side, institutional funding for rural social science research and education has declined in common with support for scholarly work generally. Neither has there been political support for rural public policy initiatives during the past decade.

There have also been encouraging developments. When there have been opportunities, the scholarly community has responded positively. As a result it is now easier to identify academics from a range of disciplines who have done rural social science work than it was a decade ago. They are to be found in prestigious private universities, in government, in public universities, and in four year colleges. There is also a sizable contingent of highly educated people around the countryside concerned with rural issues who are associated with non-governmental organizations. Not all of these people are contributing to the scholarly literature but some are.

Even as public support for rural social science has declined, there has been a heartening display of interest by the public foundations in things rural. W. K. Kellogg, Ford, and the Northwest Area Foundation provide examples.

Need for understanding

Despite these encouraging developments, there has not been significant fundamental improvement in general understanding of rural America since 1985. Rural America is still thought of as being primarily agricultural and relatively homogeneous. It is also considered to be conservative politically, fundamentalist in religion, backward educationally, and exploitative of the natural environment. All of these conditions do

---

(Continued from previous page)
targeted for retraining under the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills training program under the 1988 Family Support Act. Also, affirmative action in education has been successful in the past and should remain a viable policy option.

Of course, reducing racial and residential differentials in education and constraints to labor force participation will do little good without commensurate concern for increasing the demand for labor. The preceding discussion suggests several policy options. Incentives need to be offered to industries willing to locate in rural areas of high minority concentration. These incentives could include federal and state-supported infrastructure development and tax breaks. Programs need to be developed to provide low-cost start-up capital to entrepreneurs seeking to establish promising economic enterprises in these areas. To counter persisting discrimination in hiring, affirmative action policies should be strengthened. In particular, the size-of-firm threshold below which companies need not comply with affirmative action guidelines should be lowered to raise the pool of eligible firms. This would be especially helpful in rural areas where average firm size is smaller. As a last resort, perhaps the government should consider a program providing stable work for at least poverty-level wages to all able-bodied poor who need a job.

To be sure, political support for a number of these measures is currently quite limited and has tended to follow macroeconomic cycles. It is probably no coincidence that acrimony in the public debate on governmental intervention strategies on behalf of minorities correspond with periods of rising unemployment. These periods heighten awareness of the scarcity of jobs and raise fears that targeted minority group members are shielded from the vicissitudes of market forces and given unfair advantages in securing a job and promotion.

This brings us back to the issue of research. Evidence suggests there is greater political support for preferential government programs that target minority groups among those who recognize the structural barriers these groups face. Even those whites who express little or no traditional prejudice tend to rely on individualistic explanations for persisting race differences in economic status. Dissemination of sound research results confirming these structural barriers may serve to rekindle popular support for much needed legislation.❑

The author thanks Yoshimi Chitose for assistance in producing the graphs.

ERIC

Access to economic opportunity may be the greatest challenge over the coming decades.

exist, but by no means universally so.

As social scientists we know that rural America changes rapidly, is diverse, is non-agricultural and that it is connected in many places to, and interdependent with, urban places and international markets. Furthermore, we are usually quick to pounce on anyone who does not share this kind of understanding.

Even so, our research often suffers because it fails to reflect these fundamental characteristics. For example:

• Rural America has never been a stable place even though some things change more slowly there than elsewhere. Societies are on trajectories as they move through time and rural places are dependent on the remainder of society in the adjustment they can make. As economic and social change occurs, the contribution of those places with relatively sparse populations and greater space change as well. This may result in an exodus from rural areas, a new wave of immigrants or both. External change may become a kind of whiplash with rural places at the end of the whip. Rural areas adjust, adapt, and evolve. These conditions make it hazardous for rural social scientists to extract models from the past for desirable future adjustments. They need to use such concepts as *equilibrium*, *sustainability*, and *determinism* with great care and precision.

• A failure to account properly for rural diversity may invalidate scientific generalizations in two ways. If we fail to account for diversity when we sample, our generalizations are likely to be incorrect. But inferences will also be incorrect if diversity is not appreciated. The fact that no two places are identical means that change will affect all places differently.

• Rural social science is preoccupied with the performance of the extractive industries. One would never guess that rural America is predominately non-agricultural by looking at the program of many rural social science societies and associations.

Two needs

Two needs stand out if rural America is to become better understood. One is that diverse rural interests need to know one another and share perceptions and conceptions. The other is that rural social scientists and humanists need to communicate and learn from one another. It is conceivable one process will accommodate both needs. But the needs are different and should not be confused.

Rural America is rife with numerous specialized interest groups. There are those interested in rural health, rural education, and rural housing. There are small town and city, other jurisdictional interests, and particular commodity interests as well. The more one thinks about the matter the longer the list becomes. Unless these interests learn from one another, and mutually enlarge and modify their conceptions, it is doubtful there will ever exist anything approaching a widespread, comprehensive understanding and appreciation of this place we call rural America. The emergence of Crossroads: An Assembly for Rural America is a pioneering effort to address this specific need. The idea here is to create a new organization, an assembly, to foster communication among the many diverse groups interested in rural America. I am delighted to announce on this occasion that William Falk has agreed to lead an effort over the next several months to evaluate the feasibility of the Crossroads idea.

Communication among representatives of the rural social sciences and humanities is an important but distinct need as well. The Agriculture and Rural Economy unit within ERS/USDA historically has performed a great service in this respect. The Aspen-Ford program has also made a significant contribution. And I like to think the National Rural Studies Committee has been useful. But the need continues for some entity to provide leadership in fostering communication and stimulating scholarly work. Budget cutting has weakened the rural social sciences in both the USDA and the Land Grants. The National Rural Studies Committee is now completing the first major phase of its work and its future, or that of its successor organization, is unclear. Crossroads, standing alone, may be unable to provide the necessary leadership but it is of great importance that leadership be provided.

Why study rural America?

Some of my friends believe I have been misguided in my attempts to encourage more scholarly work about the countryside. They believe the subject is too complex and amorphous to be amenable to scientific study. Others contend with the notion that improved understanding will make it possible to better the human condition. In other words, they question whether the benefits of a better understanding will justify the effort.

I do not resent such skeptics. Under the best of circumstances research is a difficult undertaking. Powerful motivation is required to call forth the sustained effort necessary to produce useful results. Some researchers are motivated by intellectual curiosity and some are driven by a desire to improve the lot of rural people for reasons of nostalgia, sentiment, or equity.

But we need to look both more broadly and more deeply for motivation. Rural America is a part of the total society. And we need to understand rural America so that we can better understand and improve the total society of which we are a part. Access to economic opportunity may well be the greatest challenge our society will face over the coming decades. The technical change which is transforming our society will reward those who have access, control, and understanding. Those who do not will likely become residual claimants to economic opportunity, wealth, and income. Access and control now tends to be associated with the center of population. Even though some rural places are growing in population it usually is because of their natural amenities or lower cost for some service, such as retirement living, waste disposal, or prison sites. Even though they are experiencing population growth, they may not be becoming better off, relatively. More is involved here than distance and sparsity of population, but taking such variables into account will contribute to better understanding of the general phenomena. And better understanding is the only hope we have for management and control.❑

[1]Castle, Emery N. *The Forgotten Hinterlands: Rural America.* 1985. Annual Report Resources For the Future, Washington D.C.

center projects: progress report

Business Retention & Expansion on the Oregon Coast

In the Central Oregon coastal communities of Douglas County, approximately one fourth of the businesses rely on tourism for 50 percent or more of their trade. A program that teaches employees how to deliver quality customer service would be a great benefit to these firms. Suggestions like that are just what the Lower Umpqua Business Retention and Expansion Task Force was looking for as a result of their recent study.

A total of 52 businesses completed a survey and interview conducted by the Lower Umpqua Economic Development Forum in cooperation with Oregon State University Extension Service. Using materials adapted for the western region under the auspices of the Western Rural Development Center, a team of four volunteers interviewed business owners in Douglas County about local conditions that foster success or create problems. As a result of the program, three firms requested assistance with issues that related to the possible closure or relocation of their business and 22 companies requested further information and assistance.

The Lower Umpqua area was rated a good-to excellent place to conduct business by 58 percent of the people surveyed. Reliable utility service, high quality water, and good police and fire protection were among the most favorable aspects of the community, but lack of adequate housing constitutes a major concern in the business community. Thanks to the R & E survey, strategies to improve housing, public transportation, and other local facilities are part of the long range plan for economic development in the county.

Northwest Service Academy assists Farm*A*Syst in Yakima Nation

Groundwater education and protection is the goal of a new generic version of Farm*A*Syst/Home*A*Syst that will be pilot tested in a cooperative effort of Washington State University Cooperative Extension, Region 10 of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Yakima Indian Nation, and the Northwest Service Academy (AmeriCorps Volunteers).

The Northwest Service Academy at Trout Lake will provide a team of 8-10 members to be trained by Cooperative Extension, Department of Health, and private business professionals. These trained volunteers will work with Extension personnel to help people on individual homesteads complete the Farm & Home Water Quality Assessments. The Yakima Nation will provide hydro-geologic expertise, assist in selecting areas to deliver the program, and provide publicity.

Farm*A*Syst consists of a series of easy, step-by-step worksheets for ranking each farmstead activity or structure that could create a risk of groundwater contamination. It is designed to help farmers voluntarily assess and reduce groundwater contamination from farmstead activities. Other variables, such as soil, geologic and hydrologic features are also rated and used to identify specific actions to protect drinking water. The system can be used by farmers on their own or in consultation with local experts and was developed in Wisconsin and Minnesota with partial funding from the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development.

The four regional rural development centers have been instrumental in hosting workshops around the country of what is now a national program supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Extension Service, the Soil Conservation Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The accompanying Home*A*Syst program was developed to prevent pollution by helping individuals identify high risks in their rural homes and act to reduce those risks.

Rural Idaho homeowners protect drinking water

Help is on the way for rural homeowners in Idaho who want to assess activities or conditions on their property that may adversely affect groundwater and drinking water supplies. The new Idaho Home *A*Syst program, recently launched by agricultural groups and state and federal agencies, should reach statewide implementation by the end of this year.

Its use will result in voluntary actions to prevent water pollution. A project specialist has been hired by the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts to coordinate the program. Three pilot projects were conducted during the summer in Cascade, Payette, and Burley.

Home*A*Syst was adapted from Farm*A*Syst, a step by step worksheet for evaluating practices that effect water quality developed under the auspices of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development. The four regional rural development centers have been instrumental in hosting workshops around the country of what is now a national program supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Extension Service, the Soil Conservation Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For more information contact Kent Foster, Home*A*Syst Project Specialist, (208) 338-5900.

Northwest Service Academy's (AmeriCorps) acheivements in first year

The Northwest Service Academy (NWSA) created partnerships with more than 70 local non profit community organizations, school districts, and agencies to help mobilize in excess of 7,600 community volunterrs to "get things done" in the Pacific Northwest. Since September 1994, 90 AmeriCorps members of the NWSA have given more than 150,000 hours of service to local activities in the Columbia Gorge region of Washington and Oregon.

In the community, the NWSA:

- Restored a section of Kelly Creek in Gresham
- Assisted with renovation of the Andrea Lee Transitional Shelter for women and children leaving domestic violence
- Built the first community showers for Columbia River tribal villagers
- Organized and led NIKE sponsored bicycle rides with teams of grade school children from NE Portland neighborhoods
- Helped build homes with Habitat for Humanity
- Assisted with Project Second Wind, Oregon Food Bank's canned food drive
- Constructed two handicap-accessible neighborhood community gardens
- Went door to door in northeast Portland to educate 1,200 families about

ERIC

the dangers of lead poisoning

- Helped build four community playgrounds

On national forest lands, NWSA teams:

- Helped implement the President's forest plan by obliterating logging roads, gathering critical scientific data through snag analysis, surveying 465 miles of forest roads, and revegetating hundreds of acres of wildlife habitat
- Planted more than 43,000 trees and shrubs to enhance salmon runs in two national forests and one scenic area
- Fought the Wenatchee fire, the largest forest fire in Washington state history, and assisted with subsequent restoration and flood control efforts

In the classrooms, NWSA members:

- With the students, nature-scaped the schoolyard of George Middle School in northeast Portland to attract migratory, neotropical birds
- Built a new community park and nature trail for Floyd Light Middle School and its neighborhood
- With students of Shumway Middle School in Vancouver, WA, cleaned up a wetlands area which will be used as a living science laboratory
- Developed a land management plan for a 120 acre demonstration tree farm south of Oregon City with students from Binnsmead Middle School in North Clackamas, OR
- Developed the Salmon Life Cycle game in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service for the Washington Park Zoo. Eight hundred students played the game.
- Fifteen hundred science students visited the banks of the Salmon River near Mt Hood to learn from AmeriCorps members about watersheds, salmon, and methods of data collection and analysis.
- NWSA members visited another 1,500 students in the classrooms and taught subjects ranging from worm-bin composting to fire ecology.

One hundred ten new NWSA AmeriCorps members have begun a year of national service serving ten counties on both sides of the Columbia River in Oregon and Washington. Thirty-five members are based at a residential center in Trout Lake, Washington serving the mid-Columbia area and another 75 non residential members serve the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area. NWSA AmeriCorps members are 18 years and older and committed to one year of national service. In return they receive a taxable living allowance of $163 per week (well below minimum wage), health insurance, child care and, at the end of their year of service, $4,725 to pay off existing student loans or for further education.

The Western Rural Development Center was instrumental in obtaining the grant that funded creation of the Northwest Service Academy. WRDC administered the program during its initial year of training.

National Rural Studies Committee

For his outstanding contributions to the quality of rural life through teaching, research, institution building, and policy analysis and advising, Emery N. Castle was presented the Distinguished Service to Rural Life Award by the Rural Sociological Society (RSS) at their 1995 annual meeting.

Castle is the chair and founder of the National Rural Studies Committee (NRSC), funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the four regional rural development centers to increase the attention of higher education to issues of concern to rural America. The NRSC made substantial contributions to the Task Force on Persistent Rural Poverty. Also supported by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the regional rural development centers, which organize and conduct the *Pathways from Poverty* workshops around the country, the Task Force was formed to clarify the factors and dynamics of society that precipitate and perpetuate rural poverty.

Edwin Mills, Gary Rosenberg Professor of Finance at Northwestern University and a member of the National Rural Studies Committee, commented: "I suspect that Emery's greatest contribution to rural studies has been institutional...He is genuinely an intellectual leader and encourages and inspires other workers with vision and understanding."

conferences

Farm and Ranch Recreation Montana, January, 1996

Montana State University Extension has joined the state Department of Ag, Travel Montana, Tourism Countries, and the U.S. Small Business Admin to sponsor a full day workshop offering information about opening farms and ranches to tourists. Six sessions in as many locations begin January 17 in Great Falls and conclude February 2 in Polson. Business and marketing experts will address subjects such as cash flow, feasibility analysis, and business plans. Successful farmers and ranchers operating recreation businesses will be on hand in the afternoon to talk about pertinent issues. For information about a workshop in your area and to register for a session, contact

Travel Montana
1424 9th Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620
(406) 444-2654

$marter, Better, Faster... Milwaukee, Wisconsin April 21-24, 1996

Hosted by the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Continuing Education Program, the conference is aimed towards assistance providers and support staff for home-based business owners. Special focus areas for this third annual national home-based business conference are networking, regulatory and legal issues, technology, resources, growth and transition, issues for physical disabilities, and counseling skills. For further information contact

National Home-based Business Conference
c/o Continuing Education
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
Roseman 2005
Whitewater, WI 53190
(414) 472-1917

*************************************WORKING
Eric/Cress
Coordinator for Acquisitions
PO Box 1348
Charleston WV 25325-1348