WHAT REALLY MATTERS IN PLANNING WELFARE-TO-WORK EMPLOYMENT TRAINING: A CASE STUDY OF PROGRAMS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS

by

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(Under the Direction of Ronald M. Cervero)

ABSTRACT

The program planning process is an area of practice where the use of knowledge and power reconstructs or perpetuates a system in which some people are privileged and others disadvantaged. The purpose of this study was to understand how power relations shaped welfare-to-work employment training programs for African American public housing residents. Three research questions guided the study: (a) How do relationships of power shape whose interests are represented in the planning process? (b) How are planners' interests negotiated in the planning process, and (c) How are planners' interests expressed in specific features of the training program?

Data for this study were collected by using interviews, documents, and observations. The multisite design involved two housing authorities, where 15 people were interviewed. Data analysis was completed using the constant comparative method. Data were analyzed separately for each authority's welfare-to-work employment training program and a comparison of commonalities and differences was explored to determine whose interests mattered in the program planning process.

Analysis of the data revealed that (a) stakeholders' power is relational and multi-dimensional (b) specific program features represent the interests of stakeholders with the most power, and (c) program outcomes maintain organizational power and interests. Both executive directors in this study acknowledged that they were the most important person at the table in planning welfare-to-work employment training programs. These executive directors used their leadership (position) power to negotiate organizational and personal interests so that they not only planned and implemented successful programs to benefit the adult resident learner but also placed their authorities as leaders in the public housing industry.

Three major conclusions were drawn from findings of the study. First, racism intersects with other social and organizational hierarchies to shape planning of welfare-to-work employment training programs. Second, learners' voices in the planning process were overshadowed by those with greater power, affecting the development of employment training programs. Third, employment training programs reproduced the political dynamics of the welfare-to-work system by focusing the problem on welfare recipients.

INDEX WORDS: Adult Education Program Planning, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Poverty, Public Housing, Race, Racial Discrimination, Racism, Stereotypes, Welfare Racism, Welfare Social Policy, Welfare-to-Work Employment Training Programs

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EMPLOYMENT TRAINING: A CASE STUDY OF PROGRAMS

FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Mrs. Dorothy P. Clarke, and to the wonderful, courageous, public housing families with whom I have had the pleasure of working for the past 34 years. My mom taught me how to love, respect and show kindness to those around me, regardless of who they are or where they come from. I thank God for guiding me to a career of service where I have demonstrated that love, respect, and kindness to a population of people who are looked down on and stereotyped as undeserving and unworthy by society because of who they are and where they live. I am a better person for having been raised as my mother's daughter and have been blessed immensely to have positively impacted the lives of these deserving families throughout the community.

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

> There is nothing inherently wrong with being aware of color. . . . It is only when character is attached to color, when ability is measured by color, when privilege is tied to color and a whole galaxy of factors that spell the difference between success and failure in our society are tied to color . . . that it becomes a deadly, dreadful, denigrating factor among us all. (Franklin, 1993, pp. 72-73)

Planning programs is a routine activity that involves understanding the technical, political, and ethical judgments made by planners to produce programs that have educational and political outcomes for multiple stakeholders (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). Since the American society strongly holds that education is the foundational link to employment and improved quality of life (Grubb, 1996), welfare-to-work employment training programs are developed to move families to work and assist them in achieving a higher level of economic self-sufficiency. Cervero and Wilson's definition of program planning accounts for a multidimensional perspective of planning in which program planning is seen as "a social activity in which people negotiate with and among others at the planning table structured by socially organized relations of power" (p. 85). This study illuminates how the political, social, and economic implications of a reformed welfare system and the societal inequalities of race, class, and gender (with emphasis on race) further impacts planning where low-income African Americans living in public housing communities are the adult learners.

Families living in public housing communities live in communities where high unemployment and poverty rates fuel the perceived stigma that comes with participation in government-assisted programs such as welfare, housing, and Medicare/Medicaid (Newman, S. J., 1999). Welfare reform legislation passed by Congress in 1996 allowed "the country to ignore the economic and social conditions that produce poverty and inequality—class, race, gender, the economy, and the inadequacies of the low-wage labor market" (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007, p. 3). Low-income female African American public housing residents are stereotyped by the general public as deficient in knowledge, skills, work ethics, and moral behavior, justifying their unemployed status (Sandlin, 2001). These women are also blamed for their impoverished condition (Lein & Schexnayder, 2007; Martin & Fisher, 1999; Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001; Rodgers, 2000; Ryan, 1976; Schram, 2002; Stricker, 2007).

Under the Clinton Administration, political leaders focused on revamping the social policies of welfare to create an improved system of accountability and responsibility. The discussion of "welfare" or "welfare reform" brings to mind two groups of people: those who are on welfare and those who are not on welfare. Neubeck and Cazenave (2001) reported survey data that revealed that "many European Americans believe that most people on welfare are black when in reality African Americans and whites have been about equally represented on the welfare rolls for many years" (p. 4). National surveys not only stereotypically see African Americans as the benefactors of welfare but "believe African Americans prefer remaining on welfare to being self-supporting" (p. 4). Further analysis of survey data by political scientist Martin Gilens revealed that the "European Americans' hostility toward public assistance is their stereotypical beliefs about African Americans, especially the belief that they are lazy" (as cited in Neubeck & Cazenave, p. 5).

The opening quote from John Hope Franklin (1993) illustrates how the color of a person's skin often defines character, ability, and success/failure. One may think this quote refers to people of color or "the Other," but White people are included because they have color. This may seem strange, as society generally fails to see white as a color. MacMullan (2009) challenged Whites to understand their role in perpetuating a racialized society where

> many White folks won't be on board with a deep blue analysis of American democracy because they fail to see the extent to which unnoticed habits (which I call habits of whiteness) condition their actions in ways that perpetuate long-established systems of racism. (p. 2)

Even though surveys and research support the effects of race and racism, society's failure to accept this reality is real. Franklin's last phrase in the opening quote, "that it becomes a deadly, dreadful, denigrating factor among us all," suggests that race continues to dominate consciousness in a racialized society where all people are not treated equally.

## Background of the Study

"To engage in a serious discussion of race in America, we must begin not with the problems of black people but with the flaws of American society-flaws rooted in historic inequalities and longstanding cultural stereotypes" (West, 1993, p. 2).

### *The Reality of Race and Racism*

West (1993), in *Race Matters*, wrote "about what race matters have meant to the American past and of how much race matters in the American present" (p. xi). In the quote above, West challenged readers to acknowledge the reality of race that affects everyone in America. Leonard Pitts, 2004 Pulitzer Prize winner, in a recent newspaper commentary, shared how the discussion of race goes on in America, although not very well because "doing so

requires cross cultural trust we do not have and it takes us places we prefer not to go" (2009, p. 44). However, to fully understand the context of this study requires unmasking the powerful influence of racism and sexism embedded in societal norms in the areas of education, employment, politics, and economics, and how this impacts minorities, including African American female public housing adult learners in this study.

Educational programs, such as welfare-to-work employment training programs, are designed with the expected outcome of improving employability skills so the person can become self-sufficient. The cultural and racial stereotypes held by society marginalize poor African American female heads of households as undeserving of government assistance due to their lack of a work ethic (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001; Sheared, 1998). Sandlin (2001) in her research on how ideologies about work are enacted and negotiated in educational programs for welfare recipients, documented the unwarranted assumptions about welfare recipients by which "poor women are held to be the cause of a variety of social and economic ills having their root in an oppressive patriarchal society and a profit driven capitalist economy" (p. 287). Engaging in the development of employment training programs requires planners, participants, and other stakeholders to pay attention to how their power and interests are negotiated to determine whose interests really matter and should matter throughout the planning process.

Some people are convinced that racism is still a reality, while others hold a contrary view. Most will admit to a few isolated incidents of racism, prejudice, and/or discriminatory behavior but believe that racism is not the problem that it used to be. "Racism in public policy is an unpopular topic to raise in this nation's conservative political climate. . . . Many European Americans, including academics, seem to be in a state of denial as to the very existence of racism in the United States" (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. v). A study by the Correspondents of the

*New York Times* (2001) in which journalists interviewed Black, White, and Hispanic people to determine how race is lived in America concluded that race matters and that racism "can still be found in the legacy of human slavery and the relationship between blacks and whites" (p. xviii).

Most people have beliefs and demonstrate actions that are not readily identifiable as racist or discriminatory. However, those beliefs and actions continue to support and perpetuate a system that favors Whiteness over Blackness (Colin & Preciphs, 1991; Hacker, 1992; Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001; MacMullan, 2009; McIntosh, 1988; Sue, 2003; Tochluk, 2007). Thus, the educational system and its practices reflect society.

*Social Context of Welfare Reform*

Living in poverty presents numerous challenges for public housing families, housing program staff, and the community in which they live and work. Mandated changes in the welfare system, insufficient economic opportunities, and society's stereotypical view of poor people pose educational and employment problems for families who struggle to survive regardless of good or bad economic times. According to Rodgers (2000), the number of Americans who were poor in 1997 totaled 35 million or 13.3% of the population. Rodgers documented three reasons for the lack of progress in decreasing poverty: "the growth of mother-only families, declining wages for poorly educated workers, and per capita declines in cash welfare assistance" (p. 60). In 1998 the U.S. Census Bureau calculated the poverty line for a four-person family to be $16,450. According to Heintz, Folbre, and The Center for Popular Economics (2000), 27% of African Americans and Latinos had incomes below the poverty line, compared to 11% of Whites.

Reasons to reform the 60-year-old welfare system vary. The Conservative analysis revealed that "poverty stemmed from cultural or social flaws, chiefly, a weak work ethic; it was to penalize people in nontraditional family situations and above all, to get people off welfare";

others considered poverty to be the result of “low wages and unemployment; of race, class, and gender inequity; and of a single welfare state” (Stricker, 2007, p. 216). Somehow, the Conservative view refused to acknowledge that, even though millions of people experience poverty, not all impoverished people experience welfare.

President Clinton led a reform charge in 1996, believing that the government’s reform tactics should “enforce desired behaviors in the welfare poor while a combination of work and government programs such as tax credits, food stamps and a higher minimum wage would lead people to self-sufficiency and prosperity” (Stricker, 2007, p. 217). Conservative views about welfare and people on welfare have remained consistent over the years. For example, in 1992 Mickey Kaus commented, “Welfare is the umbilical cord through which the mainstream society sustains the isolated ghetto society” (2001, p. 117). Almost 10 years later Kaus, a critic of welfare, summed up the sentiment of lawmakers and the general public supporting welfare reform: “Welfare reform is about altering the culture of poverty, not reducing poverty; [welfare reform is not about achieving] “equal income” [but] “equal respect . . . the respect our society reserves for workers, even if they gain not a cent of income” (p. 5).

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 was approved by Congress and signed into law by President William Clinton. The former monthly entitlement program Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was replaced by the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. Temporary assistance and a “Work First” philosophy became the new welfare reform focus. PRWORA (a) changed welfare policy from a monthly cash entitlement to a “Work First” philosophy, (b) became a temporary allocation program with a 5-year lifetime limit, (c) allocated funding to each state to create and administer their own welfare programs and procedures in compliance with federal guidelines,

and (d) rallied the support of both conservatives and liberals to decrease government spending on poor people who could work. Welfare recipients were now required under PRWORA to work, or at least to be involved in activities leading to work.

The welfare policy change opposed long-term education (college, technical) as a feasible option to expedite the exit from welfare and poverty. Welfare recipients must work and meet all TANF regulations before engaging in an educational activity such as enrolling in college to obtain a 4-year degree. Providing educational opportunities becomes a longer process and is more expensive than employing a work-first philosophy. Another reason to choose employment over education is the perception held by lawmakers and supporters that any low-wage job is better than no job and that "non labor market activity, including education, is merely work avoidance" (Kahn & Palakow, 2002, p. 159). Even during the economic boom of the 1990s, there were not enough jobs for everyone. According to Albelda and Folbre (1996) at the Center for Popular Economics, if all welfare recipients found jobs during the economic boom, they would either displace other workers or reduce their wages.

Education matters, as it relates to employment and prosperity. Research studies consistently conclude that a college diploma is the best ticket out of poverty (Albelda & Folbre, 1996; Kahn & Polakow, 2002). The perceived benefits of a college education include steady employment in the field of study, higher wages, increased post-employment training, and closer family relationships (Alexander & Clendenning, 1997; Boldt, 2000; Gittell, Sahehl, & Fareri, 1990). "Job training, basic skills training and short-term vocational training do not have the same impact as 2- and 4-year degrees on the employment and earning potential of welfare recipients" (Kahn & Polakow, p. 159). Many believe that welfare-to-work employment training programs,

although a short-term option, seem to be the best strategy to move families toward greater self-sufficiency, especially for residents of public housing.

*Adult Education Program Planning*

The planning of educational programs for adults happens in a variety of settings, including welfare-to-work employment training for public housing residents. The theories of planning, planning models, and planning practices evolve into a process that is neither simple nor straightforward. This section introduces attributes of the program planning processes. In the context of this study, the planning processes are analyzed to determine how power, interests, and the negotiations among stakeholders produce program outcomes that privilege some and deny others to maintain or reproduce the existing social-racial structures embedded in society.

Most people reflecting on the program planning process are familiar with the traditional technical planning steps, such as conducting a needs assessment, identifying program ideas and audience, determining formats, schedules, budgets, and designing evaluation tools. Tyler's (1949) *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* provided planners a logical sequencing of steps to use to produce effective programs. Most educators and planners are comfortable in using Tyler's prescriptive planning model or other models that pay attention to content. But some scholars challenge this traditional planning viewpoint with a critical perspective on planning (Boone, Safrit, & Jones, 2002; Caffarella, 1994, 2002; Cervero & Wilson, 1994b, 1996, 2001; Sork, 1996, 2000).

Cervero and Wilson (1994b), using a critical theory lens, defined program planning as "a social activity in which people negotiate personal and organizational interests. . . . Programs are planned by real people in complex organizations that have sets of historical traditions, relationships of power, and human needs and interests" (p. 4). The critical theory perspective

involves an understanding of social change and the role of power in education that maintains, reduces, or eliminates oppression. The struggle for knowledge and power takes place in the planning process, where people benefit in different ways, including educationally, socially, and politically (Cervero & Wilson, 2006).

The planning process involves three dimensions: the technical, political, and ethical dimensions. The *technical* dimension involves selecting the appropriate techniques that fit the planning context. The *political* dimension focuses on understanding the role of power and interests and how these play out when people come together to make decisions. Adult educators place much emphasis on the *ethical* domain, as they encourage nurturing an ethical commitment to substantively democratic planning. Apple (1996) noted, "An ethical commitment to substantively democratic planning means that all people who are affected by an educational program should be involved in the deliberation of what is important" (p. 11). Sork (2000) offered descriptive categories of planning in which the ethical domain of planning is the least addressed in theory or practice. A similar viewpoint was shared by Cervero and Wilson (2006): "Our vision of good planning is based on an ethical commitment to nurturing substantively democratic planning across both levels of negotiation" (p. 98). All of this sounds good, makes sense, and appears fair; however, in the actuality of practice it is not clear how the negotiation of individual and organizational interests happen when "the person who has power in a highly asymmetrical relationship can simply exercise power in a variety of ways to achieve interests" (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 96).

Stakeholders meet "at the planning table," either physically or metaphorically through other means of communications (e.g., telephone, e-mail). They come to make judgments about what is important and to whom it is important in developing specific features of a program to

accomplish an intended goal. Those involved in the planning also bring their perceptions of race to the table, not only in the context of individual racial experiences but in the larger context of having lived and experienced a racialized society. Race is not invisible, even though it may be treated as such in adult education literature.

Cervero and Wilson (2006) described power as “a social and relational characteristic, not simply something that people ‘possess’ and use on one another” (p. 85). The context of program planning in this study is situated among issues of poverty, welfare social policy, and social inequities—namely race and racism—embedded in this culture. Planners operate within the planning process where “systems of power and privilege based on race, class, gender, . . . influence our lives” (Cervero & Wilson, 2001, p. 9). Systems of social policy, such as welfare, economics, and education, are hierarchical in nature and function to maintain or reproduce the existing social class structure that affords privilege to some and denies it to others (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Socially based power relations such as race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, as well as organizationally based power relations, are “continually negotiated at the planning table” (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 85).

People generally ignore or reject the influences of societal inequities such as race and racism; however, their influence exist and impact every aspect of daily life (Barnes, 2000; Colin & Preciphs, 1991; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Hacker, 1992; Hayes & Colin, 1999; hooks, 1994; Rodgers, 2000; Schram, 2002; Stricker, 2007; West, 1993). This happens not only in the world of social policy reforms but also in education. Adult education produces and reproduces relations of power in the distribution of knowledge, power, resources, and opportunities in a way that results in an uneven disbursement of benefits (Cervero & Wilson, 2001).

## Statement of the Problem

The adult education program planning literature encourages planners to pay attention to their practice through reflection and analysis of how their use of knowledge and power reconstructs or perpetuates a system in which some people are privileged and others are disadvantaged (Apple, 1999; Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Newman, M., 1994; Sheared, 1998). Planning matters because "educational programs produce educational and political outcomes for multiple stakeholders" (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 2). The majority of those who sit at the table to plan programs in the context of this study are White and middle class. They plan programs for mostly African American women who are poor, have limited training and education, and are labeled as disadvantaged by societal standards.

The program planning literature readily acknowledges the manifestation of power in negotiating personal and organizational interests in planning situations. Cervero and Wilson (2006) have conducted extensive studies of the planning process in the development of educational programs from a variety of areas, such as "higher education, women's education, state educational policy, corporate education, literacy education, religious education, community development and public health" (pp. v, vi). In review of these program planning research studies, it is clear that the influence of racial power was not discussed theoretically or from a practice viewpoint. Further investigation reveals that adult educators who theorize about program planning are all White men (Sork & Newman, 2004). These White men (and a few White women) adult educators conduct research in areas in which participants are predominately White (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). It seems that race is invisible and not an issue until planning involves people of color or "The Other," a frequent reference to people of color. Johnson-Bailey and

Cervero (2000) noted that the field of adult education continues to ignore race as immaterial to practice.

In reference to the context of this study, an urban setting (public housing communities) and African American participants, the literature fails to identify how the influence of racial power is manifested in the planning process to determine ethically who benefits and should benefit from the development of welfare-to-work employment training programs. Thus, the effect of racism has not been systematically studied in adult education program planning research studies.

One might assume that the stakeholders planning welfare-to-work employment training programs will plan in the best interests of African American adult learners. But this assumption is not guaranteed because each planner comes to the table with perceptions about the learners, their environment, and the welfare program that influences the use of relational power to negotiate personal and organizational interests throughout the planning process. How can it be determined whose interests are served and why? The answers lie in the ability to critically scrutinize the planning process to determine how the struggle for knowledge and power maintains or challenges a system in which adult learners are oppressed by socially structured power relations along economic, racial, cultural, and gendered lines.

## Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand how power relations shaped welfare-to-work employment training programs for African American public housing residents. Three research questions guided this study.

1. How do relationships of power shape whose interests are represented in the planning process?

2. How are stakeholders' interests expressed in specific features of the training program?

3. How are stakeholders' power and interests reflected in program outcomes?

## Significance of the Study

This study reveals the complexities of issues regarding what matters in planning educational programs for a community of adult learners who are low-income African Americans living in public housing. The field of adult education benefits from this study by noting how living in a racialized society influences what matters in program planning so that the planning process and the planned programs reflect democratic and ethically responsible planning. To understand how to create educational programs that embrace democratic and ethical planning, adult educators must be concerned with how the struggle for knowledge and power empowers some and places others at a disadvantage. This study challenges the accepted hegemony in which people embrace ideas and practices that maintain a hierarchical culture of bandage where all people are not treated equally (Brookfield, 2005).

Naming the issue (Newman, M., 1994) of racism and its significance in society, based on this research, can improve the willingness and ability of educators and others to talk about and work through concerns for creating an environment where all people are true to the democratic ideals of equality and freedom. Through personal reflection and a willingness to adjust biases about race and racism, the gap between espoused viewpoints and the reality of practice can be closed so that people are not judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

From a social policy standpoint, the study informs development and implementation of social policies in the United States by addressing the political and ethical consequences of whose interests come to the foreground of policy development and whose interests are downplayed.

These findings add to the body of knowledge in the areas of adult education program planning, racial realities, and development of social policies that will inform both theory and practice.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to understand how power relations shaped welfare-to-work employment training programs for African American public housing residents. The review of the literature is divided into three sections. The first section provides an analysis of welfare social policy and the effect of using a "work first" philosophy to move participants toward self-sufficiency. The second section addresses the embedded realities of race and racism in society and how those realities impact the African American female public housing adult learner in this study. The third section situates the theories and practices of adult education program planning in the production of educational programs such as welfare-to-work employment training programs.

## U.S. Welfare Social Policy

Throughout its history, the U.S. government has utilized its power through policy and programs to address basic social problems confronting low-income families. The literature review on welfare reveals an abundance of facts, stereotypical myths, and a racial mythology (Mink, 1998) based on the views of the general public, politicians, and academia. The definition of *welfare* and what welfare does are sometimes seen as the same thing. This section of the literature review focuses on understanding what welfare is, who receives welfare, the history of welfare, documented impact of race and racism in the welfare system, and an overview of solutions, including welfare-to-work programs.

*Defining Welfare*

Welfare is looked upon by a variety of authors as either a system or program that provides benefits and economic assistance to low-income Americans (Hayes & Colin, 1999; Pearce, 1985; Piven & Cloward, 1993; Schram, Soss, & Fording, 2003; Wharton & Roe, 1999). *System* or *program* may appear to mean the same thing; however, according to *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* (Merriam-Webster, 2002), there is a difference. A *program* is defined as a plan or system under which action may be taken toward a goal, a *system* is a group of devices or artificial objects or an organization forming a network, especially for distributing something or serving a common purpose. In essence, the system is a created entity that serves the purposes of its creators.

Welfare embodies a system of social policies directly affecting those in need. Throughout America's history political leaders have created and reformed the welfare system to meet the needs of the government and the poor. Schram et al. (2003) concluded through their research that

> in contemporary political rhetoric, "welfare" is often addressed as if it were a unique program, wholly unrelated to the broader system of social policies pursued by federal, state and local governments. Welfare provision in the United States consists of many social policies that relate to one another in complex ways. (pp. 18-19)

Specific programs designed to implement the system of social policies such as TANF, welfare-to-work employment training programs, and adult literacy programs become the "medium through which social policy is translated into social services" (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 1990, p. 9). Seefeldt (2002) cited Public Law 104-193 (PRWORA) as the most comprehensive welfare reform bill to become law: "[The PRWORA], signed by President Bill

Clinton on August 22, 1996, dramatically overhauled the nation's welfare system, in particular by creating the [TANF] block grant program" (p. 250).

The U.S. government creates systems with numerous programs to meet the needs of federal, state, and local governments, politicians, businesses and corporations, and affluent and poor citizens (Heintz, Folbre, & The Center for Popular Economics, 2000). Most people are unaware of the large amounts of money, tax loopholes, and subsidies that benefit or provide advantage to specific companies or industries (more than 200 billion dollars a year), which Heintz et al. characterized as "corporate welfare as aid to dependent corporations" (p. 99). The difference between corporate welfare and welfare is a judgmental determination of "deserving" businesses and "undeserving" poor.

*Problems and Program Solutions*

There are several programs other than those providing cash assistance (the traditional welfare) that help to meet the needs of citizens with limited income and resources. These programs address specific social problems identified in the welfare system, including lack of income, housing, food, medical, education, and training. Figure 1 identifies programs developed to address a change in or a reduction of income regardless of the source of funds (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Hansan & Morris, 1999; Hombs, 1996).

Some programs, such as Social Security retirement, Medicaid and Medicare health insurance, and food stamps, are federally created. Others, such as public housing and assisted housing programs, rely on a combination of federal funding and other sources of income. The benefits of these welfare programs affect a wide age range of people, from infants to the elderly (Stricker, 2007). Not all of these programs are stigmatized by the general public as "welfare."

| Social Problem | Programs Created to Address Problem |
| --- | --- |
| Limited Income | Temporary Assistance for Needy Families |
| | Unemployment Insurance |
| | Social Security Retirement |
| | Workman's Compensation |
| | Disability Payments |
| | Survivors' Benefits |
| Medical Care | Medicaid |
| | Medicare |
| Housing | Public Housing |
| | Section Eight or Housing Voucher Program |
| Food and Nutrition | Food Stamps |
| | Women, Infants and Children (WIC) |
| | School Breakfast |
| | School lunch |
| | Summer Food Service Program |
| | Emergency Food Assistance |
| | The Child and Adult Care Food Program |
| | Surplus Food |
| Education and Training | Workforce Investment Act |
| | Child Care and Development |
| Other | Legal Services and Energy Assistance |

*Figure 1*. Selected programs designed by the U.S. government to address social problems.

> In 1992, the government spent $464 billion on entitlements that people received regardless of their income level such as Social Security, Medicare, veteran's pensions and retirement and unemployment insurance benefits. That's about ten times more than was spent on AAFDC and food stamps in the same year. (Albelda & Folbre, 1996, p. 18)

The one program on the list that generates the most debate is always the cash assistance program.

PRWORA and its core program TANF represent a dramatic behavioral expectation of welfare recipients compared to former welfare legislation. The words "personal responsibility", "work" and "temporary assistance" frame new parameters for receiving cash assistance. TANF provides a 5-year life time limit of cash assistance from the government to the welfare recipient. According to Ripke and Crosby (2002, p. 247), PRWORA was designed with "laws focused heavily on changing the behavior rather than the resources of welfare recipients."

*Citizens in Need*

The United States is home to diverse groups of people, numbering over 305,682,072 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Regardless of role, economic level, health, or location of residence or work, all are citizens of this great nation. Most citizens have similar expectations for a good comfortable life. But with similar expectations, some citizens have an abundance of resources and some lack sufficient resources to fulfill their dreams and goals. Those who lack resources rely on some form of assistance to meet their needs. This automatically creates an asymmetrical relation that privileges some and disadvantages others.

The citizens who rely on help from the government in the form of welfare cash assistance are often characterized in a demeaning manner by those who are outside the circle of need. These citizens are stigmatized because of color of skin (race), gender, nonmarital status (single female), or lack of wealth (class). Handler and Hasenfeld (2007) cited Rank (the author of *One Nation,*

*Underprivileged: Why American Poverty Affects all of Us*) regarding the perception of those who look down from powerful positions of privilege onto those not their equal:

> “Welfare” has become the code word for the “welfare queen”–the inner city, young African American mother who has children in order to stay on welfare and produces multiple generations of welfare recipients. These families are characterized by neglect, substance abuse, crime, and delinquency. Poverty is the fault of the individual—in this case, the single mothers—rather than the structural forces of society, and welfare has been construed as a major cause of lack of work effort, unwed motherhood, promiscuity, teenage child bearing, school failure, substance abuse, and other forms of deviant behavior. (p. 2)

Throughout the literature the descriptive language used to illuminate the welfare system and welfare recipients purposely demonizes those benefiting from welfare programs. Welfare recipients are blamed for being poor and on welfare (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Jacobs & Skocpol, 2005; Mink, 1998; Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001; Quadagno, 1994; Schram, 2002; Schram et al., 2003). “From 1993 to 1998, media images of the poor continue to emphasize black people; welfare recipients tended to be portrayed as undeserving; and black faces predominated in poverty stories that adopted a negative tone or emphasized unsympathetic traits” (Schram et al., 2003, p. 9).

> European Americans who view welfare as a “black program” have been found to have the most hostile attitudes toward welfare recipients. They tend to stereotype African Americans as lazy, unwilling to make the effort to take advantage of opportunities open to them, and thus undeserving of public assistance. (Gilens, 1999, as cited in Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. 4)

The media and the use of negative demeaning words to describe welfare recipients fuel the stereotypical images of single mothers on welfare.

*The Single Mother*

Mink (1998) reflected on how the changes in welfare are predicated on the "assessments of mothers who are poor and single. . . . Hardly a soul worried about the impact of such a momentous change on poor single mothers as mothers and as citizens" (pp. 1, 2). Those who expressed concern about changes in the welfare system during the debates prior to the passing of the 1996 legislation were really concerned about its impact on children, yet the debate focused on the single mother. Handler and Hasenfeld (2007) described the single-mother family as the most visible of all welfare recipients.

> They are the most controversial and the most stigmatized. The United States is unique among the industrialized countries in how it treats this group of poor. The reason for this hated position is the explosive combination of racial discrimination and children. (p. 150)

What makes this group of welfare recipients so "visible"? They are physically visible in terms of gender and race and morally because of their single status. Those in positions of power and privilege see the need to make behavioral adjustments to comply with normal family values according to the controlling dominant culture. Mink (1998) concluded that the racial mythology of welfare "cast the welfare mother as Black and pinned the need for reform on her character" (p. 23).

Hombs (1996) provided the following comparative statistical description of people receiving cash assistance and those not receiving assistance before the 1996 welfare reform legislation was passed.

> According to the Census Bureau, about 14 million people were receiving AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) in 1995. This included 3.8 million mothers age 15-44; 500,000 mothers age 45 and over; 300,000 fathers living with independent children; and 9.7 million children. Nearly half of women on AFDC have never been married. The average mother gave birth at age 20, compared to 23 for women not on AFDC. The average family has 2.6 children, compared to 2.1 for families not on AFDC. Almost half of AFDC mothers did not complete high school, compare to 15 percent of women not on AFDC. More white women of child bearing age receive AFDC than black or Hispanic women, but blacks and Hispanics receive AFDC in disproportionate numbers. About 65 percent of AFDC recipients live in private-housing housing; only nine percent live in public housing. About 87 percent receives food stamps. About 14 percent of recipients have been on AFDC for more than 3 years. About 32 percent have received benefits for one to three years, and 34 percent have received benefits for less than one year. (p. 11)

According to the National Issues Forum (Wharton & Myrne, 1999), even with the strong economy of the 1990s, "The Census Bureau estimates that in 1996 about 13.7 percent of the U.S. population or about 36 million people lived on incomes below the poverty line" (p. 4). Therefore, not all those who lived below the poverty line were receiving welfare cash assistance. This is substantiated by Rodgers's (2000) analysis that "many people identified as poor never receive welfare, or benefit only from programs such as the school lunch program for poor and low-income families" (p. 67).

The Census Bureau's statistical comparison between mothers on welfare and those who are not, as described by Hombs, disputes the stereotypical myths of the typical welfare recipient.

The stereotypical myths hold that welfare is a Black program made up of unemployed teen and older mothers with many children whose dependence on welfare is generational.

*Myths and Realities*

One of the most prevailing myths about welfare recipients is that these women are lazy and choose not to work.

> The first principle is that in order to move up, the poor must not only work, they must work harder than the classes above them. Every previous generation of the lower class has made such efforts. But the current poor, White even more than Black, are refusing to work hard. (Gilder, 1981, p. 68)

Similar thoughts were echoed 11 years later by Mead (1992): "If working steadily at any job is enough to avoid poverty in the great majority of cases, then features of the economy become largely irrelevant to poverty or dependency. Motivation is inevitably more at issue than opportunity" (p. 212).

Proponents of punitive welfare (e.g., Mead, 1992; Murray, 1984; Olasky, 1992) collectively view single mothers on welfare as

> lazy, promiscuous, and matriarchal women have dominated welfare discourse for quite some time, inflaming demand that mothers who need welfare—though perhaps not their children—must pay for their improvident behavior through work, marriage, or destitution. (Mink, 1998, p. 23)

Writer Gilder and political scientist Mead and others seem to blame the welfare recipient for not moving up and out of poverty because of a poor work ethic. Their dominating belief seems to indicate that a motivated welfare recipient who works hard and steadily at any job can move beyond poverty. The reality of this belief is challenged by others. According to Albelda

and Folbre (1996), the following statistics refute Gilder, Mead, Murray, and Olasky in their beliefs about poverty and the single mother:

> In 1994, an individual working full time at the minimum wage earned $8,840 a year. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) could add as much as $2,528, for a total of $11,368. The poverty line for a family of 3 in that year was $11,817. (p. 66)

The 1996 PRWORA legislation based welfare reform on a "work first" philosophy that has as a foundational belief that any job is better than no job. Working harder and steadily with a motivation to succeed, according to case workers, will pay off in the end for families wanting to get out of poverty. Therefore, it seems that the welfare recipient continues to be blamed for her circumstances. Hartmann and Spalter-Roth's (1993) study of over 1,000 AFDC recipients between 1984 and 1990 revealed that over 40% worked and received wages while they combined work with welfare or cycling back and forth. Hombs (1996) described a study completed by the Institute for Women's Policy Research that examined work patterns in the lives of single mothers receiving AFDC for at least 1 year of a 2-year term from 1984, 1986, 1987, and 1988.

> On average, women in the sample were single for 23 of 24 months and received welfare for 18 months. The resulting sample included 1,181 single welfare mothers with an average of 2.1 children a piece, representing 80 percent of all adults and 81 percent of all children receiving AFDC. More than seven of ten AFDC recipients in the sample were in the labor force, either working or looking for work. Three-quarters of those who received AFDC combined this income source with earnings from low-wage and unstable jobs and income from family members. (p. 12)

In a study of 214 welfare recipients in four cities, Edlin and Lein (1997) reported that the mothers in the study (Making Ends Meet) on average had more than 5 years of job experience. In

response to the acclaimed success of the 1996 welfare reform legislation, sociologists Jencks and Swingle (2000) cautioned conservatives not to:

> think the law somehow transformed welfare mothers from idlers into workers for the first time. Even without welfare, nearly half the single mothers on the rolls in 1994 would have left by 1999 simply because their children grew older, they found work or they got married. (pp. 8-9)

Regardless of the negative beliefs that some people hold about welfare and welfare recipients, there is positive proof of the opposite. The myths and facts that influence the general public's view of welfare are not recent; they have been noted since the beginning of the nation.

## Welfare History

Assisting the poor has been a part of America's history for over two decades. The continuing dilemma of providing assistance focuses on how to help impoverished people with a hand up and not a handout. The complexity of issues surrounding poverty affects everyone—those who have appropriate resources to maintain a self sufficient life style and those with limited resources. The question becomes how much compassion is enough to help people without sacrificing societal beliefs in family, work, and self-sufficiency. In the National Issues Forum publication called *From Welfare to Work: Who Should We Help and How?* Jason DeParle, a *New York Times* writer commented, "To chart the nation's nascent welfare policy is to glimpse the American soul, its caring and its callousness, its fairness and its biases, its competence and its neglect" (p. 4).

Historically, the social problem of poverty began with the Colonial period of America's history when political leaders were faced with how to cope with poor people and their impoverished conditions. Much of the literature review begins its account of the government's

benefits for the poor with President Roosevelt's New Deal Program (Abramovitz, 1996a, 1996b; Hansan & Morris, 1999; Hombs, 1996; Mink, 1998; Rodgers, 2000; Schram et al., 2003; Stricker, 2007; Wharton & Roe, 1999). A more comprehensive and relevant understanding of poverty and the programs to address poverty requires a review and analysis of the earliest accounts of how the newly formed colonies dealt with this social problem (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Winston, 2002).

During the Colonial era and to the 19th century, relief programs were the responsibility of the local and state governments. Relief programs were fashioned after Great Britain's approach to eliminating poverty. Britain's Poor Law of 1834 focused on the position that those needing assistance should be worse off than those who worked (Patterson, 1994). Many believed that situations of poverty existed because of the "individual's spiritual, moral, mental, or physical weakness" (Winston, 2002, p. 24).

Several historical myths concerning poverty in the colonies have been challenged:

> From the earliest days of the colonies, there was significant poverty. In addition to slaves, many whites arrived and remained indentured servants. There were large numbers of single mother families. Husbands were often absent as sailors, were killed in the wars, were looking for work or had left the family. There were accidents, disease, fires, and calamities that impoverished individuals and families. (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007, p. 151)

Even in colonial times, "poverty was a moral fault; the individual was to blame rather than accidents, diseases, wars and depression" (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007, p. 151). Even though the individual was to blame for his or her poverty, regardless of circumstance, it is interesting to note that single women, under patriarchal norms, were not expected to take care of

themselves. Local male leaders made the determination as to a woman's worthiness to receive aid. Once a determination was made, the mother and her children became indentured servants to families who could provide shelter and assistance. The same was not true for women of color.

According to Handler & Hasenfeld (2007), African American and Native American single mothers and their children were treated differently.

> Councilmen tended to keep a close eye on women of color who lived independently in Rhode Island towns, a scrutiny prompted in part by official responsibility to relieve poverty that always lurked outside of the door of women struggling to support themselves and their children on meager wages of a domestic servant or farm laborer. But officials were also on the alert because Indian and black women often lived in households without male heads, raising the children in one place while their mates worked elsewhere as sailors, soldiers and laborers. To town authorities, these women were out of their proper places, disconnected from the patriarchal households on which white New England was officially built. Women so completely out of place posed a threat to order, and this threat had a distinctly sexual overtone, as evidenced by the accusations of prostitution leveled at women of color. (p. 152)

There was inequitable treatment for single mothers based on race even when the husband/mate was absent from the home. The dominance of White male public officials determining the worthiness of relief help for White single mothers was prevalent but women of color seldom received assistance because of their predetermined unworthiness.

> The poor were judged as morally blameworthy. . . . Single mothers were also individually judged but white mothers were viewed as "naturally "dependent. The moral evaluation

> was different for women of color. They were not deserving of relief; it was denied or they were expelled from the community. (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007, p. 155)

Relief aid under the control of state and local officials or private and religious charities created indoor aid in the form of poorhouses and workhouses during the 1800s. By the 1900s public welfare agencies were established. From 1911 through 1935 the mother's pension program provided limited financial aid to impoverished mother-headed families. The mother's pension program did not include African American mothers.

> In the individual states, racial state officials were often hostile to the notion that government aid should be provided to impoverished African-American mothers. Hostile sentiments were strongest in the southern states, where they reflected the racist culture and the negative controlling images of lazy, immoral African-American women that whites had constructed to help justify slavery. However, such sentiment existed across the nation. Consequently, welfare racism was widely manifested through the exclusion of African-American women from eligibility for mothers' pension assistance. (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, pp. 43-44)

*Responses to the Great Depression and Poverty*

In 1929 the stock market crashed, leading to unemployment for millions of people. People scrambled to survive the Great Depression. Hansan and Morris (1999) revealed two important outcomes of the Great Depression:

> The degree of unemployment and poverty spawned by the Depression also revealed the limitations of existing state and local relief programs to cope with the economic needs of the large numbers of able-bodied, unemployed wage earners and their families. It became apparent that only the national government had the taxing power and the financial

> resources necessary to stimulate the economy, to create jobs for unemployed wage earners, and to share with states and local government the financial burdens of public relief during a time of national crisis. (p. 3)

President Franklin Roosevelt initiated New Deal policies that created a system of federal assistance programs for families. According to Hombs (1996), the welfare system welcomed four programs: social security, workmen's compensation, unemployment insurance and Aid to Dependent Children (ADC). Hombs explained the purposes of the Roosevelt programs:

> They were intended to help people who had experienced bad luck, suffered a misfortune, or could somehow be viewed as blameless for their predicament. These are the "deserving" poor, those who want to work but can't, those who don't wish to receive charity or a handout, but must do so to keep home and family together. Social security and workman's compensation were to aid those from whom work could not or should not be expected because of age or infirmity. The AFDC program was established as a program with both federal and state financial participation. (p. 3)

Given the political climate in Washington, where the southern Democrats were able to control key committees in the House and Senate, Roosevelt "needed southern Congressmen to move his programs past the key House and Senate committees" (Quadagno, 1994, p. 21). The problem as explained by Quadagno highlighted the fact that the Southern leaders "opposed any program that provided cash directly to black workers because direct cash could undermine the entire foundation of plantation economy" (p. 21).

Therefore, "Because of southern opposition, agricultural workers and domestic servants—mostly black men and women—were left out of the core programs of the Social Security Act" (Quadagno, 1994, p. 21). This was indeed a victory for the Southern Democrats

because they supported ADC legislation on the condition that states would maintain control to set benefit levels and eligibility requirements. According to Winston (2002), “This arrangement helped to reinforce regional and racial division in ADC receipt and benefit levels throughout the country” (p. 27).

The states remained in control of setting benefits and establishing criteria during the 1940s and 1950s. The ADC program was changed to AFDC. Another major change appeared during President Kennedy’s administration when he made a conscious decision to implement political and policy changes to the New Deal. In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson “launched the Great Society—the second “big bang” of American social policy—and declared war on poverty” (Winston, 2002, p. 29).

The war on poverty was somewhat successful in reducing the percentage of people living in poverty until the late 1970s, but Albelda and Folbre (1996) commented “that the war on poverty didn’t fail but was called off” (p. 10). This comment was based on the states letting inflation erode the value of monthly payments to families with children. Solomon (as cited in Albelda & Folbre, 1996) said that “by July 1994, the real value of average food stamps and AFDC payments was 20% lower than it had been in July 1971” (p. 10).

In the 1970s Congress tightened eligibility for welfare as the U.S. economy slowed. Parents receiving AFDC were required to get jobs or enroll in job training activities. The earned income tax credit was created to provide tax refunds for the working poor. In the 1980s the federal government used an additional strategy of letting states experiment with welfare-to-work programs through state waivers. On October 31, 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed the Family Support Act, which required states to provide education, job training, and job placement programs for welfare recipients.

During the early 1990s poverty and unemployment dropped to historic lows. The focus on welfare recipients and governmental spending became the center of the debate about welfare reform as welfare rolls peaked at 5.1 million families. In 1995 reforming the welfare system became a major task of the Republican Congress. President Clinton signed the 1996 welfare reform legislation, the PRWORA, which created TANF with a "work first" requirement. (Seefeldt, 2002).

*Welfare-to-Work Programs*

The PRWORA legislation required welfare recipients to find employment against strict time frames. Even though there have been other work initiatives within the welfare system, the 1996 welfare reform legislation made employment a requirement. The states defined "work" and recipients were given up to 24 months to comply. According to Rodgers (2000), "Thirty-two states require TANF recipients and applicants to engage in work within six months. Sixteen states use a twenty-four month limit" (p. 170). The law allows states to exempt work requirements based on the age of the youngest child.

> Twenty-four states exempt single parents with a child younger than one year old. Four-teen states exempt single parents with a child younger than age six months. Two states leave this decision to each county. Four states provide no automatic option and Six states exempt some parents with children older than one year. (p. 171)

With such discretionary ability, there is concern that states will abuse the power afforded them in executing TANF laws.

> In particular . . . states have been freed to such a great extent, and federal oversight has so diminished that states can use their discretion in ways that will reintroduce old forms of arbitrary and discriminatory treatment that existed in the welfare system before legal

> protections were established in the late 1960s and 1970s. In the last few years, evidence has in fact been mounting that this law has created numerous opportunities for states to act in ways that reflect racial bias in adopting and implementing of welfare policies. (Schram, 2002, p. 141)

Schram (2002) discussed research by three authors in which the role of race was emphasized. First, Larry Orr found a correlation between low benefits in states and the percentage of the welfare population that was African American. Based on his multivariate analysis, he concluded that this was not simply the result of state inability to fund higher benefits or anti-welfarism in southern states with more poor African Americans. Instead, racial hostility and resentment against African Americans receiving welfare was more likely to be the problem. Second, Gerald Wright used the proportion of Blacks in each state's population as a proxy for the extent to which welfare benefits in the state would flow to African Americans. Even after controlling for a host of other factors, Wright found that states with the smallest proportions of Blacks and those with the most progressive civil rights laws offered the highest AFDC benefits. Third, Christopher Howard found that, while the percentage of the state's population that was African American was negatively related to AFDC benefits, that percentage was unrelated to state unemployment benefits.

The transition from welfare to work is no easy undertaking. Even before the 1996 welfare reforms, states began to experiment with plausible transitional strategies. Should strategies focus on jobs or job training? The answer to this question brought a philosophical difference among chief players within President Lyndon Johnson's administration. The only solution for the Secretary of Labor was job creation (Quadagno, 1994). Willard Wirtz commented,

> The Poverty Program must start out with immediate, priority emphasis on employment. . . . The single immediate change which the poverty program could bring about in the lives of most of the poor would be to provide the family head with a regular decently paid job. (as cited in Katz, 1989, p. 93)

The opposing opinion offered by Adam Yarmolinsky explained: “You ask yourself, do you concentrate on finding jobs for people or preparing people for jobs. There our tactical decision was, let’s concentrate first on preparing people for jobs” (Quadagno, 1994, p. 67),

Weir (1988) analyzed these viewpoints and concluded the following, as supported by Stricker (2007):

> In deciding to change the characteristics of the individual rather than the structure of the economy, federal officials initially ignored barriers impeding the *right* to work, emphasizing instead barriers impeding the *ability* to work. (p. 169)

That decision to provide training to prepare the individual for work continues to undergird the philosophy of job training programs today. It appears that the government took the easier way out by preparing people to work without sufficient jobs for them.

Piven and Cloward (1993) also supported Weir’s conclusion:

> If one took the stated goals of the relief reformers at face value, they made little sense. The reason was obvious: there were too few jobs for unskilled workers, and many of them did not pay wages and benefits adequate to support families. Indeed, had better paying jobs been abundant, the relief explosion of the 1960s would not have occurred in the first place. (p. 388)

*Work and Self-Sufficiency: Early Years*

Beginning in the late 1960s, welfare-to-work programs were created with the goal of increasing employment of welfare recipients. The employed status allowed people to take care of their basic needs while moving toward self-sufficiency. The term *self-sufficiency* continues as a buzz word when referring to welfare-to-work programs.

Welfare-to-work programs used a distinct terminology to refer to various components of a TANF program. Piven and Cloward (1993) provided a simple description of each.

> *Work incentive programs* provide recipients with welfare supplements if they gain full or part time work. *Workfare programs* require recipients to "work off" their grants by contributing labor to non-profit organizations or to government agencies. *Job search programs* required recipients to look for jobs a given number of hours per week. *Education and training programs* were sometimes made available on the theory that lack of skills prevented recipients from becoming self-sufficient through work. (p. 382, emphasis added)

Further analysis of these components seems to indicate that nothing is free or promised. Behavioral expectations of recipients are a part of conditional assistance.

Education and training programs were created to enhance skills and employability of welfare recipients. Sometimes education and training are considered to be the same but there is a difference. Grubb (1996, pp. 112-113) summarized characteristics of job training programs compared to educational programs, noting that job training programs (a) are generally much shorter than educational program (10-15 weeks), (b) are open only to those eligible to participate, (c) are located outside the places of formal education, (d) offer a variety of services (basic,

remedial, vocational, on-the-job training), (e) support placement efforts, and (f) have the purpose to prepare individuals to become employed.

The emphasis on education and training began with President Kennedy, followed by President Johnson. President Kennedy signed into law the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA), along with the Job Corps Program. A brief description of the MDTA program and its evaluation supports the conclusions presented by Weir and Piven and Cloward.

The MDTA goal was to assist displaced workers with new job skills to become employed. Instead, that population found jobs, so MDTA eventually served a younger population of youth with extremely limited educational backgrounds. According to Howard (1967), MDTA focused on "remedial subjects before it trained enrollees in auto mechanics, food services, office work and health services (as cited in Stricker, 2007, p. 63). In a sense, the program was successful because it provided participants skills and knowledge to seek employment. The number of people ready to enter low-level paying jobs increased, creating a competition for a limited number of jobs that nonprogram participants were also seeking. Here again appears the opportunity to "fix" the participants with skills but not the labor system to get a job to use those skills.

This was just one example. Job training programs in the earlier years revealed a level of ineffectiveness toward accomplishing employment goals. Grubb (1996) commented,

> Above all, the whole job training program have been quite ineffective despite the years of experimentation with new approaches, While many of them increased employment and earnings for those who had enrolled in them, the increases are so small—in the range of $250-$500 per year on the average—that they cannot hope to lift individuals out of

> poverty, or allow them to leave welfare; even these modest benefits tend to disappear after four or five years. (p. 111)

The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) evaluated four social experiments during 1982-1987 to test the effectiveness of alternative welfare-to-work strategies. These programs were designed to encourage welfare recipients to find work and leave AFDC rolls. Friedlander and Burtless (1995) evaluated these programs under the Work Incentive (WIN) Program and the Saturation Work Initiation Model (SWIM). Table 1 summarizes the findings:

Table 1

*Accomplishments and Shortcomings of Welfare-to-Work Strategies*

| Accomplishments | Shortcomings |
|---|---|
| Used modest resources in a cost effective way | Program not successful in helping graduates find better paying jobs |
| Enrollees entered employment sooner | Did not help enrollees find jobs offering job security |
| Increased total employment and increase in earnings | Two programs produce little or no total improvement in the financial position |
| Reduction in AFDC payments were smaller than earning gained but did not off-set program in two programs | One program that offered more generous education and training did not produce significant reduction in AFDC payments |
| Program achieved solid results not spectacular | Four programs had limited success reducing the number of enrollees who face long spells of joblessness and AFDC receipt. |

*Public Housing Work Strategy*

In 1994 the MDRC was asked to become a part of a national welfare-to-work strategy in public housing called the Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families. According to Riccio (1999),

> The Rockefeller Foundation and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) invited Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) to join them in developing a new project that would attempt to increase employment among residents of low work, high welfare public housing development. p. 1

Other national partners included four additional private foundations and two more government cabinet agencies. MDRC was the demonstration manager and evaluator.

The Jobs-Plus Demonstration Project was conceived in a response to the high rates of joblessness and a combination of social and economic conditions in high-poverty neighborhoods. Jargowsky (1997) defined *high poverty* as "neighborhoods or census tracts as those in which at least forty percent of the population is poor" (p. 30). Riccio (1999) further described the neighborhoods:

> Concentrated poverty brings with it a host of other social problems. These include high rates of single parenthood and family break-up, lower rates of high school completion, poor job skills, higher reliance on welfare, and higher rates of drug use, violence, and other crimes. Poor quality school, health care and other services can compound the problem. Overall, the quality of life in high poverty areas is harsh, and not solely in economic terms. (p. 3)

An interesting point in discussion of high-poverty neighborhoods is that not all high-poverty neighborhoods are public housing communities. Public housing communities are unique not

because of a concentrated group of impoverish people but because this group is under the control of local housing personnel and HUD regulations. Outsiders have someone to go to for access to this population. After all, the discussion of welfare, poverty, and unemployment has never included the goal to get people out of poverty.

Careful evaluations of previous welfare-to-work job training programs were completed so that this group would understand and learn from previous attempts to change the lives of low income families. Even with good reviews and some successes, Riccio commented about the reality of these programs.

> Mandatory welfare-to-work initiatives offering a mix of job search assistance, education, and training, with a clear and pervasive focus on relatively quick employment, may be especially effective. But while gains have been impressive, the success of even the best performing programs has had clear limits. The programs have left substantial numbers of recipients on the rolls and have not greatly reduced the common problem of high turnover or the difficulty of moving from low-wage jobs to better paying jobs and out of poverty. (p. 9)

Seven cities were selected to participate in this research demonstration: Baltimore, Chattanooga, Dayton, Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Seattle. The Jobs-Plus program targeted all working-age residents in the selected housing developments. The program goal was to increase the majority of working-age residents employed. Their saturation strategy involved three components: employment-related activities and support services, financial incentives to work, and community support for work. Job-Plus had four essential partners: the public housing authority (PHA), the welfare department, the workforce development office, and residents. Other

partners from the community at large were also a vital part of the program because the national designer believed that it would take a broad partnership to make Jobs-Plus a success.

*Public Housing Successes*

Jobs-Plus became the most rigorously evaluated employment initiative in public housing from 1998 to 2003 (Blank & Wharton-Fields, 2008). The program was evaluated by using random assignment of housing developments. According to Bloom, Riccio and Verma (2005),

> At each site, one housing development was randomly selected (through a type of lottery) to operate Jobs-Plus from a matched pair or triplet of eligible public housing developments nominated by the local public housing authority. The other one or two developments were assigned to a comparison group. Data on residents' work and welfare receipt in both the Jobs-Plus and the comparison developments were used to examine the program's impact on residents and on their housing developments. (p. ES-3)

The program's success in achieving desired outcomes for the residents and their housing developments was evaluated based on the impact on "residents' employment rates, average earnings, and welfare receipt by comparing the outcomes for residents of the Jobs-Plus developments with the outcomes for their counterparts in similar 'comparison' developments that did not implement the program" (Bloom et al., 2005, p. ES-1)

The findings showed the following:

> For all sites combined, Jobs-Plus produced positive impacts on resident's earnings, whether or not the residents continued to live in their development.
>
> The overall effects were driven primarily by large and sustained impacts in three sites (Dayton, Los Angeles, and St. Paul) where the implementation of Jobs-Plus was stronger and more complete. A fourth site (Seattle) had strong early earnings effect that

> ended when residents were displaced by federal Hope IV renovation project. The program had no earning effect in two cities(Baltimore and Chattanooga) that did not fully implement Jobs-Plus.
>
> These impacts were more likely to translate into higher earnings in the housing developments as a whole in sites where fewer residents moved out. However, the program's effect did not spark changes in broader social conditions.
>
> In the strongest implementation sites, Jobs-Plus had positive earnings impacts for many different types of residents, striking earnings effect for immigrant men, positive but smaller impacts on residents' employment rates, and no impact on resident's welfare receipt (because rates were dropping precipitously among all welfare recipients). (pp. ES--1, 2)

This ambitious demonstration project seems to indicate that the cities whose implementation strategy met the intended goal to boost employment in the developments followed closely the initial design model of three core components: (a) employment-related services, (b) financial incentives, and (c) community support for work. According to Bloom et al. (2005), the project did make a difference that "sustained earning gains as resident who were not working began to work and many residents who were already working began to work more consistently for more hours or at better paying jobs" (as cited in Blank & Wharton-Fields, 2008, p. 7). This was true for residents: African American single mothers, men, and legal immigrants of various nationalities.

To further evaluate the effectiveness of statewide programs, MDRC synthesized the results of "28 benefit-cost studies of programs based on the random assignment evaluation design. . . . This report highlights the complex trade-offs associated with balancing the desire to

ensure the poor of adequate incomes and yet encourage self sufficiency" (Greenberg, Deitch & Hamilton, 2009, p. iii). A key point to remember is that program success is determined by a number of factors but ultimately the interests of policy makers who fund the programs matters most. There were six types of welfare reform approaches, as described by Greenberg et al. (2009, p. ES-3):

> Mandatory work experience programs: Individuals are assigned to unpaid jobs
>
> Mandatory job-search first programs: Individuals are assigned to job search activities upon program entry. Other types of assigned activities can follow for individuals who do not find jobs.
>
> Mandatory education first programs: Individuals are assigned to education activities prior to job search. The most common of these activities were GED preparation or adult Basic Education (ABE).
>
> Mandatory mixed-initial-activity programs: Individuals are assigned to participate initially in either an education or training activity or in a job search activity, depending on an assessment of their needs.
>
> Earnings supplement programs: Individuals are provided with financial incentives intended to encourage work. These incentives supplement their income while at work.
>
> Time-limit-mix programs: These programs require individuals to participate in employment-orientated activities, provide them with financial incentives, and limit the amount of time they remain eligible for welfare benefits.

These programs, according to Greenberg et al. (2009), "are successful in either making program participants better off financially or controlling government costs but that there are often trade-offs between these goals" (p. ES-3). In essence the trade-offs really mean that the negotiation of

organizational interests decides whose interests matter. In the final analysis, program participants should benefit but the government will benefit the most.

*Summary*

The history of providing for the poor in the United States through an ever-changing welfare system privileged some and disadvantaged others because of societal inequities, namely race, class, and gender, with an interest on race. Those in leadership roles, such as Presidents and Congressional leaders with the most power to enact changes, did so through the negotiation of organizational and personal interests. People of color, especially African Americans, were blatantly denied access to the welfare system because of the racist views and acts of those who had some power. The welfare system has changed over the years but poor people, especially African American single mothers, continue to be discriminated against and accused of immoral standards. The current welfare reform policies and procedures have an underlying punitive and racist controlling theme aimed at changing the behavior of the poor, not changing the racist system of oppression.

## The Realities of Race and Racism

The United States has a diverse resident population in which people of different races, cultures, social, religious, economic, and educational backgrounds live in a society that is very "color conscious." The racial make-up includes 75% (228.2 million) White citizens. Minorities compose just over one third of the population, with 102.5 million citizens. Hispanics, Latino Americans, and African Americans are the largest minority groups by ethnicity and race, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). According to Edsall and Edsall (1991, as cited in Omi & Winant, 1994):

> From the very inception of the Republic to the present moment, race has been a profound determinant of one's political rights, one's location in the labor market, and indeed one's sense of identity. The hallmark of this history has been racism, not the abstract ethos of equality, and while racial minority groups have been treated differently, all can bear witness to the tragic consequences of racial oppression. (p. 1)

In this section of the literature review, racism is named and brought to the forefront, exposing its embedded nature in the lives of individuals and institutionally from its earliest existence to the present. Within the context of this study, racism is examined as part of the focus on the African American adult learner (individuals) who participate in welfare--to-work employment training programs (institutions) within public housing (institutions).

To understand the significance of racism in the context of this study required a careful search of the literature. Even though almost nothing about race and racism is mentioned in public discourses or the media, the volumes of writing from many disciplines are plentiful. The strategy used to become familiar with the topic was to find literature written by people of various disciplines, such as historians, social scientists, psychologists, and educators. This provided a comprehension examination not only of the complex concepts of race and racism but also of the relevance of these concepts in everyday life.

There is a commonality of racial facts that appears throughout the literature reviewed for this research. The words *race* and *racism* are sometimes used interchangeably because of a racial connection, but they have different meanings. Authors have written more about *race* than *racism*. Studies show that a discussion about *race* makes people in this society very uncomfortable, but discussion about *racism* is not popular or profitable. When questioned or asked to engage in dialogue about racism, the tone of the responses may range from passionate agreement to

defensive denial. The discomfort, avoidance tactics, and straightforward denial of the existence of racism does not discredit its existence nor make it go away.

An unknown author likened racism to the deadly gas carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is invisible, odorless, and cannot be touched, yet its presence will destroy life. Racism is invisible, odorless, and cannot be touched, yet the literature and real life experiences are reminders of how the lives of those who are negatively impacted by racism are destroyed, even unto death. Most authors are careful to note that racism is not a “Black thing,” only about Black people, pointing out that other minorities or people of color and White people are affected. Racial concepts are examined herein to understand the history and effects of living in a racialized society.

*Defining Racial Concepts*

Words and the meanings associated with those words shape thoughts and influence perceptions of reality (Whorf, 1956). Identifying words representing racial concepts and their meaning in the context of this study lays the foundation to discuss the relevance of living in a racialized society. These words include *prejudice, stereotypes, racial discrimination, race, ethnocentric monoculturalism,* and *racism*.

Harvard social psychologist Gordon Allport provided the most accepted definition of the word *prejudice*: “an antipathy based on faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group or an individual of that group” (1954, as cited in Sue, 2003, p. 24). Other facts associated with the use of the word are that (a) prejudice usually develops prior to any real contact with the object of the prejudice, (b) prejudice is an intellectual position taken regardless of the availability of objective information, (c) prejudice refers to a negative or hostile attitude toward another racially defined social group, and (d) racial prejudice

has an attitude and a belief component. Sue (2003) summarized racial prejudice as “negative in nature (hatred, fear, or disbelief), based on faulty or unsubstantiated data, and rooted in an inflexible generalization” (p. 25).

The problem can be exemplified by a situation in which a person holds negative attitudes toward African American welfare mothers, attributing to them laziness and mistrust based on unwarranted beliefs that these mothers choose not to work to get monthly welfare checks. Most people who form an opinion about welfare recipients have little to no contact with this population nor have the experience of being on welfare. Statistics have shown that, before welfare reform, more Whites than African Americans were on welfare (Hombs, 1996). The negativity toward welfare families and beliefs about the “welfare queen” are indicators of the level of prejudice toward African American welfare mothers. Former President Ronald Reagan was quoted by Cannon (1991) as saying, “The Chicago welfare queen has eighty names, thirty addresses, twelve social security cards and is collecting veteran’s benefits on four non-existing deceased husbands. . . . Her tax free income is over $150,000” (p. 518). Cannon verified that “the fraud committed by the Chicago welfare queen was exaggerated. The actual offender used two aliases to collect 23 public aid checks totaling $8,000” (p. 518). The exaggerated version of the fraudulent welfare recipient by Reagan is remembered more than the truth.

A common definition of *stereotype* is a “rigid and inaccurate pre-conceived notion that a person has about all people who are members of a particular group whether it be defined along racial, religion, sexual, or other lines” (Sue, 2003, p. 25). The stereotype can be positive or negative but the belief system is not swayed by contradictory information that challenges the belief. Research by social psychologists has concluded that the complex cognitive process that allows humans to categorize and process information is at work to maintain exactly what a

person *wants* to believe. Sue (2003) remarked that “people are not necessarily rational beings but rationalizing ones” (p.26).

Rationalizing the choice to hold to stereotypical beliefs in the face of contrary facts is easily understandable. This demonstrates the enduring strength and power of a belief system that intentionally refuses to change despite challenging data. The literature reveals the brain’s process of categorization that identifies differences and places them into separate meaningful units. This process allows the brain to make sense by simplifying all that is encountered on a daily basis. According to Sue (2003), “Social scientists recognized that much of the brain’s categorization occurs automatically outside the level of awareness” (p. 26). With stereotypical beliefs, people group differences related to their personal values. For example, if one values education, one may perceive other groups as uneducated because they do not measure up to one’s educational standard. Believing that one’s group is better than the other group results in feelings of superiority. In this way, a stereotype leads a person to feel better about himself/herself and members of his/her own group than about members of other groups.

Part of the mechanism used to feel good about oneself includes believing oneself to be unique and then exaggerating “good features” while minimizing those same traits in others (Sue, 2003). The literature concludes that self-image and self-esteem are formed from stereotypes. Challenging a stereotype causes discomfort and potential loss of self-esteem, which directly impacts one’s positive self-image. The reaction is to become defensive and “engage in psychological maneuvers to protect [one’s] world view” (Sue “   03, p. 27).

The theory of cognitive dissonance is relevant to this discussion. The theory of cognitive dissonance was formulated by psychologist Festinger (1957), who explained that, when a person receives information of an experience that is inconsistent with his beliefs or opinions, a state of

dissonance is induced. Once dissonance is present, the person can do any of a number of things to eliminate it: (a) compartmentalize the deceptive information by judging it irrelevant to the belief, (b) find information to validate and support the belief, or (c) discredit the source of the contradictory information. All of this happens without awareness to support a stereotypical belief system that favors one group over another group.

The prejudices against African American welfare mothers are directly related to stereotypical beliefs.

> Black mothers receiving welfare have been cast not simply as pro-typical villains, but as a collective internal enemy that threatens the very foundation of the U.S. society. They are portrayed as dishonest and irresponsible individuals who purchase bottles of vodka with food stamps intended to feed their children, or as immoral and promiscuous individuals who are said to breed children to rip off the welfare system for more benefits. (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. 3)

These stereotypical beliefs have remained consistent over the years because the racist image demonstrates hostility toward all who are dependent on welfare benefits. This portrayal of the welfare recipient and her shortcomings is upheld by those in power, who use racist images to substantiate the stereotype.

The literature defines *racial discrimination* as any action that differentially treats individuals or groups of color based on prejudices. As previous stated, "prejudice is bias expressed through negative or positive opinion, belief or feelings toward individuals who belong to a certain group or category (Sue, 2003, p. 24). Prejudicial beliefs or feelings move to racial discrimination when a person acts on those prejudices. Prejudice is a thought or attitude; discrimination is the expression of that thought or attitude. Prejudice and discrimination are not

strongly related in causal relationships. Prejudice can exist without discrimination and discrimination can occur without prejudice. Prejudice and discrimination can take place on the basis of race or ethnicity (traditions and cultural practices). One of the key points is that racial discrimination occurs when the person automatically assumes superiority based on racial differences.

Prejudice, stereotypes, and racial discrimination all involve *race* as the common denominator. Continuing to deconstruct a racialized society, the most powerful fact is that race must matter as a foundational characteristic of a racialized society. Cornel West (1993), Ladson-Billings (1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006), Neubeck and Cazenave (2001), and Schram et al. (2003) have all contended that race still matters. Race has been and still is "a powerful social construct and significance" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 8).

Ladson-Billings (1999) cited Toni Morrison to provide a supportive conclusion that race and racism still matter.

> Race has become metaphorical–a way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes and expression of social decay and economic diversion for more threatening to the body politic than biological race ever was. Expensively kept, economically unsound, a spurious and ardent political asset in election campaigns, racism is as healthy today as it was during the enlightenment. It seems that it had a utility for beyond economy, beyond the sequestering of class from one another and has assumed a metaphorical life so completely embedded in daily discourse that it is putting more recovery and more deeply than ever before. (p. 63)

Morrison's (1992) account of race actually describes characteristics of a racialized society where the effects of race and racism are present in every aspect of daily life.

The typical U.S. citizen knows that there are different races or groups of people who live within the United States of America. They may also be aware of how race is used to categorize people. The United States census since the early 1800s has constructed racial categories that have evolved over the years as racial understanding and dynamics change (Omi and Winant, 1994). The methods of categorization are highly purposeful to determine the acquisition and disbursement of governmental funding in areas such as housing, employment, education and social program design. The census' racial categories that have remained stable over the years are Black and White. According to Kendall (1997), "Race can refer to the color of skin, or religious category or a national category or to humans as the human race" (p. 3). Kendall (1997) also acknowledges that race is probably one of the least understood and most misused concepts in the English language. Sociologist Howard Winant (as cited in Kendall, 1997) concludes that "people have not resolved the cultural and political meaning of race and its significance in shaping their social structure and collective psyche." (p. 3)

Kendall (1997) defined race as a "category of people who have been singled out, by others or themselves, as inferior or superior on the basis of subjectively selected physical characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, and eye shape" (p. 3). Omi and Winant (1994) defined race as "a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies (p. 55). Race is determined to be a social construct by which people are classified based on social and political values. Some social scientists use the term *race* to refer to a biological classification determine by physical characteristics of genetic origin (Sue, 2003, p. 34).

The commonality among these definitions seems to indicate the "power" to classify human beings using physical characteristics and social and political values. The classification

allows formation of racial categories, such as those used in the U.S. census, to create “a sense of polar opposites (black and white) that posits a cultural ranking designed to tell us who is white or perhaps more potentially, who is not white” (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 9). Schram et al. (2003) edited the book *Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform*. The 12 authors who contributed to this discussion on race and welfare mentioned racism only three times. The literature on race and welfare is extensive but it appears difficult to move or want to move the discussion from race to racism.

The most significant concept in the discussion of a racialized society is that of defining *racism*. Adult educators Colin and Preciphs (1991) defined racism as “conscious or unconscious, and expressed in actions or attitudes initiated by individual, groups, or institutions that threat human beings unjustly because of their skin pigmentation” (p. 62). Sociologist Wellman (1977) defined racism as “culturally sanctioned beliefs which, regardless of the intentions involved, defend the advantages whites have because of the subordinated positions of racial minority” (p. xviii). Ron Daniels, a scholar-activist, defined racism as a “system of special privileges, benefits and psychological and symbolic and material rewards for white people. Racism is about having the power or capability to translate prejudices and attitudes or feelings of superiority into practice, customs, police or laws” (pp. 1-2).

Sue (2003), a psychologist, defined racism as

> any attitude, action or institutional structure or any social policy that subordinates persons or groups because of their color. It is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination because it involves the power to carry out systematic discriminatory practices in a brand and contrary manner. (p. 31)

These definitions of racism are similar in that they speak of human beings of different races (mainly Whites and Blacks) in a hierarchical racial-social relationship that was established in the North American colonial period over 300 years ago (Wright, 1998, p. 29). The hierarchical racial-social relationship phenomenon continues to exist. This relationship places the White race in a dominant superior position and the Black race or other people of color in a subordinate position. Within the complexity of this relationship, the issues of power become relevant. Daniels and Sue in their definitions of racism included the presence and use of power by one race over another. The power to turn attitudes and beliefs into actions that benefit the White race and denigrate the Black race seems to captures racism in its truest form.

Some would ask why it has been and still remains the case that White people are in the dominant position and Blacks or other people of color are in a subordinate position. The answer lies in understanding historically the powerful beliefs and attitudes of the White race toward Blacks, especially during the institution of slavery in the early days of the nation. White people had the right to own property, including Black slaves and White indentured servants. As property owners, they became the "masters" of ownership and oppression. The Black people (as slaves or nonslaves) became oppressed property (Daniels, 2002; Wright, 1998).

As a historian, Wright (1998) built on the alleged attributes of superiority and inferiority. According to Wright's research, members of the White race pictured themselves as gods or god-like entities, making them a superior race. In their minds they also depicted the Black and red race as nonhuman or subhuman, with alleged attributes of inferiority.

> When people are perceived to be non human or sub human, this takes them beyond simple prejudices, or bigotry or discrimination. When people are perceived this way, they are perceived to be outside a human status, outside humanity, and outside human

morality and therefore, outside human rights. If they are not human beings and do not have human rights, then there is no way they are entitled to have political or civil rights. (p. 33)

*Skin Color and Media Images*

Daniels (2002) wrote about the rationale and justification of slave ownership that benefited the White owners, who saw themselves as superior based on their skin color. The color of a person's skin varies within and across races. The color of a person's skin is associated with beliefs in superiority and inferiority. The defining color in terms of inferiority is Black; the defining color of superiority is White. Society often uses the colors black and white to designate what is good and what is not so good.

The color black has negative connotations, as in *blackmail, black sheep, devil's food cake, or black Monday* on the stock market. The color white has positive connotations, as in *angel food cake*, the traditional white wedding dress, and *a little white lie* (which is not so bad). Television shows and movies normally portray White men in leading, decision-making roles. Denzel Washington won an Oscar for his violent portrayal in *Training Day* but was not recognized for his performance in *Return of the Titans,* in which he played a football coach in an urban White high school. Being Black in a cultural framework where White is always glorified and where Black is always denigrated is the norm, not the exception.

This is a reality because mass media and public opinion have a contributing role in how policy outcomes are shaped (Sharp, 1999; Stimson, Mackuen, & Erickson, 1995). Public opinion is used by powerful lawmakers who consider it a feature of shared democracy to acknowledge what people want and give it to them (Mead, 1992). It is important to conceptualize the power of the negative images of welfare such that welfare recipients are stigmatized and deprived of full

and equal status as citizens. Piven and Cloward (1993) determined that negative images of welfare have the power to operate as social control, to divide poor people, and to racially distort how poverty and welfare are portrayed (Clawson & Trice, 2000; Gilens, 1999).

The documented research studies "between 1967 and 1992 showed that Black people accounted for an average of 57% of the people pictured in major news magazines" (Gilens, 1999, p. 14). Poverty states, according to Gilens (1999) represented about twice the true proportion of Black people among the nation's poor during this period. Gilens (1999) and Clawson and Trice (2000) acknowledged the continuance of this distorted racial view of welfare recipients in which White people on welfare were portrayed with positive stories and African American welfare recipients were intentionally portrayed as "undeserving and black faces predominated in poverty stories that adopted a negative tone or emphasized unsympathetic traits" (Schram et al., 2003, p. 9).

*Racism Categories*

Three types of manifestations of racism were proposed by social psychologist Jones (1997, as cited in Sue, 2003): individual, intuitional, and cultural.

> *Individual racism* is described as "any attitudes or actions, whether intentional or unintentionally conscious or unconscious, that subordinates persons or groups because of their color." This form of racism can be overt or settled, intentional or unintentional. *Institutional racism* is any institutional policy, practice or structure in government, business, unions, schools, churches, courts and law enforcement entities by which decisions are made as to unfairly subordinate persons of color while allowing other groups to profit from such actions. *Cultural racism* "is the individual and institutional expressions of the superiority of one group's cultural heritage over another group (arts,

crafts, language, tradition, beliefs and values) and its imposition in racial/ethnic minority groups." (p. 33)

The last term discussed here is that of ethnocentric monoculturalism, which appears as White supremacy and racism. According to Sue (2003), "Ethnocentric monoculturalism is a singular attitude or belief that one's race, culture, or nation is superior to all others, accompanied with the power to impose this expression on a less powerful group" (p. 101). This term has five components that can aid in understanding the role of White Euro-Americans as primarily responsible for the oppression of people of color.

The first component is *belief in superiority*. This does not appear to be an unrealistic belief, given that people of various races possess conscious and unconscious feelings of superiority about who they are, their history, culture, values, and so on. With regard to racial superiority, White Euro-Americans' beliefs of White superiority are not only desirable but seen as normal. The second component is belief in the *inferiority of others,* including their cultural heritage, which extends beyond their customs, values, and traditions. The physical traits, religious beliefs, and language are just a few areas where differences between Whites and people of color stand out. Because people of color are seen as different, they are evaluated as inferior because of possessing traits such as less qualified, less intelligent, and so on. The third component is the *power to impose standards*. Sue (2003) defined power as "the ability to act on needs, desires, beliefs, and values of one entity in order to influence, control, and define the existence of another" (p. 103). Power can be easily understood by looking at it from a military stance or the abuse of power in such acts as domestic violence, child molestation, and blatant racial acts, but power is "often covert, invisible and hidden" (Sue, 2003, p. 103). White Euro-Americans possess the power to "influence mistreat, invalidate and oppress other groups" (p. 1).

The oppression of other groups by White Euro-Americans demonstrates an unequal status or hierarchical relationship between groups where White Euro-Americans are the oppressor and the other groups are the oppressed. The fourth component is *manifestations in institutions and society*. Lives are controlled by the use of power to influence values and beliefs into everyday life situations through programs, policies, and practices.

> Oppression becomes a reality, especially for women and minorities, when institutional racism is manifested in compliance to policies and practices through the enactment of discriminatory statues, selective enforcement of laws, blocking of economic opportunities and outcomes, and imposition of forced assimilation and acculturation on the culturally different. (Sue, 2003, p. 105)

The fifth component of ethnocentric monoculturalism is the *invisible veil*. This describes that the consequences of ethnocentric monoculturalism are visible but the notion of how it operates is less visible. Utilizing the research of social psychologists can explain the phenomenon of invisibility.

Social psychologist Sue (2003) stated, “All people are the product of cultural conditioning so much so that their values and beliefs (our worldview) represent an invisible veil that operates outside the level of conscious awareness” (p. 105). This means that beliefs and values, developed as a result of cultural upbringing and life experiences, influences thinking, thinking, decisions, and behavior. Euro-Americans’ worldview becomes the standard against which others are measured to determine what is normal or abnormal, just or unjust, good or bad. Within the organization of society, policies, practices, and structures that may not be fair to minorities are invisible in controlling their lives. Sue cited an example in which White men dominate high-status positions while African American groups and women occupy lower-status

positions. This becomes a problem in that dominance by White men in high-status positions evaluates minorities and women in a distorted manner, reflecting Euro-American standards.

Having reviewed the literature to define pertinent racial concepts in the context of this study leads to examination of three particular areas of a racialized society to conceptualize the manifestation of racism in everyday lives, especially as related to the female African American adult learner in this study. The three areas are welfare, employment, and education.

*Racism and Welfare*

Andrew Hacker's (2003) book *Two Nations: Separate, Hostile, Unequal* applies to a racialized society where Blacks and Whites (major racial characters) live separate, hostile, and unequal lives.

> Two nations, between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets. (p. ix.)

Hacker spoke of the White nation and the Black nation and their relationship in society. In this scenario, people are identified with the Black or White race. The White race has positioned itself as the dominant superior race over the subordinate inferior Black race. The manifestation of racial power (racism) used by the White race over the Black race appears to allow no middle ground to bring these two nations of people together as one. Racism, too, controls the U.S. welfare social policy constructed by the White race to provide support to families in need, including the Black families.

Neubeck and Cazenave (2001) provided the most comprehensive and compelling research on welfare racism. The term *welfare racism* was developed by these authors to name the problem of how racism influences welfare policies and practices. The naming of a problem is

significant. To define the enemy or problem is the first step toward a resolution (Newman, M., 1994). Utilizing a racism lens to deconstruct and unmask societal inequalities with welfare social policy highlights how racism affects millions of poor people in need of public assistance, regardless of their color. It was interesting to note that Neubeck and Cazenave expressed concern about finding funding to conduct their research on welfare racism. The topic drew support and concern from colleagues. Potential funding foundations responded that their research topic "was not only politically incorrect, but foundationally incorrect as well" (p. vi.). This seems to be the average response when the topic of racism is presented. People have no problem in expressing their opinions about the welfare system, based on the abundance of scholarly research on welfare.

*The Word Welfare*

The word *welfare* continues to evoke negative images of African American mothers as the sole beneficiaries of welfare benefits. The results of several surveys by the National Opinion Research Center and the Anti-Defamation League reveal that (a) European Americans see welfare as a Black program, (b) African Americans prefer to remain on welfare rather than work, and (c) lack of effort is to blame for people on welfare because recipients do not want to work. (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001). Gilens (1999), a political scientist, in his survey analysis found that European Americans' hostility toward welfare was based on the stereotypical belief about African Americans being lazy.

"Because of the link of welfare and race, terms such as *welfare queens, welfare chiselers, generations of welfare dependency, and children having children* are used as code terms that thinly camouflaged overt racism" (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. 4). Politicians have used these code words and strongly held stereotypical beliefs to their advantage, especially

during discussions of welfare reform. Perceiving welfare as a Black program allowed passage of punitive programs that penalize welfare recipients and blame them for deficient group values and for being poor (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001).

During welfare reform debates in the 1990s politicians and other conservatives held fast to their beliefs about African Americans. The welfare program was constructed based on stereotypical beliefs. For instance, concerning teenage pregnancy, it was claimed that African American welfare mothers, including teenagers, had children out of wedlock for financial reasons. However, according to some research findings, "African American teenage girls made up a tiny part of all mothers receiving welfare (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1995). Neubeck and Cazenave, 2001) concluded,

> In this highly racialized political environment neither voluminous government statistical data nor scholarly research findings on the diverse characteristics and the unmet needs of the nations' poor have had much influence on the direction and outcome of recent welfare reform debates. (p. 4)

In essence, it matters not about the statistics and scholarly research demonstrating the inaccuracy of these stereotypical beliefs. Stereotypical beliefs were used and are still strongly held today to justify reforming welfare so that recipients' behavior must change to meet the standards of the dominant superior White race. According to Handler and Hasenfeld (2007), "Demonizing welfare allows the country to ignore the economic and social conditions that produce poverty and inequality—class, race, gender, the economy and the inadequacies of the low wage labor market" (p. 3). Handler and Hasenfeld's (2007) perception of program demonization speaks to how welfare recipients are portrayed because of the need by welfare policy makers to control the behavior of those who receive benefits. Neubeck and Cazenave

(2001) found that politicians exhibited "insensitivity to racism as a systematic social problem and blindness to the race-based privilege possessed by all whites" (p. 6). This means that the politically elite who contend that the "race problem" was dissolved by 1960s legislation and that racism is of no concern continue to deprive African Americans and other people of color of "the dignity, opportunities, freedoms and rewards that the nation offers white Americans" (Feagin & Vera, 1995, p. 7).

*Welfare Policy Perspectives*

One can use any of several perspectives to conceptualize welfare policy: the class-centered perspective, the gender perspective, and the state perspective. Added to this is Neubeck and Cazenave's (2001) racism perspective. In aligning these with research studies, understanding of the U.S. welfare policy takes on new meaning. The four general perspectives are shaped by interests in class, gender, state policy making, and racism. Neubeck and Cazenave's (2001) deconstruction of welfare policy held that "welfare policy is shaped primarily by class interests, or by patriarchal forces, or by organizational dynamics involving policy and state actors" (p. 17).

The *class-centered perspective* on U.S. welfare policy has two key factors that shape welfare policy: systematic requirements of capitalism and class dynamics. In their study entitled "Regulating the Poor" Piven and Cloward (1993) contended that welfare policy is used as a tool by the state to enforce submissive work and limit protests. The state has the ability to expand or contract welfare benefits that serve dominant class interests, including capitalism. Piven and Cloward explained the benefit of expanding welfare rolls during economic or political crises to reduce conflicts through pacification of the poor. On the other hand, when the economy is stable, the state usually expunges welfare recipients from the welfare rolls, forcing poor people who depend on welfare to find alternative ways to survive other than counting on welfare. This means

that the dominant, superior class is allowed to maintain control over labor. According to Neubeck and Cazenave (2001), Piven and Cloward's research did not include information on how racism is a part of the class-centered perspective.

The *gender-centered perspective* looks at welfare from a gender lens. The position of women in society is one of a subordinate role in the family, where the male is the head of the household and main financial provider and the woman is the wife and mother. This is considered the patriarchal family model. Abramowitz, in her report of research entitled "Regulating the Lives of Women," said that "welfare has historically served the function of distinguishing the deserving poor (e.g., widows with children) from the undeserving poor (e.g., never married and divorced mothers)" (1996a, p. 18). The distinction between *deserving* and *undeserving* is the marital status of the woman. Widows who were married met the patriarchal family ethic where women were wives and mothers; those who had children outside the patriarchal model were deemed unworthy of external support. Previously it was noted that White women and women of color received different treatment while on welfare, providing examples of racist treatment. African American women faced difficulties that White women did not have to contend with, such as not having a male in the family as head of household, because of discriminating practices that forced African American men not to be able to take care of their families.

Research by Mink (1998) revealed that the principle aim of welfare reformers has been to "restore the system's moral havens and to restore the patriarchal marital family" (p. 35). Legislators and other political elites want women to be dependent, not on the government but on a man. During the debate leading to the most recent reauthorization of welfare reform, President Bush pushed marriage as an option to help welfare mothers morally and financially. Remarks by

Johnnie Tillman, the first chairwoman of the National Welfare Rights Organization, reveals a welfare recipient's perspective on a man and "the man."

> I am a woman. I am a black woman. I'm a poor woman. I'm a fat woman. I am a middle-aged woman. And I'm on welfare. In this country, if you're any one of these things—poor, black, fat female, middle-aged, on welfare—you count less as a human being. Welfare's like a traffic accident. It can happen to anybody, but especially it happens to women. And that is why welfare is a women's issue. For a lot of middle-class women in this country, women's liberation is a matter of concern. For women on welfare it's a matter of survival. The truth is that AFDC is like a supersexist marriage. You trade in *a* man for *the* man . . . the man runs everything. In ordinary marriage, sex is supposed to be for your husband. On AFDC, you're not supposed to have any sex at all. You give up control of your own body. It's a condition of aid . . . the man, the welfare system, controls your money . . . . there are a lot of other lies that male society tells about welfare mothers; that AFDC mothers are immoral, that AFDC mothers are lazy, misuse their welfare checks, spend it all on booze and are stupid and incompetent. If people are willing to believe these lies, it's partly because they're just special versions of the lies that society tells about all women. (1976, pp. 355-358)

The feminist scholar who analyzes welfare with the gender lens "acknowledges the presence and impact of racism. . . . Racism takes a position of secondary importance in their analyses" (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. 20). Neubeck and Cazenave noted that it was advantageous to use the womanist perspective to inform their research about U.S. welfare policy. The *womanist perspective* is the perspective of African American feminists who reject White feminism. Womanists see racism at the center of analysis in challenging "the foundations of not

only patriarchal but also racist and class-exploitative forms of social organizational oppression" (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. 29).

Alice Walker created the term *womanist perspective* to be inclusive of gender, racial, and economic oppression. This is a very important realization given the context of the current study. African American female public housing residents are stigmatized because they are African American women on welfare living in public housing. The African American female could not control her race or gender. Even though most White Americans believe that she can control her position in society through education and employment, the literature continues to demonstrate that racism is the silent enemy at work to control her behavior and poverty class status. Ms. Tillman's words about women on welfare have remained true after 34 years. The program's name has changed from AFDC to PRWORA but the reality of the plight of African American females remains the same.

The *state-centered perspective* pertains to the power given states to create and enforce policies that reflect the interests of the state politicians and elite leaders without consideration of race, gender, or racial hierarchies (Evans, Rueschemeyer, & Skocpol, 1985). Several key scholars are recognized as expert writers on the state-centered perspective that fails to locate racism as the problem in their research. Jill Quadagno, a sociologist, acknowledged that racism influences state officials when making decisions but spent much more effort in justifying why the U.S. has not broadened its thinking about welfare and the state, compared to other counties.

Lieberman (1998), who wrote *Shifting the Color Line*, analyzed the institutionalized structure of welfare based on how state officials administered welfare policies reflecting racial inequities. Michael Brown's (1999) viewpoint focused on the ability of the states to finance welfare programs and cope with the taxpayers and others who opposed welfare programs. Brown

recounted the history of welfare during the New Deal era (1930s), when racist behavior and beliefs and segregation of African Americans impacted the welfare social policy. Currently, states continue to play an important role in the policy making and enforcement of welfare as the federal government's devolution plan gave power to the states to create and enforce state welfare policies. The greatest concern with the state devolution strategy has been the increased opportunity for racism to thrive on state and local levels.

*Racism-Centered Perspective*

Having reviewed the U. S. welfare policy through class-, gender-, and state-centered lenses, Neubeck and Cazenave (2001) contended that a racial lens and a racism-centered perspective must be employed to understand the significance and role of racism in welfare policy formation, implementation, and outcomes. When presented with class, gender, state, and racism perspectives, no one person is more important than another. It is important to understand how these perspectives weave together to make full covering of what lies beneath the construction and sustainability of U.S. welfare policy. The dilemma facing scholars is how to analyze governmental policies and practices from these perspectives when the power and interests of dominant Euro-Americans benefit them politically, economically, and socially to the disadvantage of people of color.

In their discussion of White racial hegemony Neubeck and Cazenave (2001) noted that *White racial hegemony* refers to the "systematic exercise of domination over racially subordinate groups" (p. 23). The current U.S. society is racialized social system within a racial state where policies created by European Americans "help to protect and reinforce systematic inequalities along the lines of skin color . . . when there is much denial on the part of European Americans that racism is any longer a serious problem" (p. 23). It may be easy to declare that racism is not a

problem or that it is not the problem of the past; however, in reality in everyday life the racial state continues to exercise control through racist institutional policies and practices such as welfare social policy and housing policies.

## Understanding Employment Processes

The foundational message in the latest welfare reform, PRWORA, is that of work. The U.S. society values work and most of the people who work. There is a stereotype that poor people are not working or not working hard enough to move them beyond reliance on governmental assistance. As a result, TANF, which replaced AFDC, focuses on employment as the 1996 welfare law required states to place an escalating percentage of their caseload in work programs where recipients would be involved in a minimum of 30 hours of work per week. This requirement has financial consequences for states. If states fail to meet these work requirements, the federal government reduces the amount of the block grants to those states. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the state to move recipients quickly into jobs to decrease caseloads and supposedly increase employment.

In booming economic times or in a recession, certain principles about work apply. The simplest principle is that there has not been a time in this nation when there were enough jobs for everyone to have at least one person in the family working full time. “Even with a strong U.S. labor market, employment would need to increase by several million jobs for there to be adequate number of jobs for disadvantage groups compared to past levels, social standards and economic needs” (Bartik, 2001, p. 34). There are several ways to estimate the number of jobs needed for full employment, depending on how the poor and disadvantaged are defined. A summary of Bartik’s (2001, pp. 34-36) calculations provides a visual comparison (Table 2). The poor and disadvantage need millions of jobs to level the employment field so that groups “move

Table 2

*Bartik's Estimate of Jobs Required to Achieve Full Employment in the United States*

| Employment group | Description | Number of additional jobs needed |
|---|---|---|
| 25- to 54-year olds in 1979 and 1998 | Decline in employment rate for men with less than a college education; high school dropouts and Blacks | 5 million (60% for single women, 40% for men, 70% for high school graduates, 30% for highs school dropouts; less than one half for White non-Hispanics and little more than one third for Blacks) |
| Non-elderly families | Each poor family to have the equivalent of one full-time, full-year worker | 8.6 million (4.5 for Whites and 4.1 million for non-Whites); families with children need 2.9 million of the 8.6 million jobs |
| Closing the poverty gap for families with children | Assuming that the poor can earn $7 per hour | 2.8 million full-time, full-year jobs; single mothers would need 1.8 million of the 2.8 million jobs. |

Source: *Jobs for the Poor: Can Labor Demand Policies Help?* by T. J. Bartik, 2001, New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

closer to employment rates of white males in the past, to provide one full time, full worker in each poor family, or to bring all poor families with children out of poverty through earning increases" (Bartik, 2001, p. 37).

*Labor Supply and Demand Policies and Businesses' Work*

Another important aspect of employment in the United States is labor supply and demand policies and how these policies affect employment and earnings. According to Bartik (2001),

> Labor demand policies directly seek to alter the behavior of low income Americans, increasing their labor supply or job skills. Labor demand policies directly seek to alter the

> behavior of employers, increasing their employment, or altering the kind of employee they hire and at what wages. (p. 19)

To make this work for both employer and employee, behaviors must be adjusted on both sides to affect employment and earnings. If the employee does not work, the overall impact is not favorable for employment and increased earnings.

In order for people who want to work to have employment, employment opportunities must be available. An example of a labor supply policy would include job training and education. Providing wage subsidies for the employer to hire the poor is a prime example of a labor demand policy. Research indicates that the United States spends much less on the labor *demand* side of the formula and more on the labor *supply* side because practices supporting the labor demand policies have a weak political base in that the businesses and conservations oppose supporting labor demand policies (Bartik, 2001).

Some businesses have made the commitment to prepare welfare recipients for entry into the labor market and to employ those recipients. There has been an increase in the number of for-profit corporations that work with public welfare agencies to help clients find and keep employment. Seefeldt (2002) looked at four major companies responsible for placing welfare recipients into jobs: America Works, Curtis and Associates, Lockheed Martin/IMS, and Maximus. These companies do not provide services directly to clients. They are located in more than one state so that they can contract with multiple state welfare agencies. Of course, this seems to be a win-win situation but critics have concerns that "a focus on the bottom line could be detrimental to welfare recipients" (Seefeldt, 2002, p. 106). Seefeldt identified problems with these for-profit companies, including cuts made at the expense of clients, improper use of

welfare funds, illegal lobbying, and paying clients lower wages than they would receive as regular employees, and charging high service fees.

Businesses have been encouraged to become involved in directly hiring welfare recipients. TANF funds can be used to develop customized training for employers who hire recipients and support mentorship programs for those who are employed. The Welfare to Work Partnership, a national nonprofit organization, "recruits businesses to hire welfare recipients and other low income persons" (Seefeldt, 2002, p. 110). Businesses involved include United Parcel Services and Marriott Hotels. Each business has related longstanding success stories but there are areas of concern, such as hiring selection processes.

*Hiring Perspectives and Challenges*

There is much frustration, especially for minorities, in the struggle to find and keep a job, whether in a booming economy or a recession. Participants in a New York focus group (Jobs for the Future, 1995b, as cited in Moss & Tilly, 2001) summarized their view point this way:

> We all have needs and all, so, in order to satisfy our needs we have to go and work. It's disheartening when we go out and we do not find work. When we go to different organizations to look for work, a lot of times whites do not want to hire us, unless it's a low-paying job. (p. 10)

Employers who have the most critical view of the welfare program and welfare recipients, such as the CEO of a Detroit food manufacturing firm, have said that

> [Welfare recipients] have a terrible work ethic, for the most part. They are more interested in leaving here and going to get their forty-ounce bottle or going to get their bag of pot or whatever it is they do. Because they are on ADC, because they are on all

> these other social kinds of service, they don't seem to mind when they don't work. (as cited in Moss & Tilly, 2003, p. 10)

Politicians and leaders of society also hold strong views on welfare recipients and employment.

> The first principle is that, in order to move up, the poor must not only work, they must work harder than the classes above them. Every previous generation of the lower class has made such efforts. But the current poor, White even more than Black, are refusing to work hard. (Gilder, 1981, p. 68)

African American job seekers, regardless of their welfare status, express a desire to work but know that the White employer has the power to hire or not hire. The White CEO, according to Gilder (1981), makes the assumption that Black welfare recipients do not want to work nor work hard and both hold stereotypical beliefs about these workers. Regardless of the documented research that welfare recipients engage in paid work in combination with welfare benefits and/or they cycle between welfare or work (Hartmann & Spalter-Roth, 1993), these strongly held stereotypes do not change, even in the face of refuting data.

Those who want to be employed are in the position to make that hiring decision. The hiring decision is not just contingent on the employers' review of qualifications and skills but lies with the employer's perception of an applicant's race and address. Researchers Kirschenman and Neckerman (1991) identified factors that were important to employers' assessment of hiring an individual: "Chicago employers used city or suburban school attendance, neighborhood, and even address (for example, whether a person lived in a public housing project) as screening criteria" (pp. 166-167). Moss and Tilly (2001) concluded,

> Employers' views and, as a consequence, their decisions about locating in and recruiting from the city, we argue, are influenced by a compound perception of race and the inner city life, families, schools, class and crime. (p. 156)

The Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality conducted by Moss and Tilly (2001) interviewed employers in Atlanta, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Boston. They found that job opportunities for workers of color were affected by urban space.

> Distance matters, pure and simple. The distribution of jobs, both quantity and type, across city and suburb is a barrier for less-skilled minority residents. The effect of space goes beyond pure distance and spatial mismatch. Space is a signal. Employers hold a view of inner-city areas and inner-city residents that is strongly influenced by their views on race. Partially underlying and compounding employer's racial attitudes about inner city residents of color are stereotypes of a host of inner-city ills. (p. 166-167)

Moss and Tilly's (2001) research substantiates that "employers explain their location decisions (typically away from the inner city), in part, on the basis of negative assessments of inner city workers relative to suburban workers" (p. 159). The preferences of employers to hire non-inner-city White workers lead them to recruit employees other than inner-city African American workers. An employer in Atlanta commented on the division between the "downtown" and "outer city" labor markets for low-level jobs.

> When you speak of Atlanta, I think there is a vast difference between downtown Atlanta and other parts of Atlanta. Typically people who are looking for secretarial, clerical positions who are not inner city residents are going to look round the periphery, where there are many offices located and many employment opportunities. They live in Gwinnett County and they don't want to come twenty-six miles all the way downtown

> when there are plenty of opportunities in their neighborhood. So for the low-skilled jobs people tend to look closer to home for low paying jobs. If you view that as the truth, then most of our applicant are inner-city residents, for low-paying work and low-skilled jobs. (p. 166, 167)

*Selective Recruitment Patterns*

Employers have strategic hiring practices to help them recruit the employee they wish to hire. Neckerman and Kirschenman (1991) conducted a survey among Chicago employers, who identified that their major concern was "Chicago's work force lacked both basic skills and job skills" (p. 392). Other concerns that once indicated a good worker were not reliable hiring standards: the lack of loyalty, not exhibiting hard work standards, and the fact that having a high school diploma did not guarantee good basic skills. Therefore, careful screening to find the best employee became very important. According to Neckerman and Kirschenman, "Almost half of our respondents said that employee referrals were there best source of qualified applicant, and it has become more common for employers to pay recruitment bonuses to employees whose referrals are hired" (p. 393).

The reality of a need to recruit differently for employees seems to speak to the perception expressed by employers that "inner-city Black workers are consistent with the interpretation that they avoid these applicants because on the average they expect them to be lower-quality workers" (Neckerman & Kirschenman, 1991, p. 393). Verbally, these employers expressed race- and class-neutral criteria but when neighborhood and institutions were targeted, they avoided inner-city populations. Neckerman and Kirschenman also found that employers in poor Black neighborhoods used selective recruitment. The newspaper was the first choice of advertising for advertising job openings. Many employers used neighborhood, suburban, or ethnic papers to

target particular populations. Some employers used a Black newspaper "because of a commitment to minority hiring or simply to keep the numbers in balance" (p. 393).

Another recruitment strategy in the Chicago area was based on the quality or location of schools, such as Catholic schools and schools in affluent neighborhoods, because more White students attend parochial schools. At the same time, employers considered Black students from Catholic schools to be more desirable for employment than Black students from public schools. Neckerman and Kirschenman (1991) also found that employers were very dissatisfied with the referrals of inner-city Blacks from the state employment agency and welfare programs. They reported that the agencies sent inappropriate or unqualified applicants. One employer commented,

> Any time I've taken any recommendations from state agencies, city agencies, or welfare agencies I get really people who are not prepared to come to work on time, not prepared to see that a new job is carried through, that it's completed. I mean, there just doesn't seem to be a work ethic involved in these people. (p. 394)

Neckerman and Kirschenman (1991) explained that "employers were especially likely to say that inner-city blacks lacked the basic work ethic, had a bad attitude toward work, and were unreliable; they also expected them to lack skills, especially basic skills" (p. 396). The described poor work ethic had the following components: not wanting to work, not knowing how to work, inability to handle the simplest tasks, attitude problems, chip on the shoulder (especially Black men), and coming late/leaving early.

Moss and Tilly (2001) reported the perceptions of the inner city workforce in their Mixed City study that corroborated Neckerman and Kirschenman (2001) findings. Even though the word *inner city* implies "non-White," Moss and Tilly found few employers who "stated outright

that the differences between the inner-city and suburban workforces was racial" (p. 176). The employers stated that education, class, family structure, and living environment in the inner city were linked to race. ShopKwik's regional human services director commented,

> There is a definite difference [in capability between city and suburban workers]. I guess to a degree it is a Black-and-White thing, but it really isn't a Black-and-White thing because I don't consider myself prejudiced. But there's a communication . . . . And once again I think it goes back to the school. We don't teach people to speak properly [and that] puts [business] people off. (p. 177)

In analyzing other comments made concerning the inner-city workforce, even when they made reference to race, employers quickly alluded to some other issues that negatively influenced the inner-city workforce, such as "work values, crime drugs, single mothers, housing projects, and the welfare mentality" (pp. 177-178). Most of the views of business people speaking about the inner-city workforce were personal opinions. But one very important point made by Moss and Tilly (2001) was that these views are more than opinions.

> Employers' association of inner-city residence with a list of stereotypes and their at times seamless interchange between inner-city and race—mostly notably, low-income Black—tell us that businesses' negative attitudes about race and reluctance to hire inner-city residents go well beyond the issue of genuine skill deficiencies. (p. 180)

The cited studies seem to indicate strong evidence that Blacks and other minorities continue to be subject to widespread employment discrimination. This discrimination is documented by the use of employment audits in which matched pairs of White and non-White "testers" are sent to apply for the same job. The results of these audits clearly indicate that employers are "less likely to hire Blacks, particularly Black males from the inner-city

neighborhoods” (Bartik, 2001, p. 273). Bartik concluded that employment discrimination is motivated by simple racial prejudice.

The results of the studies by Moss and Tilly, Neckerman and Kirschenman, and Bartik allude to employment racism but they may go as far as claiming racial discrimination, if that term is defined as any action that differently treats individuals or groups according to color based on prejudices. The definition of *racism* goes further than the definition of *discrimination*.

> Racism is any attitude, action or institutional structure or any social policy that subordinates persons or groups because of their color. It is different from racial prejudices, hatred or discrimination because it involves the power to carry out systematic discriminatory practices in a broad and continuing manner. (Sue, 2003, p. 31)

Employers who act on their prejudices and subscribe to stereotypes of Black inner-city people exhibit not only racial discrimination but racism toward this group. Employers have the power to carry out consistent systematic discriminatory practices against Blacks in the inner cities. The most effective means is to refuse to hire members of the Black work force living in the inner city.

Gooden’s (2000) research focused on the treatment and experiences of recipients who participated in the Virginia Independence Program work component entitled Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW). With 233 recipients in her study (118 White and 105 Black), Gooden reported negative employment outcomes for Blacks, even though the Black participants had higher levels of education than the Whites. Blacks were less likely to be employed full time, and the hourly wages for Whites with a high school diploma were higher than wages for Blacks with the same level of education. Also, employers treated Blacks differently by requiring pre-employment drug tests and criminal background checks; they were

given different work tasks, worked fewer hours, and were forced to work evenings. Not surprisingly, Black workers had negative opinions of supervisors.

*Examples of Welfare Racism*

Whereas welfare rolls had previously consisted of an equal number of Whites and Blacks (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001), after passage of welfare reform legislation in 1996, White welfare recipients began to exit the rolls faster than Blacks or other minorities as time limits and work requirements were put into place. *The New York Times* surveyed 14 states, including New York, and made the following discovery:

> As the welfare rolls continue to plunge, White recipients are leaving the system much faster than Black or Hispanic recipients, pushing the minority share of the caseload to the highest level on record. . . . Some analysts warn that the growing racial and urban imbalance could erode political support for welfare, especially when times turn tight. (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. 180)

This finding was substantiated by surveys conducted by the Associated Press and the *Chicago Reporter*. The statistics revealed that 40% of the White welfare recipients, compared to 27% of people of color left the rolls because they were earning enough money to be ineligible for benefits. More African American families than White families had cases closed due to sanctioning. Also, poor mothers with children were more likely to live in extreme poverty in the inner city areas, away from employment opportunities and child care but were still expected to comply with welfare rules or be removed from the program. New York "converted welfare offices into Job Centers whose acknowledged goal was to divert people away from receiving public assistance" (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. 186). New York authorities went so far as to develop a complicated bureaucratic process that mothers had to endure to receive services.

> When they first arrive at a job center, receptionists routinely tell them that there is no more welfare, that this office exists solely to see that they get a job, that if they miss any appointments their applications will be denied, that emergency food stamps and cash grants don't exist, that there is a time limit on benefits—without explaining that they can apply for Medicaid or food stamps [both need-based entitlement programs, not aligned to receipt of welfare and without time limits]. Receptionists also tell people who arrive after 9:30 AM that they must return another day. If they aren't already deterred, applicants are given a five-page preliminary form to fill out. They must return the next day to get an application. They are fingerprinted, undergo several interviews and are then directed to meet with a financial planner and an employment planner. The financial planner tries to deter people from applying by directing them to churches, charities, and food pantries. At various stages, applicants are orally denied benefits or told they are not eligible to apply, but they receive no written notice of denial or their right to appeal the decision. (p. 187)

In Idaho, where people of color constitute on 10% of the population, it was determined that "the already dizzyingly complicated and often humiliating process of applying for aid was markedly more so for applicants of color (Mann, 1999, p. 15). The Idaho's Citizen's Action Network (ICAN) sent 25 families to three regional offices to determine the treatment of these families and to identify barriers to accessing assistance from the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). These families experienced problems in gaining access to a caseworker and the numerous forms required more than four trips to the welfare office. After 3 weeks, only 8 families, of which 6 were White, secured an application appointment with a caseworker. The organization staff displayed overt expressions of welfare racism. Latinos/as were required to submit documentation of marriage and citizenship. Forms were in English only, with no

translators available. White applicants reported that the welfare department staff practiced racial discrimination, based on remarks made about Latinos and the staff's general attitude toward welfare recipients. Hispanics were intimidated with threats of deportation.

*Education and Job Training*

Education is valued in American society as a vehicle that assists in people to achieve academic successes, employment, and self-sufficiency. The 1996 welfare reform goals continue to focus on quick employment and decreased dependence on welfare cash assistance. As a result, involvement in educational activities such as college and technical school is not classified as a true work activity. Ripke and Crosby (2002) summarized the typical welfare recipient:

> They usually have low levels of education and skills. The average welfare recipient reads at a sixth- to eighth-grade level. Approximately fifty to sixty percent lack a high school diploma or a graduate equivalency degree (GED) and as many as forty percent may have a learning disability. (p. 195)

In years prior to the 1996 reform, welfare recipients were encouraged and supported to be involved in educational programs.

The Family Support Act of 1988 encouraged states to invest in educational services for low-income adults. As a part of this act, Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) provided mandatory basic skills training to help welfare recipients to overcome educational deficits so they could become employed and less dependent on the government for assistance. This is no longer the case, with the immediate focus on "work first," which places employment first and education second or not at all.

The new TANF program required work activities to include employment, on-the-job training, 6 weeks of job search, community service, work experience, and vocational educational

training. Employment is any activity in which a person is paid for work activities. On-the-job training means that the person may not be paid but spends time in learning skills of the work in a real work environment. Job search requires a recipient to contact potential employers at a designated number of contacts per week, with documented record of contact with potential employers. Community service is volunteer work for which no pay is involved. Work experience is similar to on-the-job training, also without pay. Vocational educational training provides skill development and certification through vocational schools within a 2-year period. Residents who were seeking college degrees could not complete those degrees under the new welfare reform rules because the hours spent in secondary educational activities did not count as allowable work hours. This placed the recipient in the sad dilemma of being forced to choose between giving up what had been accomplished so far toward completion of a bachelor's degree or going to work for minimum wages in a job with no prospect of advancement.

In 1997 the Welfare-to-Work grant under the Balanced Budget Act and the creation of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 1998 provided three billion dollars to states to work with welfare recipients who had more intensive problems that prevented them from working. WIA created a "one-stop shop" approach to work force development that included job training, adult education and literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs (Ripke & Crosby, 2002).

Since the earlier years of PRWORA states had been granted discretion to define work activities and education and training activities. According to Ripke and Crosby (2002),

> While some states have chosen to define work activities broadly, allowing for a range of such activities as basic skill education, postsecondary education, and work study programs, other states implemented more stringent policies that focus on rapid entry into work and severely restricts opportunities for education and training. (p. 198)

The documented consequences of the states' ability to write its own policies within the federal PRWORA legislation were that some welfare recipients benefited from education and training while some were denied the benefits of education and training.

Summarizing the findings reported by Ripke and Crosby (2002), most states provided postemployment services to those who left TANF, and over half of the states provided adequate case management services and expanded programs and services to the working poor. Of the most benefit to welfare recipients was that states offered a wider selection of services to include "education and training, tuition assistance, individual training accounts, transportation aid, case management, employment services, and financial assistance for expenses associated with emergencies" (p. 199). Even with this latitude, states saw a decline in welfare recipients participating in education and training activities, as documented by Strawn, Greenberg, and Savner (2001, as cited in Ripke & Crosby, 2002); the number of welfare recipients attending college dropped from more than 650,000 in 1996 to fewer than 360,000 in 1999.

*Basic Education*

Adult students who lack a high school diploma or GED are encouraged to participate in Basic Education programs. The importance of having a "high school diploma increases their likelihood of leaving welfare rolls and decreases their likelihood to re enter the system" (Ripke & Crosby, 2002, p. 301). Pauly (1995) reviewed and evaluated 18 adult education-focused programs during the 1980s and early 1990s that were targeted to improve literacy skills for AFDC recipients to move into employment. The evaluation revealed an increase in GED and high school diploma attainment but recipients did not improve on standardized tests. Scoring well on employment tests and questionnaires provided added information to employers in making a hiring decision. Test taking is a learned skill that challenges most people, regardless of

the reason. During this time, other researchers questioned the usefulness of a GED for the purpose of employment or improving wages.

> [The National Evaluation of Welfare to Work Studies (NEWWS)] provided the first large-scale test of the relative benefits of labor force attachment (LFA) versus human capital development (HCD) strategies by examining several JOBS sites. The random assignment study took place in six states from 1991 through 1999, with more than 40,000 single parents with children participating. There were three groups: a control group, an LFA (rapid employment-focused services) group, and an HCD (education and training) group. Even though a variety of educational institutions were used to provide services, it was determined that few providers altered their curriculum to address the specific needs of welfare to work participants. (Ripke & Crosby, 2002, p. 201).

The results of this evaluation were as follows: (a) basic education program were not generally effective in increasing employment and earnings, (b) HCD development programs were able to maintain longer, (c) participation was consistent over longer periods, (d) LFA moved people into jobs more quickly for less operating funds, and (e) economic well-being was insignificant for both LFA and HCD.

The research substantiated that those who had good reading and math skills were close to passing the GED test upon entering the program. Reading levels improved for the most deficient after a year of study; after 6 months, math skills improved. Ripke and Crosby (2002) concluded, “Although there may be benefits in doing so, few participants in mandatory welfare-to-work programs successfully obtain a high school diploma or GED” (p. 202).

*Vocational Training*

This type of training focuses on training in the technical and professional fields, sometimes with an on-the-job training component. Research seems to indicate that this type of training is most cost effective for the younger inexperienced worker. Vocational training is usually not combined with basic education or linked to the local job market, but the evidence is clear that wages and hours of employment increase (Friendlander & Burtless, 1995).

*Postsecondary Education*

A college education is seen as the best ticket out of poverty. According to Kahn and Polakow (2002), "Job training, basic skills training and short term vocational training do not have the same impact as two and four year degrees on the employment and earning potential of welfare recipients" (p. 159). Ripke and Crosby (2002) supported these findings:

> Welfare recipients with basic skills comparable to a high school diploma need approximately 200 hours of additional education and training to move up to advance skill jobs. . . . A third of all new jobs will require education and skills beyond a high school graduate level yet 70% of welfare recipients are at that level. (p. 203)

Considering that to support postsecondary education costs twice as much as basic education and job training, the benefits of job stability and increased wage earnings seem worth it to those who view postsecondary education as an option. With a degree, increased confidence, and the ability to preserve welfare participation, those who engage in postsecondary education are likely to benefit as role models to family and friends, demonstrating that welfare is not a reasonable option.

Gueron and Hamilton (2002) and Ripke and Crosby (2002) agreed that most effective programs use a mixed strategy that involves education and training and a strong work focus.

Gueron and Hamilton argued that the key to providing effective programming is to achieve a balance between “rigid job search, front and rigid education-or-training-first programs increase employment, but the former get people jobs sooner and at a lower cost and the latter do not ultimately get people better jobs” (p. 1).

The qualities of the most effective program have been identified in research of two welfare-to-work programs in Portland, Oregon, and Riverside, California, both called Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN). Table 3 compares the features of these two programs.

## Adult Education Program Planning

> Adult education is a high-stakes arena in which many actors use its seeming innocent practices to structure opportunities and benefits. With the struggle for knowledge and power as a foundation of adult practice, we know that multiple interests are always at stake; many interests crowd the table, but only a few voices command attention and action. The question of benefits—“who does” and “who should”—are always present in practice. (Cervero & Wilson, 2001, p. 282)

This section of the literature review begins with a foundational history of planning theory and practice, followed by identification of important components and ways of thinking about the program planning process. The second then highlights the challenges of program planning practice, especially with regard to the context of this research.

To most people, adult education involves planning and implementing educational programs for adult learners. What seems so simple can become as frustrating as negotiating a maze (Caffarella, 1994) because the planning process involves a struggle for knowledge and power in which the stakes, interests, and benefits privilege some and deny others (Cervero & Wilson, 2001). The opening quote specifies the complexity of program planning, which is seen

Table 3

*Comparison of the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Programs in Portland, Oregon, and Riverside, California*

| Program feature | Portland GAIN | Riverside GAIN |
|---|---|---|
| Successful for high school and nongraduates | ✓ | ✓ |
| Flexible initial activities | ✓ | ✓ |
| Enforced participation requests | ✓ | ✓ |
| Experienced operating job search | ✓ | ✓ |
| Stressed the importance of funds or jobs | ✓ | ✓ |
| Used job developers | ✓ | ✓ |
| Wait for jobs paying well above minimum wages offering the best chance for long-lasting stable employment | ✓ | |
| Take first job offered since any job was viewed as a good job | | ✓ |
| Staff communicated that improving people's employ-ability (assignment limited to 6 months or less) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Participants expected to make progress in assigned areas | ✓ | ✓ |
| Basic education assigned to those not ready to work: work history, education, entering test scores | | ✓ |
| 3- to 4-week life skills classes | ✓ | |
| Partnered with community college system to design and provide case management | ✓ | |
| Welfare department administered program using com-munity colleges to provide education and training; offered payments based on measures of student performance | | ✓ |

Source: "The Effects of Welfare Reform on the Educational Outcomes of Parents and Their Children," by N. N. Ripke & D. A. Crosby, 2002, in W. G. Secada (Ed.), *Review of research in education* (pp. 181-247), Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

as a social activity in which people negotiate personal and organizational interests in every phase of the planning process (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, 1996). Adult educators must respond responsibly by reflecting on how their practice maintains or reproduces the inequities of a racialized society in which all people are not treated equally at the planning table.

*History of Planning Theory*

The adult education planning theory begins with the 1949 work of Ralph Tyler, who produced a course syllabus that presented his approach to curriculum planning. Tyler's *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* has influenced adult education for over 50 years. These basic principles, sometimes referred to as the Tyler Rationale, "present four questions concerning purpose, content, method, and evaluation that guide the development of any curriculum" (Sork, 2000, p. 172). Tyler's contribution to curriculum planning presented a technical rationality that not only benefited elementary and secondary schools but became a useful framework for adult education planning models.

The other important contribution to the development of planning theory was Knowles' 1950 *Informal Adult Education*. Knowles was interested in addressing "the needs of learners and suggested an approach to planning and conducting instruction that put the interests and experience of learners in the foreground" (Sork, 2002, p. 172). In Sork's research review on the genealogy of planning theory he discussed the relevant books on program planning published from 1950 to 1970. Most of these books incorporated Tyler's rationale with new information on adult learning.

A noteworthy exception was a book entitled *Social Action and Interactions in Program Planning* (as cited in Sork, 2000), in which the authors used a sociological orientation to "foreground social and political aspects of planning that had largely been ignored by other

authors" (Sork, 2000, p. 172). During the 30 years from 1950 to 1980, the technical rationality became the dominant discourse. The attractiveness of technical rationality to produce programs seemed to make planning an easier and less complicated adult education activity. Following the Tylerian script did not appear troublesome except when educators began to challenge Tyler's technical rational tradition of producing programs.

Knowles's *Modern Practice of Adult Education* (1970) introduced a new terminology for an alternative educational program for working with adults: *andragogy*. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, published in 1970, also provided a different empowerment learning focus that caused adult educators to reflect on the purposes and processes of adult education. Freire's passionate focus was to challenge oppression, while Tyler and Knowles ignored power relations for the use of reason and consensus in the planning process (Sork, 2000). Other work by noted adult educators showed commitment to the technical-rational tradition.

The exception to the traditional technical-rational tradition was the work of Cervero and Wilson (1994a, 1996). Using a critical theory focus based on the work of Forester (1989, 1993), they emphasized the socialness of planning, noting competing interests and asymmetrical power relations. Based on their practice and research findings, Cervero and Wilson concluded that planners must acknowledge and understand the interactions of power and interests and the act of negotiation to uphold their responsibility for participating in ethical and democratic planning.

Planning programs is a social activity because it involves working together with people to develop an educational program capable of changing individuals, groups, and institutions. The activity of planning programs does not occur in isolation but is influenced by societal norms, both good and not so good. People who plan programs do so in a variety of settings, such as

churches, social clubs, schools, and businesses. How people plan is dependent on their personal philosophy, knowledge, position in life, and the influences of personal experience.

According to Caffarella (1994), “Program planners must have a clear understanding of why they do what they are doing. They should be able to articulate what changes will or could come about as a result of the educational program” (p. 23). This is the first in a series of assumptions that become the foundation on which planning models are grounded. Other assumptions include using a combination of systematic steps and being able to handle unexpected surprises; working with people who have different agendas and want to impose their agendas on the people in the planning situation; and a willingness to cooperate for the good of the program. As with anything else, the more one plans programs (practice) and pays attention to what one does and why one does it, the more likely one is to be an effective program planner.

Program planners must understand how adults learn and change. A variety of adult educators, including Houle (1972) and Nadler (1982), both cited in Caffarella (1994), highlight major principles and practices of adult learning used in developing planning models.

> Adults can and do want to learn, regardless of age. Adults have a rich background of knowledge and experiences. All adults have preferred styles of learning, and these differ. Adults are not likely to engage in learning unless the content is meaningful to them. Adults prefer to be actively involved in the learning process. What, how, and when adults learn is affected by many roles they play as adults. (Caffarella, 1994, pp. 24-25)

Understanding adult learning theory to explain how adults learn is important. However, a planner must also identify personal beliefs related to program planning to determine his/her philosophy about program planning (Apps, 1973, 1991; Boyle, 1981, all as cited in Caffarella, 1994). What people believe about the purpose of adult education, the program planning process,

the adult learner, and the learning process encompasses a "system of beliefs and values that guides their actions" (Caffarella, 1994, p. 31) as a program planner.

Beliefs and values formulate a working philosophy of what is important to the planner. Unfortunately, planners have not given this much thought; instead, they tend to "act" in practice without a clear understanding of what they believe. When several people come together to plan programs and these planners have not articulated their beliefs and values, the ability to make ethical decisions is affected. This in itself complicates the planning process as planners negotiate personal and organizational interests. Other important components that influence positioning in planning include understanding the various planning viewpoints that have been developed throughout the history of program planning and the critical perspectives or lens by which to view the planning process.

*Understanding Planning Viewpoints*

There are three major planning viewpoints that can be utilized to answer the question of what program planners do to plan programs. The classical, naturalist, and critical viewpoints describe a model of practice within a theoretical framework that differs dichotomously according to how program planners handle the rationality and politics of planning (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a). Cervero and Wilson argued that "these dichotomies may be distinguishable in theory, [but] responsible planning practice requires the integration" (p. 13). Cervero and Wilson built their own account of planning practice from the analysis of these viewpoints. Their critical perspective in viewing the dynamics of program planning theory and practice was used in this study as the foundation to understanding what matters in planning welfare-to-work employment training programs for African American public housing adult learners.

*The classical viewpoint.* More than 100 theories of application support the activity of program planning; the principles of these theories can be applied to solve problems encountered during the program planning process (Sork & Buskey, 1986). “The curriculum development framework presented in Tyler’s classic book, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (1949) undergirds most planning theories in adult education” (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, p. 14). The classical viewpoint in adult education rests on the logic of Tyler’s framework. The questions posed by Tyler to guide program planning translate into “the prescriptive steps of program planning as described in nearly all theories” (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, p. 14).

Pennington and Green (as cited in Cervero and Wilson, 1994a) interviewed 52 professional educators and asked them to explain the planning strategies that they used to plan programs. The educators responded in terms of logic and language comparable to the logic and language of the classical model but the planners claimed they had not used the model to systematically plan programs. However, Brookfield (1986) found that professional educators may have used the language of the classical viewpoint but also stated that the classical viewpoint did not take into consideration the political and economic relations. Therefore, Cervero and Wilson (1994a) paraphrased Tylerian questions to reflect the actuality of program planning: “What purpose(s) does a program seek? What content or educational experiences are likely to attain these purposes? By which methods can this content be effectively acquired and how can these purposes are evaluated?” (p. 17)

Another important consideration in the critique of this viewpoint is that “a theory describes an idealized process that may or may not fit with the realities of practice (Sork & Caffarella, 1989, p. 243). Cervero and Wilson (1994b) questioned the capacity of this viewpoint

to answer crucial questions of who is applying what principles, with what value and interests, and in what organizational setting.

*The naturalistic viewpoint.* The naturalist viewpoint depicts “real people trying to make judgments about what action to take in concrete situations” (Knox, 1982, as cited in Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, p. 18). This viewpoint holds that adult educators become expert planners by developing new criteria for making decisions and having knowledge of how the criteria will be used. This viewpoint focuses on the adult educator’s ability to make the best judgment in practice. Adult educators solve planning problems through deliberation and practical reasoning based on the context in which the decisions are made. Cervero and Wilson (1994a) pointed out that “the process of deliberation or practical reasoning appears to be too natural, for it does not address the situation in which unequal relationships of power exist between the educator and others involved in the planning process” (p. 20). Even so, the naturalistic viewpoint allows educators to look at how planners justify their choices. This viewpoint focuses on the values and ethics of planning and the interpersonal nature of planning.

*The critical viewpoint.* The critical viewpoint has a concern for social and political emancipation. “Emancipation is guided by the values of equality, sharing, personal dignity, security, freedom and caring” (Beyer & Apple, 1988, p. 7). Freire’s work provides great insight from a critical viewpoint. His work proposed a practice that liberates people by helping them to find their voice, which has been suppressed by existing structure that promotes social inequality. Planners must understand that education is a political and ideological activity connected with the social inequalities of a society as a whole. Cervero and Wilson (1994a) noted that, “because the judgments are made in a world of unequal and shifting relationship of power, they are inadvertently ethical and political, not technical” (p. 21).

This viewpoint asks tough questions regarding the practicality of planning in the face of power and interests that does not espouse the viewpoint of the educators. This is a challenging place for the adult educator who believes in the critical viewpoint and all that it can accomplish.

> [The critical viewpoint] draws attention to the practical contexts of action and the process by which planners make planning judgments in those contexts. But what about the personal, institutional and social interests (and the concomitant relations of power) that shape the contexts and feasibility of planners' judgments? (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, p. 25)

The classical and naturalistic viewpoints privilege a planner's discretion at the expense of structural constraints when the planner follows prescribed planning steps to develop programs. The naturalistic viewpoint provides no clarity for handling conflicts that exist in the context of planning. On the other hand, the critical viewpoint, when used to plan programs, focuses on structural constraints such as the dominant ideologies and interests of social culture and institutional organizations. Therefore, structural constraints are privileged at the expense of individual choice (Cervero & Wilson, 1994b).

These viewpoints give a range of responses to planning programs from a theoretical base that is not fulfilled in real-world practice. The importance of understanding these theoretical viewpoints is to support the conclusions that planning is a social activity in which power and the interests of individuals, groups, and institutions influence the planning process. Merely paying attention to logistical planning will not produce effective programs. The importance of programs is that they bring about change, either positively or negatively, for those involved in the process and those affected by the process. Therefore, it is imperative for adult educators and others to understand the importance of going deeper into the context of planning than accepting surface-

level planning as adequate and sufficient. Three critical perspectives or lens can be used to "see" more clearly what issues come to the forefront of planning, even when they may be so embedded that they go unrecognized.

Adult education scholars, according to Sork (2000), have been influenced by three critical perspectives, one of which became the focal perspective of program planning as developed by Cervero and Wilson (1994b): the feminist critique, postmodernism, and the critical perspective. The feminist critique challenges conventional planning theory because of its exclusion of women from its development and the absence of gender as an important consideration. "There is a great deal of literature on women as learners and the role of gender in education, but very little of the work has been incorporated, directly or indirectly into planning theory" (Sork, 2000, p. 174). Postmodernism involves challenging "generally accepted" notions and deconstructing dominant discourse. "Postmodernism challenges planning to the extent that planning is construed as a process involving set ends that are unproblematic and scientifically determined means that are instrumental to achieving them" (Sork, 2000, p. 175). Critical theory is based on the critical planning theories of Forester (1989, 1993), in which the focus was on how power and interests influence deliberate efforts to bring about change. Critical theory is used to analyze the embedded power and interests and the negotiation strategies that are used to arrive at program designs. The most striking quality of critical theory is associated with social change that reduces or eliminates oppression. Sork comments: "Critical theorists have helped us understand the central role that power plays in education-in maintaining the hegemony of privileged individuals and groups, existing class structure, access to limited resources, and control of productive capacity" (Sork, 2000, p. 176).

*The Challenges of Program Planning Practice*

Cervero (1989) and Goodson (1991) held that the essential problem confronting program planning theory in adult education is that it does not adequately account for the important things that real educators must do in everyday practice. In everyday practice people work with power relationships and interests among individual planners and institutional settings.

*Power* was defined by Isaac (1987) as the capacity to act. According to Cervero and Wilson (1994a), "Power relationships exist in all human interactions and defines what people are able to do in a particular situation" (p. 28). According to Morgan (1986), interests direct the actions of planners and other people in the program planning process, defined as a complex set of "predispositions embracing goals, values, desires, expectations and other orientations and inclinations that lead a person to act in one way or another" (p. 41). Educational programs are constructed by people with particular interests and relationships of power with each other. It is important to understand that sometimes people have power because of their position. In that case, power can be used to do certain things; however, it also has restraints on relationships to others with power. Power is not given nor taken away; power is always being negotiated. Cervero and Wilson commented that "it is not a one-way relationship in which person A gets person B to do something. . . . Rather, it involves some reciprocity among those involved" (p. 121). Cervero and Wilson's research reveal that:

> Not all relationships of power that planners face are relationship of domination. In some situations, the capacity to act is distributed relatively equal to all parties. . . . Domination is not a necessary feature of planning contexts but a subset of all power relationships that a planner may encounter. Nevertheless, most situations are marked by asymmetrical power relationships, and the difficult issue for the planner is to know whether these

asymmetries are forms of legitimate power (authority) or illegitimate power (domination). (Cervero & Wilson, 1994a, pp. 121-122)

Cervero (1989) and Goodson (1991) stated that the essential problem confronting program planning theory in adult education is that it does not adequately account for the important things that real educators must do in everyday practice. Cervero and Wilson (1994a) proposed moving planning out of the minds of individual planners into the social relationships among people working in institutional settings. This links planners' actions to the complex work of power relationship and powers and interests to define the social context in which planners must act.

Cervero and Wilson (1994a) completed research on the program planning practices of three educational programs. To understand all that has been said about program planning theories, viewpoints, power, interests, and negotiations and so on, one must pay attention to the dynamics of program planning in real-life situations. The three cases that exhibited program planning situations in adult education were (a) The Phoenix Company, a service-oriented business with 1,280 employees in the southeastern United States; (b) the College of Pharmacy at State University, which offers a seminar for practicing pharmacists; and (c) the Organization for Persons with Disabilities, a federally funded organization to reduce the incidences of developmental disability and to improve the quality of life of people with developmental disabilities.

Each planning situation involved primary planners who negotiated personal and organizational interests to develop educational programs. Cervero and Wilson (1994a) showed how the interests of individuals and the organization shaped people's judgments about the purpose, audience content, and format for each program. The primary planners in the Phoenix

Company were Pete, the Vice President for Human Resources; Joan, the Customer Services Director, supervised by Pete; Sam, the President; and George, the Director of a leadership center at a nearby university. The primary planners in the College of Pharmacy were Carl, Coordinator of Continuing Education and responsible for managing the development and products of the annual seminars; Bob, Carl's supervisor and Director of Continuing Education; and Richard, a faculty member at the college. In the organization for Persons with Disabilities, Ann was the OPD director and Marti was the primary planner for one-day education programs.

Besides their positions of power and their abilities to negotiate their power and interests personally and organizationally, nothing was ever said about the influence of gender or race on the program planning process. In two of the three cases men held titles of position and power; in the third organization only female planners were in positions of power. The race of the planners was invisible to the researchers and the planning process.

According to Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2000),

> Adult education, like all areas of education, mirrors the world in which we live and, as with all educational systems, can play significant roles in reproducing and maintaining the status quo. The North American society is a place replete with hierarchical systems that privilege some and deny others. (p. 147)

Guy (1999b) noted that, historically, "many of the same ethnic, racial, and linguistic groups who offered the greatest oppression in the United States at the dawn of the twentieth century continue to suffer great oppression at the dawn of the twenty-first century" (p. 93). Although it can easily be understood that that race is a social construct, "the effects are real in terms of social power and privilege" (Giroux, 1997, as cited in Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000, p. 148). The field of adult education and its practitioners do not escape the effects of race and

racism. “Race is a central location for the negotiation of power and privilege in education and in society” (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000, p. 151).

The construction of race in adult education literature places the White race as the norm, superior and dominant. According to Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2000),

> This perspective (of Whiteness) is so deeply embedded in the soul fabric and language of the US and Canada cultures that there have been little discussion of adult education for whites even though the white race has constituted the vast majority of the populate of adult education. (p.151)

The field of adult education responds to the issue of race theory omission that signifies race as not important in theory or practice (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000). Nearly all discussions of teaching in adult education simply avoid the racial dynamics that are omnipresent in the real world (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1997). This translates into the illusion that all students are equal, that teachers are unbiased, and that there are no racial hierarchies that structure social relationships. Most European Americans may not want to acknowledge the importance of race and racism in adult education or society, but the fact remains that race and racism still matter.

## Chapter Summary

The literature review has explored the implications of welfare social policy from its beginnings to understand the impact of policies, such as Work First, designed to facilitate greater employment and self-sufficiency in welfare recipients. Given the context of this study involving African American adult learners living in public housing, the issues of race and racism were examined to comprehend the complexity of educating and employing minorities, especially African Americans.

A review of traditional adult education program planning theories and practice provided an in-depth view of what happens in the program planning process when planners negotiate power and personal and institutional interests to produce quality education programs for the adult learner. Even at the planning table and throughout the process, technical, political, and ethical decisions are influenced by the power relationships that privilege some and deny others because of who they are and their position in life.

The literature review reveals that more research is needed to examine how the embedded realities of racism support a racialized society in which “inequality is endemic to the American system and, unless something occurs to prevent it, it will remain the same” (Guy, 1999a, p. 93). To name the problem is the first step to solving the problem.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to understand how power relations shaped welfare-to-work employment training programs for African American public housing residents. The research questions guiding this study were:

1. How do relationships of power shape whose interests are represented in the planning process?

2. How are stakeholders' interests expressed in specific features of the training program?

3. How are stakeholders' power and interests expressed in program outcomes

This chapter describes the qualitative methodology used in the study. The chapter is divided into sections addressing the research design, sampling and selection criteria, data collection methods, data analysis methods, reliability, validity, researcher bias, and assumptions and limitations of the study.

## Research Design

To understand the program planning process in the context of developing welfare-to-work employment training programs for female African American public housing residents, the most appropriate research design was deemed to be a critical qualitative methodology with a comparative case study design.

### *Critical Qualitative Research*

Using a critical perspective in qualitative research propels the researcher to "identify, challenge and change the process by which a grossly iniquitous society uses dominant ideology

to convince people this is a normal state of affairs" (Brookfield, 2005, p. vii.). Given the context of this research in the political setting of social policy and adult education for the poor, a dominant ideology of accepted beliefs and practices exists to help people understand and make sense of their world.

> When it [dominant ideology] works effectively, it ensures that an unequal, racist, and sexist society is able to reproduce itself with minimal opposition. Its chief function is to convince people that the world is organized the way it is for the best of all reasons and that society works in the best interests of all. (pp. viii-ix)

As a researcher, I wanted to know more about the adult education program planning process in planning programs based on social policies for a population of people who are poor African American single mothers living in public housing communities. Using a critical theoretical perspective provided a framework that guided me in choosing the focus of the study, the development of research questions, and insight on data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The results will not only help to improve adult education practice but to challenge and change destructive social and political practices to make society a more just and democratic place to live.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) defined *qualitative research* as

> multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 2)

Qualitative research methods allow the researcher to "observe what others miss, listen when others talk, and ask questions who others might not think to raise" (Glesne & Peshkin,

1992, p. xii). Other characteristics affecting this choice were (a) the importance placed on human experiences through face-to-face interactions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), (b) design flexibility, and (c) the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Mertens, 1998). Working with the people who actually plan programs in their communities facilitates the best use of qualitative research. Understanding how these people view their practice and the process of planning in this political environment will enrich and challenge the traditional perspectives of program planning in the field of adult education.

I saw myself as an asset to this study from the perspective of an African American female adult educator working in the public housing industry. With that said, I realized that I must enter this research project with my assumptions on the table to avoid confusion concerning my epistemological and political “baggage” in an attempt to challenge the accepted appearances of what is true according to the dominant culture (Giroux, 1983a, 1983b, 1988; McLaren, 1997).

Qualitative research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding involves a systematic and purposeful method of uncovering realities constructed from people’s experiences and perceptions to inform and expand the knowledge base in the area under investigation (Merriam, 1988; Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Mertens, 1998). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), “The choice of using qualitative research method allows the researcher the opportunity to understand what lie behind any phenomenon about what little is yet known” (p. 19).

Even though the research on program planning has produced several planning models and theories to guide program development in adult education, none has come from the perspective of an African American adult educator and practitioner. The voice and perspective of African Americans has significance and will add to the adult education program planning knowledge base. Most African Americans acknowledge the presence of “racism reflected in individual

actions, educational curricula, teaching strategies as well as the practices of organizations" (Colin, 1994, p. 15) within the field of adult education and everyday life.

Another important feature of qualitative research that is conducive to furthering understanding of the phenomena under study is fieldwork. Fieldwork positions the researcher in the context of the particular setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). This adds to the richness of discovery because the researcher experiences first-hand how research subjects interact with their world based on their construction of reality. Correspondents of the *New York Times* (2001) who orchestrated a candid look at how race is lived in America spent months with their interviewees in their everyday life. The correspondents wanted to do more than just ask the right questions and record responses; they wanted to go deep and share with those whom they interviewed to understand race relations in the 21st century. As a result of their physical presence in the lives of those interviewed, the research findings corroborated the presence of racism in every aspect of daily lives, visible to most people of color and still invisible to others.

*Case Study Methods*

The case study method was chosen as a means of investigating this research interest. Merriam (1988) said that "a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 21). The most striking characteristic of the case study is its boundedness. A case study is bounded when there are specific, finite parameters within which the case is contained. Merriam and Simpson (1998) challenged researchers to test the boundedness of their cases by asking how finite the data collection would be in terms of the number of people who could be interviewed or the specific number of observations that could be conducted. Case studies have the following characteristics that add to their uniqueness as a research design: (a) particularistic: focus is on a particular event,

program, or phenomenon; (b) descriptive: complete literal, vivid, description of incident illustrates the complexities of a situation; (c) heuristic—expands the reader's understanding of the situation, adds meaning, and extends the reader's experience (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1988), and (d) inductive: the intent of discovering meaning with little previous knowledge (Merriam & Simpson, 1995).

This research study investigated the program planning process in developing welfare-to-work employment training programs at two housing authorities. Thick description provided information to understand what happens in the planning process within public housing authorities (PHA). The reader's understanding of how racism impacts the process will be enhanced as the study addresses the research questions The uniqueness of this study focuses on program planning in practical, everyday situations with stakeholders who negotiate their personal and organizational interests and exercise power throughout the process to plan programs for single female mothers living in public housing communities.

Stake (2000) did not consider the case study to be a methodology but a choice of what is to be studied. He defined a "case study by the interest in individual cases" (p. 435). Stake defined three types of case studies: (a) intrinsic: researcher wants better understanding of the particular case, (b) instrumental: a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization, and (c) collective: researcher jointly studies a number of cases in order to investigate the phenomenon. The focus of this instrumental case study is the program planning process to support and advance understanding of racism in the context of planning employment training programs for public housing residents.

Merriam and Simpson (1998) noted that "researchers interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing will choose the case study design" (p. 28). The case

study design provides a close look at the phenomena of program planning in a concrete and contextual manner. This design answers the how and why questions posed in this study. This design allowed in-depth analysis of how racism influences the program planning process in the development of employment training programs in public housing communities.

*Comparative Case Study Design*

A comparative case study design involves two or more case studies. Hakim (2000) offered two reasons for the appropriateness of multiple cases. The first reason has to do with the complexity of the topic. The second reason focuses on the quantity of people, organizations, and events that are the subject of the inquiry. Tisdell (1993) investigated how power relationships predominately based on gender but including race, class, and age were manifested in two university classes of adults, providing an example of the use of this design. Both studies focused on complex topics such as gender, class, and power issues.

Investigating the planning process becomes more complicated when one critically examines how race and racism influence what happens at the planning table. Racism has not been dealt with as one of the emergent factors in planning (Sork, 2000). Making the connection between whose interests are served or not served in the planning process challenges theoretical positions and practices developed by mostly White male adult educators. The context of this study—welfare employment training programs for low-income African American females living in public housing—depicts the realities of how race, class, and gender continue to influence attitudes and behaviors of those creating social policies and educational programs.

This study examined the planning processes of two public housing employment training programs. Each housing authority in itself is a case study. The research design allows for the extraction and analysis of similarities and differences not only in the context of the planning

process but also in understanding how the planners at the table negotiate their personal and professional agendas throughout the process toward a finished product. One of the most significant reasons for choosing two housing authorities, other than for a comparison of their development of employment training programs, was an interest in discovering how the race of the executive director influenced the planning process. The executive director of each housing authority provides leadership in the development of programs and services for that authority. The current study focused on two housing authorities whose executive directors were of different races: one an African American female and the other a White male. For each case study, the members of planning team, consisting of the executive director, lead planner, social services coordinator, a resident, and agency liaison, were interviewed.

*Design Strengths*

The comparative case study design can strengthen the external validity of results that can lead to decisions about generalizations from the case study research (Creswell, 2003; Mertens, 1998; Yin, 1994). Hakim (2000) agreed that confidence in generalizability of the results of a case study design increases with the number of cases covered. Sudman (as cited in Hakim) "noted that confidence in the general significance and robustness of research findings increase with the number of sites . . . the largest single gain occurs when the number of sites is increased from one to two" (p. 26).

People exposed to the study are the ones who will speculate how findings can be generalized to other settings (Merriam & Simpson, 1995), but the researcher's use of thick description and multisite design can "allow the results to be applied to a greater range of other situations" (p. 103). This is an important aspect of the research process; the adult education program planning knowledge base can be expanded through considerations of the results of the

study to address the question posed by Cervero and Wilson (1994a): What really matters in program planning?

Using the case study design increased the opportunity to discover more about the political and ethical processes of program planning through the use of detailed, rich information describing the negotiations of interests and power at the planning table. When educators, administrators, and others come together to plan employment training programs for public housing residents, there is much to be uncovered in a focus on the importance of who sits at the planning table and why they are there in the first place.

*Design Limitations*

There are limitations to the use of the case study design. In addition to the fact that case studies are expensive and time consuming, the researcher must exhibit skill in observation and interviewing techniques (Merriam & Simpson, 1995). These skills are normally developed over time when practiced on a regular basis. As the researcher in this study, I have had to develop these skills over the years in my career as a social worker working with low- to moderate-income families and the people who provide services to these families. The transferability of those skills from the work setting to the research setting is not difficult. One must always pay attention to what is going on and being said in order to assess the situation accurately and to understand the message that is presented.

Another identifiable weakness of the case study design is that the researcher is the collector of data and results can be strongly shaped by the interests and perspectives of the researcher (Hakim, 2000). My goal was to share my bias going into the study and to pay careful attention to my thoughts and feelings throughout the process in order to eliminate unnecessary tainting of the results by personal thoughts and views. This is crucial when discussing areas of

race, class, and gender inequities because of my personal experiences with discrimination in all of those areas. I sought to utilize those experiences as strength to the research process and not as a liability.

## Case Selection

This study examined the planning process in the development of welfare-to-work employment training programs in two PHAs in the state of Georgia. Nationally, there are 3,200 PHAs. The major goal of these quasigovernmental corporations is to provide safe affordable housing for low- to moderate-income families.

### *Background*

The goal of construction of public housing units during World War II was twofold: to provide employment and temporary housing for families in crisis. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) oversees housing concerns in the United States. HUD's mission is to increase home ownership, support community development, and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination. The federal government provides funding subsidies to these authorities to supplement rental income to maintain financial solvency. Congress and HUD provide federal regulations to ensure proper management of the 1.2 million public housing units. Families are required to pay 30% of their adjusted gross income for rent. Utility allowances are provided at some authorities and others require families pay their own utilities.

The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 provided regulations that changed how housing authorities conducted business. This legislation can be compared in magnitude to welfare reform. Housing authorities were required to establish local admission preferences, decide on a minimum rent, and institute flat or ceiling rents. In most areas, employment became the highest admission preference: A person who was employed would

move to the top of the waiting list. Persons formerly designated as “aero renters” (those who claim no income) would now have to pay a minimum amount ($25 to $50) for rent, regardless of their income status. The most beneficial change required authorities to offer ceiling or maximum rents. Renters who pay ceiling rent do not have their rent increased as they earn more money, thus allowing the family to save money to accomplish personal goals. In the state of Georgia, with 159 counties, there are 145 PHAs serving an estimated 42,083 families. The smallest authority in Georgia has 12 units; the largest authority has 20,000 units.

*William’s Housing Authority*

William’s Housing Authority, located in a south central Georgia county, has provided low- income families a viable housing option since 1938. The mission of the authority is to add value to the community and the lives of those whom it serves through quality housing, support services, and community development. The authority’s main office is located across from two public housing communities, several miles from the downtown area.

The two-story sandstone-color office building, constructed in 1988, provides office space for employees to serve families of the Housing Authority. One enters double glass doors that place visitors in the waiting room area. The waiting room is large, with comfortable brown chairs and soft lighting; an information desk accommodates staff to assist and direct visitors to the appropriate staff member. A security buzzer is activated to let visitors pass from the waiting area to the main parts of the building. Once inside, visitors are greeted with smiles and offers of assistance if they appear to be lost.

William’s Housing Authority has 2,384 Section 8 units and 2,079 public housing units, divided into 10 major communities and 11 scattered sites. Section 8 units are a part of the federal government’s voucher program that allows low-income families greater flexibility to live in

diverse neighborhoods. Public housing communities exist to provide safe housing with affordable rent (and sometimes utilities) based on 30% of a family's adjusted gross income. Of the 5,222 people living in this Authority, 97% are Black, with an average income of $6,478. Working families make up 34% of the population; only 14% of the families receive TANF.

William's Housing Authority employs 110 people assigned to seven departments: Housing Management, Housing Assistance, Technical Services, Resident Initiatives, Hope IV, Special Programs and Finance. Three of the seven departments (Housing Management, Resident Initiatives, and Hope IV) are headed by African Americans, one female and two males. The Executive Director has served in that capacity for 23 years. He is a White male who has been nationally recognized for several of his innovative programs at William's Housing Authority, including the Family Investment Center that is the focus of this study. The Family Investment Center provides comprehensive employment and services for public housing residents in William's Housing Authority. Local agencies have entered into partnerships with William's Housing Authority to provide programs and services.

*Jennifer's Housing Authority*

Jennifer's Housing Authority, located in a mid-Georgia county, was opened in 1949. Its mission is to provide safe, quality, cost-effective housing and growth opportunities by implementing fair, consistent, and accessible services. The one-story office building, renovated in 2000, is located within a public housing community. The receptionist readily greets visitors at the office door. The brightly colored waiting area with various offices offers a warm atmosphere enhanced by friendly staff ready to assist whoever walks in the door. This housing authority provides 550 public housing units for low- to moderate-income families within 10 communities. There is no Section 8 housing in this community. There are approximately 1,111 people living

within the aegis of the authority; 95% of the population is African American and 5% is White. The percentage of female heads of households is 63%. The average annual income of families living in the authority is $6,545; 35% of that income is generated from wages and 13% of the families receive TANF.

Jennifer's Housing Authority is under the leadership of its first African American female Executive Director. She served in the capacity of finance personnel manager for several years before being promoted to the position of Executive Director, in which capacity she has served for the past 14 years. She is well known in her community, usually on a first-name basis, as she works to bridge the gap between the authority and the residents. She manages a staff of 21 people in six departments: Admissions, Occupancy, Accounting, maintenance, Human Services, and Inventory Control. There are six African American department heads, including four females and two males. Among the many services and self-sufficiency programs, Jennifer's Housing Authority is most proud of its Certified Nursing Program (CAN). This program was the focus of the current study, examining the planning processes involved in its development.

## Sample Selection

The identification of the problem and purpose statement led to the selection of the sample for the study. The *sample* is defined as those from whom data will be collected (Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Mertens, 1998). Numerous sampling strategies are used in qualitative and quantitative research. The most widely used sampling strategy is purposeful sampling (Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Patton, 1990). "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 1998, p. 61).

The current study used a theoretical sampling strategy that allowed generalization of findings to “theoretical propositions rather than to populations or universes” (Bryman, 1992, p. 90). Mason (1996) described this sampling strategy in the following manner:

> Theoretical sampling means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions, your theoretical position . . . most importantly the explanation or account which you are developing. Theoretical sampling is concerned with constructing a sample . . . which is meaningful theoretically, because it builds in certain characteristics or criteria which help to develop and test your theory and explanation. (pp. 93-94)

The two housing authorities in Georgia chosen as sites for this research were chosen based on specific criteria: (a) housing authorities that had been in existence for 25 plus years and demonstrated longevity of service and an established presence in their local communities, (b) housing authorities whose mission statement was congruent with support services and programs for their families, (c) housing authorities with employees, particularly the department head level, who were racially representative of the families whom they served, (d) housing authorities who developed and sustained a welfare-to-work employment training program for a minimum of 4 years, and (e) housing authorities who used resident participation funds (mandated HUD funds to support resident initiatives) to support resident leadership and/or entrepreneurship activities.

The selection criteria for individual participants were: (a) an Executive Director who was European American, or African American with at least 10 years as the leader of that organization and who valued the involvement of residents in the decision-making process, (b) the person chosen by the authority to serve as the program leader for the planning process, (c) the human services staff person responsible for authority programs and services, (d) a business/organization

partner with interest in partnerships with the authority to develop training, and (e) a resident who serves as leader representative for a minimum of 1 year.

The Executive Director is a key position at the planning table because he or she provides administrative guidance and leadership to move the authority toward accomplishment of its goals and objectives. This was the only sample member purposely selected based on the race, in order to assure diversity in this characteristic. One Executive Director was an African American female (Jennifer's Housing Authority) and the other was a White male (William's Housing Authority). What does race mean in the context of this research? Human beings are distinguished by physical traits such as hair, eyes, skin color, body shape, and so forth, and traditionally seen as belonging to one of three primary divisions: Caucasoid, Negroid, or Mongoloid. Mertens (1998) suggested that "samples on the basis of race should be done with attention to within group variation and to the influence of the particular context" (p. 26). The racial make-up of the planning team was not purposeful and allowed for any combination of race/ethnic composition.

## Data Collection

Research data consist of facts, impressions, beliefs, and feelings related to the phenomena being studied (Merriam & Simpson, 1995). Qualitative research employs several methods of data collection. The three collection methods utilized in this comparative case study were interviews, observations, and document analysis. A unique characteristic in the data collection process is the role of the researcher, who is the primary data collection instrument that interacts with participants to gather data.

### *Interviews*

The most common method of data collection in case study research is the interview. The interview provides the researcher a mechanism "to gather data when the topic is complex . . . it

permits greater depth where the researcher can obtain information participants would reveal in no other way" (Merriam & Simpson, 1995, pp. 150-151). The face-to-face, one-on-one in-person interview allows the researcher control over the line of questioning and is a useful strategy when participants cannot be observed directly (Creswell, 2003; Merriam & Simpson, 1995).

According to Yin (2003), "The researcher must follow a line of inquiry and ask actual (conversational) questions in an unbiased manner that serves the needs of the line of inquiry" (p. 90). The use of nonthreatening open-ended questions also allows the researcher to obtain facts as well as the interviewees' opinions. This is crucial because the interview process allows access to that person's perspectives (Patton, 1990). At the same time it should be noted that interviews are limited in that they (a) provide filtered information through the perceived views of the interviewees, (b) may provide responses biased by the researcher, and (c) limit the information because people are not usually articulate and perceptive (Creswell, 2003).

Interviews can be classified into several categories: structured and unstructured, group and individual (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Mertens, 1998). Structured interviews provide a set interview pattern in which participants are asked the same questions in sequential order, leaving little room for flexibility in the way in which questions are presented. Fontana and Frey (2000) called for the interviewer to "play a neutral role, never interjecting his or her opinion of a respondent's answer" (p. 650). Using this method ensures precise, codeable data to explain behavior within pre-established categories. The unstructured interview looks at understanding "the complex behaviors of society without imposing any prior categorization that may limit the field inquiry" (p. 653).

Semistructured interviews were conducted with the research participants in this study. The interviews were conducted at each housing authority with a pre-arranged appointment to

interview each participant. We met in the Authority's board room, which was comfortable and private. Interviews lasted 1.5 to 2.5 hours. Each interview was taped. As the researcher, I took additional notes describing facial expressions and other body language to enhance comments made by participants. All interviews were transcribed. In cases where it was not clear what was said or the meaning was questionable, I contacted the interviewee for clarification. A series of open-ended questions was used to gain the views and opinions of the participants about their involvement in and perception of the program planning process. The interview style included carefully structured open-ended questions, close listening to responses, and probing follow-up questions provided a wealth of information from the participants, based on a demonstration of skilled interviewing techniques provided by Professor DeMarras of the University of Georgia.

Another important decision that I made was how I would present myself to participants. Because I work in the public housing industry as an adult educator and social worker, I had to choose whether to assume an academic role in studying the planning process and the influence of racism or to assume the role of conducting educational research. Fontana and Frey (2000) noted that "this decision is very important, because once the interviewer's presentational self is 'cast,' it leaves a profound impression on the respondents and has great influence over the success (or lack of it) of the study" (p. 655). I decided that presenting myself as an academic specialist who was researching the program planning process would allow greater flexibility to design an interview guide that utilized my knowledge of the larger picture of public housing welfare-to-work employment training programs.

*Observations*

Observations of people in their world in conjunction with other data collection methods is valuable to the collection process because it illuminates information about people's behavior of

which they are unaware and/or which they might not recall from the past (Merriam & Simpson, 1995). This form of data collection allows the researcher first-hand experience with participants. Information is recorded as it is revealed and allows the researcher to notice and record any unusual aspects of people's behavior (Creswell, 2003). My familiarity with the public housing and the program planning process enhanced my sensitivity to understanding the behaviors of participants in this research study.

In planning the most effective observational experience, I considered what to observe and how to conduct observations to provide data for the research study. Gaining entry into William's Housing Authority and Jennifer's Housing Authority was not problematic because I had visited these authorities on business several times prior to the study.

Even though I had previous knowledge about the setting, the housing authorities, and the people in those authorities, I entered their domain to observe their interactions as a researcher with a data-collecting agenda. What should be observed? The most obvious answer was the planning process, since the research questions were situated at the planning table. The concern was that the programs examined for this study had already been planned. The interview process enlightened me on the planning process retrospectively. The observations of the housing authorities' work environment and the ongoing planning activities provide a holistic picture to glean critical information to support interview data analysis.

The observation of the Authority work environments began upon entering the building. I had to wait for approximately 15 to 20 minutes before moving to the board room. During this time I observed the people who came to the Authority to pay rent, complete applications, attend conferences, and so on. I noticed how people were treated by staff and formulated a rationale for

what I would say. One Authority had a security system where people entering the building had to be buzzed in.

I also observed the daily routine of program operations. These observations lasted approximately 1 to 2 hours. After touring the facility, where I had the opportunity to see adult learners participate in learning activities, I sat back to observe those coming and going during this time. Participants were focused and excited about their learning experiences. They were glad to share information and thoughts about the program.

I read and talked with key people about their thoughts and involvement with employment training programs. I wanted to see what these programs were like on any given day. As I conducted my observations, I was concerned with people and their roles and the types of interactions with other staff, residents who utilize the program, and community partners. I observed routine activities in the housing authorities from the perspective of a researcher coming to collect observational data for a study. Becoming comfortable with what to observe and recording those observations and thoughts is a special skill that is not developed overnight. I realized that in my personal and professional life I am not always paying attention to my actions but I move along, doing what needs to be done when it is time to do so.

*Documents*

The third form of data collection was document analysis. The terms *documents* and *records* are sometimes used synonymously but there are differences worth noting, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985). Documents are items prepared for personal reasons (e.g., memos, letters, and field notes). In the context of this research, documents included minutes and agendas of planning meetings, applications for grant funding, and other sources. Documents of interest in

this study were approval of funding requests, quarterly reports to the HUD regarding finances and program progress, and participants' case files.

Documents are important to the research process because they give the background of a situation and insights that would not be otherwise not be available (Mertens, 1998). This was particularly true in the current study. To understand how these employment training programs were developed, I reviewed grant applications, minutes of meetings, and other materials to support the interview data collected from those who had been at the planning table.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis "involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense out of what you have learned" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 127). The analytic process takes place throughout the collection of data so that findings emerge from the data to address the purpose of the research and to answer research questions. To shape the study as it progresses, analysis of the data is done simultaneously with data collection. Organization skills are useful as the researcher manages the data collection. This involves memo writing, creating analytical files, applying coding schemes, and writing monthly reports to learn from and manage the information received. *Coding* is a progressive process of sorting and defining and sorting observation notes, interview transcripts, memo, documents, and notes from relevant literature that are applicable to the research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Yin (2003) urged the researcher to have an analytic strategy that "will help you treat the evidence fairly, produce compelling analytic conclusions, and rule out alternative interpretations" (p. 111). "Much depends on the investigator's own style of rigorous thinking, along with the sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternate interpretations" (p. 110). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the researcher speaks to the

nonlinear nature of analysis as he/she moves back and forth in the analytical process to reach appropriate conclusions.

Yin (1994, 2008) contended that, whatever strategy is used to analyze data, four principles underlie all good social science research. First, analysis confirms that the researcher attended to all the evidence without leaving loose ends. Second, analysis should address whether possible all major rival interpretations. This point was important point in the current analysis strategy; the discussion of race and racism will always generate an interpretation difference because some people believe that racism does not exist as it did hundreds of years ago and contend that current society is color blind. Third, analysis strategy should address the most significant aspect of the case study to prevent the appearance of avoiding the main issue because of potentially negative findings. Fourth, the researcher should use prior expert knowledge in analysis of the data. Demonstrating "awareness of current thinking and discourse about the case topic" is useful and supportive to addressing research purpose (Yin, 2003, p. 137). My years of experience in the housing industry and as an adult educator were significant factors in conducting the research by applying the constant comparative analysis method.

## Constant Comparative Method

The constant comparative method of data analysis, developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990), allows the researcher to move "back and forth with the data, analyzing and then collecting more data, and then analyzing some more" (Mertens, 1998, p. 352). Even though this method of analysis is used with Glasser and Strauss's grounded theory methodology, it is an accepted method in other areas of qualitative research where theory building is not the main focus. As the name implies, the constant comparative method "is to compare one unit of information with the next in looking for recurring regularities in the data"

(Merriam, 1998, p. 180). Strauss and Corbin provided a three-step analytical process that involves open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

*Open coding.* The researcher closely examines all data collected via observations, interviews, and document review. A "'data bit' is a meaningful (or potentially meaningful) segment of the data" (Merriam, 1998, p. 179). By asking who, what, when, where, and how questions about the data, codes are assigned. Coding each incident into tentative categories prepares the researcher for the next step in the analytic process. During this time, the researcher also records insights that occur during the initial open coding. As data were collected in the present study, I read the data from each source and assigned codes to meaningful bits of data. To do this effectively, I referred back to the research questions to maintain a focus on what I was looking for and how best to assign the appropriate code.

*Axial coding.* "The researcher puts the parts of the data identified and separated in open coding back together to make the connections between categories" (Mertens, 1998, p. 352). Creswell (1998), who also used the term *axial coding,* explained how the researcher rearranges the data based on the code assigned. From this point codes are regrouped according to themes into larger categories. Mertens, in describing Strauss and Corbin's analytical process, described this phase as crucial in the building of a model of the phenomena in which the researcher questions the data to focus on relationships between categories. Strauss and Corbin (1990) described it as a "constant interplay between proposing and checking" (p. 111). When the researcher's interest is in analysis or concept development, the analysis is completed at the end of this step.

*Selective coding.* The next step in the analytical process involves selecting one main core category and relating the other categories to it (Mertens, 1998). I experienced difficulty in the

identification of a core category but eventually refined the analysis to relate categories to the core. The analytical process was not difficult so long as I continued to understand and refine the process so that data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. This required focus and patience. Computer software was not used to assist in the analysis process; a hands-on method of analysis was used as I creatively color-coded categories and themes and used note cards to capture the analysis on paper. This approach was much more personal and kept me involved with the data.

## Validity

Validity is seen as a strength of qualitative research where the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Internal validity "deals with the question of how research findings match reality" (Merriam, 1988, p. 201). Merriam explained that, because the researcher is the main instrument of data collection, qualitative research is valid. The other form of validity is external in nature, relating to the "extent [to which ] the findings of one study can be applied to other situations" (p. 207). To increase the validity of the research, the following methods (Creswell, 2003, pp. 195-196) were used. *Triangulation* involved coordination of three data collection sources to build a coherent justification for themes: observations of employment training programs, participants' interviews, and documents from the housing authorities. *Member checks* were used to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings by taking the final report or specific description or themes back to participants and determining their accuracy according to the participants. *Rich, thick description* was achieved through use of thick descriptive language to transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences; it was important to bring the interviewees to life because they played such a vital role in the research.

The *researcher's bias* on issues related to the research problem, the purpose of the study, and the eventual recommendations presented at the conclusion of the study was clarified through self-reflection in an effort to create an open and honest narrative. *Negative or discrepant information* that ran counter to the emergent themes was acknowledged and discussed, in recognition of the fact that different perspectives do not always coalesce. *Peer debriefing* was recognized as an influence on validity and was used to clarify the researcher's reflections on the research process; peers challenged my thinking and perceptions so that I could articulate sometimes uncomfortable feelings. Finally, a *multisite design* with rich, thick description of the two cases increased external validity or generalizability of the study data.

## Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research addresses the issue of whether the study can be replicated to reproduce the findings. Considering the boundedness of case study research, replication of all parts of a study may not be possible. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that the concept of reliability through the positivistic concept does not account for the factors of instability and change. Dependability is seen as a better concept to use, as it places emphasis on ensuring that findings are consistent and dependable. Merriam (1998) recommended that the researcher be clear about personal positions, use triangulation, and keep an audit trail.

I kept an audit journal to record data collection, analysis, thoughts, and recommendations. "In order for an audit trail to take place, the researcher must describe in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how discussions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam, 1988, p. 172). The audit trail allowed documented changes that occurred during the research and provided supporting data for interpretations and conclusions (Mertens, 1998). Schwandt and Halpern (1988, as cited in Mertens, 1998, p. 354) suggested the following

questions, which I used as a guide in constructing the audit trail: (a) Are findings grounded in the data? (b) are inferences logical? (c) is the category structure appropriate? (d) what is the researcher's bias? and (e) what strategies were used for increasing credibility? I was surprised by entries concerning my reactions to racism that I read about throughout the research experience and those that I experienced first hand.

## The Role of the Researcher and Researcher Bias

The researcher is the instrument for data collections in qualitative research. The role of researcher as primary data collection instrument necessities identification of personal values, assumptions, and bias at the onset of study (Creswell, 2003; Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Mertens, 1998). Biases shape the way in which data are collected, viewed, and understood. The researcher's interpretations of experiences require that the researcher respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of others as data are collected and analyzed through interviews, observations, and document review.

Conducting this research was very important to me personally and professionally. I have worked with low- to moderate-income families in the public housing industry as an educator and social worker. These public housing families are always affected by social policies such as welfare reform and housing. I have seen first-hand the struggle to survive, not just on welfare but as working people who work more than one job just to make ends meet. Just because these families have public housing addresses, the children and youth are stigmatized at school and their parents are mistreated by the very agencies that were created to assist them.

During the early years of welfare reform I was involved with planning a program for welfare recipients to give them job skills through training. The local technical college provided a staff person to be a member of the planning team. This experience helped me to realize the

negotiation of interest and power in constructing programs. With a White male Executive Director and a White female technical representative, I began to see how race was on the table. The program was developed and implemented but it was not successful. When I expressed concerns about program management and the cost of the program compared to results, I was told it was "no big deal, we can always find a new program provider." I could not help but reply, "Our families deserve to be treated better than that."

Most people exclaim with all certainty that education and employment are guarantors of success to achieve personal goals, including the so-called American dream. I strongly disagree with that belief because it does not apply to everyone. I consider myself an educated, middle-class African American female whose career has allowed me to be self-sufficient during 33 years of employment in the human services and adult education fields. Yet, I frequently encounter racism and sexism in my job, where I am the only African American female department head, and in everyday life. Sheared (1998), who was on welfare before receiving a doctorate in adult education, said, "Even a master's degree and a well-developed work ethic did not shield me from the pains of marginalization" (p. 8). I resonate with Sheared's feelings.

One of the most empowering revelations came to me as I pondered how to approach this research with racism as an issue. I did not have to prove that racism existed. All that I read by noted professionals and my own personal experiences supported the fact that racism exists and is not going away soon (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Sheared, 1998).

Based on the recommendations of committee members at the prospectus defense, I decided not to focus this study squarely on racism. Instead, the focus was to investigate the program planning process concerning the development of employment training programs. The title of the study changed, as did the interview questions. Race and racism were not addressed in

the interview guide. When the topic arose naturally in the interviews, I probed appropriately to understand the person's perspective. I demonstrated restraint when interviewees' perspectives on social inequities did not agree with my own. Thus, the issue of racism was not a targeted focus of the study but surfaced throughout the research process.

As a housing authority staff member completing research with peers, I was mindful of my role as a researcher and an insider. I was careful not to draw conclusions prematurely or to let my bias stemming from insider knowledge of key staff people influence data collection or analysis. There was a distinct contrast between my understanding of comments made by African American program planners and restraint of my emotions when interviewing some of the White planners. Acknowledging these feelings and reactions to what I heard and saw provided valuable insight that has contributed to my personal and professional growth.

As an African American woman who lived in public housing as a child and as a college graduate, I experienced first-hand the stigma associated with living in the public housing after college graduation when I could not get a job. The sting of inequality because of my race and gender and my inexperience with the real world of work left me devastated. Later in my work career, I came to understand that, regardless of how I saw myself—a highly educated, successful, strong willed, resourceful, and courageous Black woman—I was treated by White males in my industry as less capable and knowledgeable in my field of practice. My passion for naming and pursuing this dissertation was to show others how to maintain dignity and courage while living in a racialized society that discriminates based on race, class, and gender.

I see people in my daily work (welfare recipients and working people) who struggle to make ends meet, only to have the government fail miserably in providing equal opportunities for minorities, women, and socioeconomically deprived people. "Go to work" is the cry in

Washington and in local and state human services offices. But the working single mother may still have to decide whether to pay rent or purchase food.

Paying attention to my practice of adult education in public housing revealed my set of values and assumptions about the people with whom I work. I value people's right to be involved in areas that impact their lives. They are stakeholders who should be treated with respect as assets, not liabilities, in solving problems in society.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the methodology for this study. I used a critical qualitative methodology with a comparative case study design. The two housing authorities make up one case. Both authorities are examined separately and then comparatively analyzed. My main sources of data were semistructured interviews, observations, and documents. Confidentiality was maintained as tapes were transcribed and locked away securely. To increase the validity of the research to build a coherent justification of the themes, I used observations, documents, and interviews. Member checks were used to determine the accuracy of interview data. I also asked African American female public housing adult learners who were participating or had participated in a training program for their impressions to give an insider's perspective.

The theoretical lens used to shape the investigation of understanding how racism influences the program planning process in the development of welfare-to-work employment training programs for public housing residents focused on three areas: critical theory, critical race theory, and the ideology of blaming the poor. Critical theory disrupts and challenges the status quo (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). This research challenges the lack of acknowledgement and understanding of how racism influences the program planning process in which welfare recipients, not the system that controls their circumstances, are blamed for their circumstances.

> Racism is as healthy today as it was during the Enlightenment. It seems that it has a utility far beyond economy, beyond the sequestering of classes from one another, and has assumed a metaphorical life so completely embedded in daily discourse that it is perhaps more necessary and more on display than ever before. (Morrison, 1992, p. 63)

According to Rothmayr (1999), "Critical race theory . . . puts race at the center of critical analysis" (p. 1). Ryan (1976) challenged the mindset of those who blame poor people for their poverty. These perspectives open new doors to understanding the prevalence of racism in society.

# CHAPTER 4

## PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of this study was to understand how power relations shaped welfare-to-work employment training programs for African American public housing residents. The following questions guided this study:

1. How do relationships of power shape whose interests are represented in the planning process?

2. How are stakeholders' interests expressed in specific features of the training program?

3. How are stakeholders' power and interests reflected in program outcomes?

A qualitative comparative case study design was used to address these research questions. Fifteen people within two PHAs who were involved in the planning and implementation of welfare-to-work programs for African American public housing residents were interviewed for 1.5 to 2.5 hours each via semistructured interview format in June, July, and August 2004. Fourteen interviews were conducted face to face in the housing authorities' conference rooms and other work environment spaces, and one interview was conducted by telephone. The in-depth interviews were transcribed. Participant observations were conducted, including applicable field notes, and documents from both authorities were reviewed. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: geographical location, type of involvement, and role as a stakeholder in the authority's program planning process.

This chapter presents individual profiles of participants. The participants selected pseudonyms to protect their identity and ensure confidentiality. Along with the participant's

profile, a synopsis about the interviewee and information from comments are provided to describe the person and his or her interests and power as a planning participant.

## The Case: An Explanation of the Housing Authority and Other Government Entities

Housing authorities nationwide are quasigovernmental entities with organizational relationships with the U.S. Congress, the supreme legislature body whose actions impact the administration of HUD and local PHAs. The PHAs maintain a working relationship with the Department while building alliances with local community agencies, organizations, and business (herein referred to as agencies) to provide resources for their authorities and residents.

Specific relationships involve each authority's appointed Board of Commissioners, the Executive Director who is hired by the Board of Commissioners, the staff hired by the Executive Director, and residents who qualify to live in public housing communities. This study focused on the power struggles that exist in these stakeholders' relationships in order to understand whose interests shape the development of welfare-to-work employment training programs from the national to local levels.

### *The 2007 Congress and HUD*

The 110th Congress has 540 elected officials from 50 states, four territories, and the District of Columbia. The House of Representatives has 435 members and 5 nonvoting delegates; the Senate has 100 members. In a male-dominated environment, males constitute 83.7% of Congressional membership. There are 16 female Senators and 74 female Representatives. As of 2007, the U.S. ranked 68th in the world in terms of women holding office in the legislature. African Americans' presence is 1% in the Senate and 9.2% in the House. These elected officials possess postsecondary degrees in law (56 in the Senate), business,

medicine, and social work. Although elected leaders represent people from all classes, poor people have no physical representation in Congress because they have no position, power, or wealth.

Analysis of Congressional demographics reveals the extent to which Congress mirrors (or fails to mirror) the American society. The demographics show that the U.S. government is run by educated White men with middle- to upper-class backgrounds. They sit in positions of power on various committees (planning tables) to construct legislation that impacts the lives of U.S. citizens. This hierarchical paternal social structure produces legislative mandates that direct how the rest of society navigates through the bureaucracy on a day-to-day basis. The decisions of Congressional legislators impact federal housing organizations such as HUD and local PHAs that serve low-income families.

*HUD and PHAs*

HUD is a regulatory body of the Federal Government that provides legislative regulations governing the housing industry and financial subsidy to housing authorities. The mandated relationship between HUD and PHAs is asymmetrical in structure, creating a contentious power struggle among the organizations. In this relational struggle between HUD and housing authorities, HUD's power is backed by Congressional legislation that regulates program administration, including funding allocations, to meet the housing needs of low-income families. For instance, public housing rent is calculated based on 30% of adjusted total gross income per household. Therefore, housing authorities cannot raise rents to generate additional income, as is done in the private sector, without a change in Congressional law.

Even though housing authority Executive Directors and Board members routinely lobby Congress and HUD for more money and administrative flexibility (negotiation of interests), the

relationship between HUD and the authorities is authoritative in nature. One of the greatest examples of HUD's authoritative power over housing authorities is the funding allocation, which impacts programs and services. Congress, with HUD's, input approves the funding level at which the housing authorities are provided federal subsidy dollars to operate. In the 1990s these authorities were funded at an average of 93% to 100%. Over the next decade funding levels decreased steadily. In 2007 PHAs must meet the housing needs of families and maintain an aging housing stock on a funding subsidy of approximately 85%. To complicate funding matters even more, in 2007 HUD required the authorities to change their management structure without providing increased monetary subsidy to accommodate the mandated changes.

To understand the phenomenon of program planning within local PHAs, the relationship analysis begins on the national level, with federal government agencies as major stakeholders. Even though these agencies are not physically present at the local planning level, their power and interests significantly influence the planning process.

*Housing Authority Board of Commissioners and Executive Director*

A PHA's Board of Commissioners—a group of citizens appointed locally by the mayor—is responsible to set policy for the Authority. This board is made up of seven people from various backgrounds and positions of power with an interest in housing needs of low- to moderate-income families. As a result of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA) of 1998, PHAs were mandated to include a Resident Commissioner with full voting rights on their Board of Commissioners. Before this mandate, residents were totally excluded or included only in a limited advisory role but had no real (voting) power to influence Board decisions. This inclusion provides the Resident Commissioner with positional power and voice to serve in a decision-making capacity.

The Board approves the involvement of the authority in partnership agreements based on recommendations from the Executive Director. The Board understands and supports all efforts to hold partnerships with other agencies to extend the provision of programs and services to public housing families. The Executive Director's relationship with the Board of Commissioners is very important.

The two PHAs in this study had predominately White male board membership. The Board of Commissioners and the Executive Director are powerful stakeholders who engage in power struggles to determine whose interests matter. The Board's decision-making power controls the allocation of funds and authority resources to develop, implement, and sustain programs and services such as welfare-to-work employment training programs. Therefore, power is exercised in a racialized context.

## The Participants

Fifteen participants ranging in age from 20 to 80 years old comprised the sample. These participants represented the five groups of people whose interests always matter in the program planning process: learner, teacher, planner, institutional leader, and affected public. Of the 15 participants, 2 were Executive Directors of the housing authority (institutional leaders), 2 were planners (planners), 2 were instructors (teachers), 2 were board members (institutional leaders), 2 were agency partners (affected public), 2 were resident participants (learners), and 3 were resident leaders (affected public). The level of education for interviewees ranged from some high school to master's degrees. The length of time as a Housing Authority staff member, resident, or agency partner range from 4 to 38 years. The sample included 11 females and 4 males; 12 African Americans (Black) and 3 Caucasians (White); 9 were ages 33-56 years, 1 age 21-32

years, and 5 age 57 years or older; 9 were college graduates, 3 high school graduates, and 3 with some college experience. Table 4 identifies each participant in Jennifer's Housing Authority.

Table 4

*Participant Demographics: Jennifer's Housing Authority*

| Pseudonym | Age range | Race | Gender | Position | Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jennifer | 45-56 | Black | Female | Executive Director | Bachelor |
| Susan | 33-44 | Black | Female | Planner | Bachelor |
| Lila | 45-56 | Black | Female | Teacher | Bachelor |
| Tasha | 21-32 | Black | Female | Participant | High school |
| Margaret | 45-56 | White | Female | Agency Partner | Some college |
| Raymond | 33-44 | Black | Male | Resident Leader | High school |
| Robert | 57+ | Black | Male | Board Member | Master |

*Jennifer*

Jennifer, age 47, is an African American female with a medium-build figure and brown curly hair neatly styled for a polished, professional look. She displays a warm smile and a sweet, gentle personality. She has worked at the authority for 24 years. Her office is decorated with pictures of family and housing authority accomplishments. Jennifer was the first African American person to work in the administrative office of the authority's Admissions Department. When her supervisor left, Jennifer was promoted to the supervisory position. She recalled a serious problem with that promotion.

> The pay for that position, I knew what it was and at first intent he [White male Executive Director] was not going to pay me at that level. I've never been a quiet person! . . . So I did talk with him about the salary for that position. And I was given that salary.

Under the second White male Executive Director, Jennifer was promoted to the Accounting Department and after that was named Assistant Executive Director. Jennifer served as interim Executive Director when the Director left. She was given all authority to act as Executive Director. During the search for an Executive Director the Board of Commissioners for the authority did not automatically promote her to the position of Executive Director, so she had to apply with all other candidates. Remembering the frustration, Jennifer commented, "I felt I was doing a great job. I kept the company on track and progressing well—you know all those feelings that come in: 'Why can't you give me a chance first before doing this?'" After going through the process, she was selected as the first African American Executive Director. Jennifer described that moment as one of pride, personally and professionally.

> That made me feel better in the end because I know I earned it. No one really gave me . . . . In a way, at first, I was kind of downhearted when I had been doing the job to not be actually promoted to that job.

Jennifer once again faced a discrepancy in salary. She commented, "I was not paid according to the position." Not only was salary an issue, but the Board micromanaged the authority as if they did not have a competent Executive Director. The expression on her face as she described the incident reflected painful memories. "I was asked to do a lot of things that I should not have been asked to do." The situation was resolved after the departure of the Board chairperson.

Jennifer's housing authority has an outstanding reputation both locally and statewide. She is known as a very confident, compassionate, genuine leader who has demonstrated willingness to carry out the mission of her authority and commitment to residents despite the challenges that she encounters. Jennifer is careful to remember her struggles in growing up and appears to be respectful of her role as Executive Director. Jennifer recalled the advantages of a supportive family with expectations of success for herself and siblings.

> My mother's family always made sure we had what we needed and that we had an opportunity to see things other children might not have. We had a chance to travel and to go to a good college. And when I look at other children the ones around me [public housing communities], I want them to have the same benefit. I don't want them to think that public housing is all that exists. I want to make a difference, and over the years I know I have.

*Susan*

Susan was interviewed by telephone because she is no longer employed at the authority. During her 9 years as Resident Services Coordinator, Susan was a very compassionate, vibrant person who worked very hard to make that sure residents had quality programs to enhance their moving up and out of public housing. Susan is a slim African American woman with a determined spirit. She said that she always saw the good in any situation without succumbing to the negative realities. Some would say that she did too much for the residents; however, throughout the interview I understood her desire to level the playing field so that residents had the opportunity to be in charge of their lives.

She described her job this way: "What I primarily did was help residents become self-sufficient. Trying to knock out all of the obstacles that would stop them from succeeding and

give them a full opportunity to reach for the stars." She shared a story of her efforts in a homeownership program that met with resistance from her neighbors:

> I remember one time in the community where I lived, we were trying to get low income families qualified for homes in the neighborhood I lived in. And the people in the neighborhood I lived in actually felt that to let people that lived in public housing come into the community would bring down the value of their homes. . . . Just because you live in public housing doesn't mean that you are a rat, you know what I mean? It doesn't mean that you're less than anybody else. I had to speak at a couple of meetings to bring them back to reality. I don't understand how they can think that people in housing are different than themselves.

Susan also spent time educating the agencies about public housing families before and during the program planning process. She commented, "In order to open doors, you have to bring in the community to let them know that the people we serve are trainable and responsible and want the same things out of life that they do for their families."

During the planning process and implementation of programs, Susan coped with the competing interests of those involved in the planning. She realized that everyone who wanted to be a part of the planning came with organizational and personal agendas. Negotiating among planners was necessary but stressful. One agency representative was a part of the process to provide employment for training but Susan knew from personal interactions with this person that the person was not helping residents find employment.

> What I found to be true and to be a real problem is that the agency looked down on the residents of housing. This is a clique-ish kind of town. It's not *what* you know, it's really *who* you know. And this agency will take numbers from anybody if you give them to

> them. So long as their books look right, they really don't have to do what they are supposed to do. And that really was a problem. They should have been held accountable and if it would have been up to me they would have been accountable.

Susan remains passionate about her work at the authority. She learned how to work with all kinds of people; more important, she never sacrificed what really mattered to her—making sure residents received the best program opportunities available to move them toward self-sufficiency.

*Lila*

Lila, a business owner, entered into a partnership with the Housing Authority as a training site where qualified residents attend classes and receive hands-on training to become licensed cosmetologists. She is a tall, thin woman with great energy. The interview took place at her place of business. Besides being the owner, Lila described herself as "student recruiter, trainer and instructor." She conducted a tour of the training facility while she shared the joys and struggles encountered to build her business. She spoke highly of the partnership with the housing authority.

> This is my first time working with the housing authority, which has been a very, very good experience, a very enlightening experience. They worked to find a way to meet any person's need. . . . There wasn't a need that wasn't met, all the way down to transportation.

As an instructor, Lila noticed that, even though students coming to her program had a high school diploma, their reading and comprehension skills were inadequate. This problem would have to be addressed to prepare students to take the state licensing examination. Lila

commented, “I feel that some of them need more reading skills. And that’s why we had another instructor to deal with just doing that, with the reading and comprehension.”

Lila uses her theological counseling background to help students to cope with personal issues that usually impacted their training experience. She listens to them and shares personal challenges and how she was able to overcome them to accomplish her goals. One of her most rewarding experiences is to have students who have earned their licenses and become employed to come back to share their accomplishments. They remember the discussions and tidbits of advice that Lila shared with them that led them to thrive in the work environment.

*Tasha*

Tasha, a 20-year-old resident, completed the employment training program at her authority. On the day of the interview this quiet, petite African American woman had just received news that she had passed the state licensing examination. She was very excited about her accomplishment and what that meant for her future. She shared that she had had to stay focused to complete the program. Even though the course was designed to take 9 months to 1 year to complete, she had needed a year and a half to finish. “I could not work while I was in class because I had to focus on school. So, it was really hard. It was hard on me. It might be easier for other people but I had to concentrate.”

Tasha had not been an active participant in the program planning process. She had attended only one resident meeting, so she was unaware of the resident association and the opportunities being offered by the housing authority. Having lived in public housing for 3 years, she had been encouraged by family members to take advantage of the cosmetology training opportunity offered by the housing authority.

> My mother stayed in housing for a long time, and while she was there, she got a child care license. But my aunt, who also stays in housing, knew that I wanted to do cosmetology, so she brought me the letter and I contacted them.

After her positive experience, Tasha planned to encourage other residents to take advantage of educational and training and leadership opportunities offered by the housing authority.

*Margaret*

Margaret, a White female with 11 years experience at the local Technical College, is a vital partner with the housing authority as they seek ways to provide education and training opportunities to public housing residents. Margaret coordinates programs for the housing authority on and off the Technical College's campus. Most of the employment training programs with this authority have been made possible through the support and commitment of the Technical College. Margaret's comments during the interview showed her to be a very knowledgeable, thorough, practical program planner who enjoys the working relationship with the housing authority. "Our work is fun. We enjoy what we do, and if we can change just a few of the lives along the way that's what it's all about. And we can and we get success stories so that's what makes it worth it."

The transcription of this interview with Margaret showed how often she referred to the residents in a nonpersonal manner. She consistently used words such as "them," "they," and especially "those people" when talking about residents who participate in training and educational programs. The planning process for these programs normally involved the school's Vice President of Instruction, the housing authority's Executive Director, housing staff, and Margaret. When asked about the involvement of the residents in the process, she replied, "I don't think we ever did let them have much of a say-so. This was what was offered and that was what

we could do at the Technical School." Margaret was an excellent agency partner but it seems that she made sure that organizational interests were realized in the planning of educational programs.

*Raymond*

Raymond is a African American male who has lived in public housing with his wife for several years. He spent time in the military and is disabled. He is a very active member of the Resident Association, where he serves as president of the organization. Raymond is very proud of his working relationship with housing staff and with residents. Besides the monthly Resident Council meeting, Raymond informs residents about programs and issues of concern. "I get with the main office and find out what they have to offer and then I notify the residents, by flyer or seeing them door to door or telling them at the Resident Council meeting."

Raymond takes his role as a resident leader and representative very seriously. He is involved in helping residents to find jobs and services that meet their needs. He applies his extensive free time wisely, using the Internet and his contacts at various hospitals and health care facilities to discover job openings for residents. Throughout the interview he referred to his ability to motivate and encourage residents to be the best that they can be.

> We don't want residents just to come here and get affordable housing and just sit, like a fixture in a house. But to let them know we care; second, to let them know that they can do better than what they are doing now. And just because you're limited in the flow of money, that doesn't stop you. You can keep right on going to reach the top, reach whatever goal you want.

Raymond was very knowledgeable about the training opportunities offered by the housing authority. He shared pertinent information about program structure and participation by

residents. Although it appears that he is a “Lone Ranger” on a quest to improve the quality of life for residents, Raymond is dedicated and shows a sincere desire to work with all who are involved in the planning process.

*Robert*

Robert is an African American male who has retired from the military and now serves on the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. He is of short stature, displaying a reserved personality. Robert is an unofficial liaison between the Housing Authority and the Technical College. His duties at the Technical College involves supervising all standardized testing, and he provides career counseling to students. As a public housing resident in his youth, Robert is aware of the stigma associated with living in subsidized housing. He supports employment training programs as a way to fulfill the goal of public housing as a hand up, not a handout.

> I think it is important that you provide these trainings and education so that residents can move from one economic level to another. Because once a person has lived there and got their feet on the ground, so to speak, I think they can just move over and let somebody move into that spot.

Robert commended the Executive Director for working so diligently with agencies and organizations to meet the needs of their residents.

Table 5 identifies each participant in William’s Housing Authority.

*William*

William is a 58-year-old White male of large stature with light grayish hair, a hearty laugh, and an outgoing personality. He has worked in the housing industry for 38 years. William started as a management intern for HUD. He describes himself as “a small town Southern Protestant Christian and pretty conservative.” William commented that, after the first year in the

Table 5

*Participant Demographics: William's Housing Authority*

| Pseudonym | Age range | Race | Gender | Position | Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| William | 57+ | White | Male | Executive Director | Master |
| Marie | 45-56 | Black | Female | Planner | Bachelor |
| Alice | 33-44 | Black | Female | Teacher | Master |
| Natalie | 33-44 | Black | Female | Participant | Bachelor |
| Mary | 57+ | Black | Female | Resident Leader | High school[a] |
| Susie | 57+ | White | Female | Resident Leader | High school |
| Milton | 45-56 | Black | Male | Agency Partner | Bachelor |
| Patricia | 57+ | Black | Female | Board Member | Some college |

[a]Some high school, did not graduate.

internship, "I persuaded my boss to recruit me into a permanent job assignment." He discovered that one had little chance of making real changes in the housing industry inside the federal bureaucracy, so he made the decision to go to a local housing authority. William strategically used his experiences at the HUD office to advance to a local housing position. "I conned my way into a situation. . . . I left HUD for 2½ years to work as Director of Management Operations with a housing authority." Within a few years William moved into the Executive Director's position at that authority. He accepted the Executive Director's position at his current authority after he convinced the board of commissioners that he "fit the profile" of what they wanted in an Executive Director.

As Executive Director, William garnered the support of his board, staff, and residents to make meaningful changes in the housing industry locally and nationally. He became a proponent

for national legislative changes to housing social policy to improve the quality of life for public housing families nationwide. William co-authored a proposed legislative change that was presented to Congress on several occasions.

> I became fairly heavily involved in the national legislative scene. Especially with a mind toward trying to reform the public housing system—the public housing rent system in particular—to reduce or eliminate the negative incentives to employment that are so damaging to families that live in our neighborhoods.

Instead of moving to another housing authority, William decided to remain as executive director and accept the challenges at his current authority to continue his campaign to make lasting changes.

> I spent most of the last 10 years—especially the last 7 or 8—trying very hard to remake what our agency is. We tried to remake the hardware that is the physical plant and all that. We tried to remake the software that is how programs are orientated. We also tried very hard to diversify our program mix and program stock with nontraditional programs.

William is a very sharp, capable, confident, and articulate leader who makes sure that he maintains excellent working relations with his residents and agency partners. According to resident leaders' comments, William and his wife are known throughout the authority as caring people who respect the residents and give the best Christmas party (at his home) for his resident leaders. William's authority has received numerous national awards for cutting-edge nontraditional programs that meet the needs of his communities. He knows how and is not afraid to use his position power, personal abilities, and resources to make a difference on the local, state, and national levels, all the while advancing professionally.

*Marie*

Marie has been employed full time in the Social Services/Resident Initiatives Department for 21 years. She is a tall, heavy-built African American woman with a round cheerful face accented by short brown hair. Marie worked extensively with residents and agency partners over the years to improve the quality of life for public housing families. She commented, "We provide affordable housing and we provide opportunities for our families to move in, move up and move out." During the interview Marie, in her role as a planner, shared factual information about the various educational, employment training, and support programs provided through local partnerships with the authority.

> The position that I'm in has changed somewhat from being directly involved with families where I did some counseling and working with residents one on one. My role changed from being a case manager to someone who works closely with the agencies and monitors the agency programs that we have.

This was not a promotion but a lateral move when a new department head was hired. Marie is most proud of her early accomplishments before the position change, when she worked closely with the residents. She was instrumental in developing a Resident Meet and Greet Workshop in which the residents from her authority invited resident leaders from other authorities to share successes and struggles of living in public housing during a day-long series of activities and fellowship. As chairperson of the Housing State Association's Resident Initiatives' Committee, Marie planned five successful Statewide Resident Leadership Conferences. She chaired the first adult scholarship committee, which awarded scholarships to adult public housing residents to continue their education. Marie understands that, regardless of planning a local or statewide program, the challenges of negotiating interests and power

struggles among planners are the same. She has had to hold on to her convictions that residents deserve to be treated with respect and has provided leadership training.

*Alice*

Alice is a dynamic African American woman with energy and passion about her job with the authority. She has a tremendous smile and warm personality. Because of funding cuts Alice had to continue to provide programs and services with limited staff and resources. She juggles several roles impressively to meet the needs of the resident population.

> I play a multitude of roles because of my position/title. I am Upward Mobility Coordinator and I'm the Family Investment Center Coordinator. So I play cheerleader. I play coordinator, I devise individual training plans . . . . I offer action planning and individual service planning to anyone. I make sure that every quarter that we have new businesses within the community come in and discuss their role and how they can come on board in this collaborative effort to reach out to our residents. I do a lot of teaching. But the fact is I can't do it on a regular basis, so we have to call facilitators in or instructors from the community to come in.

After 5 years of working with agencies and businesses to develop viable employment training and educational programs, Alice understood organizational and personal interests and how they are negotiated during the planning process. She gave examples of how she negotiated organizational and personal interests to meet program goals.

> It was important to me to get several day care center directors involved in our planning process with our different programs. It's like a hidden agenda on my part: I want to make sure we have them involved so that, when we need child care, they will step forward to say, "This is a wonderful program." This is what I can bring to the table to help the pro-

> gram run smoothly. Businesses that can actually hire our residents—it's important to have them at the table and involved. Therefore, we have key representation from some of the leading agencies and organizations that hire people.

The planning process and the politics surrounding planning created tension between defining what is important: providing affordable housing versus social services. Alice's tone of voice reflected how difficult and frustrating the planning process can be.

> The political environment is very scenic and I consider the fact that we are not a bunch of service agencies, we are bricks and motor, we're not social services. And that's difficult for me because we are a social services department. But it's hard. It's hard because I'm a creative-minded person and a free spirit. I've been here for 5 years and it's been difficult.

Throughout the interview Alice cited challenges at and away from the planning table as she provides educational and training programs to enhance residents' upward mobility and self-sufficiency. Despite the battles, Alice maintains an optimistic disposition that allows her to use her power and resources to provide program opportunities.

*Natalie*

Natalie was excited to tell her story as a previous resident who had participated in one of the housing authority's training programs. She had pursued a Bachelor's degree from the local college. Currently, she is employed with the authority in the capacity of Resident Services Coordinator in one large public housing community. As a strong-willed African American, single mother of three children who had lived in public housing, Natalie took advantage of the programs because she saw the opportunity to move up and out of public housing through education and employment.

> I am an advocate [of] upward mobility. That is one of the best things in my job that I can do because I have been where a lot of my residents are. I believe in helping somebody, reaching down and pulling up anybody I can. And so my passion right now is helping residents.

Natalie is aware of the stigma of living in public housing and works hard to make a difference to disprove that stigma.

> I really don't want us to be a statistic, or continue to be a statistic, because we have a stigma on us when we move into public housing. We have babies and then our babies grow up and then they get an apartment and, you know, it's just a cycle. I try to break the cycle by giving people the avenues to break the cycle.

The programming opportunities at this Authority made a difference in the life of this former resident.

> Being in low-income housing can cause you to be in a depressed mood. You're already labeled as not having the resources and stuff to move on. One thing that I did realize was that there is another world out there. There is more that you can accomplish. But when I was in public housing, . . . I didn't know that, I couldn't see that. But once I went into public housing and there was a lot of avenues and a lot of opportunities for me to advance, I took advantage of that opportunity. I was able to grasp that there's more to my world than public housing.

As a resident leader, Natalie recalled her involvement in the program planning process. She had served as president and as secretary of her resident association. She commented, "Through the resident association I had input in what was needed, so I got involved." In her position as a staff member, Natalie continues to encourage residents to take advantage of the

opportunities provided by the housing authority and to participate as leaders at the planning table to make their interests known in the development of programs.

*Mary*

Mary has lived in public housing for 32 years. This African American woman was instrumental in forming the Resident Association in the 1970s. Since that time, Mary has served in several leadership capacities, including president, secretary, treasurer, kitchen committee chair, and other association jobs. "I've done a lot of volunteer work, even sewing classes. We got new playground equipment even when the Executive Director did not want us to have new equipment." A small-framed woman, Mary radiated with pride as she recalled the accomplishments of earlier years. She shared stories working faithfully on behalf of the residents to get the Executive Director to fulfill the resident leaders' requests. She spoke with pride and conviction.

Mary is a leader who knows that she has power and is not afraid to use it. Over the years she has maintained the same level of leadership with new executive directors. She spoke positively about how the current Executive Director involves the resident in major decisions that affect the quality of their lives.

> The residents have a major role in anything the Housing Authority does. Presidents of each Resident Association came together to form an Advisory Council to the Executive Director. . . . [The Authority's Board of Commissioners] don't always agree with residents, but they always get to hear from residents first.

In her later years, Mary continues to have an active voice in the planning process. She is not afraid to speak the truth to anyone. She continues to serve as a role model for younger

residents. Mary encourages and motivates younger residents to become active leaders and participate in training opportunities provided by the authority and their numerous partners.

*Milton*

Milton is a African American male who served on the board for 8 years before assuming the position of Executive Director for a local community action agency. For 25 years he has worked in partnership with the housing authority to provide programs and services for public housing families. “We’ve been involved with the housing authority for a long time, and it has proven to be one of the most innovative collaborative relationships.” Milton’s agency board is mandated by law to include representatives of low-income or actual low-income people. He shared his strategy for creating an environment around the planning table that encourages participation:

> The first thing you’ve got to do is create a climate where they feel like their role is legitimate, they have a right to be there, and we want you here, and here’s what we’re trying to do, and how you can assist and what your role is. And then you help people along.

Of all the interviewees, Milton was by far the strongest realist, making cutting remarks about the power of race, class, and gender in the planning process. He used terms such as “pseudo process,” “power structure analysis,” “bogus process,” and “pimped” to describe what he had observed in his experiences in working with people in general and specifically around the planning table. He adamantly shared his view on race: “Race is still a factor—a serious factor—in all that we do and a negative factor.” His facial expression, tone of voice, and sometimes his choice of words reflected his frustration with how society continues to ignore the reality of inequality based on class, gender, and race in all facets of life.

*Susie*

Susie is a White female resident who, at age 81, is extremely active and a fun person to know. When asked her to tell about herself, she responded with enthusiasm and a big smile:

> I volunteer in the office every day. I plan activities. I'm sort of a social worker. I take care of the seniors in the high rise. And I work part time as a building monitor and I train other residents to be monitors. I'm the chair boss and mascot. I plan everything that happens in the building.

Susie appeared very proud of her accomplishments. As a community leader, she is involved with the Resident Association that meets regularly with the Executive Director and Housing Management Director. She commented, "I help them plan. Anything they need me to do, I help them plan." Susie is a take-charge person to whom other residents look for leadership. When she first moved into the building 18 years ago, she did not know anyone. But she had said, "Shoot, I'm not going to do this. I am going to get out and meet the people. And that's what I did, and I got them following me." Her take-charge personality had not been evident when she became a public housing resident. Talking about welfare and employment training programs, she recalled what it was like years ago raising her family.

> Years ago I was divorced. I had four children, and they didn't want to give me anything. I had to fight a battle to get benefits started. That had to be years ago because my oldest one is 51, so back then [the government] wasn't very supportive of people. I got out and I went to work. I had to. But I didn't bring in enough to take care of four children and pay somebody to take care of them, and they wouldn't help me.

Susie's telling of her story showed why she was such a happy, likeable person. Even when the odds had been against her, Susie had known how to make the best of a bad situation. Now, in her older years, she lives to make other people laugh and enjoy life.

*Patricia*

Patricia is an African American female who works in the banking industry. We met in her office at the local bank. I could sense her appreciation for the work done at the housing authority, but she was reserved and to the point.

Patricia serves on the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. She talked about the role of the board and how the policies they make affect the housing organization, the residents, and the community. She expressed gratitude to the staff for their work in partnership with other agencies and organizations to bring educational and training programs to the residents. She was especially proud of the successful home ownership program in which over 50 families had become home owners because of their involvement in employment training programs. "[The Board members] have seen it impact [the residents'] lives in a very, very positive way. We have been able to get people into homes." The Executive Director had shared that Patricia presents each person with a big welcome home basket full of household items to each family at the closing ceremony.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section describes the case which involves two housing authorities and their relationships of power with other government entities and among their Board of Commissioners, staff and residents. The latter section profiles the fifteen participants involved in planning employment training programs for their respective authorities.

Housing authorities nationwide operate within relationships of power beginning with the U.S. Congress and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Congressional leaders, HUD officials and Public Housing staff exercise power in a racialized context where white middle class men are usually the decision makers on the national, state and local tiers of government. These mostly white power shapers make policy decisions and create laws that impact the lives of African American low income public housing residents.

The fifteen participants interviewed represented the five groups of people whose interests matter in the program planning process: learner, teacher, planner, institutional leader and the affected public. The presentation of the participants gives you a more detailed look into each person and their role in this process. Each participants comes to the table with personal and organizational interests in the racialized context to determine whose interests matter.

# CHAPTER 5

# FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to understand how power relations shaped welfare-to-work employment training programs for African American public housing residents. Three research questions guided the study:

1. How do relationships of power shape whose interests are represented in the planning process?

2. How are stakeholders' interests expressed in specific features of the training program?

3. How are stakeholders' power and interests reflected in program outcomes?

This chapter reports three themes that emerged to address these research questions: (a) stakeholders' power is relational and multi-dimensional, (b) specific program features represent the interests of stakeholders with the most power, and (c) program outcomes maintain organizational power and interests.

## First Theme: Stakeholders' Power Struggles Shape Whose Interests Matter

The first theme is *stakeholders' power is relational and multi-dimensional.* Stakeholders are defined as groups and/or individuals who participate and have a vested interest in the program planning process. Stakeholders form relationships that are the basis for social interaction as they involve themselves in the program planning process. Some relationships exist before the planning process; some are nurtured and usually maintained after the planning process. These relationships reveal an asymmetrical power structure involving those who have

power and those with less power. Within these relationships exists a silent struggle to execute power that privileges some people and disadvantages others. A power struggle exists when those who have the socially structured capacity to act exercise that power over those with less capacity to act. This study focused on the relationships of power among specific relationships and organizational relationships.

PHA Boards of Commissioners, Executive Directors, community partners, and residents have specific relationships with one another. The seven-member Board of Commissioners, the policy-making group for housing authorities, hires the Executive Director, who operates the housing authority on a day-to-day basis. Considering recommendations from the Executive Director, the Board of Commissioners must make difficult decisions regarding how to manage the PHA’s programs and services with decreased subsidies and other income sources.

> We came to a marvelous realization that the federal funding cuts were not temporary. They’re permanent. Nobody is going to give us large amounts of money. Nobody is going to pass a law and procreate a billion dollars to tell us where publishing note of fund availability and tell where to apply . . . We’re going to have to make it happen ourselves. We have got to get out there and compete successfully without private sector competition and use what advantages we have. (Executive Director William)

Community partners are there to support the housing authority’s programs and services, while at the same time their personal and organizational interests are negotiated for the benefit of their agency. Resident groups in the form of resident organizations or associations develop relationships with Executive Director and the Board of Commissioners. The Board relationship is mandated by federal law. Housing authorities must have a resident serving as a commissioner on the Board, with all voting privileges and rights.

Organizational relationships include the relationships with Congress, HUD, and the local PHA's. These organizational relationships are permanent and asymmetrical in structure. The interests of Congress powerfully control the administration and management actions of HUD. HUD provides regulatory rules for local PHAs to follow. The PHA must find a way to manage effectively their properties, programs, and services within the relationships with Congress and HUD. Local PHAs must establish additional local relationships with partner agencies to provide the programs and services to which William alluded.

*Executive Directors' Management Power*

Both Executive Directors in this research—Jennifer, the African American female, and William, the White male, utilize their position and organizational power to establish partnerships with community agencies to provide programs and services for public housing residents and advance the interests of the housing authority at the same time. Developing relationships with joint rights and responsibilities requires close cooperation between parties. The relationship building that occurs between the PHA and community agencies manifests amid power struggles to determine whose personal and organizational interests matter.

> We got really aggressive about building connections to the organization and institutions that serve our residents. We now have formal memorandum of understandings of nearly 50 different organizations. And we have property leases with more than 30 different organizations that provide services directly on site to our residents. (William)

William takes relationship building to another dimension as he uses his power to create not-for-profit corporations to provide future services for residents.

> We've created (Brace yourself!) 14 subsidiary not-for-profit corporations. . . . We recently set up a foundation not-for-profit so that we have the means for individuals and

organizations to make tax-deductible donations to help human service programming in public housing. We're setting up a not-for-profit to govern the endowment trust, which is created for community and supportive services for six programs.

As a result of William's relationship strategies, the authority's reputation for working with other agencies is a profitable experience. PHA interests are successfully negotiated and advanced such that the authority does not always have to take the lead in initiating a partnership. William commented, "The good news about working in partnership is that we get invited to participate in a lot of things in which we are not the convener." In the interest of providing services for the residents, William is aware that, as the residents benefit through additional services so does the PHA. The PHA's interests are realized when the PHA positions itself as a leader among agencies in the overall community as well as nationally. William's desire to see his housing authority become a successful trail-blazing leader in providing programs and services also provides personal fulfillment for him.

Jennifer uses her power as Executive Director to create meaningful relationships with agencies to provide services to residents and grant funding to support those partnerships.

> We started out with a somewhat interesting initiative. We have a collaborative agreement with the Technical College to provide our own educational site training. We got a grant that year and we built a building on site to have training at the housing authority. Because we realized that in order to have residents feel comfortable that they needed an atmosphere where they did not feel intimidated. (Jennifer)

Where to locate services can become an opportunity for a power struggle. The need to provide services and programs for public housing residents and the agencies' need for space to provide services and programs allow both Executive Directors in this study to use their

organizational power to negotiate space for services. PHAs usually have several community space opportunities ,and sometimes, under special federal regulations can allow an agency use of a dwelling unit. Therefore, Jennifer established the importance of "site location" for their training program during the planning process. This positioned her authority as leader in providing accessible educational programming to residents in their community and provided Jennifer an opportunity for personal fulfillment.

Jennifer commented, "One thing with partners is that we have to have open communications. . . . We have to meet regularly with our partners. . . . If not, everything can just fall apart." William used an analogy concerning relationships with human service agencies: "Relationships with human services agencies are a lot like any other kind of marriage. They require some maintenance and some hand holding and every now and then candy and flowers." Appreciation events sponsored by William's authority provided more than a warm thank you to partner agencies but strengthened the authority's interests in cultivating successful relationships while demonstrating the power of appreciation.

> We did a partnership appreciation luncheon in which we invited partner agencies to come. We had more than 70 different organizations that sent somebody. I think they were blown away . . . first because we thought enough to say thank you, but second because they were amazed to find out how many other organizations were there. (William)

Maintaining productive relationships using open lines of communication, hand holding, and appreciation tactics fortifies the interests and power of the Executive Directors representing their PHAs. This becomes an important aspect of the Executive Director's use of power to identify whose interests matter during the planning process. The Board of Commissioner's ability to hire the right Executive Director to lead the organization assures the PHA's position of

power in relationship building and the program planning process. William gave full credit to his board for their leadership and wisdom in choosing an Executive Director who could carry out the board's vision the authority.

> I worked for a Board of Commissioners that even in those very early days was a very strong board. . . . A strong board really has a sense of direction for where they want the organization to go but they in turn are willing to employ strong leadership give [the Executive Director] the charge of what to do and then not micromanage but get out the way on a day-to-day basis but hold them accountable for where the organization is going.

*Leadership Changes*

William commented on his early challenges as an Executive Director:

> The housing authority was totally alienated from its community. It was alienated from its customers, its residents. It was alienated from social services organizations that served its customers. It was alienated from the local government. . . . We had a different kind of rebuilding to do. Then we had to rebuild race relationships with our customers and rebuild relationships with the community.

The challenges that William experienced as a new Executive Director were relational in nature. The community's image of public housing was not favorable nor did the previous Executive Director build relationships with the residents. He did express concern about rebuilding race relations with his residents, who were 96% African American female heads of households.

Jennifer had experienced challenges of a different nature. She shared power struggle episodes with her board chairperson. According to Jennifer, the chairperson of the board, a White female, commented that "she would never see this housing authority become totally

Black." Jennifer provided exceptional leadership while serving as interim Executive Director for the authority. The board chairperson instructed Jennifer to submit an application for the position like anyone else. After the hiring process was over and Jennifer was selected as Executive Director, the board chairperson failed to support her in that position.

> Regardless of all my credentials or the fact that I ran the agency well during the interim, she still saw me as being a Black person. Race really entered the picture and it was not pleasant. I was asked to verify about everything that happened on a day-to-day basis. And when I was to hire people, I had to bring them before the Board first so that they could meet the people. The everyday operation of the housing authority is left to the Executive Director. . . . Hiring and firing are not jobs given to the Board. But this was the way the Board was run at that time. (Jennifer)

Jennifer was not paid the same salary as the previous (White male) Executive Director, even though she had the credentials and experience. "When I took over the job, I was paid $29,000 a year, where our other Executive Director had been making over $40,000." The salary eventually changed "but it did not come easily."

William's board supported him as Executive Director in terms of running the authority without the board's micromanaging. Jennifer's board, under the leadership of the White female chairperson, decided to micromanage the daily operations of the authority. Jennifer's troubling relationship with the board chairperson changed when the racial make-up of the board changed.

> But by then we had a new board member come on, and he was a Black male. And conflict happened within the board meeting, and before long that chairperson [White female] resigned. So we were able to start moving forward. (Jennifer)

It is reasonable to conclude that the race and gender of the Executive Director shaped the working relationship between the Board of Commissioners and the Executive Director. Jennifer's experience centered on race and not gender (both the chairperson and Jennifer were females). William reported no problems with race or gender in working with his board. During the interview with each Executive Director's board member, there appeared to be general respect for the work of the Executive Director, with no apparent struggles. Jennifer's Board member commented,

> I think that the work she has done with the housing authority since she has been Executive Director has impacted housing . . . . We got someone here from the standpoint of looking out for public housing, for people who may be less fortunate than some who could afford the housing.

*Executive Directors and Residents*

The relationship between the Executive Director and residents is different in regard to the disparity of power. As individuals, residents are perceived as having little or no positional power compared to that of the Executive Director. The Executive Director's positional power comes with substantial negotiation authority. Residents as a collective group have the potential of positional power but often lack confidence to negotiate their interests in the face of power with the Executive Director, the Board of Commissioners, or agency partners.

The Executive Director's perceptions and attitudes about public housing residents and resident's perceptions and attitudes toward the Executive Director can strengthen or inhibit a mutual working relationship. For example, under the leadership of William, a policy change that enhanced upward mobility was put into place, based on how the Executive Director perceived the residents in his authority.

> We've always placed a fair amount of emphasis on resident issues. But one day we woke up and realized that, if we're not careful, we're simply going to wind up making people comfortable in their poverty. So our board made a clear policy decision that we were going to change the emphasis. We didn't stop doing quality-of-life social services. But we changed the emphasis and instead focused primarily on upward mobility and independence social services . . . to help break the dependency cycle in public housing. (Marie)

The Executive Director used his power to influence the Board of Commissioners to change the focus of service provision. This was not a resident-initiated policy recommendation. The change positioned the housing authority to seek additional partners and funding to support the policy emphasis. In this example, the interest of board members and the Executive Director to improve the quality of life of public housing residents was accomplished with a change in policy. This validates an effort to make a difference in residents' lives from an organizational standpoint. Board members and the Executive Director felt good personally about promoting upward mobility for residents instead of social dependency. The policy decision can be seen as a powerful strategic move that inevitably strengthened the relationship between the residents and the Executive Director and between the Executive Director and his board. But this move also was in the best interest of the authority as well as the residents.

Most Executive Directors are in contact with residents either by choice or circumstance. The Executive Director is at the top of the chain-of-command ladder to resolve issues involving residents and staff. Usually, the position of Executive Director is more accessible to resident leaders through organized resident associations or advisory groups. Both Executive Directors in this study used their positional power to form an Executive Director Advisory Council or

Resident Council made up of elected resident leaders representing public housing neighborhoods. This group of elected resident leaders met with the Executive Director on a regular basis.

> Resident associations are very important in everything that we do. And they access the need for services. They help us to do research. In some cases they work as volunteers in the various organizations actually involved in providing the service. They help us evaluate how we're doing and they generally are involved. (Marie)

Jennifer began building a relationship with her residents immediately after assuming the position of Executive Director. "When I became Executive Director, the first thing that we did was establish a resident council. And I'm proud to say that the resident council is still functioning today."

All residents have an opportunity to participate in community meetings and/or serve as resident leaders within their neighborhood associations. This level of participation allows residents a voice and provides an opportunity to work more closely with the Executive Director and other agency partners. Regardless of the encouragement by housing authority staff or other residents, few residents actually accept the challenge of leadership. Natalie, a current housing manager and former resident, expressed concern about resident participation:

> One thing that I've seen is the lack of participation in the resident association, where residents don't want to come down. They're not feeling a part of . . . and that is just a lack of interest maybe. A lot of my residents are working, which is good, [so] they don't have time.

*Resident Leadership*

Those who accept the role as resident leaders use their collective position power to make things happen. Mary, a resident for 32 years, was one of the first African American leaders to become involved in the resident organization in the 1970s. She shared her experiences and relationship with the Executive Director in those early years:

> The Executive Director, back in the '70s, we could not just get to him. Nobody could get him to move for us when we [residents] requested a new playground. So I was one of the leading persons that got things done. I got him to move. He didn't want to but I didn't give, so he had to give out and give in to it. And we got on the same page before he left, but it was a hard struggle. But he did a lot of things after that.

Based on Mary's description, the relationship between the Executive Director (a White male) and residents was shaped by positional power and interests of both parties. As a result of their negotiation, the Executive Director exercised his power for a while but the organized resident group exercised their power and won the battle. As she recalled the contentious relationship with the Executive Director, Mary spoke clearly and with much confidence. It was evident that she realized that she had power as a resident leader. Mary had continued to stand up and exercise her power as a leader by voicing her concerns and solutions until the Executive Director honored the residents' request. Mary explained her relationship with the current Executive Director, William:

> The new Executive Director came completely different. He always wanted us to be involved in whatever comes up concerning the residents. Before then, we didn't know anything until the last minute, and then it was too late for us to object, to agree or disagree. The Executive Director meets with the Advisory Board, which are all the

presidents from each community. Then we in turn come back to our community and let them know what's going on, where everybody can know what's going on.

Raymond, a resident leader, commented about the working relationship between residents and their Executive Director, Jennifer.

> The Resident Advisory Board comes together with Ms. Jennifer to give input. We're just starting the ROSS grant . . . . [The residents] give input on planning concerning money, space, location, building, tearing down—all aspects.

Jennifer reciprocated with comments concerning her relationship with residents through the Resident Council Advisory Board.

> We have a great resident council and our residents really partner with the Housing Authority. We're working on the ROSS plan. I made a presentation to the Resident Council. We didn't actually just call the presidents up and say, "Hey sign this, 'cause we are trying to get money." We are compelled to have resident input according to the law, but it was not a difficult task for us because we believe in residents being involved. One statement that I always make to them is, "You know what we're doing. You don't have to listen to gossip or whatever. You're the first ones to learn." So we really listen to what our residents say . . . . We learned to respect one another. That's one of the biggest things, to have mutual respect between people and individual agencies.

Both Executive Directors in this study had established positive working relationships with their residents and encouraged resident leaders' involvement in some aspects of planning and decision making. The Executive Directors appeared politically correct in using their power to support the organization of their resident leaders, whose major role was to serve as advisors to the Directors in planning activities. A key point is that both Directors were responsible for

organizing the Advisory Council or Resident Council, not the residents. This was a top-down creation instead of a grassroots organization where residents saw the need to unite as a body themselves for the purpose of exercising collective power.

The stakeholders include Congress, HUD, local PHAs, Boards of Commissioners, Executive Directors, agency partners, and residents. This study identified the interests and power that each group possesses and how interactions among them create a hierarchical power structure that privileges some and disadvantages others.

The power struggle does not appear physical as a tug-of-war competition between two opponents but mirrors a struggle that manifest in how the negotiation of interests and the use of power determines whose interests matter in providing services and planning programs for public housing families. In essence, the winner's interests matter more than those of others, even if others benefited in some way. For example, the Executive Directors entered into partnerships with agencies to provide services and programs. This advanced the interests of the housing authority and benefited the residents. Supporting resident groups organized by the Executive Director advanced the interests of the housing authority and could eventually benefit the residents.

The relationships of power formed through the negotiation of personal and organizational interests shape whose interests matter in the planning process. The power of the federal government (Congress and HUD) with its political and regulatory nature influences the planning process at the local level. In Jennifer's and William's authorities the availability of funding for employment training programs involved a tedious, rigorous, and competitive application process. Those relationships of powers among the authority's board, Executive Director, agencies, and

residents, who were actual participants in the planning process, revealed how the use of power and negotiation of interests determined who benefited.

## Second Theme: Specific Program Features Reflect Power and Interests

The second theme that emerged from the data was that *specific program features represent the interests of stakeholders with the most power*. This section examines *purpose, audience, location,* and *content* as program features because the data illuminated the influence of power and interests as stakeholders came together to plan employment training programs for African American public housing residents. William's and Jennifer's authorities' welfare-to-work employment training programs are presented individually and then summarized comparatively based on how program features reflected the interests of stakeholders with the most power.

### *Purpose, Audience, Location, and Content*

The program's purpose broadly describes what the program intends to change. The audiences in this study were low-income African American female heads of household living in Jennifer's and William's housing authorities. The location of the welfare-to-work employment training programs was either on site or within walking distance of the housing authority community or off site, requiring transportation. The program content provides the appropriate subject matter to accomplish program purposes.

### *William's Housing Authority's Employment Training Program*

William's PHA developed Project RISE, an acronym for Resident Initiatives for Self-Employment, in the early 1990s. This initiative came about as a result of HUD's selection of William's authority and a housing authority in an adjoining state to participate in a pioneer

resident business development effort with job training and placement capabilities. William's authority spun off Project RISE into a separate 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation known as the Entrepreneurship and Employment Training Center, Inc. (EETC) to enable EETC to broaden its funding base to attract other funding sources. William's authority was the first in their region to develop such an extraordinary program focusing on resident employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. Strategically placing EETC in a position to expand opportunities and its funding base through the creation of a not-for-profit corporation reflected ingenious forethought that could lead to future possibilities. An example of this came when the authority started developing the one-stop concept of a Family Investment Center. The authority contracted directly with EETC to carry out resident employment and resident business procurement activities required by the Family Investment Center program.

The interviews and review of authority documents revealed other employment training programs developed by this authority to encourage resident self-sufficiency and upward mobility. The Resident Services staff created a 3-month holistic program with a campus-like environment entitled Women Initiating New Goals for Success (WINGS) that served approximately 30 women. A larger and more intensive program, the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, was developed. William's authority was mandated to participate in HUD's Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) as a result of receiving specific federal funds. This 5-year goal-oriented employment program provided supportive services, an escrow savings opportunity, and a training program.

*Purpose.* The Family Investment Center is a "one-stop" education and employment service facility. The name of the center signifies a strategy that invests financial and human resources for public housing families to accomplish personal goals. The Family Investment

Center met the needs of a larger number of people than either WINGS or FSS. This PHA has made a difference in the lives of residents through the creative use of existing property, the support of community partners, and HUD dollars.

The purpose of Project RISE, WINGS, FSS, and the Family Investment Center was for residents to become economically self-sufficient and move out of public housing.

*Audience.* With becoming more self-sufficient as the goal, William's Housing Authority identified that the core problem of residents was the lack of earned income. The median income for a family of four in the county was $37,900 per year, but the average income of housing authority residents was $6,090, only 16% of the median income. HUD defined very low income at that time as less than 50% of the median ($18,950). The income of the average resident family is less than one third of that. These African American single female heads of household struggle to make ends meet just to take care of their basic needs. The single head of household females continue to deal with unpleasant treatment by the world because of their singleness and living in public housing,

William developed the concept of a "one-stop" public housing training and information facility with various upward mobility programs and services to increase residents' self-sufficiency.

> Probably the thing I was proudest of is my role in the development of the Family Investment Center in Princeton Manor. The Family Investment Center is a 1940s-era mattress factory which was bought by the housing authority in the early 1970s when Princeton Manor was built. It stood empty for a long time but for years I cherished this belief that it could be a true multipurpose neighborhood services center. Later, we came

to the idea that it needed to be a multipurpose neighborhood services center with an emphasis on upward mobility opportunities.

*Location.* The Family Investment Center, located on 3.5 acres in Princeton Manor, is accessible by public transportation, automobile, or pedestrian traffic. Except for a few scattered sites, all 11 public housing neighborhoods are less than 11.4 miles from the Family Investment Center. The concept of locating social services in one area is not a new concept. Communities across the nation have seen the value of partnerships to provide centralized access of services.

This location is also in the middle of the city's proposed Empowerment Community Zone. Location within the Empowerment Community Zone allows for the possibility of additional resources and guarantees that the Family Investment Center will be included in all economic development planning and services for that area. The Resident Initiatives at William's authority—Project RISE, WINGS, FSS, home ownership programs, scholarships, and the Family Investment Center—emphasize empowering and helping residents to acquire knowledge and skills to accomplish their goals, including self-sufficiency.

The facility, nestled in the middle of Princeton Manor, is located among beautiful low-rise public housing buildings with immaculate lawns, ,flowers and shrubs. William's authority is known for its clean, trash-free neighborhoods due to resident and staff pride in neighborhood appearance. The authority has won national and state Clean and Beautiful Awards throughout the years. The current Family Investment Center program coordinator, Alice, shared more information about the facility:

> It is a multimillion-dollar facility and has been designated as a one-stop shop by the Board of Work Force Development. We have 14 agency partners that have offices there in our building and we have many programs that take place in the building.

William's PHA housed most of their employment training programs on site, except for those that were held on local technical and community colleges campuses. Based on William's comments, it mattered more to negotiate effectively with agency partners to place their programs on site.

> Sometimes it's a matter of brokering deals to get services on site. The housing authority itself doesn't provide very many employment training programs. We mainly broker them through partners and agencies. The usual mechanism by which we do this is to barter bricks for services. We have space. Agencies need space. We rent them space for a buck a year along with the support services and occasionally some kinds of case management and coordination services as well. In exchange, our residents get quality services. When I describe things that "we" are doing, I'm talking about a relationship which is really about 15% Housing Authority and about 85% our partner relationships. (William)

The renovation of the building housing the Family Investment Center exemplifies the same level of pride in the outside appearance, with friendly and enthusiastic staff and volunteers. It was required that at least 20% of all workers hired for the renovation work on the Family Investment Center project were residents. The housing authority also stipulated that, of the two staff positions to run the facility, at least one would be a resident. Several staff persons and volunteers proudly proclaimed that they were residents working in the Family Investment Center. The area is beautifully decorated with cool bright colors and displays colorful eye-catching advertisements about programs and services.

*Content.* The content decisions to place programs and services in the Family Investment Center were negotiated by stakeholders: Executive Director, housing authority staff, Resident Association members, and community agencies. The grant document submitted to HUD

requesting funding for the Family Investment Center recorded the following information regarding program content.

> The comprehensive and integrated approach was not an accident. First, the entire plan reflects the real needs of our residents as articulated by our Resident Associations. Secondly, the combination of facilities and services was also a direct result of an extensive planning and coordinating process involving over twenty-five agencies with whom we have long standing relationships. We believe the list of services is both comprehensive and well integrated. Each service chosen is physically and philosophically compatible with the Family Investment Center concept. We believe that they will work together, creating a total that is greater than the sum of its parts.

The Family Investment Center provides program activities to meet the needs of residents on a continuous basis. Alice comments, "The Family Investment Center operates 7 days a week. We have activities that are taking place every single day almost all day long." Program and services content are carefully chosen by the stakeholders. I saw programs in action with resident participants who appeared excited and focused on their assigned tasks. The computer training program had eight residents working on Internet searches. In the Adult Basic Literacy program six residents were engaged in a math exercise as they worked toward a GED. Residents greeted visitors with a smile and explanations of how programs and services offered in the building benefited resident participants. Unfortunately, some programs were no longer in the building due to funding cuts. Supportive services include child care, transportation, food stamps, Medicaid, energy assistance, emergency assistance, role models, parenting, coping skills, and stress management.

Alice reported that she has worked to develop new partnership with agencies to meet the programming needs of the facility. She talked about the FSS program that was also based in this facility.

> The FSS is a 5-year work program where individuals that are head of household in the Section 8 and public housing programs voluntarily agree to participate. We encourage them to go to work doing something. It may not be in their final goal but to do something as far as their work activity is concerned. And when they do that, most likely the earned income will go up in the household. When the income goes up, it affects the rent. We take a portion of the rent increase and put it aside in the escrow account for all of our FSS members. Every single time they receive an increase, we take a portion of the increase, and the money builds. And at the end of their 5 years, they receive the money in their escrow account. If they're no longer on TANF for 12 consecutive months, and also if they are working in that final goal with all the interim steps completed, then they can get whatever money, plus interest, that's in that escrow account.

Alice was passionate about her role as the Family Investment Center Coordinator. She had several roles through which she found ways to make things work with the resources at hand. She expressed her wholehearted belief in the ability of the PHA to provide such a facility and described the impact of the programs and services on residents who take advantage of those programs and services.

> I play a multitude of roles. . . . I am the Upward Mobility Coordinator and I'm also the Family Investment Center's Coordinator. So I play cheerleader, I play coordinator, I devise individual training plans. . . . I'm their cheerleader and I'm their person to be able to help them along on their sojourn, I call it, to achieve economic independence.

To manage such a large facility with limited staff could be overwhelming. Alice's management skills, attitude, and dedication make her a valuable asset to the Family Investment Center:

> Of the roles I enjoy the most is Family Investment Center/Upward Mobility Coordinator. I enjoy that the most because that gives me the opportunity to use my gift; I am a motivator. . . . It is my gift from God to motivate people. People listen to me for some strange reason. So I use that gift to be able to reach people that other folks have said, "You can't do this. This is impossible for you to do." I'm able to motivate that crowd of individuals that are considered hard to serve. And so that is what I enjoy doing. It's a task but when I leave at the end of the day.

*Encouraging Self-Sufficient Behavior*. Throughout the interviews and document reviews (advertisements and newsletters), the term *upward mobility* emerged frequently. Residents who become economically self-sufficient should not want to remain in public housing but to move up and out, fulfilling the ultimate goal of public housing. Public housing was built as a temporary shelter, a stepping stone, for families who suffered economically until they could regain economic stability to move out of public housing. William, who supports the original purpose of public housing, uses his personal interest and power as Executive Director to accomplish that purpose in his authority.

> I've already mentioned my belief in our commitment to try and recover that upward mobility value. The upward mobility value was based on the historic law of public housing as a stepping stone, as a ladder up and out of public housing. It helps build political support for public housing. American people are suckers for anyone trying to help themselves. They believe in a hand up instead of handouts. At the same time the

> American people are not really sympathetic with people who are on welfare all of their lives. It helps improve the social environment in public housing. I believe that it greatly benefits the people themselves.

William shared how residents benefit from employment and educational training programs.

> A lot of people pooh-poohed the value of entry-level employment and minimum wage employment. They think, “Well, gee, if you can’t do any better than that, you might be better off on welfare.” I know when I testified before the White House Welfare Reform Task Force that there is an awful lot of professional and academic opinion stated pretty much then. I disagree. I think the business of having to struggle to support yourself conveys with it two things: One is a sense of self-worth that you can’t get sitting in front of a television set and cashing your check and the second is I think it’s a myth in our society that you make your way out of poverty by starting off with your job being a nonpoverty job.

William and his staff are serious about providing opportunities that will empower resident participants to believe in themselves and visualize a better way of life. Alice commented about the opportunities at the Family Investment Center, “Residents have a multitude of education activities they can get involved in that can empower them to become economically independent.” William commented about the process of empowerment, his passionate response revealing his personal views on the subject. People may often say what they believe to be politically correct; in contrast, William’s body language—strong eye contact, excitement in his voice, and his persuasive tone—reflected what he was saying. His comments spoke to the role of staff and other stakeholders and gave a snapshot of the hidden potential that lies within public housing residents that makes their success an asset, not a liability.

> You can teach people how to get addicted to being empowered. You can teach people how to do that, and from that point on they don't really need you that much anymore because it's not in you and your part in it, it's in them. They see themselves as strong, competent, capable, and able to decide for themselves what they want to do and to do it. It's fun to watch that happen. To see people do things. To see people do things that they never thought they could do. Whether it's as simple as a person being able to hold down a job and feed their kids or whether it's an employee who came to you 8 or 9 years ago as a welfare-to-work job placement trainee and is now a branch chief supervising eight other people. I mean, you know, you get off on that! That's a large charge, any way you slice it.

The employment training program at William's authority serves more than one purpose. Those involved in making decisions about the purpose negotiate their personal and organizational interests to develop a program to prepare participants for work opportunities, to encourage personal growth of resident participants, and to feature the PHA as a supporter of economic self-sufficiency and upward mobility. If the people did not achieve economic self-sufficiency and move out of public housing the fault lay with the residents not with the housing authority. A review of the participation rolls revealed that more than 98% residents who experienced success from participation in employment training programs in this authority were African American women.

Agency documents such as grant proposals, meeting minutes, newsletters, and so forth often described resident participants as *poor, economically disadvantaged, hurting, downtrodden, unemployed, underemployed*, and *having low educational skills*. These words may accurately describe the circumstances in which participants find themselves as public housing

residents, but William's comments about those who participated in the various programs promoting economic self-sufficiency and upward mobility described persons who were empowered to change from within to accomplish their goals.

> The underside of it is that not everybody wants to participate and not everybody is willing to go through the trouble . . . . I used to worry about that a lot. But I did draw some lessons from my own experience and also from the experience of Jane Adams, who founded Hull House, the first settlement house movement: "I only worked with the people who wanted to work with me, because that's all the time I had." The Hull House never tried to reach the most destitute people. (William)

*Recruitment Challenges and Success*. Recruitment of resident participants appeared somewhat easier at William's authority. With a strong relationship between resident leaders and the Executive Director and staff, resident leaders were involved at the planning table for the Family Investment Center. Programs such as RISE, WINGS, and FSS did not employ a planning process involving resident stakeholders. Staff and agency representatives came together to develop these programs to encourage economic self-sufficiency and upward mobility. According to Alice, the Family Investment Center must have resident participation to influence program direction.

> We have a committee called a Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) and its part of our FSS/Family Investment Center's plan that we have this committee. That committee is comprised of residents and agency partners within the Center and within the surrounding community of the Family Investment Center. So the residents take a huge part in making the plans of the different programs that we provide there at the Family Investment Center. (Alice)

Alice captured the essence of resident participant in employment training programs.

> The ones that are successful are the ones that are really hungry for success, that are really wanting more than what they have now, and they don't have the stagnant mindset that "This is all I can do and I can't do any better." They want to come in asking, "What next? What happens next? Okay, after I do this, what happens next?" They are the ones that are curious. They are the ones that are there at the different activities that we have. (Alice)

Natalie, a former resident and now Resident Coordinator for Princeton Manor, was encouraged by housing authority staff.

> I was under Jeffery, who was the Resident Coordinator in my community. He was an excellent man. He believed in upward mobility, too. And he saw something in me. So he kept pushing me. He kept encouraging me that there is something more. If it wasn't for . . . and not just him . . . but there were other staff that encouraged me. Jackie was one of them. Everybody that I met in housing authority was pushing a lot of programs and opportunities for me. So I just jumped into them and said, "Okay, I can deal with this."

As a result, Natalie went back to school and received a Bachelor's degree from the local college. In her current position Natalie shared her experience as a resident taking advantage of programs and upward mobility opportunities to encourage the residents living in the community that she manages.

> I've been there and I know the obstacles in the way of a lot of residents not being able to achieve upward mobility. I share with them things that I've done in order to overcome my obstacles. And it helps a lot of people. Almost every time I see my residents, they'll tell me, "I'm going to school now. I'm doing this. I'm doing that."

As previously stated by William, all residents will not participate in programs that are offered by the authority. Natalie expressed concern about the reasons for lack of participation that she has witnessed in the past few years. Marie, a staff person who worked directly with residents for many years at the authority, expressed the same sentiment about the lack of resident participation.

> You can bring a program, no matter how good it looks on paper or how well it may have worked over the years. You bring it in one arena and then you have nobody participate. And we have yet to find out what it's going to take to get folks just to come out. That has been like an Achilles' heel . . . for me and for the housing authority as a whole. We have the same families participating, the same heads of household who come and participate. You've got this core group of maybe just a handful of folks who are going to come, no matter what you're talking about.

One of the older resident leaders, Mary, seemed sad when she spoke of residents not participating in employment training programs.

> We have a lot of programs that we cannot get people to participate in. We have to struggle and pull at them and just explain to them, "This is something you need. If you want to go on a job, you need to go to this training. You need to stand up and say, 'This is what I want to do.'" And then we'd be 100% behind you.

Despite the large number of residents who take advantage of the programs and upward mobility opportunities at William's authority, there appears to be a far greater number of residents who do not participate. Based on the comments shared by William, his staff, and his residents, a lack of participation is of great concern. Regardless of the lack of participation, it

seems that the authority will continue to carry out its mission statement: "to provide affordable housing and opportunities for our families to move in, move up and move out."

The Family Investment Center concept is an innovative approach to providing a network of educational, employment training, and social services in one facility for public housing families.

> They have a multitude of education activities that they can get involved in that can empower them to become economically independent. We are just basically a one-stop shop of services that our residents and anyone in the community can take advantage of without having to run from place to place or location to location. They can come to one place and receive all the social services that they need in one area. And the wonderful thing about the Center is that the GED classes are actually held there in the building. So they are able to come there and if they're in need, they receive encouragement from us every day as we push them on. Once they finish the course and pass the GED, we can send them on to local university to get into school if that's what they desire to do. Or they have a choice to get some formalized training on site at the actual technical school. (Alice)

According to the stakeholders at the planning table who developed the content of programs and services at the Family Investment Center, the families in William's authority needed comprehensive programs and services to move them toward self-sufficiency. Without the intervention of agencies and organizational resources in the lives of public housing residents, (according to these stakeholders) families have little chance of becoming self-sufficient. Statements in the grant application implied that residents should not be blamed for living in public housing and having to depend on governmental assistance.

> Please understand that these observations are not in the spirit of blaming our residents for their plight. Far from it; they are caught in the coils of the system they did not invent and do not know how to escape. We strongly believe that most residents want to work, as demonstrated by the overwhelming response to our outreach for a few VISTA positions that only paid $3.35 an hour, less than minimum wage. We know from our work with parent volunteers in our youth development programs that most aspire for a better life with their children. Our experiences with many residents in training programs and as Authority employees convinces us that many have the ability to realize these aspirations if they could get a fresh start. (William)

The program features are the end product of program planning work where those stakeholders at the planning table use their judgment to determine outcomes based on selected program features. Program features such as purpose, audience, location, and content evolve into features of an employment training program as each person's goals, values, expectations, and experiences (interests) lead him or her to act in a particular manner within his or her organizational and social context. The theme reveals the complexity of relationships of power and explains how stakeholders' power, interests, ethical commitment, and negotiation skills produce program features that have educational and political outcomes for multiple stakeholders.

What was developed around the planning table involving housing staff, residents, and agency stakeholders moved from idea to the realization of the Family Investment Center. This PHA invested heavily in being a resource for its families to move up and out. Furthermore, it was important to have the right staff and volunteers in place to accomplish the purposes set forth for the Family Investment Center.

*Jennifer's Housing Authority Employment Training Program*

The welfare-to-work employment training program provided several unique training opportunities for adult resident learners in Jennifer's housing authority. These programs provided skilled training in property management, cabinet making, forklift training, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), cosmetology, employability/job skills training, and literacy education. These programs were analyzed individually to understand program planning dynamics but findings are reported collectively as one employment training program.

*Purpose.* Contractual documents included Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between Jennifer's PHA and the following agencies: local technical college, cosmetology training center, local welfare agency, Workforce Investment Welfare-to-Work, and the public housing Resident Council. Each document contained a general purpose with several specific objectives. These agencies and the PHA proposed to work with adult residents' learners to effect a change in their ability to become self-sufficient through education and employment training opportunities.

Jennifer's PHA provided traditional training (CNA, Employability/Job Skills Training, and Literacy Education) and nontraditional training opportunities (Property Management, Cabinet Making, Forklift Training, and Cosmetology). Traditional training programs focus on building general employability skills to provide participants an opportunity to earn minimum wages in entry-level employment positions. Nontraditional training programs provide an opportunity for higher wage earnings and lead to career development.

Increasing employability and job retention skills, improving attitudes and strengthening work ethics most often appeared in the statements of program purpose. Field notes, agency

documents, and interviews were analyzed and core purpose or expected change was clearly self-sufficiency.

Jennifer used her power to obligate PHA resources at her authority. She serves as the contracting agent for the PHA. Jennifer's name appears on all contracts, including MOUs. She satisfies an organizational purpose and a personal desire to provide educational and employment opportunities for residents. Jennifer commented, "We work with ladies, with women. Our focus was to get them into a training program." Jennifer's explanation of program purpose deepened with these comments:

> That has always been one of our goals, to offer training programs that a person can actually earn a living and grow beyond the needs of a housing authority. I am not just satisfied making sure our rent collections are where they should be. I really want to see a change. I really want people to be able to do their best and have opportunities because mainly I've always had and used opportunities even though I'm from a single-parent family. Having opportunities helps a person to become what he or she wants to be and make a contribution.

As a program participant who completed the cosmetology program and was licensed by the state commission, Tasha said that her accomplishment fulfilled not only the housing authority's purpose but a personal desire to become self-sufficient.

> [The license] hasn't made a big difference yet, because I haven't gotten a shop. But I feel as though when I get in a shop, it will be much better for me. It'll probably turn my whole life around because then I don't have to worry about how I'm going to do this or that. I can depend on myself.

Margaret, who is employed with the Technical College, stated that the program's purpose is accomplished when participants want to continue a career path that increases self-sufficiency levels. "All of them genuinely want to get a job. They want to do better. And we've had so many that when they get through with CNA they're smart enough to go right into the LPN [Licensed Practical Nurse] program."

The belief that these public housing residents can achieve is an essential belief for planners and especially participants. Margaret's observation credits participants not only with a desire to become more self sufficient but with the academic know-how to succeed. Self-sufficiency is not just an end result; it is a mindset that propels program participants to believe that they have what it takes to be successful.

*Audience.* Jennifer's recruitment strategy focused on conducting surveys and personal interviews with potential resident participants. Finding out the needs and interests of residents to develop successful employment training programs was easy. Residents received surveys in the mail, group discussions were held during Resident Council meetings, and some door to door canvassing was conducted. Survey information was featured in quarterly resident newsletters distributed to all public housing families. Convincing residents to make a commitment to participate became a greater struggle.

> I think one of the greatest things is first of all getting the people to believe in what you're trying to do. I can relate this best to our cosmetology program. We did a survey knowing there were people out there doing hair without license. So we said, "This would be a great program to go after." And we got all our partners together after we had given the survey and the numbers were there for cosmetology, the interest. We couldn't get anybody to

> come and interview to actually go through the program. It was like pulling teeth. But finally we had four young ladies to interview. (Jennifer)

Housing staff and agency partners found it difficult to understand the discrepancy between the number of people who said that they were interested and the number who were willing to be recruited for the program. Jennifer cited several factors to explain this phenomenon.

> I think one of the barriers is commitment to the time frame that it's going to take to receive the training. And then there is always that fear. I don't know if it's fear of being unsuccessful or fear of being able to stick with it for the length of time. I don't know exactly what . . . just fear of the unknown, going to school. The level of fear is one of the most compelling issues that keep the program from getting off the ground.

Susan explained that the fear is not only a personal fear but a fear of change that will affect family and relationships. "We did the survey to find out what they'd like to do. We found out what they needed, which a lot of times was transportation and day care, which usually seemed to be the biggest problem for them."

*Location*. Jennifer's PHA located employment training programs on and off public housing properties. Locating training programs within public housing communities made sense to the staff for several reasons, including logistical convenience of supporting services such as day care and the comfort of being in a familiar educational area. Jennifer and staff, based on their involvement with residents, made a decision that involved building a facility that met the learning needs of resident participants and provided state-of-the-art accommodations for employment and educational training.

> We realized that in order to have people feel comfortable, they needed to be in an atmosphere where they didn't feel intimidated. They were used to coming here. They knew what the housing authority was, what the agency was about. (Jennifer)

Susan, who worked directly with residents, stated that it was important to provide a familiar learning environment supplemented by eventual transition of the learning environment to the college campus.

> My role was to get the Technical College to come in on site and put together a program so that the students would feel more comfortable. They had not gone to college and weren't very comfortable in that setting at first. And then we decided that, once we let them "wet their feet," we really needed to go on campus and do something there.

Janet, the Technical College stakeholder, acknowledged efforts to accommodate training both on and off public housing property. Her comments explained the reasoning and preference for locating training on the college campus.

> We train CNAs with the housing authority probably two times a year and with the Technical College two times a year. We teach it at the Technical College. We found that, because we taught it here in this setting, it does them better to get away from it (public housing). They can't wear their bedroom shoes and their hair curlers. They can't go home for lunch.

*Content.* The interests of staff and agency stakeholders were accommodated as they negotiated ways to meet the educational needs of residents. Jennifer's Authority decided to build a beauty salon for the cosmetology program, not as a training site but as a business location so those who completed training and were licensed had a facility to start their careers. Jennifer was very proud of this accomplishment. "When the cosmetology idea came up, we wanted to be able

to send ladies to training but we wanted also to be able to have a hair salon in the housing authority for residents run by residents." The cost of having a conveniently located hair salon was passed on to cosmetology graduates.

> The housing authority built a hair salon down the road. Those who graduate, get licensed, and work in the salon agree to pay back $25 a week. That includes the building rent and paying back the money for the training program. (Tasha)

This entrepreneurship philosophy held by Housing staff ensures an additional opportunity to further the interests of the PHA and Executive Director as residents become employed and more nearly self-sufficient.

A combination of staff observations and input from program consultants, agency partners, and resident needs assessment surveys was used to gather the opinions and preferences for the types of employment training programs at Jennifer's authority. Susan, a staff person in Jennifer's authority who worked closely with residents, observed residents "doing hair" (cosmetology) to supplement income.

> A lot of people did hair illegally in their apartments. We put together a cosmetology program to make it legal so they could make money to become self-sufficient and take care of their families and move out and maybe take somebody by the hand and help them to get to the next level. And anything that I was a part of, I did a survey first, several of them actually. Like cosmetology, we did a survey for a couple of years.

Program content is addressed through program activities and formats that provide participants an opportunity to learn and apply knowledge and experiences to become proficient in a particular subject. The cosmetology program required a certified instructor and training facility to teach and prepare future cosmetologist. Since none of the housing authority staff had

cosmetology expertise, another stakeholder had to be added to the planning team. The authority staff found a training facility that would meet the needs of participants and accomplish the authority's interests in providing quality employment training programs. The cosmetology instructors were responsible for determining and structuring program content to meet the state licensing board requirements and their own personal interests. The owner and main instructor of the cosmetology facility participated in the interviewing process to determine which applicants would be suited for the cosmetology program. This instructor, Lila, commented, "I helped set up the materials for the interview questions to be asked, to see if . . . this was something good for them and for me."

Staff and resident participants had no input in determining or structuring content. Tasha, a graduate, expressed concerns about content.

> I thought in cosmetology school they'd teach me something that's new, up-to-date stuff. I didn't understand that they only teach you what you need to know to pass the state board. Other things, it's up to you to learn how to do.

Tasha's perception of program content initially failed to meet her expectations but she was able to use prior experiences and a desire to graduate to fulfill her interest in becoming self-sufficient.

The authority's CNA program was similar to the cosmetology program's need for qualified instructors to design program content. Janet, Technical College representative, gave an example of a CNA program instructor. This instructor was not only certified as a CNA instructor but successful in working with public housing residents.

> The Certified Nursing Assistant class, our Allied Health Department—there has to be someone that has their licenses and practical nursing instructor's certificate certification.

> So we have a lady that has done that for us for the past year. She is real good at knowing how to read our population and determine their needs.

The Technical College's interests are met as they provide quality instruction and content to graduate certified participants.

*Recruitment Challenges and Successes.* Increasing residents' ability to become more self-sufficient is a worthy purpose despite recruitment resistance. Recruitment resistance is based on residents' perceptions of the physical and emotional cost of committing to participate outweighing the perceived benefits. This method of resistance, "What's good for someone according to another," is a way residents use their power of choice, which can result in a decision not to participate. Susan commented on a cosmetology program dropout:

> The one that had the biggest average and did the best hair actually dropped out. It was the peer pressure that actually had her drop out. She wouldn't come to sessions. When she thought she saw me coming, she would avoid me.

Housing staff worked hard to convince residents that their participation in employment training programs would yield successful results. Margaret commented on the amount of energy required on the part of staff, agency partners, and instructors to keep program participation at an acceptable level: "Having enough residents that are interested, keeping their interest, keeping them there the length of class, attitudes . . . just keeping them on track is time intensive." However, the personal satisfaction felt by staff, agency partners, and instructors at graduation ceremonies reinforces a belief that this audience can achieve academic success leading to self-sufficiency.

*Comparison of William's and Jennifer's Employment Training Programs*

A comparison of the two employment training programs revealed differences in size of the authority and available resources, including networking contacts with HUD. William, who was more of an outgoing risk taker, sought federal funding aggressively to benefit from monies available through HUD. National program recognition, a larger quantity of staff, and a sound, visible and respected visibility in the community allowed William greater access to provide an employment training program to meet the needs of the adult learner. In contrast, even though she was not on the national scene, Jennifer utilized resources effectively in a small town with a smaller number of staff to meet the needs of the adult learner. Both William and Jennifer were risk takers in their own way, not only furthering the interests of their authority through negotiation of organizational and personal interests but also making a name for themselves among peers locally and nationally. Of course, resident adult learners benefited because, without William and Jennifer, there would be no programs or authorities.

*Purpose.* The purpose of the employment training programs in both authorities focused on creating training and educational opportunities to move the adult learner toward self-sufficiency. The purpose appeared to have been accomplished, as those two have taken advantage of the opportunities in both authorities. The Boards of Commissioners and Executive Directors bought into HUD's commitment to create welfare-to-work opportunities to move families off welfare rolls and to become less dependent on the federal government for assistance.

*Audience.* The audiences at each authority were the same: low-income African American female adult learners motivated to participate in employment training opportunities to improve their level of self-sufficiency. There was a difference in recruitment of participants because residents in William's authority had greater access to program planning opportunities than the

residents in Jennifer's authority. Even though resident participation was established at both authorities, their voices were present only as a formality or to fulfill a requirement. For instance, during the convening of the stakeholders meeting to discuss the services and programs at the Family Investment Center, only one resident was present, compared to 29 agency and staff stakeholders. A careful review of the minutes of the meetings showed that the resident stakeholder was hardly involved in the process, merely present.

William would respond that previous input from resident leaders was taken into account and included, which is hardly the same as having an active, vocal presence at the planning table. Jennifer's resident leaders never made it to the planning table because the Executive Director and staff had already met with residents, conducted surveys, and mailed information, and those results were shared when Jennifer, staff, and agency partners met to start the program planning process. It is interesting that Jennifer hired a White male consultant to work with her authority to assist them in planning and implementing programs. She depended heavily on his planning expertise and years of experience.

*Location.* The locations of programs were somewhat similar between the two authorities. William located the Family Investment Center within one of the public housing communities. Agencies came on site to render services. Jennifer found funding to build an onsite training facility but the Technical College and the cosmetology school were the sites of most specialized training. The debate about locating sites on or off public housing property centers on issues of transportation and convenience. Regardless of the decision, adult learners must have the motivation and commitment to walk to the community building or travel to the Technical College to participate in the programs. In both authorities, the executive Director took the lead in making that decision, although resident input was considered.

*Content.* Program content was determined by the Executive Director and agency partners who would deliver the employment training programs. Most employment training ,programs such as CNA training or cabinetmaking, have a specific curriculum to be mastered to become certified. Most of the programs at both authorities were certificate programs, except for the cosmetology program, in which passing the state licensing test was a requirement. William's authority encouraged participants and provided resources through the community college for residents seeking Bachelor and Master's degrees.

*Summary*

After careful review of documents, onsite visits, and interviews, and specific program features such as purpose, audience, location, and content, it was clear that the Executive Directors, agency partners, and Jennifer's consultant made the decision about program features. There was involvement of residents but this involvement exerted no strong influence on any of the content areas. Welfare-to-work employment training programs provide the adult learner with new skills and certifications to get a job and become self-supporting. Apparently, the focus is on "fixing the adult learner," not on changing the system so that jobs would be accessible regardless of race, class, or gender issues. Those with the most power are responsible for making the decisions of who and what to fix.

## Third Theme: Program Outcomes Maintain Organizational Power and Interests

Evaluating program outcomes while the program is in progress or focusing on the results or outcomes becomes an important planning feature that should not be overlooked or downplayed. Evaluating involves making a judgment about the value or worth of an educational program. Stakeholders involved in the planning process make judgments about the success or

failure of program outcomes. Review of the documents and the content of interviews for Jennifer's and William's authorities revealed no formal evaluation discussion or process to determine the success of employment training programs. Programs were developed to meet the needs of residents and encourage self-sufficiency and upward mobility. The success of employment training programs seemed to focus on how many people participated and how well they met the self-sufficiency goal.

*William's Housing Authority*

William's authority's advisory boards were made up of key stakeholders who reviewed program accomplishments and offered recommendations for ongoing improvement. One of the earlier successes in William's authority was the creation of Project RISE, in which residents became employed through the Resident Development Component. Businesses already started and/or planned included janitorial services, computer training and data entry, catering, day care, and personal services. One resident, a graduate of Project RISE, operates a catering business in which she employs two part-time residents; this business provides food service to many housing authority functions. This is a good example of achieving self-sufficiency and upward mobility.

Alice described the success of the FSS program for resident participants.

> We have about nine people now that are awaiting final escrow disbursement. And the total money that they have, those nine, [is] maybe about $30,000. So we give away a whole lot of money to people who have worked hard to accomplish their goals.

William evaluated the success of programs in his authority as he talked about program success and the satisfaction of his accomplishments.

> We've helped over 400 families to buy their first house. . . . We have two not-for-profit subsidiaries that build and sell single-family houses, and so we're helping people to buy

> houses all over town, but we're also in some neighborhoods to help transform those neighborhoods from vacant abandoned shotgun houses and crack houses to good and stable neighborhoods. I derive an enormous amount of personal satisfaction out of that.

William boasted about the success of the Section 8 program that provides residents a voucher to assist them in paying rent to live anywhere they choose. The vouchers pay a certain amount based on income and family size and the resident pays the remaining cost. The significance of the Section 8 voucher program is that it removes the stigma attached to living in public housing. This program ensures additional benefits to low-income families as they are surrounded by neighbors who are working moderate middle-income families.

> We passed a milestone last year that I think is pretty important. In the experience of making housing authorities feel close to financial experience here, we are now housing more people with Section 8 vouchers than we are with public housing. My anecdotal experience plus the few studies I've seen tend to run the same direction: upward mobility outcomes tend to be better for people on Section 8 than for public housing. (William)

The success pays off in more ways than one.

> We get a lot of paydays in this business. . . . If somebody graduates from the family self-sufficiency program, they get an $18,000 check and they turn around and put $12,000 of it down on a house. That's a payday! We put together $50 million worth of housing, senior housing, mixed-income multifamily housing, lease/purchase single-family housing, $3 million worth of social services . . . . [The resident] gets the grant and brings home the money . . . pulls it off and it happens. That's a payday. That's a big payday! It's pretty addictive, really. (William)

Alice agreed about the successful impact of the Family Investment Center on the lives of families who participate in a variety of programs. The sheer numbers indicate success in Alice's way of thinking. "We do a monthly report every month at the beginning of the month to say how many people we've served monthly. And last month we served about 1,300 people."

In both authorities, one of the indicators of program success is the number of residents who participated in employment training programs who were hired as housing staff. Natalie became a property manager in William's authority after she had obtained a Bachelor's degree in business. Marie, an employee in William's authority, talked about the success of choosing a Resident Commissioner for the housing authority's Board of Commissioners.

> Our resident commissioner was not working or doing anything. She went to school to get her certification to work in child care and is gainfully employed and is doing well. Her whole attitude changed. When she started out before she became a resident commissioner, she wasn't doing anything. And even after she became a resident commissioner she still wasn't. But life went on and she'd been employed. (Marie)

*Jennifer's Housing Authority*

In Jennifer's authority the cosmetology program enrolled four residents and graduated three. Of the three, two passed the state licensing examination. The CNA program with had the largest number of participants experienced a graduation rate of 50%. Tasha, one of the cosmetology graduates who passed the state licensing examination, provided insight into the personal success that she had achieved through the cosmetology program and shared her dreams for the future.

> I've wanted to do hair since I was 14 years old. When the opportunity came, I jumped at it. Now that I have finished, I plan to work with someone in their salon to get the feel of

> the salon and learn the business end so then I can open up my own shop. I'll probably open up a braid salon, because I really like to braid hair. I also want to hire people to work for me and eventually go back to get my license to be a cosmetology instructor.

The cosmetology program was successful, even if only for a few people. Tasha expressed aspirations to become a business owner, whereas the other graduate who was licensed, continued to "do hair" on the side. Both had benefited from the cosmetology program but made different personal decisions as to how to use that training to better their lives. Margaret spoke to the problem of employment in a small-town setting.

> It's real hard in a town this size when we have very few industries anymore. We have offered a food service class. We have offered a [maids] in business class. We have offered cash register training. We have offered the computer, basic computer, and forklift training. A lot of residents don't want to do all these things. They do not want to work in a fast food place. They don't want to be a maid. But when you live in a small area, your employment options are limited.

As Jennifer used her organizational power and interest to negotiate programs and services despite the limits of living in a small town, she has often been met with opposition. She commented on a particular situation involving her renovation program and city officials.

> It continues to be a struggle, mainly because of who I am basically. I just want to share this as just probably getting on another subject, but our utilities are furnished by the city, we have gas. In our renovations of a 14-unit senior community we decided to make them total electric. I got a call from one of the council members who I considered as a real player, [who said], "What are you all doing?" I said, "We only have 14 units over there and we're converting them to total electric. They are all elderly; their families have said

> that if we could possibly do it, to do it because a lot of them are aged. We've had a fire down there. So we're going to do it." And he said that the city manager called and asked, "What's she doing over there. Doesn't she know that she's in? We can make this very difficult for her." I still have these type things going on all the time. By the way, the units are total electric!

William did not mention problems (race and gender) similar to those mentioned by Jennifer when he exercised his power as Executive Director to provide programs and services for his residents.

Both authorities in this study achieved successful program outcomes as some (but not all) residents became employed and more nearly self-sufficient. The organizational power and interests of both authorities were maintained through provision of programs and services. Clarification was realized by investigating how organization interests were negotiated and power used to accomplish desired goals.

*Organizational Interests Achieved*

Both PHAs in this study have organizational needs. An organizational need is reflected in the mission of the PHAs to provide not only affordable housing but programs and services to help residents accomplish a better way of life through education and employment. The need to position the PHA as a champion of people with fewer resources and power translate into fulfilling the organization's interest as a reputable administrator of federal funds and a caring supportive agent for the people whom it serves. Jennifer commented, "That has always been one of our goals to offer training programs, to offer programs that a person can actually earn a living and grow beyond the needs of a housing authority." Residents who accomplished program purposes were more likely to pay higher rents (due to better-paying jobs) and/or move out of

public housing (upward mobility). William commented, “Probably the most significant success we’ve had is that in one 3-year stretch we almost doubled the number of employed people in our neighborhoods.” Here are examples that highlight program success for residents but also feature the two authorities enjoying organizational success financially and politically.

PHAs are continually working to promote a positive image of public housing in their communities. The negative stereotypical images of public housing have not been erased in over 65 years of PHA existence. Susan, a staff planner, noted the importance of exposing the business community to the types of programs offered to residents to eliminate stereotypical assumptions about public housing residents and work. Stereotypical perceptions of potential employers have hindered resident employment.

> In order to open up employment doors, you have to sometimes bring in the community to let them know the people we serve are trainable and responsible and want the same things out of life that they did for their families. (Susan)

Besides maintaining a positive community image, PHAs are graded by HUD in terms of how effectively they manage daily operations. Nationwide, every PHA wants to earn the right to be a HUD High Performer, with a score of 90% or better. This status benefits the PHA financially and reduces future reporting requirements. Alice commented on how the success of the FSS program had impacted their authority’s management scores.

> We have proof that [the programs are] working well because of our C-MAP score. The FSS program plays a significant part in the C-MAP scores. We’ve done well for years. But each year the FSS program would be lacking as far as employment with our residents. This past year we had 100% on our C-MAP because of the collaborative effort

of us going out into the community and bringing in those new businesses and getting them on board with our collaborative effort to employ our residents.

Even as these PHAs work to improve the quality of life for their families, they are indeed attending to their own personal and organizational interests to make the PHA look good. The two PHAs used organizational power to allocate resources to provide programs and services.

*Planning Process Maintains Organizational Power and Interests*

The one thing that may not be clear at this point in the research is an explanation and analysis of the planning process that took place at the two PHAs. Both Executive Directors, who saw themselves as the most important person at the planning table, highlighted their power in the planning process.

> The most important person around the planning table in my case is me. I have to be able to meet all the challenges that come as a result of the program. . . . I have to have it planned out in my mind and stay comfortable and let everyone else see that, regardless of what else transpired, we'll get through it. I say that because, when we bring the partners in for the meeting, they're still looking at my reaction and what we're [PHA] going to do. And the residents too, even though it's a program that they have had input into, they still look for me to have the answer of where we go from here. (Jennifer)

Jennifer acknowledged her position of power as Executive Director. She is authorized to take the lead in convening and working with other stakeholders to accomplish the planning process. Also embedded in her comments was a recognition of her ability to assess challenging and difficult situations by remaining in control.

William responded to the question of who is the most important person around the planning table:

> The question is now, do I say something politically correct or do I say something that is true? The truth, which is not what I would hope it would be, but the truth is that usually it's me. Usually, it's me because I'm the convener. This power comes in several different ways. I'm the convener. As the convener, I have the power to bring to the table. As convener, I very often have the role of being able to at least state the terms of the problem. That doesn't mean that my point of view is necessarily going to win out. But when you're the convener, you start setting the agenda anyway. Second, for better or for worse, if you have long-term relationships and you have had a very positive relationship with your principal partners, there is a considerable amount of power that accretes to that natural. People give you . . . you don't have to seize authority or be authoritarian.

William appeared to be very clear about his power in the planning process. He described his "take charge nature" as being well received because of his previous relationships with other stakeholders. It is apparent that he feels that in his community he is perceived as a respectful leader at the planning table. William, like Jennifer, acknowledged that they are in positions of power but, even more so, they are seen as powerful planners.

*Jennifer's planning process.* Jennifer's planning process does not necessarily start at a physical planning table or with a specific problem or need.

> It starts with I guess us . . . first of all applying for the grant and then taking it to the residents to see what they're interested in. My role as the overall Director is to provide guidance . . . . No. 1: guidance, research, implementation; I'm always there. When we start a program, I'm there to make sure that we've covered all the groundwork and laid the foundation. I'm the Executive Director who wants this to work. I believe in the person in the program knowing who I am. (Jennifer)

Jennifer's statements showed that she understands the importance of having funding to make programs happen. She clearly described her role and how she exercises her power. Jennifer places emphasis on the involvement of residents in the beginning stages of the process. Evidently, she has a good relationship with her residents because she recognizes their place in planning and has a reputation for listening to them.

Jennifer used a planning strategy that involved a consultant. The consultant was hired to conduct research and pull together the partners and resources to plan the program.

> We used a consultant to really help develop the program. I don't know where we would be without his insightfulness because he had a desire really to . . . residents were everything, I mean they deserved everything just like everybody else. Even when we lost all the funding and everything, he was out there on the forefront trying to find other resources for us. He would always tell me, "Well, Jen, you know you are so ahead of everybody else. You see the vision." (Jennifer)

One of the reviewed documents was his planning timetable for the Construction/Building Renovations Training, indicating the task to be completed, staff schedule, start and finish dates, and evidence of completion.

In the initial stages of planning there never seemed to be a real planning table for all stakeholders to come together. The process appeared fragmented, with smaller stakeholder meetings: Executive Director and consultant; Executive Director, consultant, and staff; Executive Director and residents; Housing Staff and residents. The cosmetology program illustrates the typical program planning process at Jennifer's authority.

Susan and other staff realized that some women heads of household made extra money by "doing hair" (wash, roll and set, relaxers, braids, etc.) in their apartments. Staff communicated with the Executive Director, who was already familiar with this situation.

> We did a survey of residents to see what their interests would be. Well, actually we always begin with the residents. We see what they're interested in. If we made the decision and say, "Oh, this program would be good for you," then the program would probably be a bust. So when the cosmetology idea came up, we wanted to be able to send the ladies to training but we wanted also to be able to have a hair salon in the housing authority for residents run by residents. (Jennifer)

Jennifer and staff decided to provide more than training but also a business opportunity that would allow graduates to "do hair" legally and eventually increase their income. According to Susan, who worked directly with the residents, using surveys was the most effective manner of finding out what residents were interested in. "Anything that I was a part of, I did a survey first, several of them actually on different occasions. Like cosmetology, we did a survey for a couple of years."

Jennifer began looking in the local community for a cosmetology school to set up a partnership to train public housing residents to become licensed cosmetologists. While Jennifer worked on negotiating the contract with the instructor and owner of the cosmetology school, Susan began to work on the logistics of providing supportive services for those who would participate. Supportive services included child care, transportation, and counseling. Susan needed the involvement of Jennifer when she invited agency partners to come together to provide supportive services. The Department of Family and Children Services was one of the agencies that came together to support this training effort. Susan expressed that she was frustrated at

stakeholders meetings because of power issues. Her tone of voice indicated that she had not been pleased with how agency stakeholders handled negotiation of interests and power.

> The process would work best if you let the people that are involved in dealing with the residents directly handle it. That always seems to be where we had rocky roads was when the bosses came in. . . . Yes, because it seemed like every boss wanted to be in control. Every boss wanted to show that they were the boss. Instead of focusing on what we were there for, which was to help the residents, serve the residents, to give to the residents, we spent a lot of time deciding who was going to do what.

Susan may not have realized the importance of having Jennifer at the table with all other agency stakeholders. What Susan observed and participated in was the negotiation of interests and the use of power to position stakeholders advantageously in the planning process. She understood the political nature of planning decisions, but politics was not something that she played well in the Human Services arena. Jennifer, as Executive Director, understood what was going on because she too sat in a position of power with other powerful leaders.

The residents were not at the table at this point in the process. An MOU between the Technical College and the Resident Council at Jennifer's authority was apparently an effective way to involve the residents; however, the signature page told another story. Only the Executive Director and the College President had signed the document. The Executive Director was the contracting agent for the authority. While the MOU appeared to be between the Resident Council and the Technical College, in reality it was the between the PHA and the Technical College. Tasha, the cosmetology graduate, had only attended one resident meeting and expressed a lack of knowledge about the involvement of residents in the planning process.

> As I got further along in the cosmetology course, I learned that they had a resident council. But I didn't know how they went about sitting down to plan unless they sent a survey out to the apartments and asked which courses were most wanted.

When asked how she would contribute to the planning process if asked to do so, Tasha responded, "I'd love to be a part of the process. I would tell them to go out to the residents . . . . Just go out to them and listen to them and see what classes they would like to have."

Tasha expressed concern about having to pay for the training.

> It helps when you read the contract before signing. I signed understanding that I would have to pay the money back, but then I thought we didn't because this was the first course. But you have to pay the money back. And I didn't really get the understanding until midpart of the course and I dropped out, but it's okay. Just make sure you understand everything that they say.

Clause 8 of the contractual agreement among the PHA, the Resident Council, and the cosmetology participant stipulates that a participant who quits or is removed from the program must reimburse the PHA $688 (for the tool kit, registration, and application fees) and repay any portion of the tuition fee ($1,612) incurred on behalf of the participant at the rate of $25 per week for 104 weeks or until the $2,600 cost of the training is repaid.

Participants were not misled because they signed the contractual agreement. There appeared to be a lack of understanding. This contract was signed by the president of the Resident Council, the Executive Director, and the participant. This is the first employment training program in which participants had to repay the money invested in their training. This may be a reason why so few people participated, even though many more expressed an interest and could have benefited.

Jennifer's PHA provided successful employment training programs for residents who participated. She provided excellent strong leadership to negotiate her personal interests and maintain organizational interest and power.

*William's planning process.* William's planning process consistently convened at the planning table. As he stated, he is usually the convener for "diversifying our program mix and program stock with nontraditional programs." William had realized over the years as Executive Director that he could not accomplish personal and organizational goals without involvement by others, including housing staff, agency partners, and residents.

> To some extent as an institution we became a victim of our own success in that we wound up with people who had it comparatively easy to make it up and out, which left us with the folks that were going to have a harder time. That meant that, instead of just getting out of the way and letting it happen, we had to do things like work with the Georgia Department of Labor and Goodwill Industries and the Department Education, the Board of Education

As William began to conceptualize the idea of a Family Investment Center, he began the process of introducing key stakeholders to the possibilities.

> We had tried to sell the idea to everybody of the creation of the Family Investment Center. We already had a facility. We already had a consensus among our partners what ought to be done in that facility. And so we put together a winning application for the building, secured the support of more than two dozen different agencies. We chose the power of the idea of bartering space for services. . . . I insinuated myself into the national planning process for the Family Investment Center grant so that, when they did issue the

> notice of funds availability, it had my Housing Authority tattooed all over it, which is something that you get the opportunity to do sometimes.

William's accomplishments came as a result of his involvement with HUD and Congress and his clever use of personal interests and power to position his PHA locally and nationally to receive financial, social, and political support. His accomplishments came as no surprise. He had already reported how he got his first supervisor at HUD to agree to put him on his staff and that he was a successful grant writer who wrote and received grant monies from places other than HUD. He was a White man in complete control of his circumstances who had been in positions of power since his first job with HUD.

William's PHA was marked by the strong relational strategy that he had used from the beginning of his career as an Executive Director and throughout his tenure to date to change how community members and residents viewed the housing authority as they were invited to "sit at the table of change" to make life better for the residents.

> It's our conscious strategy, which I constantly communicate to our people: we want to be . . . thoroughly integrated in this community. Part of that was the philosophy I had from the very beginning, but it got really emphasized when I got here and I could see how isolated the housing authority was. The housing authority didn't have a friend in the world! Its residents didn't have a friend in the world. And there was this tendency to treat the housing authority like some kind of Indian reservation out west: "These people aren't really citizens of our city. They're not citizens of our community. They're on this federal property over here. Let the federal government worry about them." And we worked really hard in breaking that down. (William)

Milton, a long-time agency partner, commented about William and his leadership at the PHA:

> We've been collaborating with the housing authority ever since I've been involved and even before then. I was on the Board for about 8 years before I became Executive Director. So my total association has been over 25 years with the organization. And all that time we've been working with the housing authority. It has proven to be one of the most innovative and in the Southeast and in the country.

Some programs were impacted significantly due to William's use of power. Marie reported an incident in which the conflict between William and an agency's director. The organization that was created using William's power was dissolved based on William's use of power.

> EETP [Employment Educational Training Program] started out as just a staff person who is going to run this educational and employment training program. . . . So it started off as a program called Project RISE and it was overseen by a young African American with a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of zest for getting things done [but] somewhere along the way the relationship went south. . . . I have observed that personal conflict can sometimes undermine a program that is good because you and I don't see eye to eye about something, and in the business world that's going to happen. . . . Something went wrong between the relationship between him and the Executive Director. And the Executive Director of course reported directly to the Board and has a way to explain whatever was going on. (Marie)

Alice used a metaphor to describe the political environment in which the use of power to further personal interests affects staff and the programs.

> The political environment is very scenic. . . . And that's difficult for me because we are a social services department. So that's has left kind of a—it's very difficult. It's like trying to twist a brick wall. . . . If that leader is not particularly pleased with you for whatever reason, then it's kind of hard to get the support that we need. That's what I mean by twisting a brick wall: You know the services are needed but it's kind of hard to get the support because you are the one that's leading it. . . . Or I'm not informed about things that other people know about. Here I'm leading programs and don't know about those things. (Alice)

Alice recognized first-hand how the leader of the organization uses power to control funding and information that affects the ability of staff to perform their roles effectively. Alice chose to make programs work to the best of her ability, despite having to "twist a brick wall."

Minutes of the first strategy meeting for the Family Investment Center recorded that 28 people were in attendance. Besides agency partners, there was one resident leader and eight housing authority staff, including William. The meeting took place on Housing Authority property around a large conference table (the minutes included a picture). The minutes were very thorough, capturing the concerns and suggestions of those present. For example, "William welcomed everyone and explained the proposed Family Investment Center would be a multipurpose neighborhood center with focus on education, job development, upward mobility and business development."

William convened the meeting and set the agenda for the planning session. Almost every agency represented at the planning table had had a longstanding positive relationship with William and the Housing Authority. William shared how he envisioned the Family Investment Center working in conjunction with the partners around the table. Each representative suggested

what his or her agency would bring to the table. Twenty-seven agencies and organizations were at the planning table when William convened them to design the content of programs and services at the Family Investment Center. Twenty-one programs focused on adult residents and six programs focused on children and youth. There was overlap in the provision of services. Grouping those services in the following manner clarifies how these programs influenced the organizations' quest toward participants' upward mobility and economic self-sufficiency: (a) assessment services (career, educational, employment, entrepreneurial); (b) training (academic, employment, vocational, computer, entrepreneurial); (c) personal growth (life skills, self-esteem, motivation, parenting, drug and alcohol abuse, health); (d) counseling (career, employment, individual counseling); (e) employment placement; and (f) personal health management (high blood pressure and diabetes, food).

One agency partner called for an assessment survey study. William stated that it was up to the group to do the study.

> The agencies and residents in the group were well aware of the needs of the individuals who would use the center. He [William] also stated that the grant application included input from the Resident Advisory Board and Resident Associations. (from the minutes)

William did not hesitate to inform the agency representative that the needs assessment had been done and that the people whom the center would serve were already a part of the process. Resident involvement was evident. Pictures of the Family Investment Center planning retreat showed resident leaders present. The retreat participants were responsible for making preliminary decisions concerning the allocation of space within the building. The group toured the space used by existing agencies and the remainder of undeveloped space.

All interviewees from William's authority mentioned William's involvement with residents. He created an Advisory Council of leaders; later, the Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) was formalized to oversee programs and activities at the Family Investment Center. According to Alice's description of who served on the PCC, the committee was made up of mostly female resident leaders and agency representation, with fewer Black members than White members.

> We have very few male representation as far as the residents on the PCC. We have a lot of female representation. And I would say the makeup of the resident participation as far as the leaders that attend the PCC committee meetings would be two Caucasians and maybe three or four African Americans who attend the PCC committee . . . we do have some males as far as the agency partners are concerned. We have about four or five males and then the rest are females. So we have about maybe 30 people on the PCC that meet quarterly to discuss programs and activities. (Alice)

The minutes of the first planning meeting were well organized, with the secretary recording what each agency would contribute to the Family Life Investment Center in terms of staff and other resources. One of the major concerns expressed in the written comments of each agency had to do with the outreach capabilities to ensure resident participation. Careful analysis of the minutes showed an orderly consensual planning process.

This group of agency representatives, staff, and the one resident leader all came to the table with personal and organizational interests. The minutes did not record how stakeholders at this planning table negotiated their interests. The use of power was evident as members promised financial, personnel, and other resources to support the Family Investment Center. William

skillfully navigated the negotiation and power plays at the table so resident participants became winners through the Family Investment Center.

## Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to describe the program planning process in the development of welfare-to-work employment training programs for female African American public housing residents. The analysis of the program planning process included analysis of the relationships of stakeholders involved in the planning, program features, and program outcomes. Data analysis revealed that relationships of power formed through the negotiation of personal and organizational interests shaped whose interests mattered in the planning process. The relationships of power included Congress, HUD, two Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, the two Executive Directors, housing staff, agency partners, and resident leaders. Those relationships revealed an asymmetrical power structure. The program features, such as purpose, content, audience, and location, reflected the power and interests of those with the most power. These program features evolved into an employment training program in which stakeholders' power, interests, ethical commitments, and negotiation produced program features that had educational and political outcomes for stakeholders.

# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand how power relations shaped welfare-to-work employment training programs for African American public housing residents. The following questions guided this study:

1. How do relationships of power shape whose interests are represented in the planning process?

2. How are stakeholders' interests expressed in specific features of the training program?

3. How are stakeholders' power and interests reflected in program outcomes?

To understand the program planning process in the development of welfare-to-work employment training programs for female African American public housing residents, the most appropriate research design was deemed to be a critical qualitative methodology with a comparative case study design.

Instead of looking at one PHA program planning process in the development of welfare-to-work employment training programs, I chose two PHAs under the leadership of Executive Directors who were of different races and genders. One Executive Director was an African American female and the other was a White male. Commonalities between the housing authorities were (a) 97% of the population served were single African American female heads of households (b)both authorities provided a wide variety of programs and services, (c) the housing authorities and their Executive Directors were cutting-edge leaders in housing programs on the local and state levels, (d) residents were organized and had a place in the planning process, and

(e) both authorities were controlled by federal regulations and local Board of Commissioners' governing policies. The differences between the authorities were (a) the number of residents served—one was a large authority and the other a smaller one, (b) access to community resources was limited for the smaller authority, and (c) each Executive Director's race and gender influenced organizational leadership.

Interviewees were 15 stakeholders who were involved in the program planning process of these two authorities. They represented the planning team that consisted of the executive directors, lead planners, social services coordinators, residents, and agency liaisons. This was purposeful sampling according to Cervero and Wilson's (1998) identification of the key stakeholders in planning processes. Data collection consisted of interviews, each lasting about 1 to 2 hours, observations during the interviews, and observations of the daily operations of the employment training programs. I reviewed historical documents of the planning process, grant applications, work plans, and various correspondence.

The data were analyzed using the constant comparative analysis to develop categories and themes (Creswell, 2003). Analysis resulted in findings addressing three major findings: (a) the stakeholders' power is relational and multi-dimensional, (b) specific program features represent the interests of the stakeholders with the most power, and (c) program outcomes maintain organizational power and interests.

The first finding described how the results of the power struggle between various groups determined whose interests mattered in providing services and programs for public housing families. The winners' interests during negotiations mattered more than those of others, even if others benefited in some way. For example, the Executive Directors entered into partnerships with agencies to provide services and programs. This action advanced the organizational

interests of the housing authorities and the personal interests of the Executive Directors; they also benefited the residents who actually received the services and programs.

The second finding suggested that the Executive Directors, agency partners, and a consultant made decisions about program features: purpose, audience, location, and content. The welfare-to-work employment training programs, in the attempt to provide new skills and increased employability, actually focused on "fixing the adult learner." Those with the most power were responsible for making the decisions about who and what to "fix."

The third finding demonstrated that the organizational power and interests of the housing authorities, through both Executive Directors, were maintained concerning whose interests mattered more in the development of employment training programs, regardless of input by agencies, businesses, and residents.

## Conclusions

This study is significant based on the use of a critical theoretical frame to understand what really mattered in planning welfare-to-work employment training programs for public housing residents. To provide a comprehensive background to the study in regard to relevant political, social, theoretical and practice, literature from three significant areas was reviewed.

First, the implications of welfare social policy—its definition, history, myths and realities, and political, racial, and social ramifications of the PRWORA legislation designed to increase the employment and self-sufficiency of welfare recipients—were reviewed. The literature revealed a long history of demonizing the welfare single mother by blaming her for her impoverished condition. This practice has been observed from the colonial period to the present. African Americans and other people of color continue to be affected by racist ideologies and practices of European Americans who claim superiority and dominance over those who are not

White. A careful look at the labor market and employment studies reveals continued racism that hinders employment opportunities and career advancement. The “work first” philosophy overshadows the realization that postsecondary education is a more reliable ticket out of poverty for those who are receiving welfare assistance.

Second, through a critical analysis of living in a racialized society, the impact of race and racism was reviewed. The reason for the focus on race and racism relates to the fact that the adult learners in this study were African American residents living in public housing. Because of who they were and where they lived, in conjunction with receiving welfare assistance, a discussion of race and racism was relevant. This allowed for a greater understanding of how racism exists and matters in all aspects of life, including creation and enforcement of social welfare policies and in the field of adult education. A review of the sociology and psychology literature confirmed the presence of stereotypes and racist behaviors, even with challenging statistics and relevant research to the contrary. European Americans have rationalized the treatment of Blacks and other minorities from the beginnings of this nation to maintain a racial hierarchal relationship in which White is superior and dominant and African Americans and other people of color are inferior and subordinate. The literature on the topic of race and racism is dominated by White authors, writing about the White perspective in an attempt to offer solutions to help Whites to confront their role in maintaining a racist environment.

Third, the literature review examined empirical studies in adult education exploring the theory and practice of program planning. The relevance of this review was the attempt to understand the program planning process to determine whose interests matter in the development of welfare-to-work employment training programs for African American public housing residents. Research has shown that adult education program planning continues to evolve as

more researchers and practitioners pay attention to what they do to plan programs. Being able to articulate the actions and the reasons behind the actions will make for planning more effective programs. The literature in this area is led by research on program planning conducted by Cervero and Wilson, chiefly because of their critical perspective to understand the political work of being a responsible, ethical program planning entity to create a substantive democratic planning environment. The work of Cervero and other critical theorists/practitioners is crucial to understanding whose interests actually matter and whose interests should matter in the development of welfare-to-work employment training programs for African American public housing residents.

The collection and analysis of data led to three conclusions.

1. Racism intersects with other social and organizational hierarchies to shape planning of welfare-to-work employment training programs.

2. The learner's voice in the planning process is overshadowed by the voices of those with greater power, which affects the development of employment training programs.

3. Employment training programs reproduce the political dynamics of the welfare-to-work system by focusing the problem on welfare recipients.

These conclusions are situated within the context of welfare social policy, racism, and adult education literature. Each conclusion is discussed in detail in this section.

*Conclusion 1*

*Racism intersects with other social and organizational hierarchies to shape planning of welfare- to- work employment training programs.*

Program planners, in their various walks of life, are exposed to racism by living in a racialized society in which all people are not treated equally or respected because of their race,

class, or gender. The exposure to racism in everyday life is exhibited through the media's negative portrayal of African Americans and other minorities in television, movies, news stories, or examples of refusal to employ a person because of his or her public housing address, or welfare racism. This inherently historical racist behavior influences the program planner, whose beliefs and values guide decisions.

> Racism and sexism are individual and collective behaviors that are manifest in our society. They are the result of historical processes and of individual and group socialization to various ways of thinking and behaving. They shape the way people experience social relations and practice. (Flannery, 1994, pp. 17-18)

Essed (1991) commented, "Everyday racism and everyday sexism are the integration of racism and sexism into everyday situations through practices (cognitive and behavioral) that activate underlying power relations" (p. 50).

Program planning theory and practice have not focused on the importance of using a racial lens to examine and understand the impact of racism and how the use of racial power in the planning process is manifested. The "invisibility" of racism is very visible.

> [Racism] pervades the nation's politics and culture. And it is devastating in its consequences for all poor people. That something is obvious, however, does not mean that it will be seen or believed, much less acknowledged; people possess a remarkable ability to remain blind to what they choose not to see. (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. 7)

Neubeck and Cazenave provided ample evidence that racism shapes public assistance policies and practices (welfare racism).

A racism-centered perspective is needed to advance understanding of the impact of racism on the planning process, the planners, and the program participants. The "racialized

nature of U.S. society as a whole and the existence of a racial state that has long served as the political instrument of society wide white racial hegemony continues to exist not just in the context of welfare social policy but also for adult education" (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. 13).

When I first identified a research area, welfare-to-work employment training programs in public housing authorities, race, and racism were not focal points of interest. I reflected on my program planning experiences and the concepts of oppression learned in graduate school. I reached a point of acknowledgment of what made my program planning experience different. I realized that I was usually the only African American female in the planning process with mostly White middle-class men and women (more men) who used their power to negotiate personal and organizational interests at the planning table. I could not understand why, at the conclusion of planning programs, the participants did not get what they wanted or needed to bring about positive changes in their lives. Mine was the lone voice in negotiating for more effective program design that met the educational needs of participants. In essence, I was outnumbered by the interests of the White planners. I felt personally discriminated against when voicing my opinions and recommendations. I was often ignored or my ideas were rejected. Despite those ploys to discredit me, I maintained confidence and did not hesitate to share what I thought. I was not aware at the time that I was in the midst of racism in the planning process.

The earlier programming planning research by Cervero and Wilson (1994) mentioned neither race nor racism as issues in their three planning cases. The Phoenix Company, the College of Pharmacy of State University, and the Organization for Persons with Disabilities appeared to be typical organizations representing the business world, education, and nonprofit organizations. The only identifiable difference was in the gender of the primary planners; race

was not identified. It can reasonably be assumed that the reason for the omission of race was that the researcher and primary planners were White. Johnson-Bailey and Cervero's (2000) research indicated that the term *race* is used to refer to every group except White. They concluded,

> Since Whites have for so long been the majority population in the United States and Canada, it might appear to be a simple matter of convenience to forgo naming them as the unidentified subject. But the innocuous practice hides a powerful truth: giving the semblance of normalcy to whiteness accord it power, allowing entity against which all other groups are measured. (p. 149)

Whites are more in denial of racism than any other group (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001; Sue, 2003; Wright, 1998). Being White speaks to racial power and how it is negotiated in a planning situation. The overarching consensus of six adult education researchers on the topic of combating racism and sexism made reference to the power of the knowledge builders in the field of adult education. Flannery (1994) commented, "Knowledge building [in the adult education field] has been conducted primarily from the perspective and according to the standards of White, male, Western European persons" (p. 20).

To understand what matters in planning welfare-to-work employment training programs for African American public housing residents, race and racism are not issues to be overlooked because the participants are African American welfare recipients. Those who come together to plan programs for this group include a people of a variety of races, genders, and backgrounds. Acknowledgement and analysis of the racial power exhibited in this type of planning situation will foster understanding of how racism influences planners and the planning process.

Program planners include housing administrators, housing staff, agency staff, community leaders, and residents. Each planner has a system of beliefs and values that guide actions in

negotiating power and interests to develop welfare-to-work employment training programs (Caffarella, 1994).

These facts about the various components of a welfare-to-work employment training influence planners as they negotiate power (including racial power) and interests (personal and organizational) to plan employment training programs for African American adult learners living in public housing.

*Conclusion 2*

*Learners' voices in the planning process are overshadowed by those with greater power, subsequently affecting the development of employment training programs.*

The findings showed that, even though the learners were involved to a certain extent in the development of features of the employment training programs, their physical voice was normally heard in meetings outside the planning process. Planners with more power listened to and encouraged resident dialogue but also made decisions about the usefulness of resident comments to the planning process. This is not surprising, given their perceptions of welfare recipients.

> *Welfare* has become the code word for the *welfare queen*: the inner-city, young African American mother who has children in order to stay on welfare and produces multiple generations of welfare recipients. These families are characterized by neglect, substance abuse, crime, and delinquency. Poverty is the fault of the individual—in this case, single mothers—rather than the structural forces of society, and welfare has been construed as a major cause of lack of work effort, unwed motherhood, promiscuity, teenage child bearing, school failure, substance abuse, and other forms of deviant behavior. (Rank, as cited in Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007, p. 2)

Throughout the literature the welfare system and welfare recipients are purposely demonized as those benefiting from welfare, who are blamed for being poor and on welfare (Handler & Hasenfeld, 2007; Jacobs & Skocpol, 2005; Mink, 1998; Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001; Quadagno, 1994; Schram, 2002; Schram et al., 2003). When planners buy into and accept the perceived stereotypical characteristics of welfare recipients, how likely are they (non welfare planners) to want to work with recipients at the planning table as stakeholders in the program planning process? To work together, planners must be willing to listen and hear one another's perspectives based on life experiences. Otherwise, recipients' voices are dismissed in the face of power. Learners' voices in the planning process are overshadowed by those with greater power, subsequently affecting the development of employment training program features.

Cervero and Wilson (2006) noted the need for planners to have a substantive role in making decisions at the planning table. Their comment illustrates the plight of those with less power (resident planners): "Our theory recognizes that structured inequalities not only keep people away from the table, but also generally allow, a 'token' rather than 'substantive' representation for those people with little power who are present at the table" (p. 3).

The Executive Directors in this study utilized similar strategies for involving resident leaders in the planning of employment training welfare-to-work programs. Each PHA selected leaders to participate in an Advisory Board Council or President's Council that met regularly (monthly or quarterly) with the Executive Director and key authority staff to discuss concerns and hear important updates. Therefore, both Executive Directors utilized some of the key leaders in their respective councils to provide input into planning welfare-to-work employment training programs.

One PHA had its Resident Commissioner attend the interagency team planning meeting, where the logistics of program planning were agreed on. That was the first and last time that individual was involved in the planning as a direct planner who could use his/her voice to express opinions. Also in that same PHA, the resident leaders had more opportunities to share in decision making with housing staff and the Executive Director. The comments during the interviews were very positive about the relationship with the Executive Director and his willingness to value the opinions of residents.

The other PHA Executive Director involved her residents only when it was necessary to do so. Staff made the effort to contact residents via surveys to determine what programs and training interested them. It appears that this PHA had active resident organizations with committed leaders, but they met more to solve problems and give input to the Executive Director on an as-needed basis.

One of the participants in the employment training program was not involved at all in the planning of the program. The chance for her voice to be heard was dismissed because of her lack of knowledge about her rights to be a part of the planning process. The resident participant acknowledged receipt of notices about neighborhood resident meetings but she never attended. She learned about the authority's cosmetology program through an aunt who also lived in public housing. When asked why she did not participate, she said that the meetings were boring and that they never got anything accomplished. (Her generalizations were based on attendance at only one meeting.)

The fact that all planning did not occur at a physical planning table also hindered residents' voices. Only one PHA had all planners convene as a large planning group with the resident leader as the representative. The minutes of that planning meeting showed that the

resident leader did not speak much; she appeared to be in agreement with what everyone said. One of the agency partners commented during his interview that the leader of the meeting must be sensitive to making residents feel comfortable in a participatory meeting setting with other agency personnel. Based on interviews and interactions with each Executive Director, both appeared to value the opinions of resident leaders and genuinely wanted them to be involved as much as possible in developing employment training programs.

While one Executive Director had entered into a contract between the Resident Council and the local community college to provide services, the only signatures on the contract were those of the Executive Director, the contracting agent for the PHA, and the contracting agent for the community college.

The actions of both Executive Directors, who had the most power in planning welfare-to-work programs, indicated that they valued involvement and input by their resident leaders. At times during the interviews and based on casual observations, it seemed that the resident leaders were content with the level of involvement afforded them by those with more power. Resident leaders exercised their power somewhat in the planning process but did so without adverse conflicts. They settled for what they thought was best for them being determined by the power and interests of others, namely the Executive Directors.

When the latest welfare reform legislation underwent radical change, the voices of welfare recipients were not heard. Some legislators and advocates spoke on behalf of the recipients, voicing concerns about those whom they represented. If this is the closest to expressing the interests of welfare recipients, then it is probably better than nothing. However, no one can speak for someone else in the way that a person can articulate personal interests. Once people have been beaten down, disrespected, and demonized by society and blamed for

their impoverished condition, they must find courage to accept responsibility for speaking out regardless of what others think or say. One of the interviewed resident leaders spoke out and stood her ground with the Executive Director regardless of his position of power over her. She knew that she had rights and felt comfortable in exercising her power as a resident leader. She was confident that standing up to the Executive Director would eventually result in the right action by the executive Director.

*Conclusion 3*

*Employment training programs reproduced the political dynamics of the welfare-to-work system by focusing the problem on welfare recipients.*

The findings indicate that program outcomes maintain organization power and interests. The conclusion is that the employment training programs reproduced the political dynamics of the welfare-to-work system by focusing on the problems of welfare recipients. The development of welfare-to-work programs intend to "fix" the welfare recipient to become more self-sufficient through employment and less dependent on welfare: the same as the purpose of the latest welfare reform.

Both PHAs in this study produced employment training programs that appeared successful in terms of providing resources to educate and train residents to become employed and self-sufficient. Even though there were no formal evaluation standards in place to determine measurable success, the employment training programs produced by the two PHAs provided education and training and employment opportunities for those who participated. As usual, more residents could have benefited by participating. There appeared to be a level of resistance on the part of residents, many of whom refused to participate in self-sufficiency programs. Housing staff who worked closely with their residents provided this insight. Staff who had been residents

and now had become employees of the housing authority provided encouragement and support as living role models.

In the historical context of welfare, the United States has always had a problem with the poor, regardless of the legitimacy of their cause for being poor. The welfare program was not initially labeled a Black program, especially in the earlier years, because African American women who were not married or widowed were seen an undeserving of assistance. In the years leading to 1995, welfare became a controversial political topic that reminded everyone again that this was perceived as a Black program. African American women of all socioeconomic statuses found themselves stereotyped with negative qualities associated with so-called “welfare queens” (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. 3). The review of the literature in this study revealed that welfare program and welfare recipients are looked on unfavorably because of stereotypical beliefs about the welfare program and those who receive assistance. This overarching sentiment is tied to race and racism so strongly that the structure of the last welfare reform made a point to demonize and blame recipients for being poor.

Planners and legislators have failed to mention that the welfare program has not been intended to be a poverty reduction program; the main point of welfare reform has been to change the behavior of recipients by requiring that recipients go to work. The purpose of developing employment training programs was to prepare welfare recipients for work. The perception is that poor people are not working or not working hard enough to move beyond the need for welfare assistance. In the current period of high unemployment many forget that there have never been enough jobs in the United States for at least one person in every family to work full time (Bartik, 2001). The poor and disadvantaged need millions of jobs to move closer to the employment rates of White males in the past or to bring all families out of poverty.

Labor supply policies seek to alter the behavior of low-income Americans by increasing their labor supply or job skills. Labor demand policies seek to alter the behavior of employers by increasing employment (Bartik, 2001). Minorities struggle to find jobs regardless of a booming economy or a major recession.

The quantity of employment training programs has increased dramatically due to the requirements of the latest welfare reform. Working together to promote quality employment training programs has generated challenges. Providing a mixed strategy that addresses basic education, job search skills, and employability skills is a sound idea, but the reluctance of companies to hire Black workers from the inner city (Bartik, 2001; Moss & Tilly, 2001) or those who are welfare recipients because of the common stereotypes reduce the potential effectiveness of employment training programs.

The employment training programs examined in this research provided very good training opportunities for those who took advantage of them. The decision to create a one-stop shop employment training program located in one of the larger public housing neighborhoods benefited the families. The program design met the needs of those who participated and the energy and encouragement of staff made a difference. The creativity and willingness to provide nontraditional employment training opportunities, along with setting up a business for program graduates, were exceptional. However, with all of the coaching and encouragement by staff, participation was limited and graduation rates were at 50% in on PHA.

The political dynamics that changed welfare to reduce the welfare rolls could be seen as successful. Yet, the same political dynamics are at work in employment training programs and educational opportunities to accomplish the same thing. People are provided opportunities to go only as far as the dominant culture wants them to go, without real success. It becomes a matter of

control: maintaining racial hierarchies to subordinate minorities as inferior and to elevate European Americans as superior.

*Summary*

This section presented and discussed the three major conclusions that were formed based on the findings of this study. The first conclusion was that racism shapes the panning process in developing welfare-to-work employment training programs. The second conclusion was that learners' voices in the planning process are overshadowed by the development of employment training programs. The third conclusion was that employment training programs reproduce the political dynamics of the welfare-to-work system by focusing on welfare recipients. These conclusions were supported by and contributed to social welfare policy and adult education literature. These contributions provide greater understanding of social welfare policy and what really matters in the continuing development of welfare policies that affect thousands of people on and off welfare. These conclusions contribute to the literature on adult education program planning theory and practice.

## Implications of the Findings

This section address implications of the study findings in three areas: (a) social welfare policy, (b) understanding and combating racism, and (c) adult education theory and practice. The conclusions presented in this study provide valuable information to researchers, educators, politicians, and practitioners and can expand the knowledge base and skills in these areas.

*Implications for Social Welfare Policy*

America's social welfare policy was revamped in 1996 with the passage of the PRWORA. This massive legislation represents the most comprehensive reform of a major public policy in U.S. history (Rodgers, 2000). PRWORA's goal was not to reduce poverty but to

decrease the number of welfare recipients dependent on cash assistance. This study confirmed that some features of the reform produced significant achievements, such as reducing the number of welfare recipients nationwide, emphasizing work over welfare, and focusing on individual responsibility. The features that have not worked so well include failure of work to pay, lack of employment opportunities, the choice of the work-first philosophy over education (human capital development), and unequal and biased application of sanctions (Friedlander & Burtless, 1995; Hombs, 1996; Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001; Rodgers, 2000; Seefeldt, 2002).

Only a few researchers have been bold enough to name racism as an issue in the development and implementation of welfare social policy.

> Race and racism still play a major role in determining who is poor, who is in need of public assistance, who faces extreme poverty and whom is likely to be the most hurt as the economic cycle enters into the next recession. (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. 219)

The findings of this study are supportive of Neubeck and Cazenave's research. The U.S. society is a racialized society where race and racism flourish in all aspects of daily life, including politics and policies. Many people are in denial, relying on "racism blindness," a term used by Neubeck and Cazenave to describe claims that America is color blind. However, as shown by the results of this study, colorblindness is not an option. What racism blindness accomplishes is the fact that it "ignores the powerful impact that systemic white racism has on deterring who is poor in the United States, but damages all people by helping to shape the nation's response to poverty" (Smedley, 1999, as cited in Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001, p. 221).

Researchers are challenged to name the problem of racism and its detrimental effect on all society in an attempt to change the perceptions and attitudes of those in powerful positions

and to change the perceptions and attitudes of those in poverty to believe that society can overcome racism.

*Implications for Understanding and Combating Racism*

This study revealed that racism mattered, not just in the program planning process or with welfare social policy, but in all aspects of society. This is just the beginning of understanding more fully the influence of racism on the adult education program planning process. For instance, Drennon and Cervero recorded a racial incident in one of their adult literacy programs. One of the instructors "used the term wigger. When the African American women sitting at the adjacent table asked, 'What is a wigger?' Jean responded matter-of-factly a 'White n----'" (as cited in Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 15). The range of reactions was great among participants. Even the group leader did not know what to do. Finally, at the end of the program (in e-mail format), the African American who asked for the meaning of *wigger* responded:

> Jean's white n comment had no place in what we were trying to accomplish. I made no comment on the evaluation because I needed time to think about how I felt about the comment. I didn't say anything about it because I didn't want to disrupt the session. But, having had time to think about it, and my own values and beliefs, I still feel the same way . . . OFFENDED. (p. 16)

Drennon made little attempt to handle the situation because of uncertainly in how to proceed. Had I been the group leader, I would have addressed the situation immediately to expose the reason for such a word and its meaning, which is rooted in racism, and to validate the feelings of those in the class who were concerned about the incident.

This incident is mentioned here to acknowledge the power of racism not just in the program planning process but in all areas of society. There is a need to know how to handle the

ugly effects of racism. Further research should focus on how to help planners and practitioners to cope effectively with racism. Racism matters in planning welfare-to-work employment training programs for African American public housing residents. Even though some hold that racism will never go away (Bell, 1992), Blacks, Whites, and other minorities must have a plan for how to overcome racism. Sue (2003) recommended several ways in which White people can take personal responsibility to overcome personal racism:

> Learn about people of color from sources within the group, learn from healthy and strong people of the culture, learn from experiential reality, learn from the constant vigilance of your biases and fears and finally learn from being committed to personal action against racism. (p. 204)
>
> It takes power to make the greatest and most effective demand on power and to extract concessions from it. That means it is going to take effective national, regional, and local Black ethnic community power to move against White racist power in America. This power is part of the White over Black structure and system and functions from it, specifically from the racist-inundated, highly centralized institutions that are a part of that structure and system. (Wright, 1998, p. 178)

Adult educators must acknowledge that racism exists and that everyone has a role to play in confronting racism. According to Bailey, Tisdell, and Cervero (1994), “The power relations in higher education, adult education, and the professionalization reflect the power relations of society. Change is difficult, and therefore slow, but it is not impossible” (p. 74). Colin (1994) contended that, “before we can confront the issue of societal racism, member of the professoriate must first confront the racism that is reflected in their perceptions of and attitudes toward people of color and determine how racism is acted out” (p. 59). When adult educators pay attention to

their practices, they will identify why they do what they do. Greater reflections will result in a willingness to respond responsibly and ethically to make the world a better place for all people.

*Implications for Adult Education Theory and Practice*

This study has significant implications for adult education theory and practice. First, the study challenges adult education theorists and researchers to question the relevancy of how racism shapes the planning process. Adult educators must admit to the powerful concept that racism still matters. They must pay attention to their practices so that they become aware of how their construction of knowledge and exercise of power either reproduces or maintains a system of dominance and subordination of races. Cervero and Wilson, in all of their research, have critically unraveled what happens in the program planning process by simply paying attention to practices in the field of adult education.

The fact that racism is not in the foreground of program planning theory or practice does not mean it does not exist. One of the challenges to understanding how racism shapes the planning process is to examine who the stakeholders are at the planning table and whom the planning will impact. To determine what really matters in developing employment training programs for African American public housing adult learners situates racism in the middle of welfare social policy and adult education planning practices. Planners must be capable of understanding the ramifications of racism and not be afraid to cope with its influence in planning situations.

Sork's (2000) definition of a capable planner involves development of understanding and skills in technical, sociopolitical, and ethical domains. The technical domain requires planners to have various techniques to fit planning situations, whereas the sociopolitical domain requires that planners be aware of the "politics of difference that addresses gender, race, class and sexual

orientation that are brought to the planning table so they are important factors in the politics of planning" (p. 178). The ethical domain goes to the core of understanding what a planner does and why. Sork noted a gap in the literature, resulting in the failure to explain what it means to be an ethically capable planner. Sork contended that the planner must "recognize the moral commitments they make when they develop programs. Decisions made about whose interest will be represented, what aims will be pursued, how the learner community will be defined and so on involve making moral commitments" (p. 178). The planner continually challenges thinking and actions and of himself/herself and others involved in the planning process. This returns the discussion to Cervero and Wilson's prescription for planning success: pay attention to practice.

## Recommendations for Future Research

For future research, studies involving housing authorities, welfare agencies, and their constituents would create optimum opportunities to study the dynamics of racial power and to understand how racism intersects with other social and organizational hierarchies to shape planning of welfare-to-work employment training for African American adult learners. Racism intersects with gender and class in adult education program planning by working with multiple organizational hierarchies such as the federal government, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, local boards of commissioners, and staff.

More studies are needed to understand racism in adult education program planning by working with housing authorities, agency partnerships, and residents during the entire planning process of developing educational programs. This research study was done retrospectively, relying on documents and the memories of those who participated in the planning of the identified programs. To have been a part of the actual planning process would have added to the database of information on welfare social policy and adult education. The labor market should be

studied to determine how to meet the needs of the potential employer and employee so that jobs are created and made available to those who want to work. Racism should be considered as a barrier that is used to deter employment for people of color. Welfare social policy should be examined closely to determine how states are working with families in need. The literature confirms that, when states are left in control of their welfare programs, there is an increase in racist actions against African Americans and other minority welfare recipients.

The scholars of the adult education profession must take off the intellectual and philosophical blinders that allow them to believe that racism does not exist or that if it does, scholars remain in denial that they are not racist in thoughts or actions. The only way to know concretely is to continually examine and reflect one's practice. Furthermore, it will require scholars leaving their comfort zone of researching the familiar to seeking out research opportunities that involve African Americans.

The profession of adult education should take the lead in presenting scholarly research that depicts racism as a societal problem intersecting with other social and organizational hierarchies in planning adult learning programs involving African Americans. Adult educators can encourage a serious dialog about the issues of racism not only with multidiscipline professionals but with the African American adult learner, who struggles educationally, economically, and socially to survive the hardships that befall them because of who they are and where they may live. My personal and professional experiences of working with low-income families have been invaluable. The desire to educate by showing genuine respect for all people, regardless of who they are, has enriched my life more than words can say.

Adult educators who value democracy as more than a set of politically correct views will have to become stronger advocates to put into practice the most widely held democratic beliefs.

Scholarly research alone has not made a difference in challenging the stereotypical beliefs about African Americans. Any future changes to the welfare social policy calls for loud, relentless voices of those who advocate for a better understanding of how decisions made by those in power as they control the lives and economic opportunities of African Americans because racism, sexism, and classism continue to pervade a racialized society.

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APPENDIX A

THE DEMOGRAPHICS GUIDE

Interviewees will be asked to complete the following information to provide demographic data. This form will be given to the interviewee to complete before the interview.

Name: ________________________________ Position: ______________________________

Name of organization: _____________________________________

Which of the following best describes your employment status?

______ Employed full-time ______ Employed part-time

______ Unemployed, seeking work ______ Retired

______ Full-time homemaker ______ Other (specify) __________________

Percentage of time spent in each of the following role(s), for example, 20%, and 30%.

______Administrator ______Program planning _______Trainer ______Consultant

______Participant ______Agency/organization partner

Age: _____21-32 _____33-44 _____45-56 _____57 & over

Gender: ____ Female ____ Male

What race do you consider yourself to be: ______Caucasian ______ African American

______Asian ______ Native American ______ Hispanic ______ Multi-racial or other

Educational Achievement: ______ Less than high school ______Some high school

______ High school graduate ______ GED ______Some business or technical school

______ Business or technical school graduate ______ Some college ______ College graduate

Indicate the major area of study in which your degree(s) were earned:

Associate: ______________________________________________________

B.A./B.S.: ______________________________________________________

Master's: ______________________________ Doctorate: __________________________________

## APPENDIX B

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What is your preferred pseudonym? ____________________________________________

1. Describe the educational and training opportunities in your organization for public housing residents?
2. What role do you play in the planning process?
3. What role do participants play in the planning process?
4. Explain the significance of training in your organization?
5. What issues impact your program planning process?
6. What challenges have you faced regarding training or working with people in your organization?
    - Staff
    - Residents
7. How has welfare reform policy changes impacted you specifically and your agency in general?
8. How does employment training impact the lives of participants?
    - Give examples from your background that illustrates this.
    - What is the significance of these examples?
9. Tell me about the most successful employment training program you have been involved with?
10. Why was it successful?

11. What types of participants benefit from employment training programs?
12. Who do you think is the most important person around the planning table?
13. Why do you say that?
14. What other people do you think are important in the process?
15. What other agencies are involved in the process?
16. Why are these agencies involved?
17. Would you deliver the same employment training program to public housing residents in North Georgia?
18. What adjustments would you make to the program to deliver it in North Georgia?
19. What do you think of welfare reform?

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

I, ___________________________________ agree to participate in the research, "Understanding what interests are served in welfare-to-work employment training programs for Black public housing residents, " conducted by Geraldine Clarke under the direction of Dr. Ronald M. Cervero, Professor of the Department of Adult Education., The University of Georgia, 706-542-2214. I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary; I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

1. The reason for the research is to understand how stakeholders in the development of welfare-to-work employment training programs negotiate power to influence whose interests are served during the process and in the completed product.

2. The procedures are as follows: I will be expected to meet with the researcher at a mutually agreed upon time and location and answer semi-structured questions pertaining to the above stated research for approximately one hour. The interview will be tape-recorded.

3. The discomforts or stresses that maybe faced during this research are recalling unpleasant experiences when discussing race, class, and gender issues as it relates to the context of this study.

4. No risks are foreseen. I will be assigned a pseudonym for my protection. The investigator will not reveal my identity. The tapes will be kept for a specified time period for future educational and research purposes.

5. The results of this participation will be confidential, and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without prior consent, unless otherwise required by law.

6. The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the interview. My interview will be transcribed and the data will be held until 12-18-04.

| ___________________________ | ___________________________ |
| --- | --- |
| Signature of Investigator/Date | Signature of Participant/Date |

**PLEASE SIGN BOTH COPIES OF THIS FORM. KEEP ONE AND RETURN THE OTHER TO THE INVESTIGATOR.**

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**Research at The University of Georgia which involves human participants is overseen by the Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding your rights as a participant should be addressed to Dr. Chris Joseph; Institutional Review Board; Office of V.P. for Research; The University of Georgia; 606A Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-6514.**