

**CHILDREN
& FAMILIES**

IN A CHANGING WORLD:

Challenges & Opportunities

Hogg Foundation

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN A CHANGING WORLD:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

by Beatrix A. Hamburg, M.D.
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BERNICE MILBURN MOORE LECTURE SERIES

Dr. Bernice Moore loved children and valued families. Her values live on even though she died November 1, 1992. During her illustrious career, she brought to the University's Hogg Foundation and the beneficiaries of its grants and public service her qualities of sensitivity, wisdom, and concern for all people. These traits earned for her the affection and admiration of colleagues and Texans everywhere.

Following her youthful years in San Antonio and advanced degrees at The University of Texas and The University of North Carolina, her career began as a magazine editor, then as an advisor for industrial and youth groups. Her understanding of family and community adjustment problems came after her formal schooling.

She gained practical experience while directing a research study of child welfare and later serving as administrator of a community welfare program. She became a consultant to the Texas Education Agency's Division of Home and Family Life, a role in which she served for 20 years. During this period she maintained an office at the Hogg Foundation where she was considered one of the staff.

Dr. Moore's work in community organization and modern approaches to problems of juvenile delinquency prevention led to her official appointment in 1964 to the position of Associate Director for Community Programs with the Foundation. For seven years she was a leader of "Philanthropy in the Southwest," funded by a Ford Foundation grant. This successful program was an innovative effort to draw foundations of the region into joint support of projects dealing with social problems affecting children, youth, and their families.

Bernice Moore was widely recognized, lecturing to thousands of persons in youth and adult groups and conducting planning and training institutes in communities throughout the state and nation. She served as consultant to groups and organizations whose work was related to the family, personality, and mental health. Her byline headed myriad articles. She co-authored a textbook on home and family and was co-director of the Texas Youth Study. She participated actively in two decennial White House conferences on children and served on a national Joint Commission on Children and Youth.

The memory of Dr. Bernice Milburn Moore may best be found in the spirit of Texans whose lives have been better because of her work and her dynamic influence. As a memorial to her contributions, the Hogg Foundation has established the Bernice Milburn Moore Lecture Series. The presentation in this pamphlet comes from the initial convocation in that series.

FOREWORD

Dr. Bernice Milburn Moore was known to her many friends and colleagues as an advocate of better mental health programs for children and their families, as well as a distinguished social scientist who worked for the Hogg Foundation most of her adult life. As a special memorial to Dr. Moore, the Hogg Foundation has established a distinguished biennial lectureship at The University of Texas dealing with the mental health of children and their families. Every two years, a nationally recognized leader in this field will be asked to deliver a public lecture at The University of Texas at Austin, which subsequently will be published by the Hogg Foundation for wide distribution.

The first memorial lecture was given by Dr. Beatrix A. Hamburg on June 17, 1993, the anniversary date of Dr. Moore's birth in 1904. Dr. Hamburg's public lecture on that special occasion dealing with children and families in a changing world was widely acclaimed by the large audience in attendance. The high level of scholarship and the timely focus upon public policies for children and their families set just the right tone for this new memorial lectureship. The Hogg Foundation is pleased to publish this lecture as the first in what will be a major series of contributions in the coming years.

Presently serving as the President of the William T. Grant Foundation, Dr. Hamburg is also Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics and Former Director of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. She is especially noted for her research on adolescent development, in particular for her pioneering work on peer counseling and her studies of early adolescence. She has also made valuable contributions to the understanding of hormone and behavior interactions in diabetic children and adolescents. Among her many appointments to federal, state, and private commissions, the most notable was her service as Director of Studies for the President's Commission on Mental Health under President Carter. She is well known for her insightful analysis of such issues as the health of minority persons, ethical issues in health care, AIDS, and adolescents, the latter being her specialty for most of her adult career.

After receiving her bachelor's degree from Vassar College and her medical degree from Yale University, she undertook residency training in both pediatrics and psychiatry, as well as psychoanalytic training at the Chicago Institute of Psychoanalysis. Included among her many honors are the election to Phi Beta Kappa; the Brownell Prize; appointment as a visiting scholar to the Center of Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in

California; election to the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences; and election as a fellow in the Royal Society of Medicine within Great Britain. Most of her earlier professional career has been spent as a Professor of Psychiatry at Stanford or Harvard universities.

Dr. Hamburg has also had broad experience in the foundation world and currently serves on the boards of the Bush Foundation, the Revson Foundation, and the Greenwall Foundation. The William T. Grant Foundation, of which she is President, supports research on the normal behavioral and psychological development of children and adolescents, as well as their psychopathology and research on social policy as it impacts on the well-being of children and youth. Recently, she also served as a member of the Committee on Successful Adolescence for the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. As a current member of the National Advisory Mental Health Council for the National Institute of Mental Health, she continues to play a central role in providing leadership for research and public policy concerned with the mental health of children and their families.

Wayne H. Holtzman

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN A CHANGING WORLD:

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Beatrix A. Hamburg, M.D.

The family, from the time of our ancient ancestors, across cultures and throughout most of human history, has been able to serve as the fundamental and highly successful unit for the growth, adaptation, and survival of its members by providing their food, shelter, and protection. Equally important has been its role in carrying out the education and socialization of children for their future roles as parents, workers, and useful members of their group.

An important aspect of our human heritage is the extended period of immaturity of the young. This lengthy childhood provides the opportunity for extensive learning of survival skills and the acquisition of a broad base of knowledge for meeting adaptive challenges. In the family context children also learn the social competencies to enable them to interact with others with caring and trust, to regulate aggression, and to incorporate group values and norms as guides to behavior. A powerful biological basis in behavior genetics undergirds this array of family-related motivations and behaviors that have contributed so greatly to the immense evolutionary success of the human species.

Structural, societal changes, mainly related to industrial and post-industrial influences, have had enduring adverse impacts on the ability of the family to function effectively in the modern world. The question now arises as to whether, in creating our modern technological world and its side effects, we have begun to strain the limits of the adaptive potential of the family unit.

For the roughly two million years of hominid history there has been a consistent pattern of family embedded in a small supportive community as the normative pattern of social organization. In these communities, all of the individuals were well-known to each other and essentially functioned as a mutual self-help group. The entire village raised each child. Children, in turn, had a range of dependable role models. The work of the adults was always clearly visible to children of all ages. Imitation of adult work was a major form of play. Children's learning of survival skills and all of their socialization were rooted in concrete experiences of their real world. In older childhood, there were tutelage and mentoring by involved adults. As they matured, children experienced a continually growing sense of contribution to the family and to the community, as well as the feeling of being a valued member of their group. This "hands on" mode of teaching and the efficacy of learning in context would seem to have deep biological roots. Unfortunately, it is a principle that has been largely ignored in modern pedagogy in the United States.

Agricultural Society

The basic family structure, just sketched, characterized the various hunter-gatherer societies for about two million years. The rise of agricultural societies, about ten thousand years ago, was a major new development. However, this major shift in life style did little to change the fundamental child-family-community pattern.

For the most part, as agriculturalists, the family remained as the basic and self-sufficient social and productive unit. The autonomy and preeminence of family roles were strongly affirmed in most societies. For example, when formal public schooling was introduced in the United States in the mid-1800s, it was geared to family farming needs. With the exception of a tiny elite who were given a highly academic program, children had short school days and very long summer vacations, in order that they would be maximally available to do chores on the family farm. Formal educational goals for them were limited. Only low-level literacy and numeracy were deemed necessary or even desirable for their agricultural life. Practical knowledge and skills for farming were taught at home.

Industrial Revolution

The advent of the Industrial Revolution in the last century was another major new development for mankind. However,

this development was destined to have a far more significant impact on families than the preceding agricultural revolution. The rise of industrialization created, for the first time, a radical shift of the economic productivity from the family unit, embedded in a small community, to factories and other remote workplaces. Industrialization also promoted the shift of the population from rural settings and small communities to large cities that were centers of commerce. This had been unknown in prior human experience. These changes and their sequelae greatly diminished family self-sufficiency and weakened other salient family roles.

When productive work was removed from the family setting, not only was there a substantial loss of adult presence, but adult work was no longer visible to the children to be learned by observation, imitation, and practice. Also, the ability of the children to contribute to the family and community economy by their helping roles was greatly diminished. As a result, the children were no longer a substantial asset to the family but tended to become a burden. As the Industrial Revolution flourished and spread widely, increasing mechanization and advances of technology reduced the need for a large labor force. It became increasingly difficult to absorb adolescents into the labor market. Partly to remove youth from the labor force, there was motivation to increase the age of compulsory schooling to include adolescents. Inevitably, the responsibility for education of children and youth increasingly moved from the family to the public school system.

As described earlier, American schools were geared to an

agricultural economy with their short days, long summer vacations, and goals of achieving only low-level literacy. As it turned out, the structure and functioning of the existing schools were nicely pre-adapted to prepare youngsters for the low-skill, rote jobs of the assembly line and heavy industry. In fact, the schools themselves were already organized very much on a factory model. The children were arrayed in neat rows. They were taught by methods of rote learning, with heavy reliance on the authority of the teacher and the use of workbooks that were to be filled out repetitiously in rigidly prescribed ways. Some children adapted fairly well to this environment; many did not. The premium placed on passivity, punctuality, and conformity was also excellent preparation for the industrial workplaces of that era.

Contemporary World

Today, we have moved into the rapidly changing post-industrial world, in which workplaces and worker requirements have changed. Increasingly, there is a need for highly literate and highly skilled workers who can understand and interact effectively with sophisticated and changing technology. Most public schools today, regrettably, are still based on the traditional model. Schools in America have had the greatest stability of any of our institutions. Someone said that if Rip Van Winkle were to wake up today from a 100-year sleep, the only thing he would recognize would be the schools. They still operate on the short school day, long summer vacation, and rote learning that were devised for an agricultural society. This fact sets us apart from the other major post-industrial nations, that have modernized their schooling to fit modern needs. Our students lag significantly behind students

in other post-industrial nations in educational achievement, and our nation lags behind in the global economic competition. This school underachievement and unused potential in the United States have been particularly notable among minority and disadvantaged children. The inadequacy of their schooling is greatly aggravated by socioeconomic factors that impair the ability of families to fulfill their functions.

One Model: School of the Future

The School of the Future project of the Hogg Foundation is a welcome, much needed new model. It provides an approach that responds to the vulnerability of modern families and recognizes the critical role of the school as a support structure and vehicle for meeting basic family needs in contemporary American society. While education is still the primary function, schools can also serve as locations for connecting families to the comprehensive and integrated array of services that are essential in meeting their basic food, health, and housing needs. The integration of health, mental health, and human services for all children and their families within the neighborhood is being evaluated in this model program by studying the changes in children as a result of new services. Established in four major cities of Texas, research associated with the School of the Future project should provide much needed answers to important questions concerning child development and education.

Drastic Change

It is worth noting that many of the most significant societal changes have occurred in very recent historical time, largely since the 1960s. Indeed, the pace of revolutionary change in human circumstances is proceeding at unprecedented and remarkably rapid rates. As was noted earlier, the ancient hunter-gatherer societies persisted virtually unchanged for about two million years. Agriculture was introduced about 10,000 years ago and, worldwide, was the dominant and stable social organization throughout that span of time until the introduction of the Industrial Revolution, about 150 years ago. Within this century, the post-industrial revolution has been established in Europe, America, and the Pacific Rim for several decades and is spreading throughout the world.

This very new and increasingly rapid rate of drastic change in so many spheres of human functioning is a stress and major adaptive challenge in its own right. However, the best predictions are that rapid change will be a permanent aspect of our foreseeable futures. Even the most advantaged of today's parents will not be able to give their children the same kind of explicit preparation for the future that was possible in the stable and predictable worlds that characterized so much of earlier human history.

Even when an emergent technology is visible on the horizon, its true future significance is likely to be unknowable at the time. For example, when TV first appeared in the 1950s, there was no hint of the powerful role that it would assume in socializ-

ing our children as it bypassed parents to transmit to youngsters vivid, direct messages that may be quite different from the values, goals, and behaviors espoused by the family. TV dramas, advertising, and music videos independently shape the knowledge, values, and behaviors of children and youth for many hours each day. Much of the content involves violence and sex but at all times introduces a wide array of novel ideas and unexamined choices to children and youth.

Some of the recent and enduring post-industrial societal changes that now pose formidable challenges to our children and families, indeed, to our society, are reviewed here briefly.

Changing Roles of Women

Throughout most of American history the idealized, and the actual, mainstream American family was large and patriarchal. Marriage, sexuality, and procreation were tightly linked. Married women were expected to dedicate themselves to house-keeping and childrearing; they were discouraged from working outside the home. Husbands were dominant and the sole support of the family. Divorce was uncommon because of the prevailing mores, as well as the economic dependence of the wife on her husband for support of herself and her children. This pattern began to change in the last half of this century. At the present time, marriage, sexuality, and procreation are no longer strongly linked. Cohabitation before marriage is an accepted pattern. Through the use of "the pill" and other contraceptive devices, women can now control their reproduction. The overall family size is much smaller. There is an increasing trend for women to

have children outside of marriage. Divorce rates have risen sharply. A very striking recent change is the large increase of women in the workforce.

Mothers in the paid labor force, even those with very young children, have been increasing at a rapid rate. Figure 1 presents the trends for working mothers over the period of 1970 through 1990.

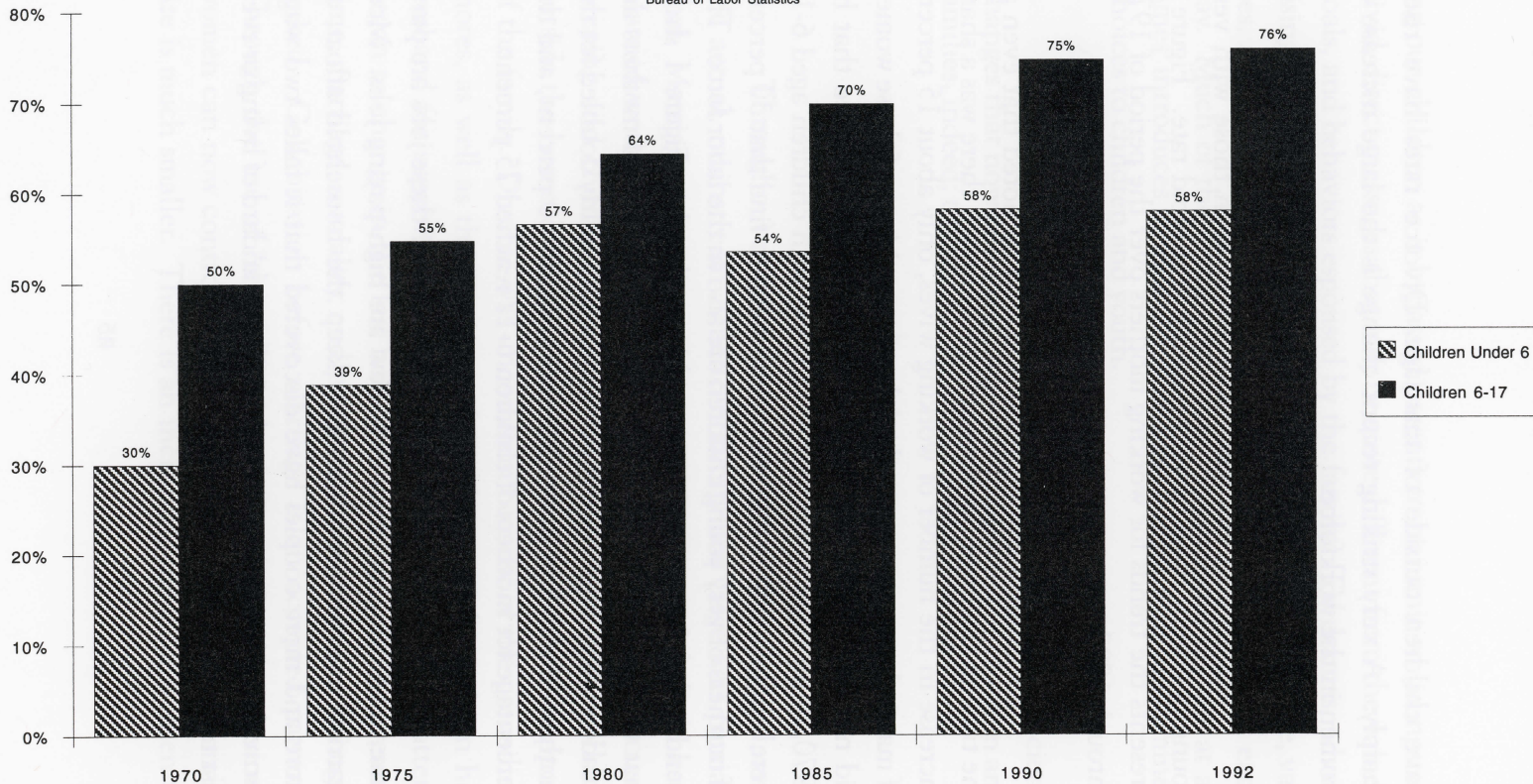
For comparison purposes it should be noted that even at the time of the great depression (1930s), when there was a sharp increase in the number of working wives, only about 15 percent of married women were in the labor force. Many of those women did not have children. It is, therefore, startling to see that by 1970, more than 50 percent of mothers with children aged 6-17 were employed. It is even more surprising to find that 30 percent of mothers of very young children are also in the labor force. The trends over the twenty-year period presented in Figure 1 show that the rates of labor participation for both sets of mothers are steadily rising. By 1990 the percentage had nearly doubled for the mothers of children under 6 years to almost 60 percent, and the percentage for mothers of children 6-17 reached 75 percent.

It is important to note that many of these jobs are part-time, temporary, or dead-end. Few are high-paying jobs. Most married mothers are working to keep the household afloat, as more and more couples have discovered that it takes two wage earners in a family to maintain a decent standard of living or even just to make ends meet.

Figure 1

Mothers in the Paid Labor Force US, 1970-1992

Source: US Department of Labor,
Bureau of Labor Statistics



Some of the mothers are working to gain independence and may be seeking divorce. Divorce accounts for roughly two-thirds of the increase in single parenthood among whites since 1960.¹ Other mothers are unmarried and are the sole support of the family. The income earned by a single working mother may be inadequate to meet basic expenses. Figure 2 shows that child care costs alone can consume from 40 percent to 75 percent of the income of a single parent.

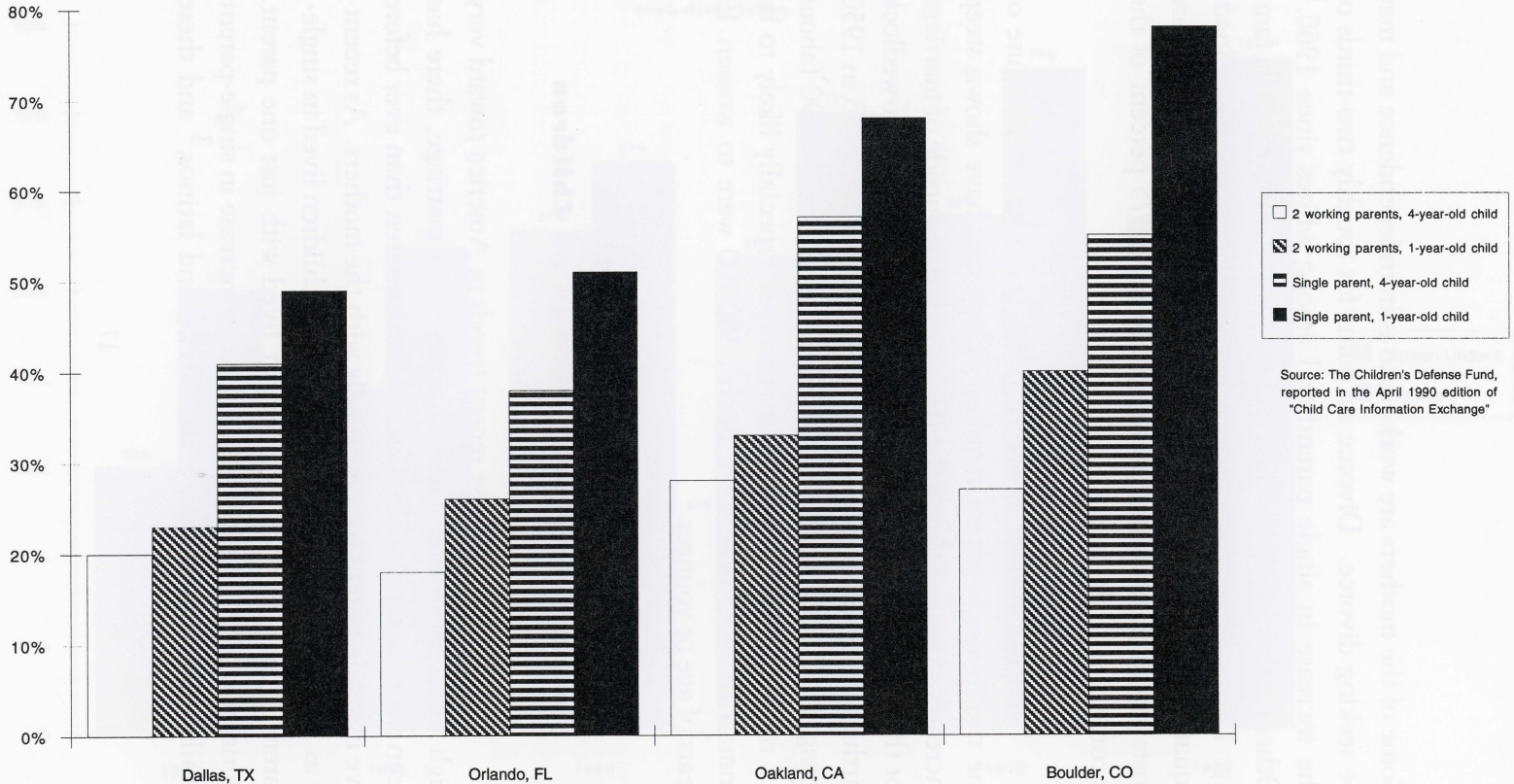
Births outside of marriage are the other major cause of the rise in single-parent families. They, too, have shown steep increases. Figure 3 shows the trends in births outside of marriage for the years 1950-1990. A sevenfold increase in out-of-wedlock births has occurred in that period, up from about 1 in 33 in 1950 (roughly 140,000 births) to over 1 in 4 children in 1990 (about 1.2 million births). Teenage mothers are especially likely to be unmarried. Of those 1990 births, 360,700 were to women 19 years of age or younger.²

Impact of Societal Change on Children

As a result of these recent trends in America toward very high rates of divorce and births outside of marriage, there has been a restructuring of families. More children than ever before live in single-parent homes, usually with the mothers. As recently as 1970, only 10 percent of American children lived in single-parent homes. By 1991, 25 percent lived with just one parent. During the 1970s and 1980s, the rate of increase in single-parent families was similar for whites, blacks, and latinos,³ and these

Figure 2

Child Care Costs: Percentage of Income of Parents
Working Full Time at Minimum Wage, 1990

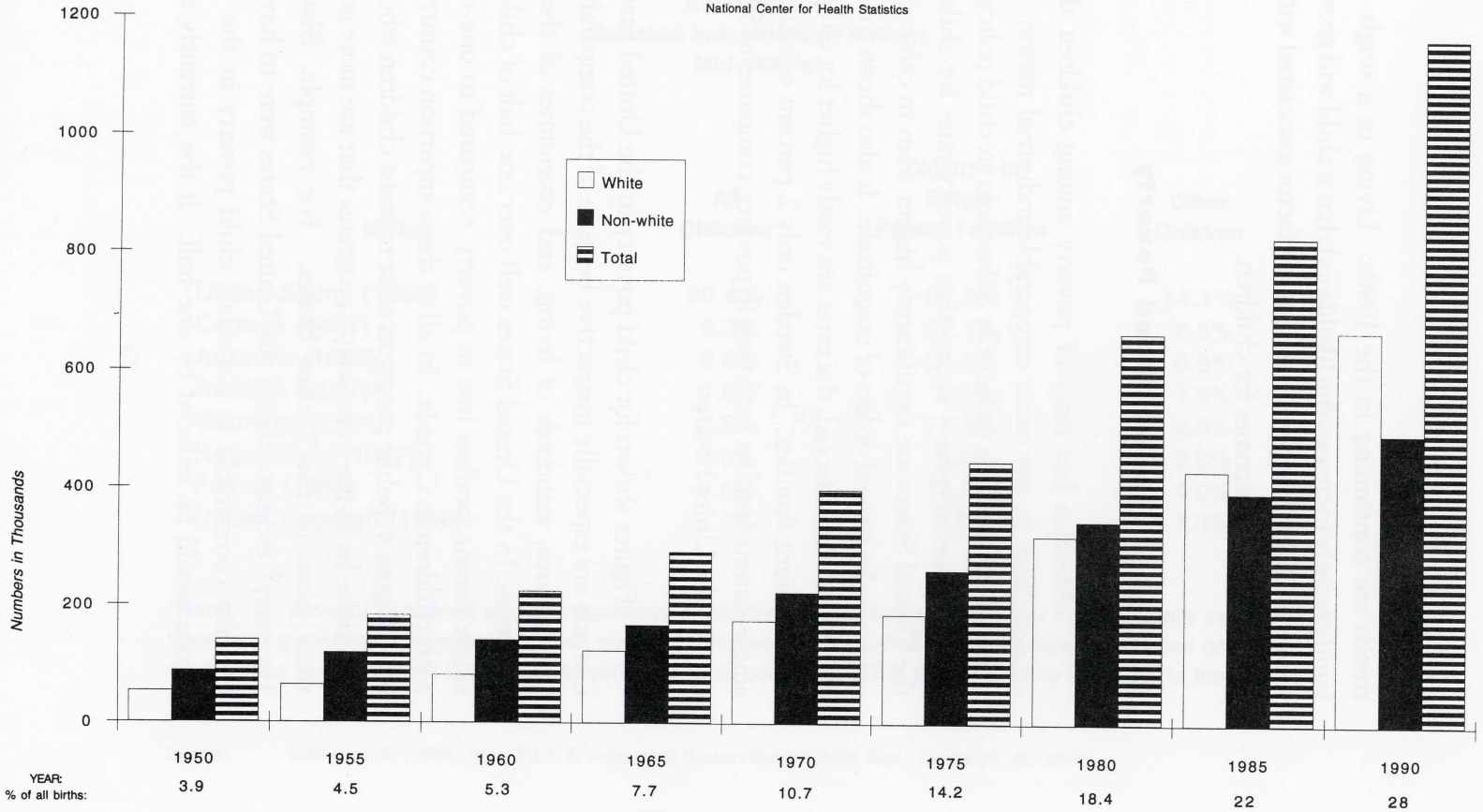


Source: The Children's Defense Fund,
reported in the April 1990 edition of
"Child Care Information Exchange"

Figure 3

Births Outside of Marriage, US, 1950-1990

Source: US Department of Health & Human Services,
National Center for Health Statistics



trends are continuing in the 1990s. Living in a single-parent family greatly increases the likelihood that a child will grow up in poverty. Childhood poverty is a major factor associated with high risk of adverse outcomes for children.

Childhood Poverty

America has rates of poverty among children that far exceed those in any other comparable industrial nation. These national differentials reflect the differences in child policy across the countries. Figure 4 shows that poverty rates for children in the United States are significantly higher than in other modern countries by several orders of magnitude. It also shows that while all children are affected, the rates are vastly higher for children in single-parent families. In Sweden only 2 percent of children in single-parent families are living in poverty, compared to 54.2 percent in the United States.

Figures shown for child poverty in the United States and Canada are especially instructive because of the comparability of the cultures, standards of living, and economies of these two countries. In the United States well over one-half of children in single parent families live in poverty, compared to one-third of such children in Canada. In all of the comparison countries listed in Figure 4, public programs exist to assist children who would otherwise be living in poverty—programs that are more generous than those in the United States. For example, Blank and Hanratty⁴ estimate that if the United States were to have child benefits comparable to Canada's, child poverty in the United States would be reduced by one-half. If the currently existing

Figure 4

**Child Poverty
Selected Industrialized Nations
Mid-1980's***

Nation	All Children	Children in Single- Parent Families	Other Children
United States (1986)	20.4%	54.2%	14.1%
Canada (1987)	9.3%	37.1%	6.6%
Australia (1985)	9.0%	34.6%	6.6%
Sweden (1987)	1.6%	2.0%	1.5%
Germany (1984)	2.8%	15.9%	2.3%
Netherlands (1987)	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
France (1984)	4.6%	13.1%	4.0%
United Kingdom (1986)	7.4%	8.5%	7.3%

*Note: Poverty is defined as the percentage of children below 40 percent of the median family income after taxes and government transfers for each country. Incomes are adjusted for family size differences using the equivalence scales implicit in the U.S. poverty line in all countries. This 40 percent line is similar to the official U.S. line.

Source: Smeeding, T. (1992). "Why the U.S. Antipoverty System Doesn't Work Well," *Challenge*, 30: 30-35.

United States policies persist, they will have the effect of continuing the steady increase in the percentage of children who live in poverty.

Ethnic comparisons in Figure 5 show that child poverty is not distributed equally across population groups in America, even when family composition is held constant. When compared to black and hispanic children living in the same family structures, white children consistently show the lowest poverty rates. For single-parent, female-headed households, the rates in 1992 were about 51 percent for whites, 70 percent for blacks, and 71 percent for hispanics. For two-parent families the child poverty rates were about 10 percent for whites, 18 percent for blacks, and 29 percent for hispanics. These rates mirror the differences in wages and employment rates across the ethnic groups. However, as will be shown, although the rates differ, the overall trends for increased child poverty have been similar for all groups. Nonetheless, despite their more favorable poverty rates, because white children comprise the bulk of the child population of America, more than half of all poor children in the United States are white.⁵ Across race, ethnicity, and family structure, children are the poorest Americans.

Poverty Trends

Trends in poverty of children and elderly from 1970 to 1991 have diverged impressively. The steep rise in child poverty across this period is in marked contrast to the sharp drop in the poverty rate for the elderly. In 1960 the elderly were the poorest group.

Figure 5

**Child Poverty Rates According to Family Type,
US, 1992**

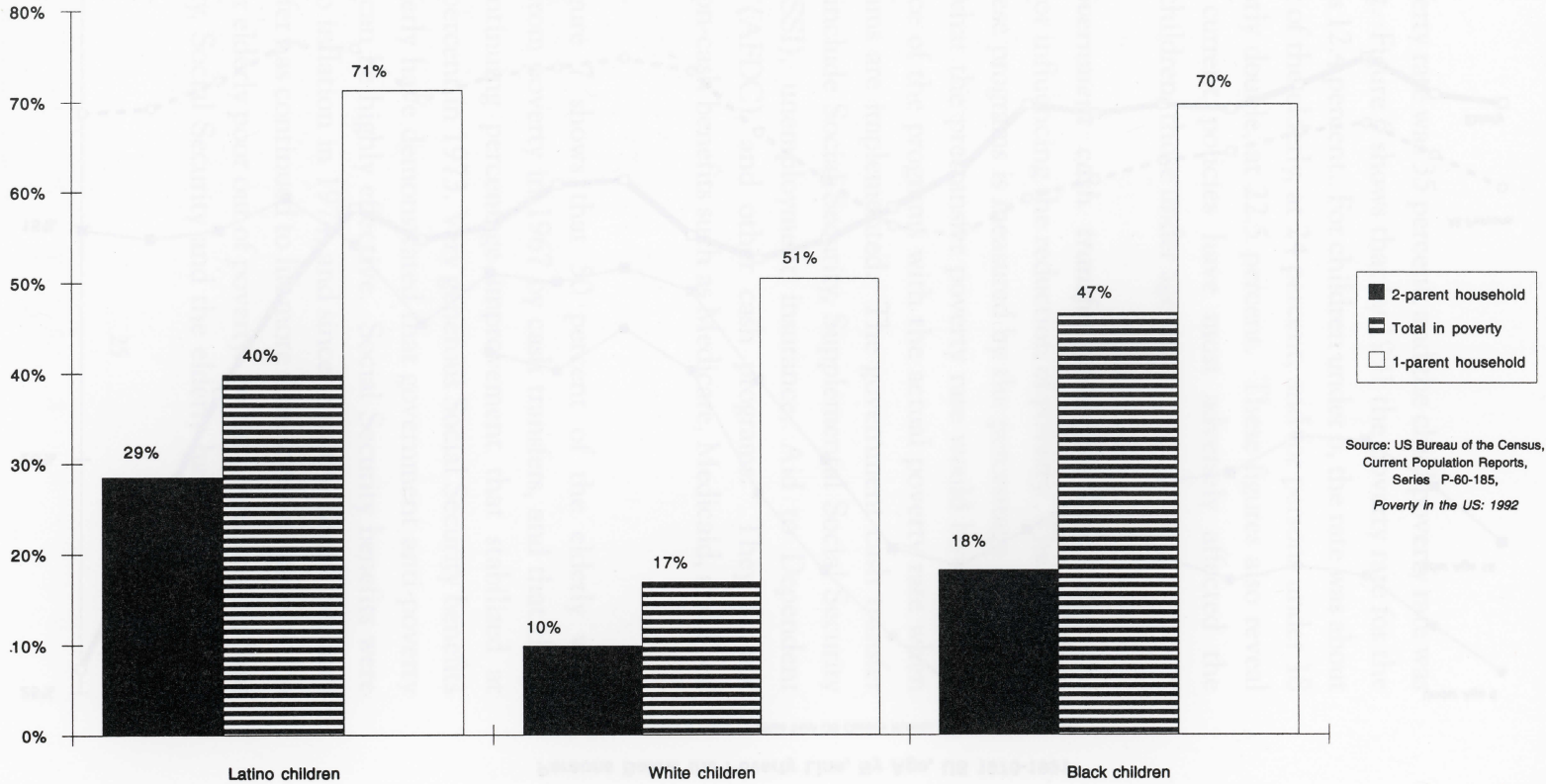
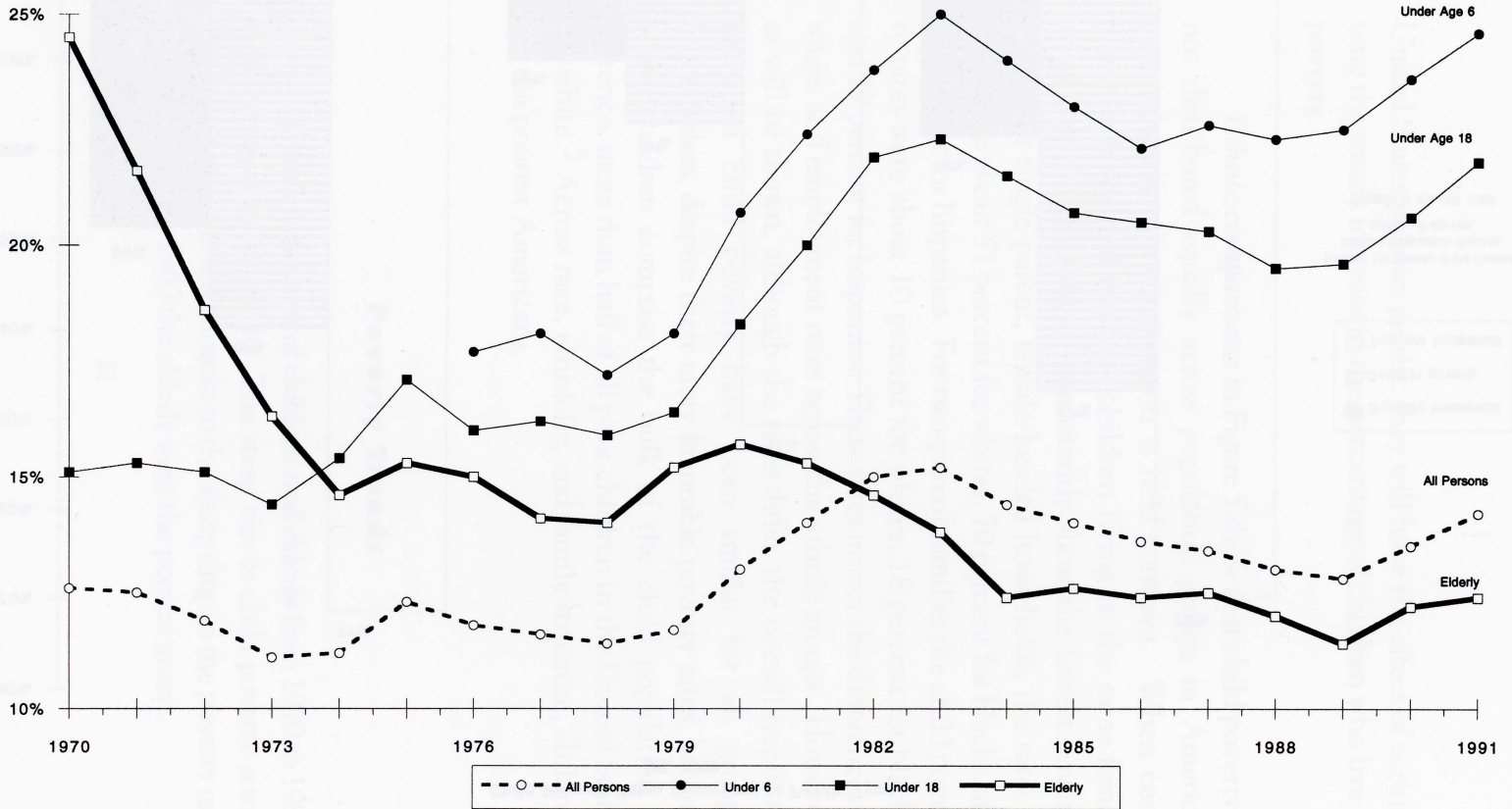


Figure 6

Persons Below the Poverty Line, By Age, US 1970-1991

Source: Center on Budget & Policy Priorities from US Census Bureau, Poverty in the US, 1991



Their poverty rate was 35 percent, and the child poverty rate was 27 percent. Figure 6 shows that by 1991 the poverty rate for the elderly was 12.4 percent. For children under 6, the rate was about twice that of the elderly, at 24 percent; and for persons under 18 it was nearly double, at 22.5 percent. These figures also reveal that our current policies have most adversely affected the youngest children, those under age six.

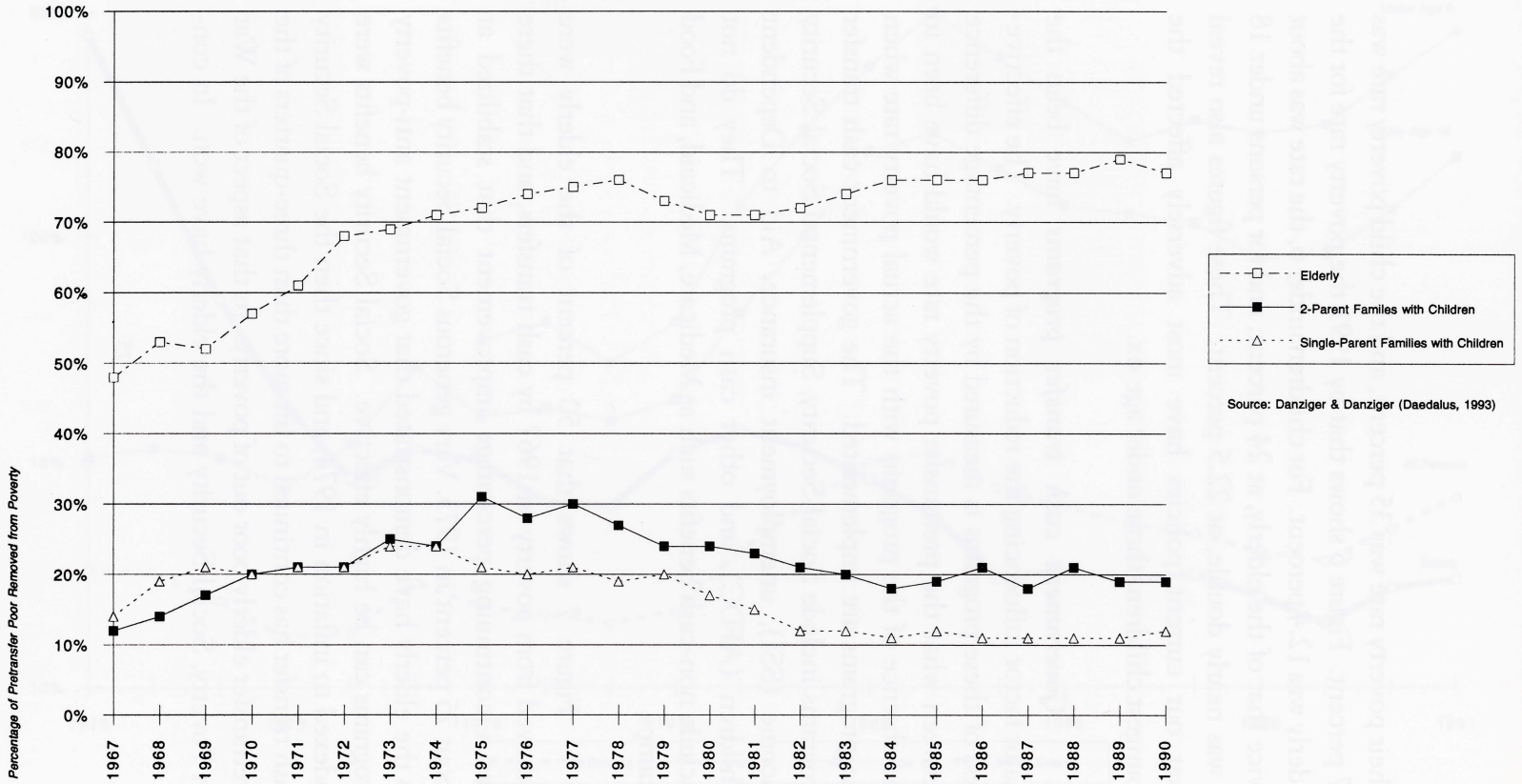
Government cash transfer programs have been the major factor influencing the reduction of poverty. The effectiveness of these programs is measured by the percentage difference between what the pretransfer poverty rate would have been in the absence of the programs with the actual poverty rate when the programs are implemented. The government cash transfer programs include Social Security, Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI), unemployment insurance, Aid to Dependent Children (AFDC), and other cash programs. They do not include non-cash benefits such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Food Stamps.

Figure 7 shows that 50 percent of the elderly were removed from poverty in 1967 by cash transfers, and that there was a continuing percentage improvement that stabilized at about 75 percent in 1973. Very generous Social Security benefits to the elderly have demonstrated that government anti-poverty programs can be highly effective. Social Security benefits were indexed to inflation in 1974, and since then the Social Security cash transfer has continued to lift more than three-quarters of the pretransfer elderly poor out of poverty. In that aspect of the War on Poverty, Social Security and the elderly have won. In con-

Figure 7

Antipoverty Effects of Cash Transfers

Percentage Removed from Poverty, 1967-1990



Source: Danziger & Danziger (Daedalus, 1993)

trast, the cash transfer programs for children and families have been ineffective. If married mothers had not entered the labor force in such large numbers to augment family incomes over the past two decades, the poverty rate for children in married families would also have increased substantially.

Mother-only families experience the greatest poverty. In such families, there is only one wage earner, and female workers earn less than male counterparts. Non-working mothers fare poorly in the cash transfer system. The AFDC programs for non-working mothers are far less generous than the Social Security program for the elderly, and AFDC has never been indexed to inflation. Failure to index has meant a systematic decrease in benefits levels over the years and is a significant factor in the rise in child poverty. At present more than 13 million children live in poverty. This is an increase of 2 million since 1980.

Future Populations

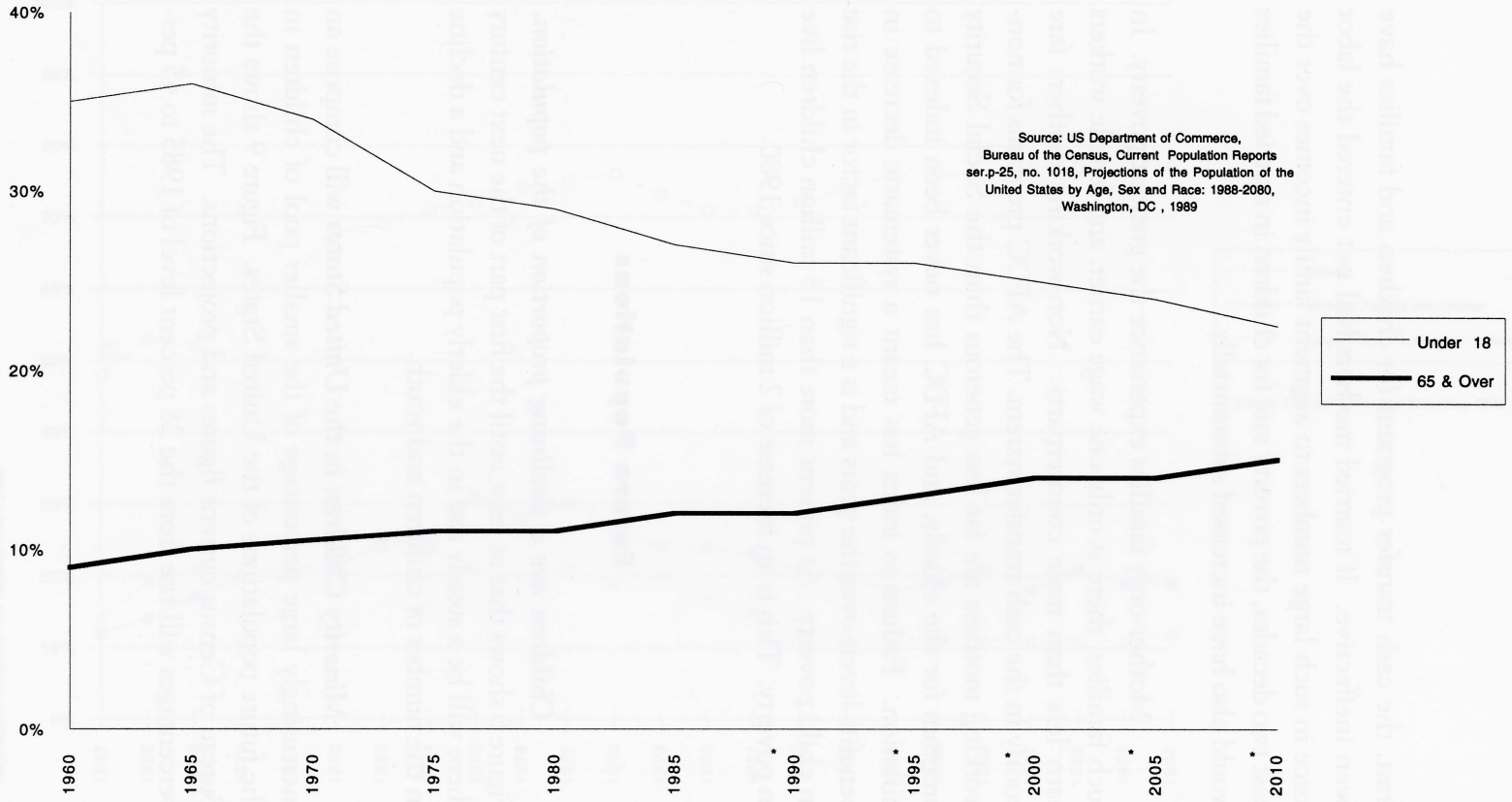
Children are a declining proportion of the population.

Figure 8 shows that at least until the first part of the next century there will be a steady rise in the elderly population and a decline in the number of children and youth.

Minority Children in the United States will comprise an increasingly large percentage of the smaller pool of children in the future populations of the United States. Figure 9 shows the Bureau of Census current figures and projections. The minority percentages will rise from the 28 percent level of 1985 to 45 per-

Figure 8

Children and the Elderly as a Proportion of the US Population



Source: US Department of Commerce,
Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports
ser.p-25, no. 1018, Projections of the Population of the
United States by Age, Sex and Race: 1988-2080,
Washington, DC, 1989

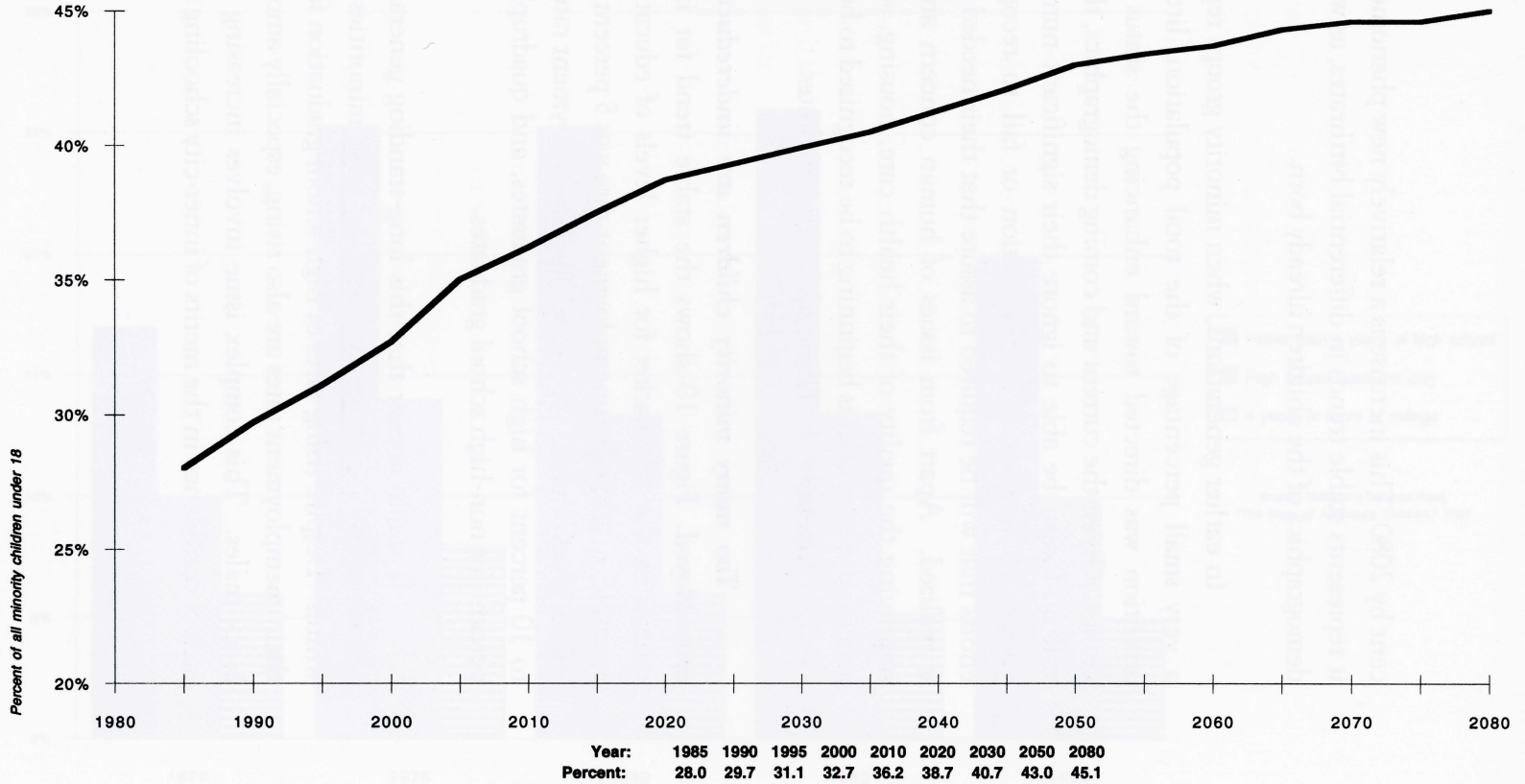
— Under 18
— 65 & Over

*Middle series projections

Figure 9

Minority Children in the United States, 1980-2080

Based on US Census Bureau Projections



cent by 2080. This increase is a relatively new phenomenon, but it represents stable trends in differential birthrates, as well as the demographics of the children already born.

In earlier generations, when minority groups represented a very small percentage of the total population, little policy attention was directed toward enhancing the status of these groups. Given the current and coming demographics, the nation will no longer be able to ignore their significant numbers and potential contribution to the nation or fail to recognize the efforts that will be required to assure that their needed potential is realized. Apart from issues of human concern and equity, improving the quality of their health care, housing, schooling, and job opportunities is beginning to be recognized to be a necessary investment in the future of the United States.

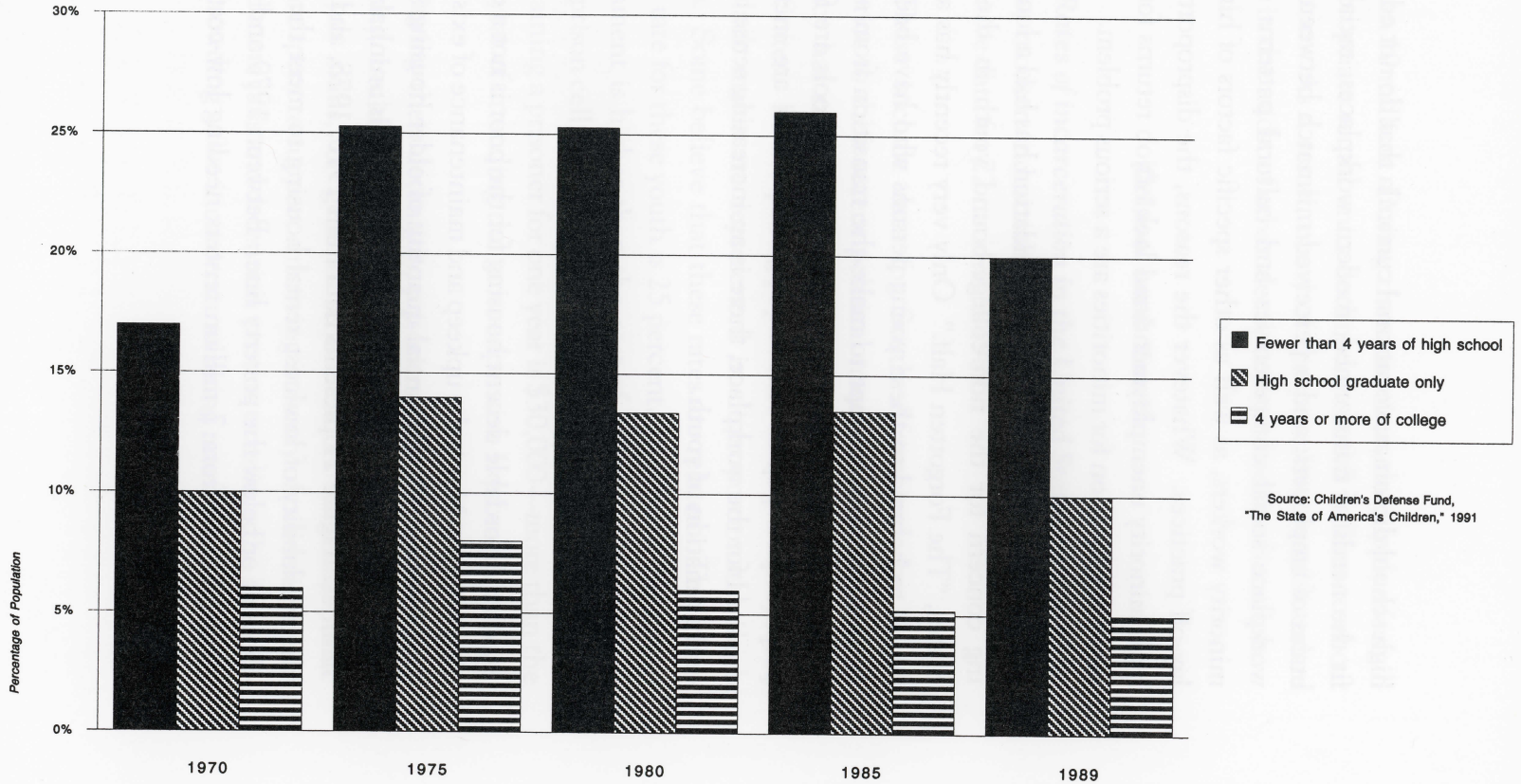
Too many minority children are undereducated and unemployed. Figure 10 shows the stable trend for increasing returns in the job market for higher levels of education. For example, in 1989 the unemployment rate was 5 percent for those with 4 years or more of college. The unemployment rate doubled to 10 percent for high school graduates, and quadrupled to 20 percent for non-high school graduates.

It would appear that this long-standing general trend is not as directly applicable to blacks and other minorities as it is to whites. Despite rising rates of high school graduation for blacks, their unemployment rates are also rising, especially among young black males. This complex issue involves increasing employer lack of confidence in the merits of inner-city schooling and their

Figure 10

Youth Unemployment Rates by Level of Education

US, 1970-1989



Source: Children's Defense Fund,
"The State of America's Children," 1991

high school diplomas; vocational curricula that do not educate to fit the needs of transformed, modern workplaces; racial preferences of employers; and a perceived mismatch between needed workplace social competencies and cultural patterns of some minority workers, as well as other specific factors of hiring and lay-off practices. Whatever the reasons, the disproportionately high minority unemployment and lack of job returns for investment in education for minorities are a serious problem.

The William T. Grant Foundation has had a long-standing concern for the non-college-bound youth in the United States, "The Forgotten Half." Only very recently has attention begun to be paid to these young persons who have been left to flounder as they attempt to make the transition from school to work. As youth unemployment rises, and schools are failing to prepare their pupils with the high skills that are increasingly required for the workplace, there is an increasing sense of futility and alienation of youth.

Housing

Affordable decent housing for the poor is not a construction priority. Nor is the upkeep and maintenance of existing low-cost housing. A substantial quantity of older housing stock has been allowed to fall into decay that makes it uninhabitable by families. Figure 11 presents data from 1970, 1978, and 1987 on the availability of low-cost rental housing to meet the needs of those at or below the poverty line. Between 1970 and 1987 the demand went from 7 million renters needing low-cost units to

more than 10 million. During the same time, the supply of available appropriate rental units declined from 8.5 million to about 6.5 million. As a result, many of the poor live in substandard housing in the midst of urban decay or have become homeless.

Crime and Youth

Rates of incarceration in the United States are the highest of any modern industrialized nation. Figure 12 presents the comparative data for 22 nations in 1989.

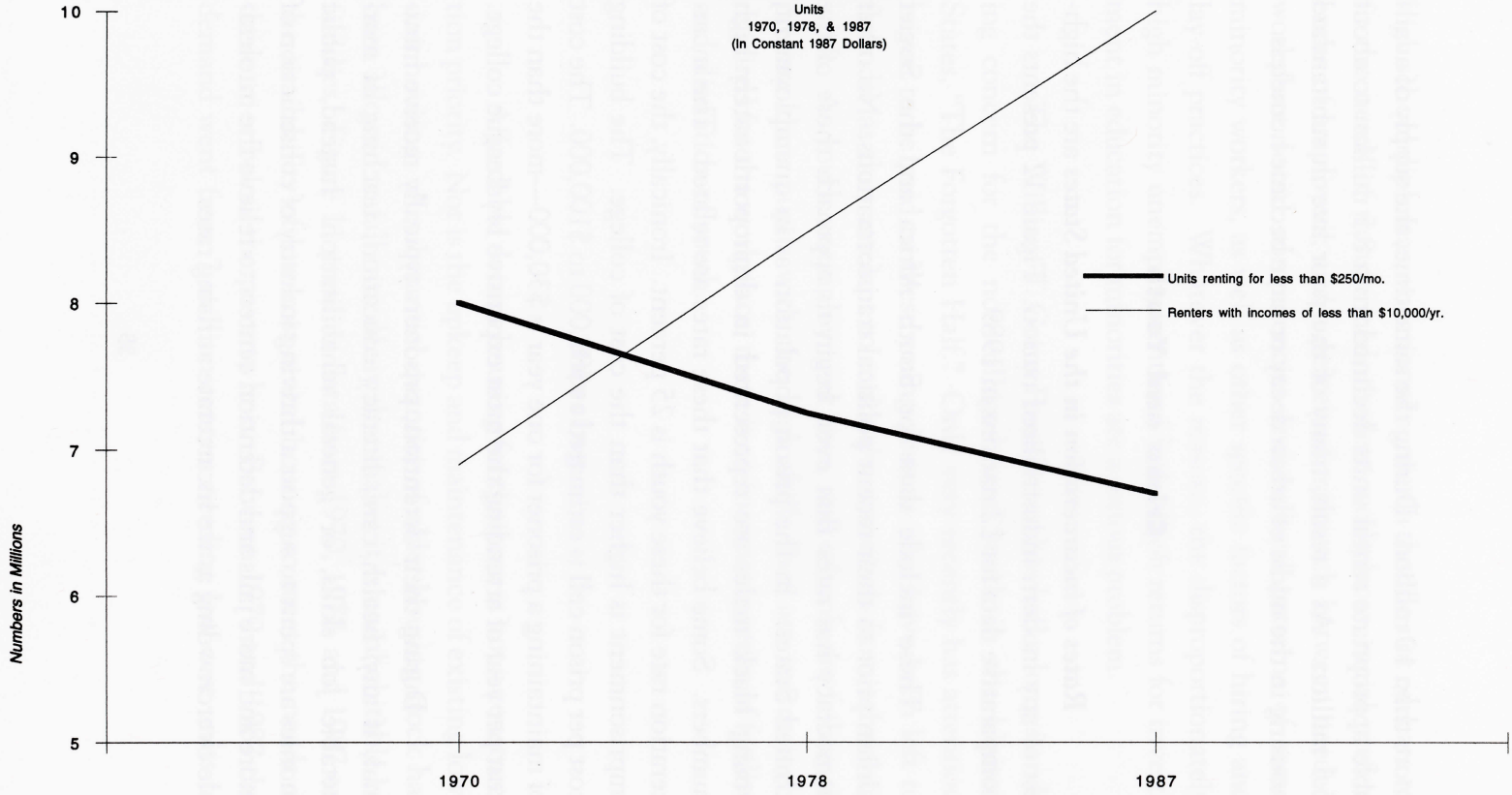
These include data for South Africa and the Soviet Union prior to their recent political transformations. No other democracy has rates that even begin to approach those of the United States. In the prison population as in unemployment, young black males are represented in disproportionately high numbers. Some believe that these rates are related. The incarceration rate for these youth is 25 percent. Ironically, the cost of imprisonment is higher than the cost of college. The building cost per prison cell is estimated at \$80,000 to \$100,000. The cost of maintaining a prisoner for one year is \$30,000—more than the cost per year of attending the most expensive Ivy League college.

During their detention, prisoners typically receive minimal, if any, health care, literacy education, teaching of marketable job skills, or general rehabilitation. Instead, public monies are spent to support a thriving industry of construction of more and more jails and detention centers to relieve the intolerable overcrowding as we incarcerate at rising rates.

Figure 11

RENTERS AND UNITS

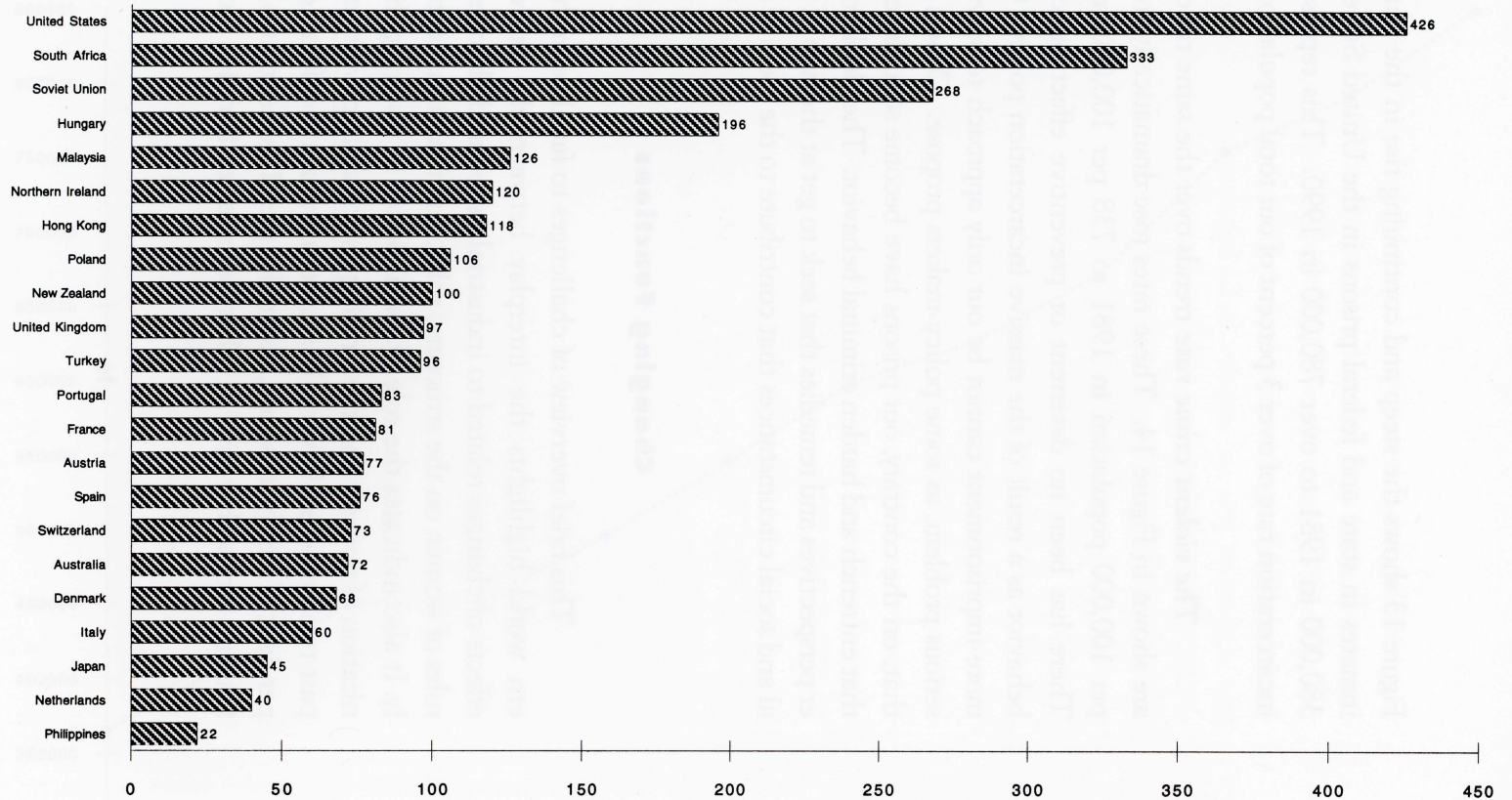
Low-Income Renters & Low-Rent
Units
1970, 1978, & 1987
(In Constant 1987 Dollars)



Source: Center on Budget & Policy Priorities

Figure 12

Rates of Incarceration per 100,000 Population



Source: The Sentencing Project & Penal Reform International, 1989

Figure 13 shows the steep and continuing rise in the number of inmates in state and federal prisons in the United States, from 380,000 in 1981 to over 780,000 in 1990. This represents an incarceration rate of over 3 percent of our total population.

The violent crime rate trends over the same time period are shown in Figure 14. These rates rose dramatically from 595 per 100,000 population in 1981 to 738 per 100,000 in 1990. There has been no deterrent or preventive effect on criminal behavior as a result of the massive incarceration policy. Clearly, more imprisonment cannot be our only approach to solving this serious problem, as some policy-makers propose. Others believe that, on the contrary, our prisons have become schools for crime that entrench and harden criminal behavior. They look to broader perspectives and remedies that seek to get at the web of personal and social circumstances that contribute to the roots of crime.

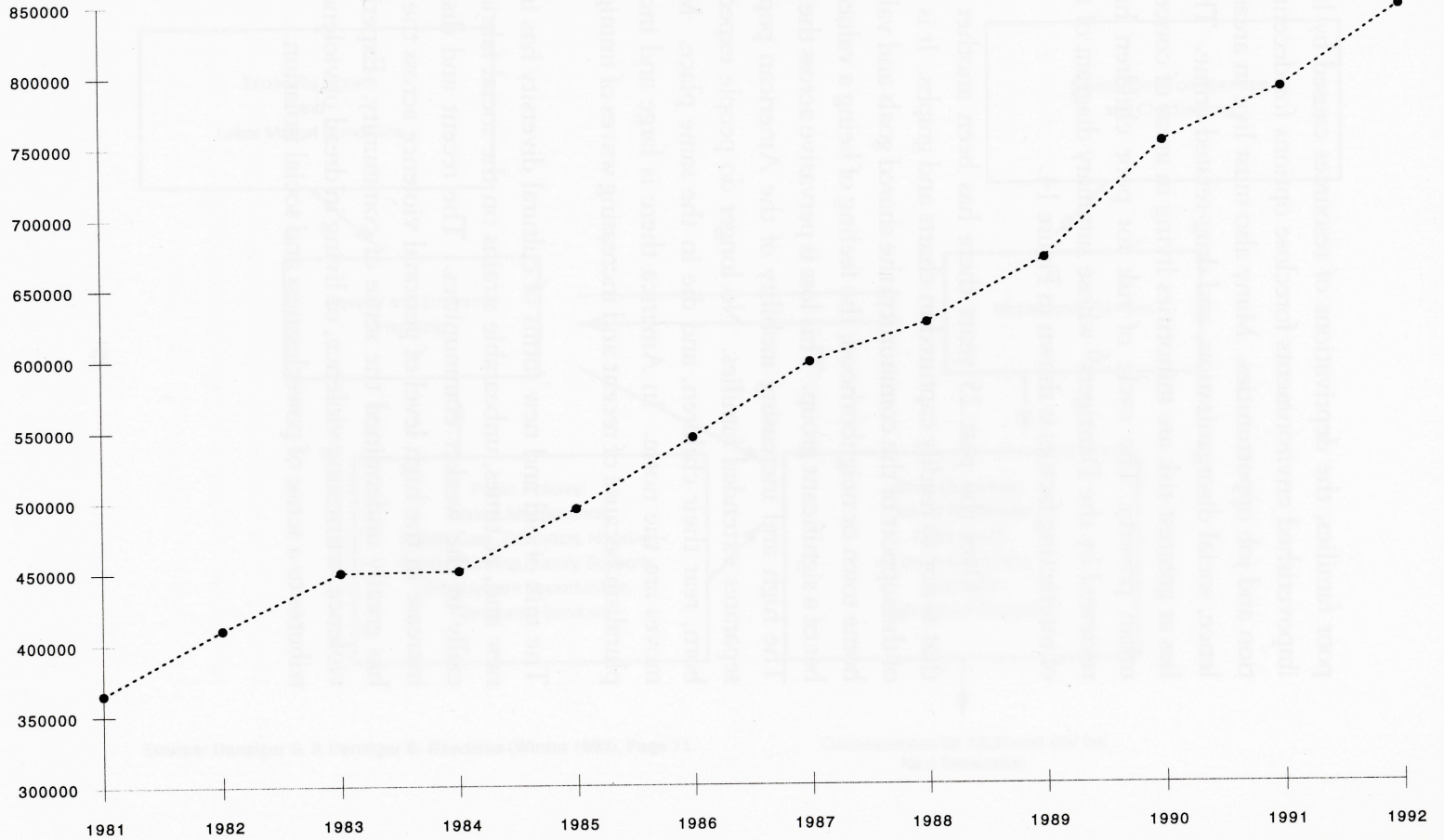
Changing Functions

This brief overview of challenges to families in the modern world highlights the interplay between the far-reaching effects of changes related to industrialization and changes in the roles of women on the structure, roles, and functions of the family. It also indicates the role of social policy in fostering the feminization of poverty and the striking rise of child poverty over the past two decades. Poverty has adverse impacts on families independent of family structure, but it also greatly accentuates the difficulties for mother-only or otherwise stressed families. For some

Figure 13

Total Inmates in US State & Federal Prisons, 1981-1992

Source: US Department of Justice,
Bureau of Justice Statistics



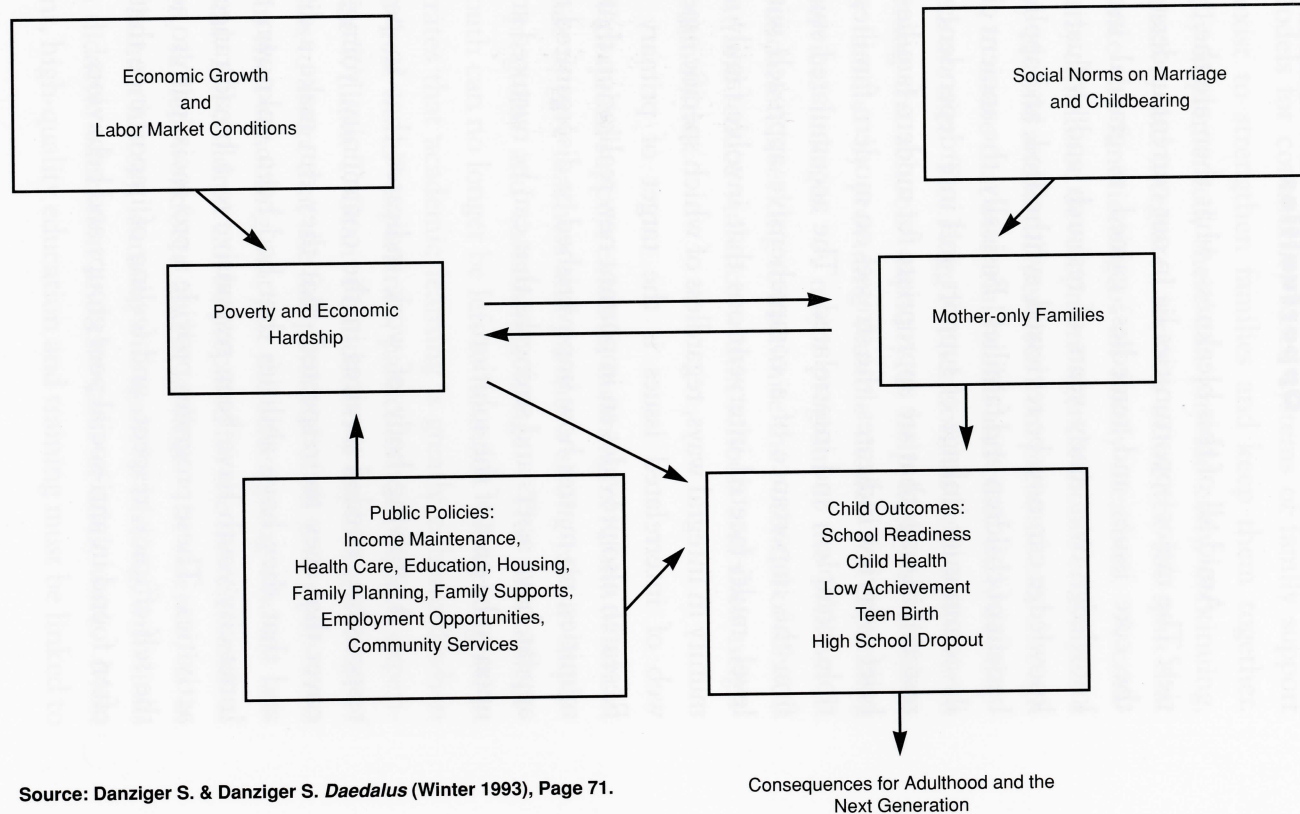
poor families, the deprivations of resources caused by living in impoverished environments foreclose options for decent education and job opportunities. Many also must live in areas of violence, social disorganization, and drug-related crime. The families at greatest risk are minorities living in areas of concentrated urban poverty. The cycle of risk for poor children has been reviewed by the Danzigers⁶ whose summary diagram of the web of interacting factors is shown in Figure 14.

Over the past 25 years there has been another change that is not so readily captured in charts and graphs. It is the loss of the support of the community: the shared goals and values of a home town or neighborhood; the feeling of being a valued member of a significant group. This loss is pervasive across the nation. The high and increasing mobility of the American population separates extended families. No longer do people expect to be born, rear their children, and die in the same place. Multiple moves are the norm. In America there is large and increasing pluralism because of recent and increasing waves of immigration.

The mix of old and new forms of cultural diversity has imposed new and, at times, unbearable strains on the social fabric, especially in the weaker communities. The recent and disturbing increase in the high level of personal violence across the nation has greatly undermined the sense of community. Experiencing violence, witnessing violence, or living in dread of violence contributes to a sense of powerlessness and social isolation.

Figure 14

Poverty and Child Outcomes: The Cycle of Risk



Source: Danziger S. & Danziger S. *Daedalus* (Winter 1993), Page 71.

Opportunities

Amid all of this bleakness, what then are the opportunities? The major opportunities lie in our current understanding of the core issues and remedies, gained as gradual incremental knowledge over many years of research and evaluation. This knowledge can now be reviewed, synthesized, and applied for the benefit of children and families. Basically, the ancient child-family-community linkage of support and interdependence must be restored in ways that are appropriate for modern families. As this brief overview indicates, the stresses on modern families are multiple, complex, and interrelated. The accumulated studies confirm the importance of a comprehensive approach with multi-level, multi-faceted interventions that involve family and community in integral ways, regardless of which specific aspect of the web of interrelated issues is the target of primary concern. Research also provides an important new realization that all communities, no matter how impoverished or disorganized they may appear, have assets and strengths that can be nurtured and drawn upon to be part of the solution.

A growing body of work indicates that in performing responsible, needed services in the community, youngsters discover that they are respected, that they can make a difference, and that they have abilities that had been unknown to them. Inner-city youth have been responsive to a broad range of such activities. These programs provide a pro-social path to achieving the self-efficacy, respect, and feeling of importance that are too often found in anti-social peer groups and behaviors.

Models for community-based systems of family support services exist to strengthen families and keep them together. When fully implemented, these can provide early, continuing, comprehensive, and integrated services across the life span that can enhance the functioning of all family members. A compelling early childhood development agenda should encompass a continuity of child and family services from prenatal care through preschool, to assure that essential health and basic early development needs are met. The Hogg Foundation has been a pioneer in strengthening the schools' capacity to help high-risk children and their families by providing feasible models for expanding schools-services linkages. A major program at the William T. Grant Foundation is seeking to maximize the potential of schools to prevent and reduce violence within schools and their neighboring communities.

Widespread support exists for meaningful reform of school governance to give teachers and parents a strong role in implementing programs and sustaining change. The non-college-bound youth can no longer be left to flounder. New recognition demonstrates that academic learning is greatly enhanced when linked to "real world" experience, particularly workplace experience. The William T. Grant Foundation is exploring a range of approaches to assure that the full potential of all young persons is realized in their schooling, not just the select group who are college-bound. All children can be prepared for the new demands of a modern, skilled workforce and/or college. In essence, as in much of human history, learning will again be lifelong, with links between didactic education and the tasks of adult work. Most important, high-quality education and training must be linked to

a reality of obtaining good jobs.

The ills that beset the child and families are interrelated. In the past few years, carefully researched reviews have emerged with details of the proven successful strategies and models for addressing the kinds of issues that have been described. There are excellent books, for example, by Joy Dryfoos, David Hamburg, and Lisbeth Schorr.⁷ For all of them, one of the most encouraging findings has been that the soundly based, comprehensive, and sustained interventions have positive impacts on multiple problems.

Much more remains to be learned, but we now have far better guidelines as to where and how to look for answers. There are many opportunities to be a part of the solution. The problems facing children and families in the modern world are crucial and daunting. However, with persistence and commitment, they are not intractable.

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