Toward a Mandatory Work Policy for Men

Lawrence M. Mead

Summary

Lawrence Mead addresses the problem of nonwork among low-income men, particularly low-income black men, and its implications for families and children. The poor work effort, he says, appears to be caused partly by falling wages and other opportunity constraints but principally by an oppositional culture and a breakdown of work discipline. Mead argues that if government policies are to increase work among poor men, they must not merely improve wages and skills but enforce work in available jobs. Using the same "help with hassle" approach that welfare reform has used successfully to increase work among poor mothers, policymakers should adapt the child support enforcement and criminal justice systems so that both actively help their clients find employment and then back up that help with a requirement that they work.

Men with unpaid child support judgments and parolees leaving prison would be told to get a job or pay up, as they are now. But if they did not, they would be remanded to a required work program where their efforts to work would be closely supervised. They would have to participate and get a private job and have their subsequent employment verified. Failing that, they would be assigned to work crews, where again compliance would be verified. Men who failed to participate and work steadily would—unless there were good cause—be sent back to the child support or parole authorities to be imprisoned. But men who complied would be freed from the work program after a year or two. They would then revert to the looser supervision practiced by the regular child support and parole systems. If their employment record deteriorated, they could again be remanded to the work program.

Mead estimates that such a program would involve as many as 1.5 million men who are already in the child support and criminal justice systems and would cost $2.4 billion to $4.8 billion a year. It is premature, says Mead, for such a program to be mandated nationwide. Rather, the best role for national policy at this point is to establish and evaluate promising model programs to see which work best.

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The nation has successfully raised employment among poor mothers through welfare reform. The share of all poor mothers with children who worked jumped from 44 percent in 1993 to 64 percent in 1999, while the share working full time, year-round rose from 9 to 17 percent. Those figures fell back to 54 and 16 percent by 2005, partly because of the 2001 recession, but were still well above the level before welfare reform.[1]

Meanwhile, however, work levels among low-income men—many of them the absent fathers of welfare families—remain low and falling. In 2005, only 42 percent of working-aged men under the poverty line reported any employment at all, only 16 percent of them full time year-round.[2] Partly for this reason, work levels for the overall poor population have not improved. How might work levels for low-skilled men be raised in the same manner as those of welfare mothers? That is the question I address here.

The success of welfare reform in putting poor mothers to work was unprecedented. Until Congress passed the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, government efforts to increase work among the poor had fallen far short of expectations. The problem, in part, was the tendency of researchers and policymakers to see the challenge too much in economic terms. Viewing poor adults as lacking in "human capital," they had sought to solve the problem by raising the skills of the poor, through education and training or by improving their incentives to work. But experience with numerous experimental welfare work programs during the 1980s and 1990s proved that it was also necessary to enforce work. Welfare reform succeeded where other programs had failed largely because it linked new wage and child care subsidies with clearer demands that people work in return for aid. That combination, plus superb economic conditions during the 1990s, propelled welfare mothers into the working world as never before.

Much of the effect of welfare reform, it is important to note, came through "diversion." As reform took hold during the 1990s, welfare mothers got a message that work was now expected of them. In response, many took jobs even before they were told to do so. Many more single mothers went to work without going on welfare at all. Change was driven by a political dynamic wider than social policy. Because of this, the impact of reform exceeded what one would have expected based on the experimental welfare work programs conducted since the 1980s.[3]

Policymakers should use a similar strategy to raise employment among poor men. For men, there is no broad benefit structure like welfare to use as a basis for promoting work, but other institutions can serve. One such is child support enforcement; another, the criminal justice system. Both are already heavily involved in the lives of many low-income men. In this article, I describe the problem of nonwork by poor men and suggest its causes, stressing male psychology. I argue that benefit-oriented solutions, such as higher wages, will not suffice. They must be combined with measures to enforce work. I outline a possible mandatory work program that would be linked to child support and criminal justice, and I propose federal demonstrations, similar to those that preceded welfare reform, to develop such programs further. Finally, I consider objections about the cost, politics, and implementation of such programs.

Table 1. Poor Men: Numbers and Share of Male Population, by Age and Race, 2005

	Ages							
	16–50		16–24		25–35		36–50	
Race/ethnicity	Number (millions)	Percent of total	Number (millions)	Percent of total	Number (millions)	Percent of total	Number (millions)	Percent of total
Total	7.3	10	2.7	15	2.1	10	2.5	8
White	5.1	9	1.9	13	1.5	8	1.8	7
Black	1.5	17	0.6	23	0.4	16	0.5	13
Native American	0.1	23	0.04	28	0.04	22	0.06	20
Asian	0.4	11	0.1	18	0.1	11	0.1	7
Hispanic	2.0	16	0.7	21	0.7	15	0.6	14

Note: Racial categories do not overlap. Native American includes American Indian and Alaska Native. Asian includes Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders. Racial groups add to less than total because persons of two or more races are omitted. Hispanics are an ethnic category that overlaps the races and may draw from any of them.

Source: Author's tabulations from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

Nonworking Men

In 2005, 7.3 million men in the United States between the ages of sixteen and fifty—10 percent of all American men of that age—lived in poverty (see table 1). The vast majority were white, although more men who were poor for several years running would no doubt be nonwhite. The poverty rate is highest among young men, those aged sixteen to twenty-four, then falls at later ages. As they age, most men settle into regular employment, and their poverty rate declines. Each of the racial or ethnic subgroups shows the same pattern, although poverty rates run higher among blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans at all ages than among whites or Asians.

Table 2 compares employment patterns for all men and for poor men, in the same age groups as table 1 during 2005. The contrast is dramatic. The share of poor men not working at all—50 percent—approached the share of all men working full time year-round—63 percent.[4] For all men, the share working full time was 26 percent among the youngest age group, but it surged quickly to more than 70 percent in the older categories. The share not working correspondingly plunged. But for the poor, the share working full time peaked—at only 29 percent—for men aged twenty-five to thirty-five before falling again. The share not working fell to only 38 percent for that age group before rising again to more than half for those aged thirty-six to fifty. If current trends hold, most poor men will leave the labor force well before the usual retirement age.

For all men, work increased with age for all the racial and ethnic categories, although work levels ran somewhat lower for blacks and Native Americans than the norm. But for poor men, the share not working exceeded the share employed for every group, although work levels ran conspicuously lower for blacks and higher for Hispanics than the average. Almost two-thirds of poor black men as a whole and nearly three-quarters of those aged sixteen to twenty-four reported not working at all during 2005.

The problem has grown worse in recent decades. For men under age thirty-five with

Table 2. Shares of All Men and Poor Men Working Full Time and Not Working, by Age and Race/Ethnicity, 2005

Percent

	Ages							
	16–50		16–24		25–35		36–50	
Race/ethnicity	Working full time	Not working	Working full time	Not working	Working full time	Not working	Working full time	Not working
All men	63	16	26	36	73	9	77	9
White	65	14	28	32	75	7	79	8
Black	50	28	17	51	61	19	67	19
Native American	52	23	17	44	64	13	62	18
Asian	62	18	19	48	67	12	80	8
Hispanic	64	16	35	36	74	7	76	10
Poor men	19	50	8	58	29	38	23	52
White	23	45	10	53	35	33	27	48
Black	6	66	1	73	11	59	8	64
Native American	8	57	4	53	7	49	11	65
Asian	20	51	8	67	19	41	38	42
Hispanic	33	39	13	56	44	25	41	38

Source: See table 1. Full-time workers work full time and full year. The category of working less than full time and full year is omitted. See note to table 1 regarding racial categories.

no more than a high school education (and no longer in school), employment has fallen steadily since the 1980s. The decline in work was particularly severe for black men during the 1990s, despite the economic boom of that era.[5] The implications for family poverty are dire. Men without steady earnings seldom marry or stay married, nor are they likely to support their children.

Causes

Social scientists have two principal approaches to explaining nonwork among poor men, especially among blacks.[6] Economists typically assume that nonworking men display economizing behavior—that they are acting so as to maximize their utilities. If they are working less, then they must be responding rationally to changes in incentives or in working conditions that have made work less worthwhile or available. The other approach is cultural; proponents interpret nonworking behavior not as economizing and rational but as dysfunctional. As they see it, nonworking men are acting counter to their own interests—and the interests of their families and society as well. Policymakers seeking solutions to the male work problem must first decide which of these viewpoints is truest to the psychology of the men. For measures to increase male work levels cannot succeed unless policymakers accurately perceive the state of mind that they seek to change.

The Economic Approach

As noted, economists assume that people will work if working is worth more to them than not working. If people who have been employed begin to work less, work must have become less valuable relative to other pursuits. Thus employment should vary directly with wages—work levels and wages should go

up and down together. This is called the substitution effect. And indeed, as wages among the low-skilled (those with a high school education or less) stagnated or fell during the 1970s and 1980s, the work level of this group also fell. Economists infer that the falling wages caused falling employment: these men decided to work less because doing so had become less worthwhile.

One difficulty with this reasoning, though, is that lower wages can also generate an incentive to work more. When pay per hour is lower, workers must put in more hours to cover their financial needs; conversely, higher wages allow them to cover these needs with fewer working hours. In this case, work levels should vary inversely with wages—work levels should go up as wages go down. This is called the income effect. When wages change over time, whether the substitution or income effect will dominate is unclear a priori.

Several economists estimate that, at least for low-paid workers, the substitution effect dominates. This is why the economic approach to explaining male nonwork stresses low wages. However, these estimates rest on data before 1990.[7] During the 1990s, real wages for the low-skilled rose, especially late in the decade. Work levels for poor single mothers also rose sharply, as is consistent with the economic theory, although welfare reform and the new benefits also helped. For low-skilled black men, however, labor force participation rates continued to fall even during the 1990s, which is not consistent with the theory. Some force other than reduced pay must be driving work levels down.[8]

Some economists also argue that jobs have become less available to disadvantaged men as well as paying less. Employers, they believe, have become less patient with low-skilled workers than they once were. Pay now varies far more according to a worker's education than it once did, leaving the low-skilled worse off. Under pressure from restructuring and globalization, employers demand that low-paid employees show adaptability and produce without problems, or be replaced.[9] But this argument cannot explain why millions of unskilled immigrants from Latin America and Asia are now at work in the U.S. economy. Nor can it account for the large differences in work levels among different groups of poor men.

Yet another hypothesis is that native-born blacks have become less employable than other low-skilled groups. Economists once thought that the flood of women into the labor force during the 1970s and 1980s drove down wages and employment for young blacks, but during the 1990s there is no sign of this.[10] George Borjas argues that rapid immigration from Mexico, both legal and illegal, has depressed unskilled male wages and employment. Anecdotal evidence suggests that employers today often hire women or illegal aliens rather than native-born blacks, viewing them as more tractable. But other economists question these effects. They are in any event too small to explain the low black male work levels or their decline even in the tight labor markets of the later 1990s.[11]

One fact that used to make male nonwork seem rational is that the drug trade and other illicit activities seemed to offer better opportunities than legal but low-paid jobs. However, returns to drug selling have fallen since the 1980s. Most drug gang members today make barely more than they would in legitimate employment, while they also face high risks of violence and arrest. Drug dealing no longer seems a rational alternative to working in legal but low-paid jobs.[12]

The final explanation for nonwork offered by economists is that other types of barriers block employment for the poor. The so-called mismatch theory asserts that jobs have become less accessible to the inner-city poor, either because the jobs moved—from urban areas to the suburbs, to the South, or overseas—or because they now demand more education and skills than poor adults offer. This theory too seemed more plausible during the 1970s and 1980s, when deindustrialization was rampant, than it did during the 1990s, when legions of unskilled job seekers—immigrants as well as welfare mothers—found jobs in cities. Even in a globalizing economy, most jobs do not demand a four-year college education, and many of these jobs still pay well.[13]

The Cultural Approach

The cultural view of male nonwork is that nonworking men fail to take advantage even of the jobs they can get. Lower wages do not cause employment to fall. Rather, both low wages and low employment result from a breakdown in work discipline. Low-income men, particularly blacks, have become less reliable employees. As a result they are paid less and they also work less, either because they are fired or because they drop out of jobs. This logic is consistent with employers' loss of patience with low-skilled workers. One argument against the cultural view is that schooling levels for men—our best measure of labor quality—continue to improve, although educational standards have no doubt fallen over the past several decades.[14]

An argument in favor of culture is that the forces driving work levels down for younger blacks during the 1990s include the child support and criminal justice systems. Compared with the past, many low-skilled men today seem deterred from working because of automatic wage deductions to pay child support or because they are incarcerated. These forces likely overwhelmed the greater disposition to work that higher wages in that decade might well have caused.[15] Although wage deductions and imprisonment could be viewed as disincentives or barriers to work, consistent with the economic approach, the behavior that generates such sanctions is not optimizing, but self-defeating.

The best evidence for the cultural theory comes from ethnographic accounts that capture the attitudes of nonworking men toward employment. If disincentives such as low wages explained the problem, we would find these men calculating carefully whether working were worthwhile. They would be complaining about low wages and demanding to be paid more, in the practical style of trade unionists who bargain over working conditions with employers.

But this is not what ethnographers find. Typically these men do not reject the work ethic; like other poor adults, they usually affirm it. Nor do they say dispassionately that working is not worthwhile. Rather, they affirm the work norm yet fail to achieve it for reasons that remain mysterious.[16] Thus, any theory of nonwork must explain why the nonworkers appear to violate their own values. For poor women, the explanation is often lack of confidence. Hence the evolution of welfare policy toward work programs that both require welfare women to work and help them to do so. For men, one explanation is temptation: the men want to do the right thing but are lured away from it by the seductions of the street, such as the drug trade.[17]

A more important explanation focuses on respect: low-income men often fail to work because doing so would violate their self-esteem. Black youth, for example, typically

demand higher wages before they will work than whites with the same qualifications. Economists might say that they have a higher "reservation wage"—the wage that would induce them to accept a job. But this framing again suggests a quality of calm calculation that is lacking.[18] Actually, passion reigns. Black youth will often refuse to work for "chump change" even if it means not working at all. Or they accept jobs but then find them unrewarding or abusive. So they leave them in a huff or are fired.[19]

Low-skilled blacks feel that employers treat them as expendable, firing them at the least provocation. To the employers, however, it seems that the men simply "don't want to work." So bosses grow wary of hiring them, particularly minorities and ex-offenders. They often hire women or immigrants instead. One cannot call such preferences racist, because black employers voice the same complaints as whites.[20] Economists may say the men behave "as if" they do not find work worth their time. A psychologist would suggest rather that, out of intemperateness, they violate their own intention, which—as for other men—is to get ahead.

The men also commonly fail as husbands and fathers. Spouses expect them to work regularly to support the family, but they often refuse, or they get into drugs or crime. They do not argue that jobs pay too little to take; they simply behave badly in ways that even they disapprove of. So the women give up on them and raise their children alone.[21] Soon the authorities come looking for them, demanding child support payments or arresting them for crimes.

Male Psychology

What is the source of these rebellious patterns? One interpretation, although it is speculative, appeals to frustrated male psychology. At the heart of nonwork is not economic behavior but men's hunger for "dignity" or "respect." More than most women, men typically work not just to make money but to "be somebody." The male quest is to get out front for some cause and by so doing to vindicate oneself. That drive is valuable because it motivates men's achievements, but it is also dangerous unless it is harnessed to larger purposes, typically employment and the family.[22] The trouble today, of course, is that poor men's drive to succeed has often lost these ties. It now seems merely self-serving. Many men now seek respect by rejecting available jobs or by taking risks by committing crimes. By asserting themselves without performing, they earn failure rather than respect.

Lower wages do not cause employment to fall. Rather, both low wages and low employment result from a breakdown in work discipline.

Selling drugs, far from being a rational option for the low skilled, exemplifies this frustrated drive for respect. Unskilled youths who go into drugs are searching for any way they can to vindicate themselves against the disapproval they feel from the society. Unfortunately, to pursue recognition in this way proves destructive for both them and their communities.[23]

This rebellious pattern often surfaces early in poor men's lives. By misbehaving, many

alienate first their parents, then their teachers, and finally their employers. Each rejection makes the quest for dignity more desperate, producing further rebellion, which produces further rejection, in a descending spiral. To observers, the men seem anarchic, yet they themselves feel powerless.[24] In the middle class, by contrast, most boys learn in infancy to satisfy their parents, then their teachers and bosses, in an ascending spiral. By behaving well, they achieve success and respect while also serving others. By behaving badly, poor men never get to first base.

This perspective helps to explain one of the mysteries of poverty—why poor men seem more impaired than poor women. On average they are less employable than poor single mothers, even though the women have children to worry about. The reason may be that their lot in life is less affirming. Poor women find their identity chiefly as mothers. They typically believe they can succeed in that role, even if outside observers dissent. They have to meet community standards for their children, but they are not in direct competition with other mothers. They also have had their own mothers as role models, even if their fathers were absent.[25] For them, working is secondary. It usually poses practical problems, not a crisis of identity.

Men, by contrast, are wired to achieve self-esteem chiefly through ventures outside the home. That forces them into the labor market, a far more competitive arena than motherhood. There they are up against other men much better prepared than themselves. They often lack fathers to guide them, and government does little to help them. So their failure, at least in competitive terms, is all but inevitable. Hence the prickly defensiveness that often blocks them from working at all, to their own cost.

Among successful men, what keeps assertiveness in line is early conditioning. Most middle-class boys of all races internalize the values and lifestyles of their parents. Obeying their elders—especially their fathers—prepares them later to obey their teachers and employers. To be sure, working does not solve all their problems. They still have to struggle for adequate wages, by earning raises or promotions, or through trade union or political activity. But by becoming steady workers, they at least get a foot on the ladder.

Today's urban poverty arose chiefly because work discipline broke down in the mid-twentieth century among low-income people, especially blacks. Somehow, many parents lost their own discipline and thus their authority over children. Fathers failed to work and often disappeared. Their sons then became rootless, seeking to work but not knowing how. Paradoxically, the collapse came just as opportunities for blacks were expanding.

To a cultural interpretation, poverty reflects social disorder more than deficient opportunity. As Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote, "a community that allows a large number of young men to grow up in broken homes, dominated by women, never acquiring any stable relationship to male authority, never acquiring any set of rational expectations about the future—that community asks for and gets chaos."[26] The chief solution to poverty then is to restore order. Government must provide some of the pressure to work that today's poor have not internalized.

Assessing the Two Views of Male Nonwork

On balance, I find the cultural view of male nonwork more persuasive. It is more true to life, and it captures the self-defeating quality of male nonwork. The economic reading is

unpersuasive as long as jobs sufficient to prevent poverty appear readily available, as immigration proves. But the two theories are not completely inconsistent. Opportunity constraints may exacerbate the cultural problem.

A key issue is whether reduced opportunities generate an oppositional culture or the reverse.[27] Both may be true. To say that lousy jobs directly generate resistance to working is too simple. That view does not account for trends over time. Low-skilled work attitudes seem to have worsened since the 1960s, a period when opportunities for blacks, on balance, improved. Work behavior among black men is worse today than it was under segregation and Jim Crow. That deterioration must have causes in the broader culture, outside the labor market.[28]

Yet, to a degree bad behavior and lousy jobs may reinforce each other. Acting out undermines men's reputation with employers, driving wages and opportunities down. At the same time, low wages exacerbate a dysfunctional culture. When disadvantaged men confront the job market, they may already be unfitted for it, but low wages also dramatize their failure. This helps to trigger the cycle of rebellion and rejection, and it is this—more than low wages per se—that brings them down.

Benefit-Oriented Programs

What does this causal analysis imply about government efforts to raise male work levels? One clear implication is that merely providing better opportunities is not enough. To say that cuts against the grain of our political culture. When the political class becomes aware of any new social problem, its initial instinct is to define the sufferers as victims and seek causes outside of them. Later, as cultural causes of the problem become more evident, the victims come to bear more onus for their difficulties. Welfare reform shows that trajectory, and nonwork among poor men is beginning to do the same.

Nonworking men have begun to get serious attention in Washington only in the past few years, since the success of welfare reform. The news media initially characterized them as oppressed by external conditions—as child support defaulters overwhelmed by their arrears or as ex-offenders without support in the community.[29] But if a failure to work reflects rebelliousness more than economic disincentives, then merely improving opportunities and services is unlikely to change much.

Confronted with male nonwork, many analysts still stress benefits. They would either pay unskilled men more to work in the jobs they can already get or give them education and training to get better positions. On the record, such programs would yield some gains, but they would not produce much steadier work, which is the main goal here. This is just what a cultural view would expect.

Wage Subsidies

One way to motivate more work might be to raise the minimum wage. At $5.15 an hour, the current minimum is below historic levels in real terms. At this writing, Congress seems likely soon to raise that figure to $7.25. The two primary objections to the increase are that it might destroy some low-skilled jobs and that most of the workers who would benefit are already above poverty, chiefly because they live in households where other people are working.

Most analysts would prefer to raise wage subsidies, which do not deter hiring and are better targeted on the low-income population. Some propose making noncustodial fathers

eligible for the same generous earned income tax credit (EITC) that is now paid to custodial parents of children—as much as 40 percent of wages—provided the father pays his child support. Or they would limit the child support a poor absent father must pay, viewing it as a "tax" on earnings. Some would also expand the much smaller EITC given to single low-wage workers or create a more general subsidy for all low-wage workers.[30] See, for example, the article in this volume by Gordon Berlin.

Evaluators of various experimental programs aimed at increasing employment among disadvantaged men have not found that raising wages clearly produces more work.

Raising wages would no doubt make poor men *better off* in some sense. They could either make more money if they worked or make the same amount by working less. But whether they would work more, which is the goal here, is doubtful. Provisions in force before the 1990s that allowed welfare beneficiaries to engage in work and still receive benefits had little effect on recipients' work behavior.[31] Federal income maintenance experiments beginning in the late 1960s also found that low-paid work effort was largely unresponsive to wages.[32] During the 1990s, the EITC appeared to increase work by single mothers, but its influence is difficult to separate from that of rising work requirements in welfare and the strong economy, which cut in the same direction.[33] And this finding applies largely to women rather than to men.

Evaluators of various experimental programs aimed at increasing employment among disadvantaged men have not found that raising wages clearly produces more work. The Jobs-Plus program, which tested whether financial incentives and social supports would increase work rates among residents of public housing, showed some employment gains by men, but the men were mostly husbands in two-parent welfare families, not the more detached men who are at the heart of the male employment problem.[34] The New Hope project, which tested the effects of a work guarantee and work supports such as child care, increased the work and earnings of men outside families "sporadically," but the program involved benefits besides wage subsidies as well as encouragement from a capable staff.[35] One statistical study of whether black youth work more consistently when they get better jobs returned mixed findings.[36]

One risk of higher pay is that it would exacerbate the inflow of immigrants, thus creating more competitors for low-skilled men in getting jobs. That danger could be avoided only if border and administrative controls on immigration became more effective than they are now.

Raising wages might increase work over the long term, because of the interaction with culture already noted. Paying poor men more is a visible sign that society values their labor. Over time, that might reconcile some men to taking menial jobs. But in the short term, higher pay seems unlikely to overcome the fractious psychology that now undermines male work. For wage incentives to have much effect on behavior, low-skilled men would

first have to become more committed to working steadily. At that point they would start behaving more like trade unionists who bargain over their conditions of work. Higher wages alone cannot produce that shift. Today the chief value of higher pay may be political—in reconciling liberal leaders and opinion makers to the need for work enforcement.

Education

Most disadvantaged men do badly at school. Many drop out, and few earn more than a high school diploma. Because their skills are poor, their pay is low. How might policymakers help them stay in school longer, acquire better skills, and thus merit higher pay? Most schools in low-income areas function poorly. Government has recently tried to improve them by imposing outside standards, as in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and by promoting choice and competition among schools. Another approach has been to create small high schools that focus on work rather than college. But because teachers unions often oppose these measures, progress by this route will be slow.

The alternative is compensatory programs that promote learning outside of the schools. Intensive preschool programs can raise employment and depress unwed pregnancy and crime in the later lives of students. Recently, some after-school programs for at-risk teenagers have shown promising effects on education and health.[37] But these benefits come from a few small, high-quality experiments. The programs probably could not be expanded to a wider population and realize the same gains. The national Head Start program has not shown the impacts achieved by the most noted preschool pilot programs. And even if the programs were effective at scale, their benefits would be long delayed. Compensatory programs have too remote a tie to adult employment for them to be the primary solution to the male work problem.

Training

The final benefit-only approach to the work problem has been to train low-skilled workers after they leave school.[38] With exceptions noted below, these programs have had much smaller impacts than the work programs that transformed welfare. An evaluation of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) during the 1990s found only slight earnings gains for adults—smaller for men than women—and losses for youth.[39] One reaction is that the programs are simply underfunded.[40] Another explanation—more plausible in my view—is that the clients commonly lack the raw ability to raise their skills by much. The only way to elevate their wages, then, will be through regulating or subsidizing wages, as suggested above.[41]

But voluntary training has also failed to accomplish much because of the widespread misconception that the main barrier to work is low skills. In fact, it is work discipline. When men are poor in America, it is usually because they do not work consistently at *any* job, not because they earn too little. That has been apparent since the 1960s.[42] What trainers really need to instill in disadvantaged men, if they can, is the personal organization to get and stick with the jobs that they can already get. If men show discipline, then employers will teach them specific skills. That commitment is what immigrants typically show today, as their native-born competitors often do not. So like education, improved training can make only a limited contribution to solving the male work problem.

The Need for Structure

The record suggests strongly that opportunity-oriented measures alone can do little to

improve men's work effort because they fail to confront the oppositional culture described above. Nonworking men must comply with legitimate demands to work, however hard that is, before they can expect to earn the success and respect they crave. They must accept the old-fashioned view that the best expression of male dignity is to do a legitimate job, however lowly, rather than not to do it. Only this can halt the current negative cycle, where resistance begets failure. Only this can begin a positive cycle, where work discipline yields steadier employment and advancement.

How to cause that shift is the great question. The answer suggested by welfare reform is that government must enforce work as well as promote it. Work must become an obligation and not a choice. Programs must link help and hassle. As the editors put it in introducing this volume, government must use both carrots and sticks. New benefits can help, but they must be tied to requirements bearing on the clients. Some chance for success—some respect—must be offered up front. But there must also be demands to work steadily at the jobs offered or available, backed up by some kind of sanction.

Directive Programs

To be effective, programs to increase employment among nonworkers must be directive. They must tell their clients clearly that they are expected to work. Programs framed as incentives or as additions to human capital leave work too much as a choice. Welfare reform mandated work for welfare mothers as a condition of aid. The most successful welfare work programs use case managers to check up on clients to be sure they fulfill their obligations, a style I call paternalist.[43] And in the policy areas just mentioned, the most successful programs have been the most directive.

Among innovative high schools designed to increase employment, the one clear success has been Career Academies, a form of school-within-a-school where teachers engage small groups of students in a family-like setting. Instructors set high standards and then help youth attain them with more sustained and personalized attention than they get in the usual high school. This approach significantly improves students' earnings and employment.[44] The most successful training program has been Job Corps, which places disadvantaged youth in a prep-school-like setting, away from home, where they are closely supervised; it too raises both earnings and employment.[45] Similarly, the National Guard Youth Challenge Corps sends disadvantaged youth to a military base for five months, followed by a year of mentoring by National Guard members. The youth begin as dropouts, but 73 percent of those who finish the program have gotten high school diplomas or a GED.[46]

All these programs are for youth. Government has so far failed to generate comparable structures for adult men. Such programs must be both more supportive and more demanding than traditional training. Rather than just impart skills, they must address the troubled relations that disadvantaged men often have with employers. The program itself must exemplify a constructive relationship between the worker and authority, trading acceptance for performance.

A model might be the Center for Employment Training, a noted training organization for adults in San José, California. Local employers work closely with CET to define well-paying jobs they need to fill. The program then prepares trainees, most of whom are Hispanic, to take the jobs with full-day sessions that mimic actual work. The key ap-

pears to be offering real opportunities, while keeping clients under strong pressure—with help from the surrounding Hispanic community—not to waste their opportunity. Unfortunately, CET has not proven to be replicable in other locations.[47]

The Military Model

The limitation of all these programs, including CET, is that they are voluntary and cannot literally enforce work. Clients can walk away from them without losing anything else of value. The programs thus depend on informal suasions to maintain involvement. How could men be *required* to work in the same manner as welfare mothers?

Some observers have seen the military as a possible answer. Hugh Price, a close observer of black youth, remarks on the power of military service to straighten out other blacks he knew growing up who never connected with school. The army imposed discipline while also offering advancement to soldiers who performed. It taught what society wants all youth to learn—that "if you do a job well, you get ahead." During the late 1980s, after conditions for ghetto youth had sharply deteriorated, another expert opined that it might be time to "conscript them for their own good."[48]

The military achieves exactly the sublimation of male assertiveness mentioned above. The "four-star general," as Daniel Moynihan wrote in the "Moynihan Report," expresses the "very essence of the male animal," which is "to strut." The military offers blacks an arena for advancement where equal opportunity is stiffly enforced. Black entry into the military has historically been high. But once in the military, many youth find that officers act like the fathers they never had, demanding compliance with rules and orders.[49] So the effect on black recruits can be salutary.

But relatively few blacks tested well enough to qualify for the army even in 1965, when the draft was still in force. Even fewer can do so today, when the military is volunteer and seldom admits high school dropouts. Some studies find that black men who serve in the military do indeed have better postservice work records than blacks who do not serve, but black enlistment is no longer unusually high.[50] To combine opportunity with a work requirement, then, policymakers must adapt other large institutions that already exert authority over many low-income men.

Child Support Enforcement

One such structure is child support enforcement. Traditionally, low-income fathers have viewed that system as one-sided, biased in favor of single mothers and interested in fathers only for their money.[51] As noted, child support withholding seems to have driven down employment among low-skilled young black men. But conceivably the system could also promote employment, to the benefit of both the men and child support collections.

In 2003, among the 3 million poor single mothers, only 60 percent had a child support order and only 36 percent received any payment.[52] Child support problems were most serious among black men. In 2003, 68 percent of black births occurred outside marriage, much the highest rate for any race. Probably a quarter of black men aged sixteen to twenty-four—and half of those aged twenty-five to thirty-four—are noncustodial fathers.[53] Government has made far more progress in establishing support orders than in getting poor fathers to pay up.[54] In 2003, about 1 million absent fathers owed child support to poor families yet paid either nothing or less than they owed.[55] These are the men for whom irregular employment is likely to be part of their problem.

Past Programs

Middle-class absent fathers are relatively easy to locate, they usually have enough income to pay their judgments, and they cannot easily abscond. The low-income father is tougher to find and has less to lose by evading support. And if he is located, family courts have difficulty determining his ability to pay. He may claim to be jobless and destitute, but how can judges be sure? They can tell him to get a job, but they cannot verify whether he does.

Child support enforcement programs emerged to solve this problem. Judges now can remand nonpaying fathers to a work program, with the mandate to attend the program or pay up, on pain of going to jail. This obligation can be monitored, so the father cannot evade it. If he is in fact working surreptitiously, the work program will conflict with his job, forcing him to admit his earnings and pay support. If he really is jobless, the program can help him get a job. Thus help is combined with hassle.

During the 1990s, the Parents' Fair Share (PFS) demonstration in seven sites around the country offered low-income nonpaying fathers reduced support orders along with employment and other services. In return, they were required either to pay their judgments or to attend the program. Low-income cases were also reviewed more intensively. The program increased the share of clients paying support and the amount they paid, largely through "smoke-out" effects—participation revealed unreported jobs, forcing fathers to pay up. The fathers also valued the attention they received from the job clubs and support groups provided. But PFS registered no clear gains in the fathers' employment or earnings.[56] Children First, a similar program in Wisconsin, recorded similar results.[57]

Critics say that Parents' Fair Share intervened in the child support problem too late, after the fathers had left the families and reneged on support. Better, if possible, to prevent breakup in the first place. The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study found that most unwed parents plan to stay together at the point their child is born, although most split up within a year or two. "Fragile family" programs attempt to build that relationship through a range of services, but without requiring work.[58] The Responsible Fatherhood and Partners for Fragile Families demonstrations were conducted in nine states during the late 1990s and early 2000s with government and foundation funding. Some Responsible Fatherhood sites showed encouraging gains in employment, earnings, and child support payment by fathers, but no experimental evaluations were done to attribute these gains clearly to the program.[59] Without the requirement of work, positive impacts are probably unlikely.

Adding Mandatory Work

A more promising course is for child support enforcement programs to require work. The employment side of Parents' Fair Share was underdeveloped. The program made clear that clients had to participate or pay up, but not that they had to work. Employment was framed largely in passive and economic terms. It was seen not as an obligation, but as a benefit provided through services such as job search. PFS banked heavily on arranging on-the-job training (OJT) for many of its clients. This proved difficult to do, in part because much of the funding had to come from the Job Training Partnership Act. JTPA often doubted that PFS fathers could satisfy employers and refused to fund them.[60]

If PFS had included a more clear-cut work requirement, it might have generated both more smoke-out effects and more employ-

ment gains. A work test would change PFS's requirement from "participate or pay up" to "work *and* pay up." Clients would have to get a job or work in one arranged by the program for twenty or thirty hours a week for a specified number of months, on pain of incarceration. Out of their earnings they would also pay their judgments. Once they were working and paying steadily, they could qualify for training to enhance wages. That is the sequence typical of the more successful welfare work programs.[61]

Many absent fathers fall behind on their support payments, in part because their judgments are not reduced when they are unemployed or in prison. These arrearages provide a further need—and opportunity—to enforce work. Some share of the arrearages owed to government might be forgiven for each month or year that a father pays his judgment. The effect would be to convert much of his monetary debt into a work obligation.[62] The rationale is that society benefits when the father works, not just when he pays money. Working generates favorable spillovers for poor families and communities, aside from the income it provides.

Adding work enforcement would broaden the child support mission beyond collecting support to getting fathers to work. Some new benefits and programs would be needed, but would make it possible to enforce both work and support payment more effectively.

Criminal Justice

The second important authority structure for low-income men is the criminal justice system. Ex-offenders leaving prisons need work to rebuild their lives. Traditionally correction systems have sought mainly to incarcerate offenders. Work programs aimed at this group have not achieved much, but they could be revamped to promote successful reentry and reduce recidivism.

During the 1960s and 1970s, as more poor mothers went on welfare, more poor men committed criminal offenses, and crime rates soared. The nation responded by sending more offenders to prison for longer terms. Rates of incarceration went on increasing even during the 1990s, after crime rates had started to fall. More than 2 million people are now in prison or jail. The problem is most severe among blacks: probably 30 percent of young black men have criminal records. Crime also overlaps substantially with the child support problem: probably 70 percent of male offenders are also noncustodial parents.[63]

Many absent fathers fall behind on their support payments, in part because their judgments are not reduced when they are unemployed or in prison.

As more men enter prison, more also leave. Around 630,000 men now exit the prisons annually—four times more than in 1978. Few convicts learn meaningful skills while in prison, and few reliably reintegrate into the community upon their release. Recidivism runs high. Thirty percent of released men are arrested again for new offences within six months; two-thirds within three years.[64]

Ex-offenders must reconnect with families, handle various health problems, and find housing. Failure at any of these hurdles can

drive them into homelessness or addiction, or back into crime. In the long run, however, whether they stay free depends more than anything else on whether they work steadily.[65] Just as for other men, success—or failure—at work stands at the center of their lives.

Past Programs

Criminal justice has few successful model programs on which to draw. During the 1970s, vocational programs in prisons appeared to have no effect on recidivism, prompting the conclusion that "nothing works." Later assessments have been more positive, but even the better programs reduce recidivism by only 8 to 17 percent, and only a minority of inmates receives remediation in prison.[66] Prison-based rehabilitation appears to achieve little, in part because it takes place inside the walls, removed from the conditions ex-offenders face out in the society.

Work programs for convicts outside the walls would appear more promising, but experimental programs have not yet shown effects comparable to those of work programs in welfare. Ex-offenders were one of several groups served by the National Supported Work Demonstration run by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) during the late 1970s. This study placed disadvantaged job seekers in positions created in local nonprofit agencies. It improved employment for welfare mothers and former drug addicts, but not for ex-offenders or youth. The ex-offenders did increase their work while they were in the program, but they also left quickly, after which the effect dissipated.[67] During 1991–94 a program for convicts on work release in Washington State failed to reduce recidivism or costs, although it did help a minority of men transition from prison.[68]

The parole system oversees convicts who leave prison before their sentences end. Parole officers typically require clients to meet with them once or twice a month and to take drug tests, among other rules. These requirements look like the sort of oversight that has generated strong impacts in welfare work programs. Yet by itself parole does not reduce recidivism. Even intensive supervision serves mainly to detect more violations of parole conditions such as drug use.[69] Some experts have concluded—adapting a phrase from welfare reform—that we must "end parole as we know it."

In 2005 the Bush administration funded Ready4Work, a set of seventeen voluntary demonstration programs aimed at prisoner reentry. One goal was to involve faith-based groups. Because the programs are service-oriented and do not enforce participation, they presume a motivated client.[70] Perhaps they will do some good, but they are unlikely to produce significant change. Nor can any effect be proven, because no experimental evaluations are planned.

Improving Work Enforcement

Work programs for ex-offenders can be improved. The chief focus of parole supervision has been to detect parole violations. Changing clients' work behavior has been secondary. To affect recidivism, a new program must combine parole with demands that clients participate in programs aimed at their problems. To promote employment, supervision must be targeted much more specifically on working, and it must be more immediate. The supervisor must monitor actual work or job search and must have some quick way to reward good behavior and penalize bad.[71] The precedent is drug programs, where swift and certain, not severe, punishment is what promotes compliance.[72]

Besides better supervision, a second necessity is help in finding work. Low-paid jobs clearly are available, and most ex-offenders already find them on their own. But their work rates fall with time, and unemployment runs high.[73] Most employers admit their reluctance to hire former convicts.[74] The danger is that some reentering offenders will take too long to find work, become discouraged, and return to crime. So a reentry work program must ensure work for its clients in some way. Equally, it must deny to men who might resist taking menial positions the excuse that jobs are unavailable. Christopher Jencks has argued that if jobs could be guaranteed to the jobless adults of the ghetto, community pressure on them to go to work would become far more effective.[75]

But did not guaranteed jobs for ex-offenders fail in the past work programs just mentioned? Yes, but National Supported Work was voluntary. Those ex-offenders had finished their sentences and were no longer under correctional authority. In the program I am proposing they would be on parole and would have to work or return to prison. The difference from the Washington State work release program, which was mandatory, is that supervision would be far more work-focused.

A third element needed is orientation to the demands of working. Even if training is not generally effective, men who have lived behind bars need some instruction about the demands of the workplace. Fourth, they need some help dealing with other problems in their lives, such as health, housing, and relations with their families. A reentry work requirement should thus initially be part time, allowing time to address these other problems. In both New York City and Wisconsin, mandatory work assignments for welfare mothers have been less than full time, to accommodate remediation activities.

America Works

One program combining these four elements is the Criminal Justice Program run by America Works (AW) in New York City.[76] America Works here applies to men the same private-sector approach to work placement that it has used successfully with welfare mothers. Ex-offenders are given an intensive orientation, lasting up to six weeks, on getting a job and working, including interviewing, dress, and behavior. They are then placed by sales representatives in private firms that recruit low-skilled labor from AW. Once placed, AW "corporate representatives" visit the clients on the job, talk to the employers, and help to work out any problems that the new hires may have.

Thus, work is arranged and overseen, although jobs are found privately rather than created. Clients also receive preparation for work and help in working out difficulties. America Works is financed largely through incentive payments. In the evaluation in New York described below, AW receives $1,160 from New York State for each initial job placement, then $2,088 for each placement that lasts at least ninety days, then a final $464 for each that lasts six months or more, for a total of $3,712. In its first year, 2001, the Criminal Justice Program placed 78 percent of the clients who completed its orientation in jobs. Of these, 44 percent held their jobs for at least ninety days.

The program serves not only parolees who are referred to it but also other ex-offenders who choose the program themselves, food stamp recipients (who also face a work test), and men from New York City's child support enforcement program. A version of the pro-

gram serving only ex-offenders is now being evaluated experimentally by Public/Private Ventures. In this version, the orientation will be given to clients in prison, before they leave to come to the program in New York.

Center for Employment Opportunities

An alternative model is offered by the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), also in New York City.[77] Parolees come to CEO from the state prison system. After receiving several days of preemployment instruction, they are assigned to work crews that CEO maintains through its Neighborhood Work Project (NWP). There they do maintenance and repairs for local government agencies. Their attendance, performance, and comportment are monitored daily, and they are also paid daily, which meets their need for immediate income. Pay is $6.75 an hour, the New York State minimum wage. Clients work full time, four days a week.

On the fifth day, they report to a Vocational Development Program (VDP), where they work with a "job coach" who instructs them on job interviewing and helps them straighten out personal problems that could interfere with working. After two weeks in NWP, they also see a job developer, who lines up interviews for them with private employers. Clients stay in NWP as long as is needed to get a regular job, with a limit of seventy-five days. After placement, they are followed up at thirty, sixty, ninety, and one hundred and eighty days. CEO's job retention rate at six months has been about 40 percent, and it has recently begun tracking retention over a year.

CEO sells its programs to state parole officers in the city as a way to keep their parolees employed. It also serves youth returning from the state Shock Incarceration program (boot camp), as well as some offenders leaving city jails. It is funded mostly by the parole system, the agencies that hire its work crews, and other government agencies. It costs CEO $33,220 a year to provide a slot in its community work crews. Since an average of six clients will hold a slot in a year, the cost per client is only $5,537. Furthermore, these costs are largely defrayed by the income CEO earns from the agencies that employ its crews. The net cost is only $3,219 per slot, or $536 per client.[78]

The core program—NWP and VDP serving state parolees—is one of four now being assessed in MDRC's Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ evaluation. In addition, the Joyce Foundation has begun to evaluate a similar transitional work program for ex-offenders at five sites in the Midwest.

Both CEO and AW arrange and oversee work, while providing work orientation and casework. But AW does not regard transitional jobs as necessary, whereas CEO does. America Works believes that only placing clients with regular employers can prepare them to work, that creating jobs in government is a waste of time and money. If clients fail, and some do, AW gets them further positions until they succeed. CEO, by contrast, sees a need for supported work. Ex-offenders must function for some period under conditions where serious work demands are made but standards are more lenient than in regular jobs, and supervisors accept a mentoring role.

Even if one accepts the need for transitional jobs, the CEO positions seem short, lasting at most seventy-five days. Positions in other work guarantee programs have lasted six months to a year or more, in part because more time was thought necessary to instill work discipline.[79] Longer assignments might improve job retention after clients move on

to private jobs. On the other hand, longer positions cost more, and many clients placed in public jobs for enforcement purposes leave them quickly. Average tenure in a government job is far less than the assignment. CEO finds that whether a client can succeed at work is usually settled well before seventy-five days.

A Possible New Program

To sum up the discussion thus far: the nation faces a serious social problem because of low work levels among poor men, particularly blacks. This problem appears due partly to falling wages and other opportunity constraints, but principally to an oppositional culture and a breakdown of work discipline. The solution is partly to improve wages and skills, but more importantly to enforce work in available jobs. That suggests the same "help with hassle" approach as succeeded in welfare reform. Policymakers might adapt the child support and criminal justice systems to help enforce employment among men. Each system must both assist and require its clients to work. But experimental programs have not yet shown the clear effects on employment seen in welfare work programs.

Localities with serious poverty appear to need a mandatory work facility to which low-income men could be referred if they persistently failed to work despite a work obligation. This includes low-skilled men in arrears on their child support and ex-offenders on parole who do not maintain employment.[80] The program would be funded and run jointly by the local child support agency (or family court) and the parole system. A joint program should permit economies of scale because the clienteles overlap.

Men with unpaid child support judgments and parolees leaving prison would be told to get a job or pay up, as they are now. But if they did not, say, within sixty days, they would be remanded to a required work program where their efforts to work would be more closely supervised. There they would have to participate and get a private job within, say, sixty days, with subsequent employment verified. Failing that, they would be assigned to work crews on the CEO model, where again compliance would be verified.

Localities with serious poverty appear to need a mandatory work facility to which low-income men could be referred if they persistently failed to work despite a work obligation.

Jobs would pay the regular wage (if private) or the minimum wage (if public). The program would deduct child support from the pay of men who owed it, but would also help them arrange offsetting public benefits, perhaps including enhanced wage subsidies. Men who failed to participate and work steadily would—unless there were good cause—be sent back to the child support or parole authorities to be imprisoned. But men who complied would be freed from the work program after a year or two. They would then revert to the looser supervision practiced by the regular child support and parole systems. If their employment record deteriorated, they could again be remanded to the work program.

The clientele for the proposed program could include the estimated 1 million child

support defaulters (see above) plus prison parolees whose work problems are serious enough to warrant closer supervision. Because more than half of parolees quickly get jobs on leaving prison, but then tend to slack off on their work effort, the share of parolees with serious work problems is probably more than half. There were 784,000 parolees nationwide at the end of 2005.[81] Assume 60 percent, or 470,000, have significant work problems. Thus, around 1.5 million cases might be subject to the new work program.[82]

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America Works serves ex-offenders at a cost of $1,160 for each case placed in a job plus $2,088 for each placement that lasts at least ninety days. Seventy-eight percent of clients reached the first milestone, 44 percent of these the second (I omit the further payment for jobs lasting at least six months). Applying these figures to 1.5 million total cases yields a cost of about $2.4 billion a year. For the Center for Employment Opportunities to serve the same population would cost $3,219 per slot, after deducting revenues from expenses, or $4.8 billion annually.[83] That figure—twice AW's—reflects the higher cost of public employment programs.[84] Both figures are conservative in that they assume no diversion effects. But if the new program were well-implemented—a big if—it might cause some nonworking men to go to work voluntarily, thus reducing the population to be served. The precedent is welfare reform.

A Federal Demonstration

Such a program probably would raise child support collections. Whether it would increase work or reduce recidivism is still unclear. Thus, it should not yet be mandated nationwide. Rather, the best role for national policy currently is to promote the kind of program development that lay behind welfare reform. During the 1980s, early studies by MDRC, chiefly in San Diego, established that mandatory work programs tied to welfare could raise the employment and earnings of welfare mothers substantially. Then during the 1990s, further studies showed that welfare work programs were more effective if they stressed work in available jobs rather than education and training. That evidence came partly from MDRC's evaluation of Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) in California, but mainly from its National Evaluation of Welfare to Work Strategies (NEWWS), a federal study of eleven welfare work programs around the country conducted in the mid-1990s.[85] The requirements to participate in work programs and to "work first" were essentially the policies instituted by welfare reform in the later 1990s.

In welfare work, the first stage of program development was funded largely by states and foundations, the second by the federal government. The same approach might work well for men's programs. The first stage might include Parents' Fair Share plus the evaluations of AW, CEO, and the Joyce programs that are now under way. PFS, although less successful than the early welfare work programs, taught important lessons about how to promote work among child support

defaulters. The current projects, largely privately funded, may well do the same for work among ex-offenders.[86] Then, assuming these studies show potential, the second stage would be a federal comparative evaluation of different strategies for men's programs, similar to NEWWS.

The cost of such studies appears manageable.[87] The PFS evaluation cost $12 million to $15 million. The NEWWS evaluation covered eleven programs over thirteen years (1989–2002) and cost about $30 million. But costs in these studies were inflated by the surveys used to track results and by the NEWWS studies of child and family effects. A study of men's work programs without these dimensions, which simply used unemployment insurance reporting to track work effects, should cost much less. The current MDRC assessment of CEO will cost $4 million to $5 million over six or seven years. The AW and Joyce studies together cost around $6 million.

However, the welfare work studies typically did not fund the program being studied, only its evaluation. The services and benefits were already defrayed largely by welfare and other existing programs. A men's program could well involve benefits not now provided, such as transitional jobs, and the evaluation would have to fund these as well as the research. Then again, transitional jobs can also generate revenue, as in the CEO program noted above, offsetting some of their cost.

Federal funding for men's programs is already substantial. For 2005, the Bush administration proposed $300 million for prison reentry programs, leading to the $22.5 million being spent on Ready4Work. For 2006 it proposed adding a further $75 million. Reauthorization of welfare reform in 2006 included $50 million for responsible fatherhood programs. But, as noted, the administration's emphasis is on involving faith-based and other community organizations, not on evaluating the success of the programs. Thus, it is doubtful that anything systematic will be learned about what works. Future appropriations should fund a research structure, like NEWWS, that can help settle the best model for work enforcement for men.

Objections

Aside from the expense of evaluations, skeptics might raise several objections to addressing the male work problem through mandatory work programs.

Cost

Could government afford to create the work programs needed to enforce work by men, even if they proved effective? Government jobs are costly. That was one reason why welfare reform largely placed recipients in jobs in the private sector. Only Wisconsin and New York City invested heavily in public positions. In New York, work experience jobs cost $43 million in 1999, or about $1,400 per filled slot per year excluding child care.[88] Such expense might be particularly difficult for child support. That system currently costs government more to run than it saves in welfare costs, although economies in other programs may offset these losses.[89]

The costs of an AW- or CEO-style program taken to scale—$2.4 billion or $4.8 billion a year—are not inconsiderable, but they are far lower than the costs of welfare reform. The expense would also be offset by several benefits or economies. One is higher child support collections, though these are difficult to calculate because PFS—the closest evaluation of such a program—did not include a cost-benefit analysis. Another saving would be in

incarceration, which is enormously expensive. On average, American states spent $25,487 to house each prison inmate in 2005.[90] Savings here would hinge on whether and how far work programs reduced recidivism, thus allowing ex-offenders to be released earlier. Prison savings are the chief reason to think that mandatory work programs could be affordable.[91] Finally, higher work levels would translate into hard-to-estimate reductions in other social problems (welfare, unwed pregnancy, foster care) and their costs. These cost issues imply that further evaluations of men's work programs, including those now under way, should include cost-benefit as well as impact assessments.

Politics

Would it be politic to create new programs for nonworking men? Many authors note that nonworking men are the most feared and least popular of all the poor. They are not viewed as "deserving," like the working poor or the elderly, nor do they care for innocent children as welfare mothers do. But to suggest that this negative view bars government from helping them is to misunderstand public attitudes. While the voters do disapprove of the way many poor people live, they still support helping them, provided programs promote good behavior. The desire to save money is secondary, contrary to what many academics believe.[92] Welfare reform is enormously popular simply because it promotes work. The billions spent on child care, health care, and wage subsidies to accomplish that end more than outweighed the savings from caseload reductions, yet no objections were raised.

Proposals for men's work programs must be carefully framed. The main reason to support them cannot be that the men are unfortunate, or that the community would benefit in practical ways if they went to work, such as through lower crime, although both things are true. Still less can government seem to be negotiating with the nonworkers over the terms on which they will work, as might appear if they were offered only higher wages or wage subsidies. Rather, work policies must offer nonworkers the same terms as other low-skilled people who already work. Above all, programs must directly affirm the work norm. They must demand work of men in the same direct way that welfare did for its recipients, and there must be clear gains in work. Past programs that tried to do that were popular, and improved programs for men could also be.[93]

Implementation

The greatest practical obstacle to my proposals probably is that most child support and corrections agencies, which would be the means to enforce work, do not now regard employment as a central goal. One reason child support has not seriously addressed the work problem is that its routines are modeled on middle-class absent fathers who usually have the means to pay their judgments. Child support agencies thus tend to assume that nonpaying fathers can pay if pressed. This view fails to credit the serious employment and income problems faced by about a third of the nonpayers. Parents' Fair Share found it difficult to work closely with child support personnel because they were reluctant to ease pressure on the men.[94] More recently, some child support agencies have done more to help disadvantaged fathers pay their judgments.

Another implementation problem is that child support usually lacks welfare's ability to mandate work on its own authority. Typically, the agency cannot remand a father to a work program without a judicial order. Roughly half the states have experimented with work programs for child support defaulters, most of

them with enforcement aspects like PFS. But the programs appear small and largely separate from the main child support operation.[95]

Corrections agencies, for their part, see their mission as punishing offenders, not helping them succeed after they leave prison. The parole system exists to enforce parole rules. It insists that parolees work, as that is among the rules in most states. But officers typically see achieving work as the convicts' responsibility rather than their own. Neither prison nor parole focuses on what happens to men after they leave supervision. This mind-set is one reason why supported work programs for prisoners failed during the 1960s and 1970s. The current experimental work programs for ex-offenders report similar problems working with parole officers today. To solve the work problem, as well as reduce recidivism, the corrections system must be made more accountable for how its clients turn out.[96]

In the short term, the implementation problem can be minimized by keeping work programs separate from ordinary child support and corrections operations. The work mission would be vested in a separate organization that was optimized around it. Child support and corrections still have the power to incarcerate, the final sanction behind getting the men to participate and work. But they would be moved into the background, their authority invoked only as a last resort.

In the end, however, fundamental change can occur only when the regular child support and corrections agencies fully incorporate the work mission. This was what happened with welfare reform. The idea of putting welfare mothers to work was pioneered in experimental programs, but then mainstream welfare adopted that goal as its own. In the extreme case—Wisconsin—welfare was entirely rebuilt around employment. Only then did the world change for welfare families, producing the large diversion effects seen in the past decade.[97] Similarly here, nonworking men will probably not take available jobs in visibly higher numbers until child support and corrections agencies consistently press them to do so. When they do, on the welfare precedent, many nonworking men will go to work voluntarily, not only those immediately subject to sanctions. As with welfare reform, work effects could be much larger than program evaluations under the old conditions might suggest.

Administrative change, in turn, finally rests on politics. Successful work programs must first be developed, but then they must be implemented across the country by politicians and administrators who believe in them. That means not just driving new bureaucratic routines down to the ground, but changing expectations in the culture. Elected leaders, speaking for the public, must credibly state that work will now be seriously expected of men with debts to society. Work will also be newly rewarded. The community will share with jobless men the burdens and the benefits of change. The goal of the new work programs is not to blame or to exclude jobless men. Rather, it is to change lives and integrate the jobless into society. If that commitment is clear, on past precedent the poor will respond and work levels will rise.

Notes

1. Data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Survey, for the years after the indicated years.

2. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Annual Social and Economic Supplement,* March 2006, table POV22.

3. Lawrence M. Mead, *Government Matters: Welfare Reform in Wisconsin* (Princeton University Press, 2004), chap. 9; Jeffrey Grogger and Lynn A. Karoly, *Welfare Reform: Effects of a Decade of Change* (Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 171–72.

4. Admittedly, poverty is often endogenous to nonwork. To a large extent, that is, poverty and nonwork measure the same thing. Nevertheless, not all poor men are nonworking, and there are revealing differences among subgroups.

5. Harry J. Holzer, Paul Offner, and Elaine Sorensen, "Declining Employment among Young Black Less-Educated Men: The Role of Incarceration and Child Support," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 24, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 330–33.

6. For what follows, I am indebted to a meeting of experts on the men's problem that I convened at New York University in December 2004 with support from the Center for Civic Innovation at the Manhattan Institute. My interpretation, however, is my own and should not be attributed to the other participants or to CCI, MI, or their funders.

7. In technical terms, the elasticity of labor supply with respect to wages is positive. The estimates come from Chinhui Juhn, Kevin M. Murphy, and Robert H. Topel, "Why Has the Natural Rate of Unemployment Increased over Time?" *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity, 1991,* no. 2: 75–142; Lawrence F. Katz, "Wage Subsidies for the Disadvantaged," in *Generating Jobs: How to Increase Demand for Less-Skilled Workers*, edited by Richard B. Freeman and Peter Gottschalk (New York: Russell Sage, 1998), chap. 1; and Jeff Grogger, "Market Wages and Youth Crime," *Journal of Labor Economics* 16, no. 4 (October 1998): 756–91. My thanks to Harry Holzer for these sources.

8. Harry J. Holzer and Paul Offner, "Trends in the Employment Outcomes of Young Black Men, 1979–2000," in *Black Males Left Behind*, edited by Ronald B. Mincy (Washington: Urban Institute Press, 2006), chap. 2.

9. Ronald F. Ferguson, "The Working-Poverty Trap," *Public Interest*, no. 158 (Winter 2005): 71–82.

10. George J. Borjas, "The Demographic Determinants of the Demand for Black Labor," in *The Black Youth Employment Crisis*, edited by Richard B. Freeman and Harry J. Holzer (University of Chicago Press, 1986), chap. 5; Rebecca M. Blank and Jonah Gelbach, "Are Less-Educated Women Crowding Less-Educated Men Out of the Labor Market?" in *Black Males Left Behind*, edited by Mincy (see note 8), chap. 5.

11. George J. Borjas, "The Labor Demand Curve Is Downward Sloping: Reexamining the Impact of Immigration on the Labor Market," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 118, no. 4 (November 2003): 1335–74. Borjas estimates that high school dropouts lost 5 percent of wages to immigration over the 1980s and 1990s. For the debate about the issue, see Roger Lowenstein, "The Immigration Equation," *New York Times Magazine*, July 9, 2006.

12. Steven D. Levitt and Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh, "An Economic Analysis of a Drug-Selling Gang's Finances," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115, no. 3 (August 2000): 755–89. My thanks to Peter Reuter for helping me interpret this research.

13. Peter Edelman, Harry J. Holzer, and Paul Offner, *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men* (Washington: Urban Institute Press, 2006), pp. 28–30.

14. Holzer and Offner, "Trends in the Employment Outcomes of Young Black Men" (see note 8), p. 24.

15. Holzer, Offner, and Sorensen, "Declining Employment among Young Black Less-Educated Men" (see note 5), pp. 333–47. My thanks to Harry Holzer for helping me interpret these trends.

16. Lawrence M. Mead, *The New Politics of Poverty: The Nonworking Poor in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), pp. 139–40.

17. Elijah Anderson, "The Story of John Turner," *Public Interest*, no. 108 (Summer 1992): 3–34; Mark Kleiman, "Coerced Abstinence: A Neopaternalist Drug Policy Initiative," in *The New Paternalism: Supervisory Approaches to Poverty*, edited by Lawrence M. Mead (Brookings, 1997), chap. 6.

18. Harry J. Holzer, "Black Youth Nonemployment: Duration and Job Search," in *Black Youth Employment Crisis*, edited by Freeman and Holzer (see note 10), chap. 1.

19. Alford A. Young, "Low-Income Black Men on Work Opportunity, Work Resources, and Job Training Programs," in *Black Males Left Behind,* edited by Mincy (see note 8), pp. 150–58. For an early statement of this culture, see Elliot Liebow, *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967). For a later and more hostile statement, see Orlando Patterson, "A Poverty of the Mind," *New York Times*, March 26, 2006.

20. Joleen Kirschenman and Kathryn M. Neckerman, "'We'd Love to Hire Them, but . . .': The Meaning of Race for Employers," in *The Urban Underclass*, edited by Christopher Jencks and Paul E. Peterson (Brookings, 1991), pp. 203–32.

21. Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas, *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood before Marriage* (University of California Press, 2005), chaps. 2–4.

22. Harvey C. Mansfield, *Manliness* (Yale University Press, 2006); Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992), chaps. 13–19.

23. Philippe I. Bourgois, *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2003); Elijah Anderson, *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City* (New York: Norton, 1999).

24. Frank E. Furstenberg Jr., Kay E. Sherwood, and Mercer L. Sullivan, *Caring and Paying: What Fathers and Mothers Say about Child Support* (New York: MDRC, July 1992).

25. Edin and Kefalas, *Promises I Can Keep* (see note 21), pp. 135–36, 177–79.

26. Daniel P. Moynihan, "A Family Policy for the Nation," *America* (September 18, 1965), p. 283.

27. Edelman, Holzer, and Offner, *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men* (see note 13), p. 24.

28. Mead, *New Politics of Poverty* (see note 16), pp. 147–55.

29. Blaine Harden, "'Dead Broke' Dads' Child Support Struggle," *New York Times*, January 29, 2002, p. A19; and Erik Eckholm, "Help for the Hardest Part of Prison: Staying Out," *New York Times*, August 12, 2006, pp. A1, A12.

30. Edelman, Holzer, and Offner, *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men* (see note 13), chaps. 5–6; Wendell Primus, "Improving Public Policies to Increase the Income and Employment of Low-Income Nonresident Fathers," in *Black Males Left Behind*, edited by Mincy (see note 8), pp. 226–37; Edmund S. Phelps, *Rewarding Work: How to Restore Participation and Self-Support to Free Enterprise* (Harvard University Press, 1997).

31. Robert Moffitt, "Incentive Effects of the U.S. Welfare System: A Review," *Journal of Economic Literature* 30, no. 1 (March 1992): 13–19.

32. Gary Burtless, "The Work Response to a Guaranteed Income: A Survey of Experimental Evidence," in *Lessons from the Income Maintenance Experiments: Proceedings of a Conference Held in September 1986*, edited by Alicia H. Munnell (Boston: Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, n.d.), pp. 22–52. Wage subsidies do not appear promising, Burtless concludes, because "the labor supply functions estimated in the experiments are vertical or backward-bending" (p. 48).

33. The best known of several studies is Bruce D. Meyer and Dan T. Rosenbaum, "Welfare, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and the Labor Supply of Single Mothers," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 116, no. 3 (August 2001): 1063–114. One may also doubt whether the claimed EITC effect actually occurred, as field observers of welfare reform did not hear that the credit caused welfare mothers to go to work. More likely, mothers went to work because of welfare reform and then received EITC as a windfall. See Mead, *Government Matters* (see note 3), pp. 175–81.

34. Howard S. Bloom and others, *Promoting Work in Public Housing:The Effectiveness of JOBS-Plus: Final Report* (New York: MDRC, March 2005), chapter 4.

35. Greg J. Duncan, Aletha C. Huston, and Thomas S. Weisner, *Higher Ground: New Hope for the Working Poor and Their Children* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2007), pp. 62–63.

36. Higher wages reduced absenteeism, but special skills, if demanded by a job, increased it. See Ronald Ferguson and Randall Filer, "Do Better Jobs Make Better Workers? Absenteeism from Work among Inner-City Black Youths," in *Black Youth Employment Crisis*, edited by Freeman and Holzer (see note 10), chap. 7.

37. These include Big Brothers Big Sisters, Children's Aid Society-Carrera, and the Quantum Opportunities Program.

38. Here and below I rely heavily on Robert Lerman, "Helping Out-of-School Youth Attain Labor Market Success: What We Know and How to Learn More" (Washington: Urban Institute, 2005).

39. Howard S. Bloom and others, *The National JTPA Study: Title II-A Impacts on Earnings and Employment at 18 Months* (Bethesda, Md.: Abt Associates, May 1992).

40. Robert J. LaLonde, "The Promise of Public Sector-Sponsored Training Programs," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 149–68.

41. James J. Heckman, "Doing It Right: Job Training and Education," *Public Interest*, no. 135 (Spring 1999): 86–107.

42. Lloyd Ulman, "The Uses and Limits of Manpower Policy," *Public Interest*, no. 34 (Winter 1974): 97–98.

43. Lawrence M. Mead, "Welfare Employment," in *The New Paternalism*, edited by Mead (see note 17), chap. 2; Mead, *Government Matters* (see note 3), chap. 8.

44. James J. Kemple with Judith Scott-Clayton, *Career Academies: Impacts on Labor Market Outcomes and Educational Attainment* (New York: MDRC, March 2004).

45. John Burghardt and others, *Does Job Corps Work? Summary of the National Job Corps Study* (Princeton, N.J.: Mathematica, June 2001).

46. Hugh Price, "Foreword," in Edelman, Holzer, and Offner, *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men* (see note 13), p. xvi. Of course, such outcomes do not establish impact. The program is now being evaluated by MDRC.

47. Lerman, "Helping Out-of-School Youth" (see note 38), pp. 22–4.

48. Price, "Foreword" (see note 46), pp. xiv–xv.

49. U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Policy Planning and Research, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (March 1965), pp. 16, 40–43.

50. Joshua D. Angrist, "Estimating the Labor Market Impact of Voluntary Military Service Using Social Security Data on Military Applicants," *Econometrica* 66, no. 2 (March 1998): 249–88; Meredith A. Kleykamp, "College, Jobs, or the Military? Enlistment during a Time of War," *Social Science Quarterly* 87, no. 2 (June 2006): 272–90; idem, "A Great Place to Start? The Effect of Prior Military Service on Hiring" (Lawrence, Kan.: University of Kansas, Department of Sociology, February 2007).

51. Furstenberg, Sherwood, and Sullivan, *Caring and Paying* (see note 24); Earl S. Johnson and Fred Doolittle, "Low-Income Parents and the Parents' Fair Share Demonstration" (New York: MDRC, June 1996).

52. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, April 2004, child support microdata file, table 4.

53. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2005* (2005), p. 67; Edelman, Holzer, and Offner, *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men* (see note 13), p. 25.

54. U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means, *2004 Green Book: Background Material, and Data on the Programs within the Jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means* (March 2004), pp. 8.69–8.77.

55. This figure is the difference between the 1,582 million poor single mothers who were owed child support in 2003 and the 562,000 who received full payment. See Bureau of the Census, CPS child support microdata file (see note 52).

56. Fred Doolittle and others, *Building Opportunities, Enforcing Obligations: Implementation and Interim Impacts of Parents' Fair Share* (New York: MDRC, December 1998); John M. Martinez and Cynthia Miller, *Working and Earning: The Impact of Parents' Fair Share on Low-Income Fathers' Employment* (New York: MDRC, October 2000). There were, however, some impacts on employment and earnings for the more disadvantaged fathers, those without a high school diploma or recent work experience.

57. Ron Blasco, *Children First Program: Final Evaluation Report* (Madison, Wis.: Department of Workforce Development, November 2000).

58. Wade F. Horn and Isabel V. Sawhill, "Fathers, Mothers, and Welfare Reform," in *The New World of Welfare: An Agenda for Reauthorization and Beyond*, edited by Rebecca M. Blank and Ron Haskins (Brookings, 2001), pp. 425–27; Irving Garfinkel, "Child Support in the New World of Welfare," in *The New World of Welfare*, edited by Blank and Haskins, pp. 452–53.

59. Jane C. Venohr, David A. Price, and Tracy Griffith, "OSCE Responsible Fatherhood Programs: Client Characteristics and Program Outcomes" (Denver: Policy Studies, September 2003).

60. Doolittle and others, *Building Opportunities* (see note 56), chap. 2; John Wallace and Stuart Yeh, "Employment Component for the Parents' Fair Share Demonstration" (New York: MDRC, July 1991); telephone discussion with Fred Doolittle, April 3, 2006.

61. Cynthia Miller and Virginia Knox, *The Challenge of Helping Low-Income Fathers Support Their Children: Final Lessons from Parents' Fair Share* (New York: MDRC, November 2001), pp. 12–16.

62. Primus, "Improving Public Policies" (see note 30), pp. 238–39. Such an arrangement could apply only to child support debt owed to government, not to debts owed to the family, unless the mother agreed.

63. Jeremy Travis, *But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prison Reentry* (Washington: Urban Institute Press, 2005), p. 3; Edelman, Holzer, and Offner, *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men* (see note 13), p. 25; Holzer, Offner, and Sorenson, "Declining Employment"(see note 5), p. 334, n. 10.

64. Travis, *But They All Come Back* (see note 63), pp. 34, 94.

65. Joan Petersilia, *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry* (Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 112.

66. Robert Martinson, "What Works? Questions and Answers about Prison Reform," *Public Interest*, no. 35 (Spring 1974): 22–54; Travis, *But They All Come Back* (see note 63), pp. 107–08, 160–62, 168–71; Petersilia, *When Prisoners Come Home* (see note 65), pp. 175–84, 246–47.

67. Board of Directors, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, *Summary and Findings of the National Supported Work Demonstration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1980).

68. Travis, *But They All Come Back* (see note 63), pp. 171–74; Petersilia, *When Prisoners Come Home* (see note 65), p. 99.

69. Amy L. Solomon, Vera Kachnowski, and Avinash Bhati, "Does Parole Work? Analyzing the Impact of Postprison Supervision on Rearrest Outcomes" (Washington: Urban Institute, March 2005); Joan Petersilia and Susan Turner, "Intensive Probation and Parole," *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research* 17 (1993): 281–335.

70. Joshua Good and Pamela Sherrid, "When the Gates Open: Ready4Work: A National Response to the Prisoner Reentry Crisis" (Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, October 2005); and Linda Jucovy, "Just Out: Early Lessons from the Ready4Work Prisoner Reentry Initiative" (Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, February 2006).

71. Interview with Jeremy Travis, in New York, N.Y., on July 20, 2006; Petersilia and Turner, "Intensive Probation and Parole" (see note 69), pp. 313–15.

72. Kleiman, "Coerced Abstinence" (see note 17). Here and in the remainder of this subsection, I largely follow Travis, *But They All Come Back* (see note 63), pp. 173–76, 179–82.

73. Travis, *But They All Come Back* (see note 63), pp. 162–64; Petersilia, *When Prisoners Come Home* (see note 65), p. 119.

74. Harry J. Holzer, Steven Raphael, and Michael A. Stoll, "How Do Employer Perceptions of Crime and Incarceration Affect the Employment Prospects of Less-Educated Young Black Men?" in *Black Males Left Behind*, edited by Mincy (see note 8), chap. 3.

75. Christopher Jencks, *Rethinking Social Policy: Race, Poverty, and the Underclass* (Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 127–28.

76. This account is based on an interview with Peter Cove and Lee Bowes, the managers of America Works, in New York, N.Y., on July 6, 2006; and on William B. Eimicke and Steven Cohen, "America Works' Criminal Justice Program: Providing Second Chances through Work" (New York: Manhattan Institute, November 2002).

77. The following is based on an interview with Mindy Tarlow, executive director of CEO, on February 22, 2006; and on Center for Employment Opportunities and MDRC, *The Power of Work: The Center for Employment Opportunities Comprehensive Prisoner Reentry Program* (New York: Center for Employment Opportunities, March 2006), and other CEO materials.

78. Data from the Center for Employment Opportunities.

79. These programs would include the National Supported Work Demonstration, the public jobs components of welfare reform in New York City and Wisconsin, and also the government jobs created under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) in the 1970s.

80. A third possible population would be single men receiving general relief, a nonfederal aid program found in some localities, notably New York City. This group is often subject to work requirements already. See Cori E. Uccello and L. Jerome Gallagher, *General Assistance Programs: The State-Based Part of the Safety Net* (Washington: Urban Institute, January 1997).

81. Travis, *But They All Come Back* (see note 63), pp. 162–63; Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2005* (U.S. Department of Justice, November 2006).

82. The child support and parolee numbers are at a point in time; many more individuals than this would cycle through these statuses over a year. Around 630,000 ex-offenders leave the prisons annually, a number not far different from the 784,000 parolees in 2005, implying that parole is largely short-term. But the stock at a point in time determines the number of slots needed and thus the scale of the program.

83. AW's cost = (0.78 * 1.5 million * $1,160) + (0.78 * 0.44 *1.5 million * $2,088) = $2.43 billion. CEO's cost = $3,219 * 1.5 million = $4.83 billion.

84. Reassuringly, the per-slot costs for both AW and CEO fall within the range found for 1980s-era work experience programs for welfare recipients. See Thomas Brock, David Butler, and David Long, "Unpaid Work Experience for Welfare Recipients: Findings and Lessons from MDRC Research" (New York: MDRC, September 1993).

85. James Riccio, Daniel Friedlander, and Stephen Freedman, *GAIN: Benefits, Costs, and Three-Year Impacts of a Welfare-to-Work Program* (New York: MDRC, September 1994); and Diana Adams-Ciardullo and others, *How Effective Are Different Welfare-to-Work Approaches? Five-Year Adult and Child Impacts for Eleven Programs* (New York: MDRC, December 2001).

86. The CEO study has joint federal government and foundation funding.

87. The following discussion and cost estimates draw on conversations with researchers at MDRC and officials at the U.S. Administration for Children and Families.

88. Jason A. Turner and Thomas Main, "Work Experience under Welfare Reform," in *New World of Welfare*, edited by Blank and Haskins (see note 58), pp. 299–302. Per-slot costs were below those estimated for AW and CEO because they include only the incremental expense of adding workers to an ongoing agency. The AW and CEO costs include more for supervision and overhead.

89. U.S. House of Representatives, *2004 Green Book* (see note 54), pp. 8.65–8.69; Maureen A. Pirog and Kathleen M. Ziol-Guest, "Child Support Enforcement: Programs and Policies, Impacts, and Questions," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 25, no. 4 (Fall 2006): 944, 977–78. Child support's total revenues are about four times its costs, but collections go largely to cases outside welfare.

90. Bureau of Justice Statistics, "State Prison Expenditures, 2001" (U.S. Department of Justice, June 2004), p. 3. I indexed the 2001 figure of $22,650 to $25,487 in 2005 dollars, using the unadjusted Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers.

91. Hugh B. Price, "Transitioning Ex-Offenders into Jobs and Society," *Washington Post*, April 10, 2006.

92. Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy* (University of Chicago Press, 1999), chaps. 2, 8; Fay Lomax Cook and Edith J. Barrett, *Support for the American Welfare State: The Views of Congress and the Public* (Columbia University Press, 1992).

93. Travis, *But They All Come Back* (see note 63), pp. 182–83.

94. Ronald B. Mincy and Elaine J. Sorenson, "Deadbeats and Turnips in Child Support Reform," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 17, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 44–51; Doolittle and others, *Building Opportunities* (see note 56), chap. 2.

95. Office of Child Support Enforcement, "Child Support and Job Projects for Fathers by State" (U.S. Administration for Children and Families, July 27, 2006); conversation with Rob Cohen, U.S. Administration for Children and Families, August 11, 2006.

96. Travis, *But They All Come Back* (see note 63), pp. 174, 330; Petersilia, *When Prisoners Come Home* (see note 65), pp. 172–74; Heather MacDonald, "How to Straighten Out Ex-Cons," *City Journal* 13, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 24–37.

97. Mead, *Government Matters* (see note 3), chap. 9.