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Public Policy and Private Lives: Social and Spatial Dimensions of Women's Poverty and Welfare Policy in the United States*

BY ANN R. TICKAMYER**

INTRODUCTION

Seventy-five years after gaining suffrage and almost one hundred fifty years since the *Declaration of Sentiments*, adopted by the First Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, proclaimed women's human rights and rights as citizens of the United States, women's ability to realize these rights remains circumscribed, ambiguous, and in significant realms, unequivocally second class. Nowhere is this clearer than in the situation of women's poverty and women's consequent relationship to the welfare state, where gender shapes both the necessity for access and the types of encounters with social welfare services and bureaucracies. Although formally gender blind laws and rules govern access to most social welfare provision,¹ recent feminist scholarship has

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¹ There are a few welfare programs designed solely for women, most notably the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children ("WIC"), 7 C.F.R. § 246 (1995), designed to upgrade nutrition for pregnant women and their children by providing food supplements. For the most part, however, even the programs that were designed specifically for women to address their roles as childbearers and rearers have been increasingly reframed in gender neutral terms. For example, the form of social transfer that is most popularly understood as "welfare," Aid to Families with Dependent Children ("AFDC"), 42 U.S.C. §§ 601-617 (1994), was formerly reserved for eligible low income mothers without a male spouse or partner. Since 1990, all households, including those of married couples, are eligible to receive AFDC if they meet the

begun to articulate how the gendered nature of programs and policies and the patriarchal assumptions, ideologies, and politics that lie behind them, create a paternalistic welfare state that continues to disadvantage women.²

Little of this analysis, however, directly enters current, increasingly rancorous, public debate over welfare provision.³ Although poverty analysis has become a growth industry,⁴ and discussion of the links

income and other eligibility requirements. The majority of recipients remain women.

² For some of these articulations, see generally ANN ORLOFF, *THE POLITICS OF PENSIONS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BRITAIN, CANADA, AND THE UNITED STATES, 1880-1940* (1993) (analyzing state supported pensions for the elderly in Britain, Canada and the United States); SANFORD SCHRAM, *WORDS OF WELFARE: THE POVERTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCE OF POVERTY* (1995) (critiquing the way welfare policy is set and evaluated in the United States); WOMEN, THE STATE, AND WELFARE (Linda Gordon ed., 1990) (collecting articles about women and welfare); Ann Orloff, *Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States*, 58 AM. SOC. REV. 303, 303-28 (1993) (developing a conceptual framework for analyzing the gender content of social provision that draws on both feminist and mainstream work); Diana Pearce, *The Feminization of Poverty: Women, Work and Welfare*, URB. & SOC. CHANGE REV., Winter-Spring 1978, at 28, 28-36 (examining the economic and social consequences of being female that result in higher rates of poverty).

³ An argument can be made that much of the political climate surrounding welfare issues is a negative reaction, a backlash from efforts to protect and extend women's rights in general and in welfare use in particular. It is noteworthy, however, that few of the principal politicians or policy analysts involved in debating welfare reform acknowledge feminist arguments or scholarship on the topic.

⁴ Writing about poverty a decade ago, it was easy to observe that poverty in general was a neglected topic and that particular forms of poverty, such as rural poverty, escaped both popular and scholarly scrutiny. For a history and discussion of poverty research, see generally Cynthia M. Duncan & Ann R. Tickamyer, *Poverty Research and Policy for Rural America*, 19 AM. SOC. 243, 243-59 (1988) (proposing a reevaluation of poverty theory and research to stimulate policy-relevant research on rural poverty issues); Ann R. Tickamyer & Cynthia M. Duncan, *Poverty and Opportunity Structure in Rural America*, 16 ANN. REV. SOC. 67, 67-86 (1990) (reviewing research on rural poverty and tracing its relationship to its historical roots in social, political, and economic inequality and to current economic restructuring). Since that time poverty analyses have increased exponentially, and particular segments of the impoverished population, such as women, children, and the homeless, have been the

between poverty and welfare has boomed as politicians from all ends of the political spectrum vie to reform "welfare as we know it,"⁵ the ways that gender influences welfare policy and the ways that women are affected by these policies remain distorted, obscured, or neglected. Instead, the systematic relationship of gender to both poverty and welfare provision is masked behind rhetoric that attributes individual responsibility for poverty and economic failure to individuals who happen to be women and who are blamed for an imputed inability to live up to societal norms, values, and expectations by reasons of culture, socialization, character deficits, or public policy — almost anything but bias and discrimination. Thus, debates on public policy and discussions of programs and initiatives on poverty notably lack consideration of key dimensions of late twentieth century poverty in America. The debates severely distort poverty discourse and dampen any hope of devising effective, let alone equitable, welfare programs for *all* citizens.

Some of the dimensions of gender-based disadvantage leading to poverty and welfare dependency are well-known and extensively analyzed in scholarly accounts, if not in the public discussion. Analyses of the feminization of poverty focus on women's disadvantages in the formal labor force; their reproductive roles which mandate primary responsibility for dependents' care; their vulnerability to economic hardship when lacking the financial support of a male wage earner; the decreased likelihood of having a male wage earner present in the household; and the two-tiered nature of the welfare system. Other aspects require more extensive investigation, such as the complexities of the relationship between women's productive and reproductive roles and activities, the ways these link to other societal and community roles and responsibilities, and notably, the intersection between gender and spatial dimensions of poverty and welfare. This last factor, the spatiality of poverty and welfare policy, is played out in tensions and contradictions between the public functions of welfare and the private lives that are at stake.

This Article examines the implications of acknowledging the existence of gendered social and spatial relations in poverty research and

subjects of vast amounts of new scrutiny. A recent search of library social science data bases produced hundreds and, in one case, thousands of entries for the last five years alone.

⁵ Gwen Ifill, *Clinton's Plan to "End Welfare as We Know It"/He Proposes Billions for Training and Tax Credits*, S.F. CHRON., Sept. 10, 1992, at A1.

policy debate to demonstrate the consequences of their neglect or misrepresentation for welfare policy and provision. This Article begins with an overview of feminist perspectives on gender, poverty, and the welfare state to highlight the missing components of current political debate on welfare reform.⁶ This Article then turns to an even more neglected aspect of current welfare polemics: the gendered geography of poverty and welfare provision.⁷ After examining the current state of theory and research on these topics, the Article demonstrates the importance of their inclusion for effective and realistic poverty and social welfare policy that takes account of the realities of women's lives and the contexts in which these lives are lived. Special attention is paid to neglected populations such as rural women and their families and to maligned populations such as inner city minority women. The Article concludes with an outline for reorienting policy relevant theory and research on these topics.⁸

I. THE GENDERED NATURE OF POVERTY AND THE WELFARE STATE

A growing body of feminist literature on the welfare state⁹ and new theoretical work clarifying the "embeddedness" of different forms of social exchanges and relationships¹⁰ provides the foundations for understanding why current welfare policies and politics handicap women. Feminist critiques of welfare policy point to the gendered nature of the welfare state and the gender bias built into forms of social provisioning. The embeddedness paradigm directs attention to the intersection of social relations based on market relations, reciprocity, and redistribution, and broadens analysis of social and economic survival to encompass all forms of productive and reproductive activity.

⁶ See *infra* notes 9-32 and accompanying text.

⁷ See *infra* notes 33-55 and accompanying text.

⁸ See *infra* note 56 and accompanying text.

⁹ See, e.g., WOMEN, THE STATE, AND WELFARE, *supra* note 2.

¹⁰ For a discussion of embeddedness, see generally ENZO MINGIONE, FRAGMENTED SOCIETIES: A SOCIOLOGY OF ECONOMIC LIFE BEYOND THE MARKET PARADIGM (1991) (criticizing the paradigm of the self-regulating market and analyzing the processes of social organization); Leonard Bloomquist et al., *Work Structures and Rural Poverty*, in PERSISTENT POVERTY IN RURAL AMERICA 68, 68-105 (1993) (examining the relationship between different theoretical perspectives of work structures and rural poverty).

A. *Feminization of Poverty*

Since the term "feminization of poverty" was coined by Diana Pearce,¹¹ there has been a growing recognition that poverty in America is disproportionately concentrated among women and even more disproportionately concentrated among women of color. Census figures for 1990 show that one third of all female-headed families have incomes below the poverty level compared to slightly more than ten percent for all families.¹² When these figures are disaggregated by race and ethnicity, the results show almost fifty percent of Black and Hispanic female-headed families are poor compared to slightly more than a quarter of white female-headed households.¹³ Although poverty rates for female-headed households have actually decreased slightly since the 1960s, the numbers of poor women and their proportion of the entire poverty population have increased steadily.¹⁴

The reasons for women's disproportionate poverty are complex and controversial, with explanations varying with ideological and political perspectives. Most mainstream and feminist social scientists currently agree that the major factors responsible for women's poverty arise from a complex mix of economic disadvantage in the labor market and disproportionate responsibility for reproductive labor or the caregiving responsibilities that traditionally make up women's work.¹⁵ These

¹¹ Pearce, *supra* note 2.

¹² SCHRAM, *supra* note 2, at 145-47 (citing statistics from the United States Bureau of the Census, *Poverty in the United States*, Current Population Report).

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ These seemingly contradictory statistics, along with initial underemphasis on the correlated factors of race and ethnicity, have led some to question the utility of the concept of feminization of poverty. Although some trend data are artifacts of other social trends (e.g., the increase in female-headed households for the entire population) and the interplay of race and other social factors must be acknowledged, the bottom line is that women are disproportionately poor by any measure and the problem has grown worse. See Sheldon Danziger & Daniel Weinberg, *The Historical Record: Trends in Family Income, Inequality, and Poverty*, in *CONFRONTING POVERTY: PRESCRIPTIONS FOR CHANGE* 18, 18-50 (S. Danziger et al. eds., 1995) (examining factors contributing to the lack of growth in living standards throughout the past two decades).

¹⁵ As stated in Ann R. Tickamyer, *The Uneven Spatial Development of Rural Sociology*, in *POPULATION CHANGE AND THE FUTURE OF RURAL AMERICA: A CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS* 29, 33 (Linda Swanson & David Brown eds., 1993):

analyses are sharply at odds with popular opinion and political discourse that have less charitable diagnoses of the sources of much poverty, attributing it to deviation from cultural norms of individual effort and hard work.

There is also significant disagreement about the extent to which the welfare system is implicated in creating and sustaining women's poverty. Among conservative analysts it has become popular to blame the existence of public assistance for creating poverty and dependency.¹⁶ These analysts argue that the availability of welfare to meet basic needs creates disincentives to work and provides opportunities to indulge in antisocial and deviant behavior which is then passed down to new

Social reproduction is used in the enlarged sense found in feminist . . . theories to refer to the processes of reconstituting the social relations of human society necessary for all social and economic activities. Abstractly, it entails reproducing the systems of class and gender relations. More concretely, it covers all the work necessary to sustain household and economic activities, including childbearing, rearing, housework, household consumption, and a variety of other noneconomic activities. While the household is the locus for most of these activities, the state also plays a fundamental role in shaping how social reproduction is implemented. State involvement in reproduction entails a large number of diverse activities ranging from regulating the economy, to providing social welfare and assisting in the development of human capital. Finally, social reproduction in its entirety cannot be understood without understanding the linkages between the household, the state, and the economy.

For further discussion of social reproduction, see RUTH SIDEL, *WOMEN AND CHILDREN LAST: THE PLIGHT OF POOR WOMEN IN AFFLUENT AMERICA* (1986); Maxine Z. Baca, *Family, Race, and Poverty in the Eighties*, 14 *SIGNS* 856, 856-74 (1989) (discussing cultural and structural models of the black underclass); James Dickinson & Bob Russell, *Introduction: The Structure of Reproduction in Capitalist Society*, in *FAMILY, ECONOMY AND STATE: THE SOCIAL REPRODUCTION PROCESS UNDER CAPITALISM* 1, 1-20 (1986) (addressing the concept of social reproduction in terms of a totality of economic, familial, and political structures); Ann R. Tickamyer et al., *Women and Persistent Rural Poverty*, in *PERSISTENT POVERTY IN RURAL AMERICA*, *supra* note 10, at 200-29 (constructing a theory of women's rural poverty in light of feminist scholarship and theories of general rural poverty).

¹⁶ For examples of conservative analyses, see GEORGE GILDER, *WEALTH AND POVERTY* (1981); CHARLES MURRAY, *LOSING GROUND: AMERICAN SOCIAL POLICY 1950-1980* (1984) (examining the success of social welfare programs in economic and non-economic terms).

generations of welfare dependents who would rather collect a government check than find a job. While there is little empirical support for this analysis and much evidence to the contrary,¹⁷ it has become a popular diagnosis for the causes of poverty and the basis for calls for sharp retrenchment in welfare programs.¹⁸ What was initially a fringe argument has become the new political orthodoxy, driving the politics and polemics of welfare reform for both political parties.¹⁹

Ironically, many feminist and progressive analysts also attribute some of the blame for women's poverty to the welfare system, but from a very different perspective. In this view, it is the inadequacy, coupled with the social control functions, of social welfare provision that exacerbates women's poverty.²⁰ In particular, the existence of "public patriarchy"²¹

¹⁷ See generally MARK RANK, *LIVING ON THE EDGE: THE REALITIES OF WELFARE IN AMERICA* (1994) (examining the lives of individuals on welfare in juxtaposition to welfare statistics).

¹⁸ The widespread devaluation of women's labor is a major source of distortion in poverty research and policy analysis and current welfare reform debates. The notion that women on welfare don't work, i.e., are sitting around having babies and eating bonbons (or worse, doing drugs) permeates the discourse of the public, politicians, and researchers alike. Thus, Wilson discusses the need for instilling work discipline into the lives of the underclass and politicians propose cutting off benefits after a limited time period without regard for care giving responsibilities. William J. Wilson, *Public Policy Research and the Truly Disadvantaged*, in *THE URBAN UNDERCLASS* 460, 460-81 (Christopher Jencks & Paul Peterson eds., 1991). Studies of the lives of women on welfare show the same sorts of unremitting toil true of women in other circumstances. But instead of punching a clock, they are negotiating welfare bureaucracies, tending their own and others' children and other dependents, and as often as not, working off the books. See *THE URBAN UNDERCLASS*, *supra* (addressing common misconceptions about poverty and welfare recipients in the United States).

¹⁹ See Daniel P. Moynihan, *Congress Builds a Coffin*, N.Y. REV. BOOKS, Jan. 11, 1996, at 33-36 (discussing the demise of Aid to Families with Dependent Children).

²⁰ See, e.g., SCHRAM, *supra* note 2, at 128-29.

²¹ For discussions of public patriarchy, see generally MIMI ABROMOVITZ, *REGULATING THE LIVES OF WOMEN: SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY FROM COLONIAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT* (1988); Carol Brown, *Mothers, Fathers and Children: From Private to Public Patriarchy*, in *WOMEN AND REVOLUTION* 239, 239-67 (Lydia Sargent ed., 1981) (describing current changes in the nature of patriarchy); Nancy Fraser, *Struggle Over Needs: Outline of a Socialist-Feminist Critical Theory of Late-Capitalist Political Culture*, in *WOMEN, THE STATE, AND*

substitutes impersonal, public control of women by the state for the private control by family and male kin. This process is embodied in a dual welfare system highly correlated with gender and race, although nominally gender and race blind. Feminist accounts demonstrate the segmented nature of a welfare system in which productive labor located in the formal labor market is valued and protected over all other forms of work,²² while reproductive work is devalued and unpaid. Thus, social transfers with relatively generous and accessible aid and without the stigmatizing label of "welfare" are available to predominantly white, middle class male labor force participants in such forms as unemployment compensation and workmen's compensation. Whereas women workers who are located in either inferior labor market positions or informal and reproductive work are more likely to have access to only the most minimal, stigmatized, and punitive forms of assistance such as AFDC and food stamps.²³

Women's well-documented disadvantage in the labor market²⁴ is mirrored and reinforced by their relationship to the state in the form of

WELFARE, *supra* note 2, at 199-225 (outlining an approach for discussion of needs and poverty in western political culture).

²² The formal economy is the realm where labor is regulated and protected and this regulation distinguishes it from the informal economy.

²³ For discussions of the bifurcation of the welfare system, see generally WOMEN, THE STATE, AND WELFARE, *supra* note 2 (collecting articles about women and welfare); Barbara J. Nelson, *The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State: Workmen's Compensation and Mother's Aid*, in WOMEN, THE STATE, AND WELFARE, *supra* note 2, at 123-51 (arguing that two separate forms of welfare, based on welfare capitalism for young men and on charitable traditions for widows, reinforces the gender, racial and class organization of the welfare state); Pearce, *supra* note 2 (examining the economic and social consequences of being female that result in higher rates of poverty); Diana Pearce, *Welfare Is Not for Women: Why the War on Poverty Cannot Conquer the Feminization of Poverty*, in WOMEN, THE STATE, AND WELFARE, *supra* note 2, at 265-79 (arguing that the trend toward the feminization of poverty (a greater percentage of the poor being women) has altered the needs of today's poor and the policies necessary to meet those needs).

²⁴ There are innumerable sources documenting women's labor market disadvantage. Good overviews can be found in ALICE A. KEMP, *WOMEN'S WORK: DEGRADED AND DEVALUED* (1994) (discussing the work of women inside and outside of the home); JUDITH LORBER, *PARADOXES OF GENDER* (1994) (analyzing gender as a social institution); BARBARA RESKIN & IRENE PADAVIC, *WOMEN AND MEN AT WORK* (1994) (detailing evidence of sex inequality at work).

government assistance and interventions. Women's relegation to lower paying and sex-segregated jobs, greater likelihood of part-time or intermittent work histories, frequent participation in informal labor markets and economic activities, and experiences of harassment and discrimination directly and indirectly influence their eligibility for social welfare transfers. Welfare benefits available to women and their children are either based on undervalued reproductive labor where social assistance benefits are stigmatized, variable, and unstable, and frequently punitively administered, or they are accrued by a position of relative disadvantage in the formal labor market.²⁵ Women's lower wages, greater likelihood of part-time or intermittent employment, and concentration in poorly compensated, unprotected secondary sector jobs affect their eligibility for different forms of benefits. They are less likely to be eligible for relatively high paying, stigma-free social insurance type benefits, such as unemployment compensation, that accompany protected and primary sector employment. When they are eligible, they qualify for much lower benefit levels than those available to primary sector workers — typically men.

B. Social Welfare Policy Regimes

A broadly comparative view of gender relations and welfare provision across different types of societies helps to elaborate how gender permeates forms of social citizenship in the United States. Nations can be classified in terms of their "social policy regime" or the ways that social welfare provision is organized and conducted by the state. The elements that make up a social policy regime include: the assumptions about the sources of entitlement to assistance (citizenship, human rights, labor market activity, ascriptive status such as gender, race, or age); the means by which such assistance will be provided; the degree of intervention of the state in private enterprise and activity; and the degree of redistribution of social resources.

The United States has been classified as having a liberal or neoclassical social policy regime in contrast to corporatist and social democratic regimes.²⁶ In a liberal social policy regime, primacy in regulating the

²⁵ See DIANA PEARCE & HARRIETTE MCADOO, *WOMEN AND CHILDREN: ALONE AND IN POVERTY* (1991) (studying poverty and welfare as they pertain to women).

²⁶ For a discussion of social policy regime classifications generally and of the United States' classification specifically, see GOSTA ESPING-ANDERSEN, *THE*

economy is granted to market mechanisms, and concomitantly, social rights are closely tied to relationship to past or current labor market activity rather than being defined in terms of more universal claims to assistance. For example, health insurance is privatized with the highest quality of access linked to wealth and labor market activity with only a secondary, patchwork system for the unemployed, underemployed, and impoverished. This contrasts with social democratic regimes that typically assure universal access to health care for all members of society, regardless of labor market status. In a liberal welfare state efforts are made to avoid tampering with the operation of markets. Interventions to deal with social problems are rarely entered proactively but only in response to perceptions of extreme market failures such as the widespread existence of poverty among the elderly that ultimately led to the inception of social security earlier in this century.²⁷

The prominence of the concept of "deservingness" in popular notions about legitimate access to the benefits of the welfare state illustrates the dominant ideology in a liberal welfare regime. Popular perceptions and public debate about welfare divide recipients into those persons and groups who are "deserving" of assistance and those who are not.²⁸ Deservingness is defined by attribution of dual dimensions of respectability and industriousness, and the best way to demonstrate possession of these qualities comes from stable employment. Individuals who have weak attachments to the labor market for whatever reason also have more tenuous claims on the rights of citizenship both in practice and in popular opinion.²⁹ Women, whose attachment to the labor market is notoriously tenuous for reasons ranging from the socially mandated primacy of reproductive roles to socialization and discrimination, increasingly find themselves defined as "undeserving."³⁰

Yet as both embeddedness and feminist theories emphasize, market relations and activity do not exist in a vacuum. They are not independent of other forms of social organization but are embedded in social relations of production and reproduction, both of which are necessary for human society to exist and persist, and both of which are instrumental in shaping

THREE WORLDS OF WELFARE CAPITALISM 26, 27 (1990) (arguing that current economic processes are shaped by the nature of states and state differences); ORLOFF, *THE POLITICS OF PENSIONS*, *supra* note 2, at 19, 20; Orloff, *Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship*, *supra* note 2, at 312.

²⁷ Orloff, *Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship*, *supra* note 2, at 310.

²⁸ See MICHAEL KATZ, *THE UNDESERVING POOR* (1989).

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

survival strategies for individuals, families, households, and communities. Basing claims to social rights on market activity ignores large segments of social life and renders many forms of invaluable social activity and forms of work invisible or relegates them to secondary status.

Women make up the most prominent social category with a problematic relationship to the labor market and, not coincidentally, they are the group most responsible for reproductive labor. Historically, women's access to social rights has been limited. Initially, they lacked full political and economic rights. Even as these have been formally extended, their tenuous relationship to the labor market in a system which defines rights largely in relationship to market activity means continued limitations on access to social benefits.

The situation is particularly problematic at the present time when expanded access to and participation in the labor market for women has accompanied declining access to paternalistic protections with few compensating sources of support and enduring competitive disadvantage in actual labor market opportunities. Full access and opportunity remain elusive. Women are no longer expected or able to be exempted from working even when they have responsibility for young children or other dependents' care. Yet they still carry primary responsibility for care giving with few private or public resources available for assisting in that care and little likelihood of earning sufficient income to enable them to purchase assistance. Women are caught in a triple bind: criticized for lack of labor market activity; criticized if work interferes with reproductive work; and criticized for accessing state aid when any of these other activities break down.

Thus, gender correlates with access to welfare, links opportunities in and out of the welfare system, and permeates definitions of citizenship and the rights that it entails. Yet, recognition of the gendered nature of their subjects has failed to penetrate conventional accounts of social welfare policy or polity, nor does it enter discussion of welfare reform. Historically, the expansion of the welfare state accompanied the decline of private responsibility for welfare provision at the same time that women's opportunities have expanded beyond the household to include a wider range of civic and labor market activities. But the degree to which assumptions about women's roles and responsibilities for welfare provision has or has not changed rarely is directly discussed or debated; there is little discussion of how or why this has occurred or the consequences for women.

The discussion to this point has focused on the barriers faced by all women, and certainly all women share a high degree of vulnerability to impoverishment. Yet as poverty figures indicate, certain groups of women are even more vulnerable. Women of color are subject to disadvantage and discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity as well as gender. These factors may be exacerbated yet further by spatial location. Minority residents of inner city neighborhoods are further disadvantaged by living where few labor market opportunities exist.³¹ Similarly, rural women have more limited labor market experience and opportunities, while simultaneously they often have more extensive household and family enterprise responsibilities.³² The next section of the Article will explore how the spatiality of poverty reinforces gender in defining women's opportunities.

II. THE SPATIALITY OF POVERTY

Although spatial metaphors abound in the social sciences, they often mask a failure to adequately theorize and research the spatiality of social relations. This is as true of poverty and welfare provision as any other subject.³³ The failure to adequately consider spatiality pervades poverty theory, research, political discussion, and policy analysis. There are at least three important dimensions to spatiality as they affect public policy on women's poverty. These are the existence of significant gender implications of geographic diversity in poverty incidence, causes, and consequences; the existence of a geography of gender relations that affects all social institutions; and the existence of public-private distinctions that underlie assumptions about welfare provision. Each will be briefly examined.

³¹ WILLIAM J. WILSON, *THE TRULY DISADVANTAGED: THE INNER CITY, THE UNDERCLASS, AND SOCIAL WORKS* 148 (1987); *see also generally* THE URBAN UNDERCLASS, *supra* note 18 (addressing reasons for concentrated poverty and policies to combat it).

³² Tickamyer et al., *supra* note 15, at 217, 223.

³³ Interestingly, one of the oldest distinctions in western welfare schemes entails a spatial distinction between "indoor" and "outdoor" relief. RANK, *supra* note 17, at 13. Indoor relief meant institutionalization of the poor such as in the poor houses and workhouses of Dickensian notoriety. Outdoor relief entailed some sort of subsidy to allow some degree of independent subsistence. It is noteworthy that this distinction has been resurrected in the current debates on welfare reform with the suggestion of sending the children of indigent and underage mothers to orphanages.

A. *Geographic Diversity*

One strand in the expansion of poverty research has been a surge of studies on variation in poverty by spatial variables reflecting geographic diversity including region, population size and density, characteristics of labor market areas, and migration patterns. There also has been a virtual explosion of research on poverty of place, both for particular locations and for types of locales. Thus, it is possible to document a boom in research on urban ghettos, a smaller but significant increase in studies of locales of persistent rural poverty (especially in the rural South and Appalachia), and new community studies, ethnographies, and histories of poor people in rural, urban, and fringe locations.³⁴

³⁴ It is not possible to give more than a flavor of the explosive growth of this research. Examples of urban research can be found in *THE URBAN UNDERCLASS*, *supra* note 18 (addressing common misconceptions about poverty and welfare recipients in the United States); *WILSON*, *supra* note 31 (examining social and class changes in inner-city neighborhoods). Sources on rural poverty include *RURAL POVERTY IN AMERICA* (Cynthia M. Duncan ed., 1992) (examining different facets of rural poverty including the lack of rural work opportunities that pay a living wage); Daniel Lichter et al., *Changing Linkages Between Work and Poverty in Rural America*, 59 *RURAL SOC.* 395, 395-415 (1994) (examining inequality of work availability between metropolitan and rural workers); Tickamyer & Duncan, *supra* note 4; and most exhaustively and comprehensively *PERSISTENT POVERTY IN RURAL AMERICA*, *supra* note 10 (reviewing theoretical and empirical studies of rural poverty). National studies of the geography of poverty include John P. Jones & Janet Kodras, *Restructured Regions and Families: The Feminization of Poverty in the U.S.*, 80 *ANNALS ASS'N AM. GEOGRAPHERS* 163, 163-83 (1990) (arguing for state intervention to support female-headed families and to improve the status of women's work); Janet Kodras & John P. Jones, *The State, Social Policy, and Geography*, in *GEOGRAPHIC DIMENSIONS OF U.S. SOCIAL POLICY* 18-36 (Janet Kodras & John P. Jones eds., 1991); Janet Kodras et al., *Contextualizing Welfare's Work Disincentive: The Case of Female-Headed Family Poverty*, 26 *GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS* 285, 285-99 (1994) (illustrating how poverty is governed by specific employment and welfare characteristics). Locality research includes many fascinating new studies such as *JANET FITCHEN, ENDANGERED SPACES, ENDURING PLACES: CHANGE, IDENTITY, AND SURVIVAL IN RURAL AMERICA* (1991) (portraying and explaining interrelated changes currently occurring in rural America); *FORGOTTEN PLACES: UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AMERICA* (Thomas Lyson & Willand Falk eds., 1993) (examining the territorial dimensions of rural poverty and underdevelopment); *DAVID L. HARVEY, POTTER ADDITION: POVERTY, FAMILY, AND KINSHIP IN A HEARTLAND COMMUNITY* (1993) (examining the

This increasing attention to spatial variation goes far to elaborate what is known about poverty in contemporary America, but this expansion of the empirical base is not reflected in policy debates in at least two ways. First, the vast majority of public policy discussion, including calls for welfare reform, suggestions for new programs, and debate over general principles to guide public policy ignores the existence and implications of spatial variation. With the exception of policy discussions emerging from specific (nonurban) locales,³⁵ most public

family and community contexts of strategies developed to cope with poverty); JAY MACLEOD, *AIN'T NO MAKING IT: LEVELED ASPIRATIONS IN A LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD* (1987) (analyzing how poverty circumscribes the horizons of young people and how class structure is reproduced at the societal level). Historical works with attention to place include JACQUELINE JONES, *THE DISPOSSESSED* (1992) (illustrating patterns of resourcefulness common to poor people); NICHOLAS LEMANN, *THE PROMISED LAND: THE GREAT BLACK MIGRATION AND HOW IT CHANGED AMERICA* (1991) (examining American race relations and social welfare policy).

³⁵ For an extensive policy discussion emerging from the literature on rural poverty, see KENNETH DEEVERS, *THE RURAL POOR: POLICY ISSUES FOR THE 1990S* (1988); DUNCAN, *supra* note 34; PERSISTENT POVERTY IN RURAL AMERICA, *supra* note 10; Kenneth Deavers & Robert Hoppe, *The Rural Poor: The Past as Prologue*, in *RURAL POLICIES FOR THE 1990S*, at 85-101 (Cornelia Flora & James Christenson eds., 1991) (examining characteristics of the rural poor and policy changes likely to benefit different groups); Duncan & Tickamyser, *supra* note 4; Tickamyser & Duncan, *supra* note 4. However, such literature does not enter mainstream or national policy debates. Similarly ghettoized is the very extensive discussion of rural development policies, including macrolevel policy, sectoral, and rural place policies. *See, e.g.*, Frederick Buttel et al., *The State, Rural Policy, and Rural Poverty*, in *PERSISTENT POVERTY IN RURAL AMERICA*, *supra* note 10, at 292-326 (examining inability of American governing institutions to deal successfully with the wide range of rural needs); Gene F. Summers, *Rural Development Options*, in *ECONOMIC ADAPTATION: ALTERNATIVES FOR NONMETROPOLITAN AREAS* 287-98 (David L. Barkley ed., 1993) (considering the need for a national rural development policy, a comprehensive strategy and the role of local organizations); James Bonnen, *The Political Economy of U.S. Rural Policy: An Exploration of the Past with Strategies for the Future* (1990) (paper presented at the International Symposium on Economic Change, Policies, Strategies and Research Issues, Aspen, CO) (discussing potential strategies to achieve a rural sector policy). Additionally, while these policies can have profound effects on rural people's lives, they are indirect means to dealing with poverty rather than the sorts of social provision measures under discussion here.

policy debate either focuses on urban issues or assumes a national context. In practice these approaches are one and the same. The result is that the specific circumstances and needs of different groups are not served by welfare policy.

The conflation of urban and national policies and the failure to incorporate spatial variation in welfare policy finds little relief in specifically rural oriented policy analysis and debate.³⁶ Direct policies are largely absent or are narrowly focused on commodities. Place oriented policies directed at rural America, such as regional and rural development initiatives, are largely absent or a failure.³⁷ Specifically rural poverty and welfare policy is nonexistent, although it can be argued that this is a relatively recent development. War on Poverty initiatives of the 1960s emphasized rural poverty, most notably isolated pockets of white poverty populations such as in Appalachia. This has changed in ensuing years.

The two major exceptions to the focus on national and urban policy are found in discussions of the role and value of poverty demonstration projects at state and local levels, see Michael Wiseman, *Welfare Reform in the States: The Bush Legacy*, FOCUS, Spring 1993, at 18, 18-36 (examining waivers of federal regulations to enhance state reform) and most recently, the new location specific economic development efforts known as EZ-EC (empowerment zone, enterprise community). SMALL COMMUNITY AND RURAL DEV., U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., RURAL GUIDEBOOK STRATEGIC PLANNING: A GUIDEBOOK FOR COMMUNITY BASED STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR EMPOWERMENT ZONES AND ENTERPRISE COMMUNITIES: BUILDING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER 36 (1994). However, the former typically entail state level experiments, addenda, or waivers to national programs which are applied across the board to all locations within the state. Alternatively, they are localized demonstrations which may be tailored to the needs of the community or local area but are not explicitly evaluated in terms of the geographic distinctiveness of that locale. Overall, such programs receive low grades for planning, coordination, and potential for contributing to national policy. Wiseman, *supra*, at 33. The EZ-EC program, on the other hand, is locally based and initiated and truly does have the potential for reflecting spatial sensitivity, however, it is too early to tell how these will unfold. Regardless of their potential for providing a more coherent rural development policy, these programs are typical in their disregard of gender issues. SMALL COMMUNITY AND RURAL DEV., *supra*, at 36.

³⁶ Cf. Buttell et al., *supra* note 35; Bonnen, *supra* note 35.

³⁷ The failure category would presumably include the two large scale regional development initiatives of the War on the Poverty: the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission, both of which focussed narrowly on infrastructure projects and tended to reinforce long entrenched political interests. Bonnen, *supra* note 35, at 2-3.

Declines in rural poverty rates relative to their previous levels, the perceived failure of War on Poverty interventions, the racialization of welfare policies, and the ensuing spotlight on urban ghetto poverty has effectively eliminated widespread concern for rural poverty. Rural poverty is largely invisible with only periodic nostalgic revisits to sites of historic poverty such as Appalachia and the Deep South.

This failure to recognize spatial variation is especially ironic in view of recent political developments directed at divesting the federal government of responsibility for poverty programs and policies. Part of the explicit rationale for this movement is the belief that local authorities know best, i.e., can most effectively and efficiently allocate resources to maximum effect because of their local knowledge and smaller scale. A case could be made that popular opinion and political discourse has outstripped the scholarly approaches to public policy. A second glance suggests it's not quite this straightforward. While it remains to be seen how this restructuring of welfare unfolds, proposals to localize welfare provision at this point appear to be more a product of a desire to downsize the federal government than the outcome of sensitivity to spatial variation. The failure to recognize spatial variation in scholarly policy analysis is echoed in political rhetoric, calls for welfare reform, soundbites, media features, and public opinion which stereotype poor people in predictable ways.

The second way spatial diversity is overlooked is in failure to recognize that spatial variation has different implications for different groups; different populations located in different places have different needs and circumstances. This is particularly the case for women against whom much of the rhetoric of poverty and welfare reform is directed in pejorative fashion with little regard for varying contexts. In popular discourse, poverty is overwhelmingly associated with urban minority populations, particularly women of color who are stereotyped as "welfare queens and cheats" and are perceived to flaunt underclass lifestyles and choices. The race, class, and gender bias inherent in these images drives welfare reform debate. Diversity in poor populations is ignored or dismissed. The implications for women can be further understood by examining the geography of gender.

B. The Geography of Gender

If the most straightforward form of spatiality — large-scale geography — is not recognized by most contemporary and mainstream poverty and social welfare policy analysts, then it probably is hopeless to expect recognition of more subtle forms of spatiality. Yet embedded in social

relations relevant to poverty policy are other types of spatial arrangements that need to be scrutinized. These include the spatiality of communities, labor markets, and households, all of which can be shown to be subtly gendered.

The failure to analyze social policy in spatial terms goes beyond the failure to distinguish such basic differences as those based on population size and density (urban and rural) or regional variation. An emerging paradigm originating in critical and postmodern geography posits a socio-spatial dialectic that shows how space constrains and shapes social relations and activity and simultaneously how social relations produce and reproduce spatial arrangements.³⁸ While most analysts have focused on global and national level social and spatial relations of production (analyses of global and regional uneven development are particularly prominent), relevance for more localized and more intermediate social forms also can be established. Elsewhere this author argues for the importance of considering the spatial dimensions of social reproduction activities.³⁹ Since social reproduction is implicated in women's poverty and is the focus of most welfare policy, it is necessary to consider this further.

The importance of space has been documented directly and (more typically) indirectly by geographers, anthropologists, and sociologists who show how spatial arrangements relate to social status, access to resources, and allocation of time and labor within the household as well as in public arenas.⁴⁰ For example, urban geographers describe the ways the urban landscape affects an individual's ability to carry out family and household responsibilities by determining access to income, consumer goods, and services such as health care and child care. Women who work outside the home seek employment closer to home than men, going so far as to use proximity as the primary selection criteria. At the same time employers also locate on the basis of proximity to such captive sources of labor,⁴¹ thus reconstructing entire urban and suburban landscapes.

³⁸ See EDWARD SOJA, *POSTMODERN GEOGRAPHIES: THE REASSERTION OF SPACE IN CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY* (1989) (considering space and geography in relation to historical narrative).

³⁹ Tickamyer et al., *supra* note 15, at 29-41.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., DAPHNE SPAIN, *GENDERED SPACES* (1992) (discussing how different societies have separate male and female arenas).

⁴¹ Susan Hanson & Geraldine Pratt, *Geographic Perspective on the Occupational Segregation of Women*, 6 NAT'L GEOGRAPHIC RES. 376, 381 (1990); Susan Hanson & Geraldine Pratt, *Job Search and the Occupational Segregation of Women*, 81 ANNALS ASS'N AM. GEOGRAPHERS 229, 244 (1991); Moshe Semyonov & Noah L. Epstein, *Suburban Labor Markets, Urban Labor Markets, and Gender Inequality in Earnings*, 32 SOC. Q. 611, 618 (1991).

Rural sociologists and anthropologists provide numerous examples in studies of the family farm in the United States and household survival strategies both domestically and cross-nationally. Increasingly, family farms are supported by off-farm employment, and the allocation of labor between the household, the farm enterprise, and off-farm employment entail a delicate balance of spatial arrangements influenced by such factors as type of commodities, type of off-farm employment opportunities, individual human capital, family composition and life course stage. Women with young children are more likely to engage in productive (economic) activities close to their reproductive (childrearing and household) responsibilities. This means they will be more likely to engage in farm work, informal labor market activities, or home-based employment depending upon the availability and location of other labor options including formal labor market employment.⁴² As children enter school or leave home, women are less constrained, and the farm-household division of labor among family members may shift as their labor market opportunities expand.⁴³ Who does what, *where*, reflects a spatial division of labor that is closely intertwined with the gender division of labor.

Still other examples come from findings of both classic and contemporary studies of the urban and rural poor that highlight the importance of social networks for daily survival.⁴⁴ For many poor women and their families, access to these networks is the most important resource they have and the primary form of relief from the daily hardships of grinding poverty. This is illustrated in the ongoing study conducted by Bonnie Dill and her colleagues of poor women in rural

⁴² Mareena McKinley Wright, *I Never Did Any Fieldwork, but I Milked an Awful Lot of Cows!: Using Rural Women's Experience to Reconceptualize Models of Work*, 9 GENDER AND SOC'Y 216, 220-22 (1995).

⁴³ See PEGGY BARLETT, AMERICAN DREAMS, RURAL REALITIES: FAMILY FARMS IN CRISIS (1993) (examining trends in American farming, their impact on rural communities and the effects of federal farm legislation); RAND CONGER & GLEN ELDER, FAMILIES IN TROUBLED TIMES: ADAPTING TO CHANGE IN RURAL AMERICA (1994) (exploring personal experiences of families in poverty in terms of designing more effective social policies).

⁴⁴ Some such studies include: JANET FITCHEN, POVERTY IN RURAL AMERICA: A CASE STUDY (1981); HERBERT GANS, THE URBAN VILLAGERS (1962) (native-born Americans of Italian parentage in Boston); CAROL STACK, ALL OUR KIN (1974) (black community in the urban midwest); Bonnie T. Dill & Bruce B. Williams, *Race, Gender, and Poverty in the Rural South: African American Single Mothers*, in RURAL POVERTY IN AMERICA 97 (Cynthia Duncan ed., 1992) (black single mothers in rural Mississippi and Tennessee).

communities in the Mississippi Delta.⁴⁵ Although there are few opportunities for these women and their living conditions are wretched, they are tied to their locale by dependence on networks of community and kin that would be sacrificed if they migrated.⁴⁶ What is underscored in this work is the importance of physical proximity of these networks for survival and the determining influence they have on life course decisions.

It is precisely these links which are overlooked in policies that advocate relocation encouragement and assistance. One of the few ways that locational differences have been acknowledged in welfare policy debates is in the popularity in some circles of encouraging movement to where the jobs are located. Programs to assist relocation involve human capital training and possibly assuming or assisting in the direct costs of relocation. All the other costs — breaking and recreating ties and assistance networks — are not understood or are ignored.

The centrality of gendered space can be extended even inside the home and to the “regions”⁴⁷ of face to face interaction.⁴⁸ Regions structure communication between actors and are differentiated in their use to the point of incorporating very different meanings and values. Thus, stratified space extends to the household such as is found in the notion of “front and back regions” which correspond to arenas for socially acceptable versus compromising behavior and activity.⁴⁹ The importance of household geography has been better recognized in literature (the classic example is Virginia Woolf’s powerful essay, *A Room of One’s Own* associating women’s advancement with rights to household and work space); by ethnographers who describe who does what where within the household; and by some feminist scholars who have examined the spatial design of urban housing as it helps or hinders the performance of household activities and responsibilities.⁵⁰ To understand the implica-

⁴⁵ Dill & Williams, *supra* note 44, at 106.

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ ERVING GOFFMAN, *THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE* 106-40 (1959).

⁴⁸ ANTHONY GIDDENS, *CENTRAL PROBLEMS IN SOCIAL THEORY* 207-09 (1979) (discussing three main theoretical traditions in social science: interpretative sociology, functionalism, and structuralism).

⁴⁹ GOFFMAN, *supra* note 47, at 106-40.

⁵⁰ See, e.g., Dolores Hayden, *What Would a Non-sexist City Be Like? Speculations on Housing, Urban Design, and Human Work*, 5 *SIGNS* Supp. S170, 170-87 (1980) (proposing a new paradigm of the home which would support the activities of employed women); Ann Markusen, *City Spatial Structure, Women’s Household Work, and National Urban Policy*, 5 *SIGNS* Supp. S23-44 (1980)

tions for welfare policy it is necessary to further examine the meaning of gendered space, particularly its association with the public-private distinction.

C. Public Space, Private Space, Gendered Space

Discovering spatiality in institutions and organizations, less far-reaching than society-wide, territorially-delimited geography, can be further specified by reference to public-private distinctions between and within all social institutions. Feminist scholars have noted a spatial division of labor prevailing to some degree or another in all industrialized societies in which men dominate public space (political, civic, and economic arenas) and women occupy private space (household, family, and other sites of reproductive activity), thus "gendering" space.⁵¹ The public-private space distinction both corresponds to different social institutions and internally divides particular institutions.

Recent feminist analyses from a number of perspectives including architects, planners, anthropologists, geographers, and sociologists consolidate these arguments to explicitly demonstrate a relationship between the degree of gender segregation and spatial segregation in society.⁵² They describe a correlation between low status for women and highly differentiated public and private spheres, asserting that gender stratification of social institutions is reinforced by spatial segregation. Gender stratification is structured into social institutions such as the family, education, and the labor market. Each social institution has a corresponding context such as the home, school, or the workplace, and spatial segregation within these "spatial institutions" reproduces gender stratification. The mechanism linking the two is distance from sources of knowledge which provides the basis for power. Gender stratification

(investigating the interrelationship between city spatial structure, women's household work, and urban policy).

⁵¹ See DOROTHY SMITH, *THE EVERYDAY WORLD AS PROBLEMATIC: A FEMINIST SOCIOLOGY* (1987).

⁵² See SPAIN, *supra* note 40; Michelle Z. Rosaldo, *Women, Culture, and Society: A Theoretical Overview*, in *WOMEN, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY* 17, 17-42 (Michelle Z. Rosaldo & Louise Lamphere eds., 1974) (relating universal asymmetries in the actual activities and cultural evaluations of men and women to a universal opposition between domestic and public spheres); Wiseman, *supra* note 35.

insures that the most valued knowledge in a society is that most readily available to men, and spatial segregation reinforces differential access.⁵³

Relegation of women to a segregated private sphere keeps women from access to knowledge and thus from power. Gendered space typically follows a public-private sphere distinction with public space the domain of men and private space the domain of women and status distinctions determined accordingly. There is cross-cultural evidence for the relationship between the rigidity of spatial sexual segregation and the status of women in nonindustrial societies as well as detailed examples of its operation both historically and in the contemporary United States.⁵⁴

Segregation occurs both within and across social institutions. Thus, women face social and spatial segregation in all social institutions even where they have been nominally integrated into that institution as exemplified by the persistence and perniciousness of occupational and firm-level sex segregation. However, those realms that are most closely affiliated with women's activities such as the family and the home are associated with devalued activities and less powerful sorts of knowledge. These contexts are further gender stratified into a "male/female territorial dichotomy"⁵⁵ with private sphere areas such as the kitchen more clearly associated with women.

III. GENDER, SPACE, AND WELFARE POLICY

The purpose of underscoring the inherent spatiality of social life is to emphasize the centrality of geography to any consideration of social policy. Introducing the concept of gendered space shows how spatial arrangements differentially operate for women and men to link individual opportunities and outcomes (well-being) to access to resources in the household, community, and labor market. The final link in the chain being forged is the connection between gendered space and poverty and welfare policy.

A. *Spatiality of the Gender-Welfare Link*

As described above, feminist analysis has added gender as the missing dimension to these analyses, but they still lack a spatial analysis.

⁵³ SPAIN, *supra* note 40, at 15-21.

⁵⁴ *Id.* at 248-51; see Wiseman, *supra* note 35.

⁵⁵ LESLIE K. WEISMAN, *DISCRIMINATION BY DESIGN: A FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF THE MANMADE ENVIRONMENT* 86 (1992).

The polity is also a spatial institution and, as in other socio-spatial institutions, spatiality reflects and reproduces gender inequality. Geographic variability occurs within and across states, regions, and locales. Gender relations are not the same across space, even within the same society. Although gender differences across the United States' regions and types of places may lack the drama of cross-national cultural differences, they are sufficiently present to require investigation. Forms and relations of social reproduction, opportunities for women within the labor market and outside it, involvement in community, friendship and kin-based networks, and access to state programs and benefits vary widely across regions, between rural and urban America, and from place to place.

Spatiality encompassed in the public-private distinction discussed above is further elaborated in the gender-welfare state analysis. Feminist critics of welfare policies note that for many women survival depends on the unhappy choice between dependence on a man or dependence on the state. The reproductive work done by women — child bearing, rearing, caring, provisioning, nursing, housework, consumption activities, etc. — is relegated to the private sphere where it is a largely invisible, yet fundamental, activity for the survival of all members of society, both women and men. Such work is not valued, in part because it is conducted outside public scrutiny. When it is made public through the intervention of the welfare system, it is done in a punitive way to reinforce the subordinate status of such work and its workers, relegating it to the back regions of the state and the welfare system as well as the community and the household. The stigma attached to welfare then acts as punishment for bringing private affairs into the public domain. Furthermore, as a greatly underrepresented constituency in the public sphere, there are few advocates for poor women's interests heard in the political arena.

B. Implications for Poverty Research and Policy

Understanding the spatial and gender relations of poverty is especially important for understanding women's poverty in America. In rural areas opportunity for both income and welfare is more restricted, nonwaged and informal work more prevalent, access to land and capital more restricted, traditional norms of women's roles in families and communities remain widely embraced, political opportunities for women are limited, and social networks provide both resources and obstacles.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ See Cynthia M. Duncan & Nita Lamborghini, *Poverty and Social Context in Remote Rural Communities*, 59 RURAL SOC. 437, 437-61 (1994) (comparing

Each of these represents a spatial relationship as well as a social relationship, beyond the initial crude rural-urban distinction. For example, rural labor markets often include more territory or have significant physical barriers to travel (i.e., require longer commuting differences), have fewer jobs, and are heavily sex segregated, all of which operate to the disadvantage of men and especially women and contribute to women's poverty *and their disadvantage in social welfare eligibility*. High levels of informal and nonwaged labor found among rural women often are the outcome of these limited formal market opportunities or are the inevitable compromise for women who have reproductive responsibilities that cannot be otherwise arranged, especially in a climate of strong support for a traditional division of labor. Again, this not only represents a reduced opportunity to earn income but also reduces eligibility for social benefits.

Urban areas also have other space related obstacles. They too suffer from isolation but often social rather than spatial isolation. Spatial problems include crowding, segregation, and other social ills such as high crime rates, deterioration of necessary public services and infrastructure, and an overabundance of low wage labor that present specific obstacles for poor women and their families. The disenfranchisement of women from public office is slowly being reversed but remains a major problem in representing women's interest in the public sphere. The existence of social networks provides needed social and sometimes economic support but also binds women with few other resources to otherwise limited locales. Additionally, they may stigmatize recipients of welfare or create greater social distance between those who do and do not avail themselves of state sources of provisioning.

It is relatively easy to design research that incorporates these issues, and increasingly, research on poverty does reflect both gender and spatial issues. It's much harder to apply these to poverty and welfare policy. Nevertheless, there are take-home lessons that can be drawn from these examples. These examples suggest the necessity for devising social policy based on a different set of principles and factors than current policy recognizes, i.e., to truly require a revolution in welfare as we know it. The current system punishes women for not being men (i.e., not following the same patterns of work history that men pursue and provide); punishes society by stigmatizing women's work, including reproductive labor; and punishes the periphery (whether in rural United

social segregation in a chronically poor, single-resource community with that in a more diverse community).

States or desolate inner city ghettos) by ignoring isolation and other spatial factors. All current proposals for "reform" fall into these same traps. A truly equitable policy that recognized how gender and space shape opportunity would:

1. Recognize "back regions" in designing welfare policy and design programs to reduce differential access to programs.
2. Recognize the way public-private organization of the division of labor hides real, necessary, and socially beneficial work.
3. Recognize the ways spatial segregation creates/reinforces/reproduces the state enforced distinctions between women and men.
4. Recognize the true costs and benefits of different social arrangements to devise explicit social policy about women's work (reproductive work, etc.). Currently costs are largely internalized except for the increasingly heavy social costs of the inefficiencies and inequities of this system.

Each of these points underscores the necessity for devising new accounting schemes for how we measure work or beneficial social activity; new ledgers for how costs and benefits are evaluated; and new enumerations of who is doing what, where. Until all work is valued and counted and women's work is not hidden in the back regions of society and the community, no amount of welfare reform will come close to dealing with the problems of poverty in the United States, let alone in specific areas and regions and for specific groups of people. Women will not be able to realize the legacy of their rights embodied in the *Declaration of Sentiments* until public-private contexts of poverty for women in the United States are thoroughly aired and understood.