OFF TO THE (LABOR) MARKET:

WOMEN, WORK, AND WELFARE REFORM IN 21ST CENTURY AMERICAN CITIES

by

TIMOTHY JAMES HANEY

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Confirmation of Approval and Acceptance of Dissertation prepared by:

Timothy Haney

Title:

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This dissertation has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Department of Sociology by:

James Elliott, Chairperson, Sociology
Ellen Scott, Member, Sociology
Patricia A. Gwartney, Member, Sociology
Margaret Hallock, Outside Member, Labor Educ & Research Center

and Richard Linton, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies/Dean of the Graduate School for the University of Oregon.

June 13, 2009

Original approval signatures are on file with the Graduate School and the University of Oregon Libraries.

An Abstract of the Dissertation of

Timothy James Haney for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Title: OFF TO THE (LABOR) MARKET: WOMEN, WORK, AND WELFARE REFORM IN 21ST CENTURY AMERICAN CITIES

Approved: _____
James R. Elliott

This research contributes to scholarly understanding of the labor market activity of women living in disadvantaged neighborhoods in large U.S. cities, the group most affected by 1996's welfare reform legislation. Welfare reform tightened eligibility for means-tested assistance programs, forcing many women to seek employment despite daunting personal obstacles. This research uncovers the extent to which this subset of women found steady employment in standard, living-wage jobs as well as the reasons why many have not. Unlike most work in this field, it incorporates measures of neighborhood disadvantage to further explore the spatial barriers to employment faced by this demographic group. I ask whether neighborhood context matters for employment outcomes, beyond individual characteristics and circumstances.

Survey data, collected in 1998-1999 and 2001, come from the Project on Devolution and Urban Change, a longitudinal study of 3,916 women living in poor neighborhoods of four U.S. cities. I link these individual data to tract-level U.S. Census data, resulting in a longitudinal, multi-city, geographically-linked dataset, something that no previous published research uses, but an important tool for understanding how neighborhood context affects individual outcomes. The methodological approach involves a combination of regression techniques including pooled logistic regression, ordinary least squares regression, the use of change scores as predictors, the use of lagged endogenous variables, and the derivation of predicted probabilities using results from regression models.

Results of this research indicate that neighborhood disadvantage is of only modest utility in explaining women's work trajectories. Although living in neighborhoods with more car ownership does improve employment outcomes, other neighborhood measures are less important. Some traditional markers of "disadvantage," such as the presence of female-headed (single parent) households, actually facilitate better employment outcomes, suggesting the need to reevaluate traditional notions of neighborhood advantage and disadvantage. Individual barriers to employment, particularly health, childcare and family responsibilities, and individual car ownership are consistently predictive of better employment outcomes. The results suggest the potential importance of spatially-targeted programs aimed at alleviating childcare, health and transportation barriers to employment.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Timothy James Haney

PLACE OF BIRTH: Janesville, Wisconsin

DATE OF BIRTH: November 14, 1980

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon
Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
Ripon College, Ripon, Wisconsin

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy, Sociology 2009, University of Oregon.
Master of Arts, Sociology 2005, Tulane University.
Bachelor of Arts, Sociology and History 2003, Ripon College.

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Stratification and Inequality (race/class/gender)
Urban Sociology
Work and Labor Markets
Quantitative Methods
Sociology of Disaster
Sociology of Poverty

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Instructor, Department of Sociology, University of Oregon, 2007-2009

Graduate Teaching Fellow, Department of Sociology, University of Oregon, 2006-2009

Teaching Assistant, Department of Sociology, Tulane University, 2003-2005

Teacher, Hahnville High School, St. Charles Parish, Louisiana, 2005-2006 (During Hurricane Katrina Evacuation and Displacement).

Statistical Analyst and Research Assistant, "Exploring the Prevalence of Interracial Couples among Kin, Friends, and Acquaintances.". National Institute of Health Award #0617724. Principal Investigator: Jiannbin L. Shiao, 2008

Interviewer and Research Assistant, "New Orleans Neighborhood Change Study." National Science Foundation Award # 0554818. Project Principal Investigator: James R. Elliott, 2006

Research Assistant, Department of Sociology, Tulane University. Supervised by James R. Elliott, 2003-2005

Procedural Analyst, Fond du Lac County (WI) Department of Social Services, 2003

Summer Research Assistant, Department of History. Ripon College, 2001

GRANTS, AWARDS AND HONORS:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant. ($20,000), 2008

Wasby-Johnson Sociology Dissertation Research Award. University of Oregon. ($7,000), 2008

Harry Braverman Award for Student Paper in Labor Studies. Society for the Study of Social Problems. ($200), 2008

Graduate Student Publication Award. Department of Sociology, University of Oregon. ($200), 2007

Achievement Award in Sociology. Ripon College. ($300), 2003

Phi Beta Kappa, Epsilon of Wisconsin Chapter, 2003

Edwin Webster Endowed Scholarship for Excellence in the Study of History. Ripon College ($2,000), 2001

ProCollege Summer Research Grant. Ripon College ($3,000), 2001

PUBLICATIONS:

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CHAPTER I

WELFARE REFORM, WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCE INQUIRY[1]

We ask, how did she wind up on welfare?... Why didn't she just find a job? The questions themselves are set up in such a way as to produce a circular logic. Why did you become a single parent? We are not seeking social causes... Therefore, no form of answer can be provided that won't make the respondent look guilty and ultimately responsible for all the larger social problems.... We can completely ignore the social and historical bases of poverty.
(Hays 2003:125)

The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie—deliberate, contrived and dishonest—but the myth—persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.
John F. Kennedy, 1962 commencement address at Yale University

The goal of this dissertation is to examine the labor market activity of economically disadvantaged urban women following the U.S. welfare reform legislation of 1996. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) ended individual entitlement to welfare transfers and forced many recipients to enter the labor force, regardless of individual circumstances or barriers to employment. The act's writers assumed that work was readily available and that sustained employment would lead them out of poverty (Corcoran et al. 2000). Yet, despite a booming late-1990s economy marked by steadily falling unemployment and poverty rates (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008; U.S. Census Bureau 2008), many scholars feared that local labor

[1] This dissertation project is funded by a Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

markets would be overwhelmed with new low-skill job-seekers and that there would not be sufficient jobs available (Leete and Bania 1999). At the same time, others feared that the available jobs would be of low quality and would not lead out of poverty (Card and Blank 2000; Newman 2006; Blank et al. 2006).

While some research on this subject centered on the assimilation of formerly welfare-reliant job seekers into local labor markets, a much larger body of literature documented the numerous personal obstacles faced by welfare-reliant women prior to reform, fearing that these obstacles would translate into joblessness and material hardship in the post-reform era (Corcoran et al. 2000). Recent research documents many of the barriers that disadvantaged urban women face in obtaining steady, high-quality employment. The frequently discussed barriers include poor health (or disability), childcare and family responsibilities, low skill sets (including literacy), housing instability, domestic violence, access to transportation, substance abuse problems, a dearth of social networks with connections to employment opportunities, and more recently, neighborhood disadvantage. Most research analyzes these barriers in isolation, but those that do weigh them together assume that each of these barriers is of equal importance in constraining employment opportunities (i.e., women with two barriers are less likely to be employed than women with one barrier [see Danziger et al. 2000a; Danziger et al. 2000b]). My dissertation parts with this assumption and seeks to uncover which barriers matter most for which employment outcomes for recent welfare leavers.

This research matters because employment remains the most consistent method of averting poverty. Regardless of race, gender or age, considerable differences exist in poverty rates between those who are employed full-time, year-round and those who work

less. For the country as a whole, just 2.6 percent of all Americans who were employed full time, year-round were in poverty in 1999. By comparison, 13.1 percent of those who were employed either part-time or for only part of the year, and 19.9 percent of those who were not employed at all earned incomes below the poverty threshold (Freeman 2001: 114). Before 1996, many women facing childcare burdens, poor health, domestic violence, substance abuse problems, low skill sets or pervasive neighborhood poverty, could rely on government aid to remain out of the labor force while still receiving a basic subsistence income. PRWORA's implementation gradually removed this support, meaning the odds of experiencing poverty now stand higher than ever for those women who cannot obtain steady employment. And, while employment may indeed be central for averting poverty, previous research demonstrates that many disadvantaged urban women simply face too many barriers to obtain and maintain employment or they obtain jobs that do not allow exits from poverty (Danziger et al. 2002a).

Beyond serving as another "welfare leaver" study, many of which simply ask "to what extent are leavers employed three years later?," this research utilizes a broad focus on numerous employment-related outcomes, assesses multiple potential barriers to employment, models change over time, and seeks to gain an overall understanding of the labor market prospects and struggles of poor women in American cities at the turn of the twenty-first century. Thus, the real value of this study pertains to its empirical comprehensiveness which, unlike much existing research, goes beyond testing one or two individual barriers. Having data on many potential barriers to employment allows for a better assessment of when and how each operates during different phases of the welfare-to-work transition.

Importantly, little previous research takes the neighborhood context of these women into account. Recent research has identified neighborhood context as an important predictor of life outcomes and decisions including civic engagement, educational attainment, and sexual activity. Even so, no prior research on the employment of poor urban women or former welfare recipients accounts for neighborhood characteristics as a focal part of the study. To what extent does living in a high-poverty, high-joblessness, disordered, residentially-unstable neighborhood explain employment access, maintenance, and quality? Which neighborhood-level mechanisms matter for employment outcomes? How much does each of these factors matter? This study utilizes multi-city, longitudinal, geographically-linked data to unpack the relationship between poor urban women's unemployment and neighborhood context. Despite the lengthy literature on personal obstacles to employment I seek to understand whether women's neighborhood context interacts with these individual barriers to constrain the ability of women to obtain stable, living wage employment.

The construction of appropriate public policies designed to aid the transition to stable, living wage jobs for former welfare recipients and other demographically similar women depends on a more thorough understanding of their current labor market activity and pertinent barriers to employment. Beyond policy, however, this research holds promise for academics by adding a new piece to a rapidly-evolving puzzle; by merging literature in the work/employment, poverty and policy, gender, and care work fields with the neighborhood effects literature from urban sociology, this study contributes to an evolving cross-disciplinary field of inquiry. To date, little research takes this perspective and adequately assesses the barriers to employment faced by poor urban women. Why?

Acker (2005:49) points out that "From the perspectives of capital, [this demographic group is] of little interest, at best members of a draining 'underclass.'" Trapped between the expectation of employment, an eroding safety net, and daunting personal obstacles, disadvantaged urban women stand out as particularly vulnerable to material hardship. Additionally, much of the available data simply do not permit these analyses, particularly research involving spatial as well as individual barriers to employment.

The coming sections highlight the historical developments and policy imperatives that prompted this analysis and prior sociological research on this topic. First I provide a brief overview of the study.

Project Overview

The remainder of this chapter will accomplish four principal tasks. First, it demonstrates why understanding the employment patterns of disadvantaged urban women is of utmost importance in the post-reform era. Second, it outlines the context of welfare reform and the broader economic trends affecting poor women's employment. I argue in this section that welfare reform marked a new era in capitalism's historic push to maximize job searching, drive down wages, and foster economic growth (as well as other political forces). Yet, I also contend that these forces are often countered by a strong push to protect vulnerable subpopulations that, for whatever reason, face barriers to employment (although this latter push is often still inadequate). In this context, welfare reform marks the most recent significant push in the former direction. Next, this chapter reviews relevant literature covering the many barriers to employment faced by poor women. Siegel and Abbott (2007) note that work is a process that involves getting a job

despite barriers, maintaining that job, and eventually seeking promotion or transitioning to a better job elsewhere. Consistent with this view, the chapters of this project treat work as a process.

Chapter II begins by overviewing this study's data source, sample, and empirical methods. It also provides descriptive statistics, a discussion of important methodological issues, and concludes by posing hypotheses for each of the empirical chapters.

Chapter III offers the first empirical analyses, examining the current employment status of the sample. It asks: what factors best explain the current employment of poor urban women? Which barriers are most relevant for understanding which women become disconnected from the labor market? The general approach takes into account the changes in employment over time, and attempts to understand the labor market activity of disadvantaged urban women from multiple angles. Lastly Chapter 3 seeks to find out what factors predict job acquisition among the jobless and which factors predict job maintenance among the employed. In doing so, I seek to identify the barriers most prohibitive to steady employment.

Chapter IV tackles the issue of employment continuity. Although a disadvantaged urban woman may be able to obtain employment, working consistently over time may prove difficult. Following this logic, I ask which barriers are predictive of continuous employment through time, measured as the number of months employed over two and four-year periods. This chapter also analyzes job stability, operationalized as the number of different employers a sampled woman had during these periods. Finally, I conclude by assessing whether these barriers encourage or prevent more weekly working hours.

Chapter V focuses on job quality. Previous research suggests that many former welfare recipients and other poor women work for pay, disproportionately in dead-end, low-wage, benefit-deficient jobs. Yet much of this research ignores who gains access to the few living-wage, benefit-laden jobs that are available, and who cycles through dead-end jobs. Thus, in the aftermath of welfare reform, this chapter asks: Which women transitioned into good jobs with higher relative pay, standard working hours, and benefits and which women remained in low-paying, unstable, unpredictable jobs? Did certain barriers, although unrelated to employment more generally (in Chapter III), actually block access to quality employment?

Chapter VI, the final chapter, summarizes findings from the three empirical chapters and discusses their relevance for public policy. It asks: What types of targeted policies would ease the transition to work for poor urban women, given the erosion of many social welfare safety nets during the late-1990s? Finally, I consider the implications of this research, both theoretically and methodologically, for social science inquiry and suggest directions for future research.

The Eroding Safety Net: Contemporary Welfare Reform in Historical Context

In this section I contend that welfare reform follows in a historical pattern, one propelled by capitalist demand for profit and expansion at the expense of society's most vulnerable and marginal groups. I argue that these exploitive currents are matched, sometimes strongly and sometimes feebly, by protective social and political forces who believe that society bears the responsibility to care for its least advantaged members, particularly those who face barriers to employment or perform other important tasks for

society such as childrearing and care for the elderly or disabled. Although pure free market capitalism would have no welfare state to reform, the existing welfare state results from a continual give-and-take relationship between capitalist interests and social welfare protectionist interests. Thus, as I discuss in the following section, the policies adopted during the 1980s and the 1990s (particularly welfare reform in 1996) represented a swing in direction away from safeguarding caretakers, homemakers and those who face labor market difficulties and toward compelling these individuals to seek employment for the sake of profit and economic growth.

The welfare reform legislation enacted in 1996, PRWORA, follows a series of events during the preceding 400 years, both in Europe and the United States that progressively brought new demographic groups into the labor market by eroding the social safety net. Polanyi (1957a) presents the example of England's adoption of market capitalism and its relationship to the working and living conditions of the nation's poorest groups. He argues that in the European context, economic "improvements…are, as a rule, bought at the price of social dislocation" (P. 76). Following welfare reform in the contemporary United States, Leete and Bania (1999) similarly warn that "If the private sector does not fully absorb all those seeking work…significant social dislocation could result" (P. 69).

To clarify Polanyi's observations, capitalism requires a continually expanding market for labor, "but to establish such a market, especially in England's rural civilization, implied no less than the wholesale destruction of the traditional fabric of society" (P. 77). Under a market system, profits stagnate during times of labor shortages, and capitalists compensate by inducing a surplus of labor. Polanyi argues that market

behavior is directed towards the creation of such surpluses (Polanyi 1957b:321). This idea is consistent with traditional Marxian theory that sensitizes us to capitalism's insatiable need for expansion, labor, technology, and resources (Marx and Engels 2003 [1845]:90-92). Unemployed workers (Marx's "industrial reserve army") drive down prevailing wages through competition for jobs (Marx and Engels 2003 [1867]:146-149).[2]

Why do unemployed individuals continue to seek work despite falling wages? In a capitalist economy, each household must derive income from some source in order to continue living. In Polanyi's words, "human beings must have food and drink, clothing and shelter, first of all, before they can interest themselves in politics, science, art, religion, and the like" (Polanyi 1957b:325). Peck (1996) adds that "because labor is dependent on waged employment as a means of subsistence, it is unable to wait outside the labor market until conditions are more favorable" (P. 27). Under capitalism, people must find work despite low wages or personal obstacles.

Polyani, however, sees this scenario as engineered and intentional. In capitalist societies,

> The instrument of material welfare was controlled solely by the incentives of hunger and gain—or, more precisely, either fear of going without the necessities of life or the expectation of profit. So long as no propertyless person could satisfy his [or her] need for food without first selling his [or her] labor in the market and so long as no propertied person could be prevented from buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest, the blind mill would turn out ever increasing amounts of commodities for the benefit of the human race. Fear of starvation with the workers, lure of profit with the employer would keep the vast mechanism running (Polanyi 1977:11).

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[2] Capitalism also increases profits by decreasing the paid labor force by introducing mechanization, and thus, displacing workers.

Thus, in a capitalist economy, workers cannot simply wait until the prevailing wage meets their subsistence requirements. Rather, when capitalist economies require more potential workers, they take advantage of the inherent needs of individuals (food, shelter, clothing) and draw more workers into the labor market, despite unsatisfactory wages. Indeed, the subsequent crowded labor market suppresses wages even further. This serves powerful capitalists by ensuring that a large portion of the population requires and seeks employment, but a comparatively smaller portion gains access to employment opportunities. Such "instrumentalists" adopt the position that individual capitalists and government leaders corroborate to deliberately manipulate the state for their own financial gain. More moderate "structuralists," like Wright and Perrone (1973) believe that the state embodies certain class principles, and although it is not manipulated by a linked collective of particular actors, over time the state tends to serve and reinforce the interests of the wealthy class. From this perspective, market capitalism's structure generates and reproduces inequalities. Thus, Wright (1997:28) concludes that "capitalist class interests are...opposed to such things as universal guaranteed basic income or durably very low rates of unemployment, even if the taxes to support such programs were paid entirely out of wages and thus did not directly come out of their own pockets."

Structuralists contend that particular classes are too atomized and disjointed to pursue collective goals, yet the end result is still a set of policies that serves their interests. The manifest function of individual actions may be individual gain and profit-seeking, but the latent function is the perpetuation of social inequalities and social dislocation. Whether we subscribe to instrumentalist or structuralist views of the state, both contend that looming threat of economic hardship draws groups formerly exempt from work

activity (peasants in 18th century Europe and economically-disadvantaged women in the contemporary United States) into the labor market.

In Polanyi's (1957a) view, potential for economic growth inherent in market capitalism cannot make up for the social dislocation wrought by it. Instead, the imperative of economic growth forces all facets of social life (marriage, child rearing, state and government, the organization of science, religion) to reshape themselves; "everything had either to comply with the utilitarian pattern or at least not interfere with the working of the market mechanism. But, since very few human activities can be carried on in the void...the indirect effects of the market system came very near to determining the whole of society" (Polanyi 1977:12). York and Clark (2005:440) sum up this Marxian view of capitalism in their contention that "The ultimate goals within this economic system are to maximize profit and to sustain unfettered development of the capitalist enterprise.... In this situation, nature is freely appropriated, workers are increasingly separated from the direct means of survival, and social needs are trumped by the demands of capital." In the contemporary U.S. academy, the same sentiment found its voice among critical feminist scholars, who argued that "family life has been transformed to meet the needs of paid work, but paid work has not been transformed to meet family needs" (Acker 2005:93). Both Acker (2005) and York and Clark (2005) imply that the needs of poor women to remain out of the labor force and care for children, nurse health problems, or deal with other personal complications, take a backseat to capitalism's need for a growing, cheap, and expendable labor force. This labor force can be found overseas or alternatively, in poor urban neighborhoods. Indeed, the perspective advanced by Acker (2005) is only one of a number of gendered practices on which

capitalism in the United States is built, including sex segregation and pay inequalities (Reskin and Padavic 1994) and an unequal division of domestic labor (Hochshild 2003).

Historically, one of the main ways to safeguard vulnerable populations (or those seen as unhireable) from the vicissitudes of the labor market is through government-funded social safety nets, such as England's Speenhamland Law (1795). For half a century, England's poor relied on this legislation to receive a "minimum income irrespective of their earnings" (Polanyi 1957a:78). The Speenhamland Law stood starkly opposed to capitalism's accelerating need for workers by shrinking the labor pool and thereby driving up wages. Worried about falling profits and stagnant economic growth, reformers pushed "The Poor Law Reform" of 1834, which overturned The Speenhmanland Law and immediately withdrew all forms of public aid (Polanyi 1957a: 82). Historian James Patterson (2000) points out that Poor Law's significance was its establishment of the "Less Eligibility" rule, or the notion that life on public aid must be less desirable than employment, even at low wages. Implicitly, the law assumes that citizens are rational actors and if employment is made more attractive than joblessness, they will logically seek it.[3] This law drew the first distinction between the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor, and pushed many of England's most vulnerable citizens into the labor market (Patterson 2000:17).

Within the United States, both public opinion and policy have vacillated between safeguarding poor women (allowing them to care for families) and compelling them to enter the labor force or risk material hardship. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), enacted in 1935, for many years provided a safety net for poor families

[3] This same position was taken by Charles Murray (1984), more than 150 years later.

(primarily female-headed households) to remain out of the labor force. The program's passage was followed by the Food Stamp Act (1964), Medicare (1965), and Medicaid (1965), all part of President Johnson's "War on Poverty." These programs provided resources for the poor and elderly to remain out of the labor force. These programs were accompanied by the Earned Income Tax Credit (1968), which augmented the wages of low-income earners (thus providing support when members of these groups *did* enter the labor force). All in all, between 1963 and 1966, federal grants to states for social services more than doubled (Iceland 2003:124). Therefore, the 1960s marked an era of new and progressive social programs, many of which aimed to provide financial assistance to those not employed, and leading some critics to label the 1960s the "generous revolution" (Murray 1984).

However, by the 1970s the public had given up the notion, originally enshrined in AFDC, that welfare mothers should be exempted from paid employment in order to raise children full-time. Since by that time most non-poor mothers were employed outside the home, most Americans felt welfare mothers should also be (Mead 2001:203). Others noted seemingly self-destructive cultural characteristics (a "culture of poverty") and often attributed them to multi-generational dependence on government aid (Murray 1984). Following this change in public sentiments, the United States undertook a gradual withdrawal of aid and increased the imperatives to seek paid employment. However, the public alarm over welfare "dependence" cannot be attributed to its increasing "generosity." Despite rising caseloads, welfare represented a stable portion of the federal budget (meaning per capita transfer amounts were actually slipping). And, when taken in a cross-national context, the alarm appears even more unfounded. Rolls were rising

equally as fast (and were larger, proportionally speaking) in England and Sweden, without a corresponding sense of crisis (Patterson 2000:172). This unexplained shift in public opinion prompted some critics to claim that politicians attacked welfare primarily because it offers women an option and protection from accepting untenable wages or remaining in a marriage that may offer neither security nor safety (Corcoran et al. 2000:244).

Others saw the attack as primarily rooted in racism and popular opinions of welfare as a staple, or social pathology, of the black community (Quadagno 1996). Ronald Reagan, elected President in 1980, went on record recounting his story of a black Chicago welfare mother with "80 names, 30 addresses, 12 Social Security cards, and a tax-free income of over $150,000" (Seccombe 1999:13). Reagan commonly referred to welfare recipients as "cheats" and "free loaders" who should be forced back into the labor market (Trattner 1994:363). Yet when reporters tracked down Reagan's "welfare fraud," they discovered the actual offender used two aliases to collect 23 public aid checks totaling only $8,000 (Albelda and Folbre 1996:92). Despite the hyperbole and inflated figures, the story's popular appeal provided staying power and exerted influence over public opinion. Seccombe (1999:8-9) concludes that from a feminist perspective, public and governmental hostility toward welfare results from a competing demand for women's unpaid labor in the home and cheap labor in the market, as well contempt over poor women's marriage, sexuality, and childbearing patterns.

The safety net erosion accelerated during the 1980s with the passing of Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) in 1981, shortly after Reagan took office. OBRA slashed federal antipoverty budgets and severely restricted eligibility rules to eliminate

aid for all but the "truly needy." Some scholars estimate that OBRA alone increased the federal poverty rate by more than two percent (O'Connor 2002:42). Following OBRA, the national unemployment rate approached 10 percent of the workforce, and the poverty rate jumped from 11.7 percent in 1980 to 15.3 percent in 1983 (Trattner 1994:368). This was followed by the Family Support Act (1988), which created the federal JOBS program and required mandatory work activities for all public aid recipients, including mothers with children over three years old. In all, the Reagan administration oversaw the paring of expenditures for Food Stamps, unemployment, child nutrition, vocational education, Job Corps, AFDC, as well as the termination of public service employment (Iceland 2003:125). This political impetus carried into the 1990s, as well, with the passing of the 1990 Budget Law, forbidding Congress from approving new spending without identifying an offsetting source of revenue. In order to fill the subsequent budget gap, legislators again cut funding for Food Stamps, emergency shelter funding, and disability benefits rather than pushing for tax increases (O'Connor 2000:288). These changes, apart from affecting poor Americans in general, disproportionately affected women, as female-headed households made up the bulk of enrollment in such aid programs. Yet at this time, AFDC caseloads continued to climb, making a broad-spectrum welfare reform bill the next logical step in a series of events designed explicitly to limit government spending on aid programs and to compel many poor Americans (disproportionately women) to search for paid employment.

At the same time PRWORA was paring down government aid programs, the Department of Housing an Urban Development (HUD), with funds dedicated to the Homeownership Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE VI) program, demolished

and reconfigured many of the neighborhoods inhabited by the urban poor (Popkin et al. 2004). Much as PRWORA was designed to "end welfare as we know it," HOPE VI was designed to "end public housing as we know it" (Elliott et al. 2004). HOPE VI encouraged local authorities to identify and demolish distressed public-housing complexes and to work with private developers to construct mixed-use, mixed-income communities on the newly cleared sites (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999, 2000).

During the mid-to-late 1990s, HOPE VI dramatically reshaped many of America's poor neighborhoods by replacing high-rise public housing developments with more modern, low-rise, mixed-income communities. This initiative stemmed from the widespread conclusion that areas of concentrated poverty (Wilson 1987), and more specifically, high-rise public housing (Newman and Schnare 1997) had failed to deliver a suitable living environment for residents and, in many cases, blocked access to employment and socioeconomic mobility (Reingold et al. 2001). Even with little solid support that these changes would improve the life chances of residents, policymakers pushed the initiative forward (Popkin et al. 2004). At the same time, HOPE VI signaled the federal government's abandonment of high-rise public housing as an answer to the housing needs of the urban poor. Consistent with other programs that ended federal support of anti-poverty programs (OBRA, the Family Support Act, and eventually, welfare reform), HOPE VI further limited the range of available options for disadvantaged groups. And, far from replacing units on a one-to-one basis with new units or vouchers for private rental assistance, the end result was fewer total subsidized

housing units available (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999; 2000).

Ending "Welfare as We Know It"

Following several reforms during the 1980s and 1990s, the stage was set for a massive overhaul of public assistance programs. This overhaul arrived in 1996 when President William J. Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) into law, promising to "end welfare as we know it." Known widely as "welfare reform," the act fundamentally changed the face of government assistance in the United States. When first proposed by Clinton, the bill resembled an activist social policy that pleased liberal academics, policy-makers, and legislators. Although Clinton touted slogans such as "two years and you're off," liberals assumed he was trying to increase the bill's appeal to the Republican-majority in Congress, but would ultimately push through a progressive piece of legislation. Clinton openly acknowledged many barriers to employment faced by poor women, saying that "there are things that keep people on welfare. One is the tax burden of low wage work; another is the cost of child care; another is the cost of medical care....today you have this bizarre situation where people on welfare, if they take a job in a place which doesn't offer health insurance, are asked to give up their children's health care, and go to work...That doesn't make any sense" (Seccombe 1999:15). Despite the rhetoric, the final bill bore little resemblance to the original proposal (Heclo 2001:187-189) and seemingly ignored many barriers that Clinton mentioned. Its passage prompted the resignation of several of Clinton's top policy experts, who believed the bill made perilous compromises with the

Republican-majority congress. According to poverty scholar David Ellwood, when the bill passed, liberals were "hit by a freight train" (O'Connor 2002:185).

Most notably, PRWORA replaced AFDC with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), our current welfare program. Although the federal government distributes TANF to states as a yearly block grant, the funds utilized for each state's program remain frozen at pre-1996 levels, forcing each state to develop methods to reduce caseloads and benefit amounts. These include punitive sanctioning policies, time limits (both consecutive and lifetime), and diversion programs aimed a discouraging initial application for TANF or Food Stamps.

PRWORA immediately ushered in a precipitous caseload decline. In all, the AFDC/TANF rolls were cut from 12.2 million recipients in 1996 to 5.3 million in 2001 (U.S. House of Representatives 2000; Moffitt 2002). These declines ranged from a low of 22 percent in Rhode Island to a high of 90 percent in Wyoming (Pavetti 2001:230). In 2002, the percentage of all persons receiving public assistance was the lowest ever on record (less than three percent). Although some decline may be traceable to favorable economic conditions during the late 1990s and early 2000s, much is undoubtedly associated with PRWORA's implementation.

Compulsory employment is central to PRWORA's logic. The bill forces each state to place an annually accelerating percentage of its caseload in work-related activities (Haskins and Blank 2001:12). Undergirding PRWORA are two main premises: first, its writers assume that almost all recipients can obtain and keep jobs, and secondly, that regular employment will eventually lead to a living wage and self-sufficiency (Corcoran et al. 2000). Beyond requiring employment, PRWORA assumes that any adult with a job

does not need welfare. Even before welfare reform, employment was equated with economic self-sufficiency, public opinion held that contact with the labor market would increase skills and augment self-esteem (Harris 1993:320). In fact, the Work First programs adopted under PRWORA use a labor force attachment model that assumes that the skills garnered through labor market experience produce advancement, and that this direct experience, rather than education or vocational training programs, is the best way to move former recipients up the job ladder (Corcoran et al. 2000). The logic of welfare reform was therefore "get a job, get a better job, get a career" (Gais et al. 2001:46). While conducting interviews in two welfare offices, Hays (2003) frequently encountered signs reading "All Jobs are Good Jobs" and "Any Earnings are Good" (P. 34). One woman on TANF reported that

> They didn't care what it [the job] was and yeah, there was constant pressure…It was pretty clear to me that what I was looking for wasn't going to be handed to me through working at Burger King or any of those type jobs, and I didn't have the training or the skills to do anything but that (Seccombe and Hoffman 2007:150)

Work requirements for recipients are set at 32 hours per week in California, 30 in Florida, 30 in Ohio, 20 in Pennsylvania, the states in which the data for this project were collected. About one third of all states ask that a non-working parent search for a job either before the family's application is reviewed or while it is processed. Some states, including Iowa, Michigan, Tennessee, and Wisconsin began requiring 40 hours of work per week (Rowe and Giannarelli 2006).

PRWORA's writers and advocates assume that jobs paying a living wage are readily accessible, even to workers with low skill levels. Many scholars question this

assumption. Rank (2005) likens the labor market to a game of musical chairs where there fewer chairs (jobs that pay a living wage) than players (job-searchers). Some combination of luck and skill can procure one of the chairs, but even if we were to enhance each player's skill (human capital), the game's structure (the economy) ensures that two players will be left without chairs (Rank 2005:75). One study in Illinois, for example, found there were at least 25 job seekers for every job that pays at least poverty wages and 75 seekers for every job that pays at least 150 percent of the poverty line (Burtless 1995). Concerns such as Rank's, over the supply of jobs with few skill requirements, accelerated following welfare reform. Another study from the late-1990s found 3,000 jobs advertised in the *Washington Post*, but at the same time, there were 36,400 unemployed Washington residents and another 28,000 receiving public assistance. Most advertised jobs required prior employment experience or educational credentials that many poor people simply lack (Quigley 2003:21). This finding, coupled with Burtless' (1995) finding that job-seekers already outnumbered available low-skill, living-wage jobs, foreshadows heated competition among former welfare recipients and other urban-job seekers. Such conclusions led some scholars to advocate policy that addresses the demand for workers rather than solely altering the supply of workers (Heckman and Krueger 2005:289; O'Connor 2002:240). All told, PRWORA's assumptions about the ubiquitous availability of employment contrasts sharply with scholarly knowledge of labor market conditions. According to Robert Solow, 1987 Nobel Prize winner in economics, "There is absolutely no reason to believe our economy holds a substantial number of unfilled vacancies for unqualified workers" (quoted in Quigley 2003:56).

This paradox prompted several scholars to estimate the potential effects of welfare reform on local labor markets: with a steady number of job opportunities and an increasing number of job seekers, what would happen? Leete and Bania (1999) calculated that during PRWORA's initial year, welfare recipients eligible for low-skill jobs would have to claim anywhere from 34 to 61 percent of all the anticipated low-skill job openings (in the Cleveland-Akron metropolitan area) in order to become fully employed. Other national estimates suggested more modest effects. Bartik (2000:100) estimated some effects on the unemployment rate occurring immediately after welfare reform, peaking quickly, and disappearing by 2008. He estimated that the "overall economy adjusts easily to the welfare reform supply shock, which is but a small increase in the overall labor supply." But the shocks will be "substantial" for particular demographic groups, such as female heads of household and female high school dropouts. Yet these predictions, written before the post-9/11 economic recession, may overstate the economy's ability to absorb workers with few marketable skills, and the labor market outcomes of less skilled individuals exhibit more variability over the business cycle than workers with more skills (Hoynes 2000). And, although these initial estimates that local labor markets would be overwhelmed proved to overstate the actual trouble that leavers encountered when finding employment (see Rowe and Giannarelli 2006; Blank et al. 2006), reports of material hardship and income instability within samples of recent welfare leavers (London and Scott 2005; Polit et al. 2001a; Scott et al. 2004) indicate that too few women were gaining access to employment and even fewer obtain quality employment, capable of sustaining a family.

Thus, consistent with Polanyi's (1957a; 1957b; 1977) theory that capitalism draws new groups into the labor market that had previously been exempt from work activity, PRWORA increased the need for paid employment in poor communities, especially among poor women. Some evidence suggests that many welfare leavers have indeed found jobs; from 1994 to 2000, the percentage of unmarried mothers who were employed grew 11.6 percentage points to 78.9 percent. This compares to 68.8 percent among married mothers. Twice as much family income, on average, came from earnings as from welfare in 1999. The reverse was true as recently as 1994 (Lichter and Jayakody 2002). But, the number of available jobs only tells half of the story; to explain which women found steady living-wage employment in the post-reform era and who did not, it is necessary to assess the barriers faced by potential job-seekers.

Much of the above evidence indicates that the safety net eroded for nearly 30 years, but little of it explains why PRWORA surfaced in the mid-1990s. What features of this time period facilitated or encouraged such a radical step in U.S. social policy? In short, the answer lies in macroeconomic trends. Beginning in the 1970s, but particularly in the 1980s, job opportunities for less-skilled workers, particularly in manufacturing, shrank considerably. Elliott (1999b) finds that this urban restructuring, resulting in the loss of manufacturing jobs, predominantly diminished women's employment prospects and earning potential, not men's. This eroding opportunity structure preceded a lengthy period of economic growth. Beginning in April 1991, the U.S. economy grew for 120 consecutive months, the longest expansion in U.S. history, and the poverty rate dropped from 15 percent in 1993 to a low of 11.3 percent in 2000—a level not seen in twenty years (U.S. Census Bureau 2008). Similarly, between 1993 and 2000 the unemployment

rate fell from 6.9 percent to 3.9 percent—its lowest point in 30 years (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008), and a point that many economists had deemed impossible only few years earlier. In fact, until the early 1990s, many economists and policymakers believed that the "natural unemployment rate" hovered around six percent (Freeman 2001:98). Any drop below this threshold would drive up wages and trigger inflation. To many such experts, the falling unemployment rate during the early and mid-1990s foreshadowed economic gloom; the labor market needed more hands and greater competition for jobs to stave off inflation and ensure economic growth. By stripping away the welfare safety net and mandating that those using the safety net also engage in employment, economic growth continued for at least five more years.[4] Policymakers and economists, with OBRA in recent memory, knew that cutting the safety net would indeed keep the unemployment rate above that critical threshold; its passage prompted nearly a three percentage-point jump in unemployment (Trattner 1994:368). Thus, while the 1980s marked a time of diminishing opportunity, legislation aimed at maintaining an artificially high unemployment rate limited the benefits of economic growth during the 1990s and kept prosperity out of the hands of many less-educated workers.

In sum, welfare reform emerged as a result of a confluence of social and economic factors including capitalism's need for an industrial reserve army (Polayni 1957a), racism and the link between black women and welfare dependency (Quadagno 1996), the gendered practices within capitalism that fail to acknowledge women's duties

[4] One may also adopt the structuralist stance here that welfare reform was not designed specifically to drive down wages, stave off inflation, and stimulate economic growth, but the policy's structure worked to ensure this outcome, regardless of intent.

as care givers (Acker 2005) and concerns over the current system's costs (Murray 1984; 2005).

York and Clark (2005) point out that evolutionary history is characterized by lengthy periods of stasis, marked by slow or non-existent change, followed by very brief periods of rapid change. This phenomenon is dubbed "punctuated equilibria" and like many biological and geological concepts, it has been adopted by social scientists and used to explain social change as well. Within this framework, I argue that the 1990s and early 2000s represent such a period of rapid social and economic change. Although public assistance programs had suffered more than a decade of attack, the fundamental changes ushered in by PRWORA represented the most sudden and stark program changes in recent memory. Given the booming economy, the reduced financial supports levied by PRWORA, and the residential disruption garnered by the reconfiguration of many poor urban neighborhoods (via gentrification and programs such as HOPE VI), the late 1990s and early 2000s present a unique opportunity to view the barriers that poor urban women face to employment. This period marked the best of economic times, but also a time when access to public safety nets eroded, housing options fluctuated, and the need for employment income swelled.

Research on Obstacles to (Living Wage) Employment

With PRWORA's passage, supporters envisioned

> a compact, homogenous group of formerly 'dependent' welfare recipients meeting up with a precise set of rules and an efficient set of caseworkers, and hearing the message that is was time to go. They then stood up straight, smoothed over the

> wrinkles in their attire, and simply went out and got jobs, or otherwise found a way to take care of themselves and their children (Hays 2003:95).

Yet a growing body of sociological research finds that former recipients and demographically similar women face a myriad of barriers that prevent smooth absorption into the labor force, beyond the structural, macroeconomic barriers noted above.

Danziger et al. (2000a) ask how much the odds of employment decrease as the number of barriers increases (i.e., they regress employment on the number of barriers, ranging from zero to seven, as well as a few control variables). Others use a similar additive model of barriers (Turner et al. 2006; Danziger et al. 2000b; Olson and Pavetti 1996). For example, the MDRC's city-specific studies simply report the prevalence of particular barriers including human capital, substance abuse, and family responsibilities. They note that in each city, the number of employment barriers fell between 1999 and 2001, a statistically significant decrease (Brock et al. 2002; Brock et al. 2004; Michalopoulos et al. 2003; Polit et al. 2005).[5] These conclusions rest on the assumption that each barrier is equally important in constraining access to employment. I eschew this additive model of employment barriers assume that some matter more than others (and some, presumably, do not matter). The additive approach leaves many crucial questions unanswered: Is educational attainment or a decreased childcare burden more important for easing the transition into the labor market for poor urban women? Is the experience of domestic violence a larger deterrent to stable employment than a lack of transportation? Academics and policymakers must know which factors are most

[5] This change was fueled by a significant drop in the percentage of women without a high school degree and drop in the percentage whose youngest child was less than six years old. Cleveland actually saw a significant increase in the percentage of women who have one or more children with special needs or behavior problems, while Philadelphia saw a significant drop in this percentage.

important in predicting various forms of labor market activity and job quality. More comprehensive studies too often focus on different subpopulations, such as immigrants (Preston et al. 1998) or current TANF recipients (Sullivan & Larrison 2003).

I also part with the neoclassical economist's assumptions of hyper-rationality, in many cases assuming that job seekers possess full information about wages and available positions, and always act accordingly, even low-skill, low-wage job seekers. In one prime example, Andersson and Holzer (2005, p.84) suggest that there is a

> trade-off between initial wage levels and subsequent wage growth, implying that low levels of earnings initially might be necessary to achieve higher earnings growth over time. While an individual might need to forgo some of his or her initial earnings within any job in order to receive on-the-job training from the employer, it is not clear that working in low-wage jobs or firms relative to higher-wage ones offers greater potential for wage growth over time.

They find that a combination of earlier job mobility and subsequent job retention may work best for low-income earners. Such economic models assume that on average potential employees have detailed, accurate knowledge about which types of jobs will provide the most growth and have the flexibility to choose between jobs. Yet, in a sample of formerly welfare-reliant women, there is reason to believe that job seekers have little choice about the jobs they take. For example, Hays (2003), Seccombe and Hoffman (2007), and Lein and Shexnayder (2007) all find that welfare recipients are pushed into the labor market and forced to take the first available job, regardless of scheduling, pay, or benefits. Leaving this initial job to search for another may jeopardize any remaining benefits (e.g., Food Stamps or Medicaid). Thus, research outside of the hyper-rational economic approach, views employment less as a strategy and more as a means of survival obtained and maintained in the face of several potential obstacles. In

the remainder of this section I examine research on several of these potentially pertinent barriers.

Childcare and Family Responsibilities

Unlike this research, many studies focus primarily on only one or two barriers to employment. Prominent and most numerous are those that single out childcare as an important barrier. Even before PRWORA, research has typically found that childcare responsibilities and costs kept many women out of the labor market, especially single mothers (Joesch 1991; Brayfield 1995; Kimmel 1998; Meyers et al. 2002). Many former welfare recipients, despite reporting a desire to work, also insist that family responsibilities always take priority and work should never interfere with family (Seccombe 1999:60). Baum (2002) finds childcare costs extremely prohibitive of work for single mothers. In fact, increased childcare expenses appear to dichotomize women. For those seeking employment, high childcare costs prohibit it. But, for those already employed, high childcare costs induce a cycle whereby the mother works more hours in order to earn money, thereby also needing more childcare. Similarly, Acs and Loprest (2004) find that the average monthly childcare costs for welfare leavers range from $165 to $244, an amount that would require 32 to 47 hours of work pr month at the minimum wage of $5.15 in 2000—just to pay for childcare! Wettersten et al.'s (2004) participants reported that the lack of childcare made it difficult to obtain and maintain employment. Lein and Shexnayder (2007) likewise find that because of high costs, few of their study participants used formal care and most required their children to exhibit considerable independence, even at a young age. Some unemployed women have disabled children

who require full-time care, thus preventing any employment (Romero et al. 2003; Seccombe and Hoffman 2007:29).[6] Brandon et al. (2007:7) find that nearly 33 percent of former TANF-receiving, single-mother families contained disabled persons, i.e., one or more disabled children (12.1 percent), or a mother with a disability (13.3 percent), or both (7.3 percent). Thus, disabilities among members of economically disadvantaged families occur frequently, but have been largely ignored as an important barrier to employment.

Others note that family responsibilities primarily affect wages, not employment, *per se*. This "wage penalty for motherhood" literature finds that women with more children consistently report lower wages than other demographically similar women with no children or one child (Budig and England 2001; Lundberg and Rose 2000; Neumark and Korenman 1994; Waldfogel 1997, 1998; England 2005). Similarly, Hays (2003) finds through ethnographic research that jobs paying $5 to $7 an hour generate more income for poor mothers than TANF would generate, but childcare costs more than offset income gains (P. 56). At the same time, however, both the U.S. General Accounting Office and the Children's Defense Fund conclude that all childcare needs are met by current subsidy programs and that no one remains out of the labor force because of unmet childcare needs (Besharov and Samari 2001:464). They reach this conclusion because many childcare subsidies go unclaimed each year. Yet, some research has found that local welfare offices attempt to ration various subsidies by simply not telling clients about them (Besharov and Samari 2001). Scott et al. (2005) find that the cumbersome

[6] Unless they can find alternative care, which is expensive and difficult, particularly for children with many needs.

application and renewal processes may actually dissuade some eligible women from receiving vouchers, and Hays (2003) finds that many eligible recipients are simply never told of their eligibility. Lein and Shexnayder (2007) find that although 22 to 30 percent of former TANF recipients received child care subsidies at the time they left TANF, some were told they must work 20 hours first in order to be eligible, which was impossible without a subsidy. Moreover, subsidies could be revoked if children were absent from child care for too many days, even when they were absent because of illness.

Overall, findings on childcare's effect on employment fail to address either the number of children a woman cares for or their ages, and their disability status and how these characteristics affect the likelihood of steady, high-quality employment, net of other pertinent explanations. Even when women are able to find care for their children, unpredictable schedules, unreliable transportation, and lack of stable support networks often creates a continually changing, unreliable "patchwork" of care. Such patchworks typically involve at least some time spent in low-quality care (Scott et al. 2005). To what extent does the high cost and unreliable quality of childcare, coupled with often daunting responsibilities for care, limit women's employment when other relevant barriers are considered? Understanding these dynamics is of notable importance, as over 40 percent of women with children under age one are in the labor force, yet many women still lose at least some employment time to childbearing and subsequent childcare (England 2005:387).

Health

Prior research also documents health, both physical and mental, as a substantial barrier to employment. Broadly speaking, sociological research notes a relationship between income and health. Less than four percent of those with incomes over $50,000 report fair or poor health, while five times as many with less than $15,000 do (Mullahy and Wolfe 2001). Estimates suggest that between 10 and 30 percent of welfare clients suffer from physical disabilities that limit their work activity—a rate more than three times the national disability rate (Hays 2003:165). Similarly, poor mothers with disabilities encounter more problems holding employment and thus return to welfare more often than demographically-similar non-disabled mothers (Brandon et al. 2007). One-third of women interviewed by Seccombe (1999:70) complained of health problems, including asthma, depression, high blood pressure, or back pain. These health problems, as Acs and Loprest (2004) and Seccombe and Hoffman (2007) report, constitute the primary reason that welfare-reliant women report an inability to obtain and maintain employment.

Hershey and Pavetti (1997), for instance, report that health problems accounted for 9 to 13 percent of all job losses in the New Jersey welfare-to-work program. Physical health problems with visual components leave job-seeking women unable to obtain work in service professions where interaction with customers is of importance. As an example, Seccombe and Hoffman (2007: 50; 128) refer to poor dental health as a "caste marker" that "screams" poverty more ferociously than any other physical attribute. Many of their interviewees report that their difficulties securing employment stem from managers' unwillingness to hire employees with observable dental anomalies. No matter the health

problem, interviews with women uncover a paradox of the employer-provided health insurance system used in the United States; those interviewed by Seccombe and Hoffman (2007) report needing health insurance in order to receive medical treatment, but the medical treatment was often a necessary prerequisite to their ability to work. Their overall results, however, indicate the crucial importance of health for employment. They report that "conversations would often spontaneously revolve around health." Health concerns were "often the justifications for women's continued participation on welfare" in order to continue to receive health insurance, since the low-wage jobs for which they quality do not provide it (Seccombe and Hoffman 2007:6).

In addition to physical health, one estimate suggests that between four and 39 percent of welfare mothers suffer from mental health problems serious enough to prevent them from obtaining and keeping jobs (Johnson and Meckstroth 1998). Another suggests that 12 to 56 percent have a work-limiting mental health problem (U.S. General Accounting Office 2001). The National Institute of Mental Health finds that low-income individuals are two to five times more likely to suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder than those in the highest income groups (Bourdon et al. 1994). Hays (2003:156) compiles these three estimates to conclude that between 10 and 20 percent of welfare mothers suffer from mental health problems sufficiently serious to prevent them from maintaining employment (Hays 2003:156). Rates of post-traumatic stress disorder and major depression are fourfold higher in welfare samples, and the prevalence of generalized anxiety disorder is twice as high as in the general population (Zabkiewicz and Schmidt 2007:169). Seccombe and Hoffman (2007:42) find that 25 percent of respondents were classified as depressed at the first survey and 29 percent one year later.

In what ways do mental health problems affect work? Using panel data, Zabiewicz and Schmidt (2007) find that mental health problems decrease the number of hours former welfare recipients work, but results are inconclusive regarding the effect of mental health on women's long-term work trajectories. Some argue that employers may be hesitant to hire those with known mental health problems but evidence is sparse. Also complicating the documented research on health effects are correlates. Lee (2005), for example, finds that mental health problems and substance abuse problems often co-occur, leading to spurious multivariate results. Dooley and Prause (2002) similarly find mental health and alcohol abuse intimately related. Data from the Urban Change Study reveal that roughly one-quarter of respondents in each of the four cities has a health problem that limits their ability to work, although between waves (1999 and 2001) the prevalence of this health-related barrier dropped by one or two percentage points in each of the four cities (Michalopolous et al. 2003; Brock et al. 2002; Brock et al. 2004; Polit et al. 2005). Similarly, the prevalence of depression rested between 23 and 30 percent in each city, increasing in Philadelphia and Miami between 1999 and 2001 while decreasing in Cleveland and Los Angeles. Yet, researchers are left wondering the extent to which mental health and physical health matter for employment outcomes when considered alongside other relevant barriers.

Closely-related to both physical and mental health are issues of substance abuse, which have also been found to limit employment and job retention. Most studies find that the prevalence of alcohol problems in AFDC/TANF caseloads approach those found in the general population (Zabkiewicz and Schmidt 2007:169), and they can tangibly affect employment, but conclusions are mixed. Some find no relationship between

alcohol and drug use on employment and hours worked (Grant and Dawson 1996). Others report increased wages for those with substance abuse problems (Kaestner 1991; Register and Williams 1992; Gill and Michaels 1992), while still others have shown it to decrease wages (Bryant et al. 2000). Substance abuse problems do result in job loss because it decreases productivity and increases absenteeism, job-site accidents, and inefficiency (Dooly and Prause 2002:789).

Violence

Also closely related to health is the issue of violence, particularly domestic or intimate partner violence, which is often a precursor to various health conditions. Estimates suggest an above average prevalence of domestic violence in welfare samples. Among participants in a New Jersey welfare-to-work program, 22 percent had been raped, 55 percent had experienced domestic violence, and 20 percent had been sexually molested as a child. The National Comorbidity Survey reveals that 14 percent of single mothers in the U.S. had experienced Post-Traumatic Stress Distorder (PTSD) in the previous year and 15 percent of welfare recipients in a Michigan sample were currently suffering from PTSD. One study of single-mother welfare recipients in Washington state found that 60 percent had past sexual or physical abuse (Blank 2001:40). Moreover, evidence suggests that welfare reform may exacerbate violence. In their longitudinal ethnographic work on welfare leavers Scott et al. (2002) find that by stripping away financial safety nets, welfare reform made many women even more dependent on abusive partners, often preventing them from leaving abusive relationships. Thus, domestic

violence can be viewed both as a barrier to employment for women who left welfare, but also as a direct result of welfare reform's mandates.

In all, some estimates suggest that up to 40 percent of poor families contain at least one member suffering from trauma-induced psychological disabilities (Lichter and Jayakody 2002:128). But, how might this affect the ability of these women to sustain employment? Wettersten et al. (2004) find that many women with abusive partners found the abuse so emotionally draining that they experienced difficulty concentrating at work. Others had spouses who prevented them from going to work or visited, called, or threatened them at work. When employed, it resulted in absenteeism or poor work performance. When unemployed, domestic violence often hindered their ability to search for and obtain paid employment. Similarly, Raphael (1996; 1995) finds that violent intimate partners often destroy homework assignments, keep women up late into the night (affecting the quality of work or the ability to interview well), destroy clothing, threaten to kidnap children from childcare providers, or intentionally disable automobiles to prevent commuting to work. These factors coalesce to make it extremely difficult for women to obtain employment, maintain it over time, and move up into higher quality jobs. Romero et al. (2004) also find that domestic violence predicts more difficulty finding employment, job absenteeism, and job loss.

Human Capital

Human capital, a term borrowed from economics, refers to

> the sum total of skills embodied within an individual; education, intelligence, charisma, creativity, work experience, entrepreneurial vigor, even the ability to throw a baseball. It is what you would be left with if someone stripped away all

> of your assets—your job, your money, your home, your possessions—and left you on a street corner with only the clothes on your back (Wheelan 2002:99).

Typically, the return on investments in human capital is quite high. The return on a college education, for example, is about 10 percent per year, meaning that an individual who invests a sum in a college education, can expect to earn that money back plus about 10 percent a year in higher earnings. According to Wheelan "few people on Wall Street make better investments than that on a regular basis."

Skills honed through formal education are scarce among samples of welfare recipients. In 2000, welfare recipients aged 17-21 read, on average, at a 6th grade level (Corcoran et al. 2000:255). Despite this lack of "hard skills," Holzer (1999) found that available jobs generally required at least basic skills; 75 percent of entry-level jobs required high school diploma, general experience and references; 65 percent required job or occupation-specific specific experience; 40 percent required training, and over 50 percent required applicants to pass a test. Yet differences exist even among those with a high school diploma. Those with GEDs typically perform the same (or worse!) in the labor market as high school dropouts with comparable schooling levels. When measured ability is controlled for, GED recipients earn less, have lower hourly wages, and obtain lower levels of schooling than other high school dropouts. Since the share of high school graduates who obtain their diploma by route of the GED is growing and is as high as 25 percent in some states, the quality of measured high school graduates is declining and labor market prospects depend even more heavily on higher education (Heckman and Krueger 2005:79; 140).

Other research singles out a lack of measurable skills, rather that simply credentials, as the main barrier to employment for former AFDC/TANF recipients. Poverty aside, 25 percent of young adults aged 16 to 25 in the mid-1990s could not perform simple addition or subtraction procedures. This mismatch between the skills required by employers and those possessed by job seekers may likewise serve as a barrier to the acquisition of stable, living-wage employment by former welfare recipients. Analysis of the Urban Change data reveals that between one-third and one-half of each city's sample had no diploma or GED (Michalopolous et al. 2003; Brock et al. 2002; Brock et al. 2004; Polit et al. 2005). In all four cities, the prevalence of this barrier dropped between 1999 and 2001, in Cleveland by as nearly ten percentage points. Yet educational attainment might not be the only pertinent form of human capital. According to Seccombe (1999:56), in 1997, the unemployment among African American women age 15-25 who had not completed high school was 22 percent. But women who had a high school diploma fared only slightly better with unemployment at 19.7 percent.

Beyond "hard skills" such as educational attainment, many employers seek "soft skills," such as the ability to converse in standard English, interpersonal deference, and work ethic. Research suggests not only the importance of soft skills in gaining access to opportunities, but also that employers assess candidates' soft skills based, at least in part, on race and ethnicity, often attributing a lack of requisite soft skills to black applicants (Moss and Tilly 1996; Wilson 1996). At times, traditionally low-status groups such as foreign-born Latino workers may be advantaged by employer perceptions regarding their deference to authority, at the expense of better-educated native-born workers who might demand higher wages or better working conditions (Waldinger and Lichter 2003). Many

welfare recipients fail to understand the importance of punctuality and the seriousness of absenteeism, and they may resent or misunderstand lines of authority and responsibility (Hershey and Pavetti 1997). Others argue that because of isolation, some African Americans who reside in impoverished neighborhoods have come to speak a language that is increasingly remote from that spoken by white Americans. Both schools and employers, particularly service-providing employers, require employees to speak standard dialect (Massey and Denton 1993:162). Therefore, soft skills serve as one avenue through which racial and ethnic disadvantage operate.

Work experience also serves as a form of human capital that stratifies potential job seekers. Although work experience has been found to predict current employment, those with frequent job changes on their resume often cannot find employment because their applications reveal high job turnover and signal unreliability (Wilson 1996:120).[7] Other research finds that time spent out of the labor force affects a worker's subsequent wages (the rusty skills hypothesis), although time away early in one's career appears to have particularly damaging effects (Spivey 2005; Andersson et al. 2005:7). Thus, work continuity also serves as an important form of human capital and time spent away from the labor force (while raising children or seeking treatment for an ailment) may be yet another barrier to employment because job skills become rusty with each month spent out of the labor force or unemployed. Even so, research typically finds that investments in education have greater returns than investments in work experience. That is, single mothers who substitute work experience for education must endure a longer route to

[7] Results in this area are mixed. Work by Andersson et al. (2005) finds that switching jobs produces larger wage gains than loyalty to a single employer in hope of promotion.

economic independence (Harris 1993). But, scholars in this area also know that the type of work performed profoundly effects subsequent employability. Duneier (2000:328) observes, based on his study of New York street vendors, that "One does not spend seven years working on the sidewalk and make a swift foray back into the formal economy."

Access to Transportation

Transportation continues to be a formidable obstacle for America's working poor, especially in rapidly-changing inner-city economies. Available evidence suggests that poor Americans, particularly welfare recipients, disproportionately live in inner-city neighborhoods, far from entry-level jobs, found disproportionately in suburban areas (Lacombe 1998; Sawicki and Moody 2000; Ihlanfeldt and Sjoquist 1998). In assessing the job prospects for a group of welfare recipients, Belkhir (2005) concludes that the movement of jobs to communities without a public transportation infrastructure limits the odds of employment for this particularly disadvantaged group; i.e., two-thirds of new jobs are in suburban communities, but three-quarters of welfare recipients live in rural areas or central cities. Furthermore, those in poor communities, particularly racial minorities, tend to have low rates of car ownership. As Blumenberg and Ong (2001:3) point out, "the spatial mismatch between welfare participants and jobs can cause costly commutes; a mismatch can also limit recipients' access to informal job networks, make it difficult for recipients who work far from home to respond to household crises, and lead to unpredictable work arrivals." Asked to explain their unemployment, welfare recipients

cite access to transportation as a close second behind childcare issues, according to a California study (Ong 1996). Other research finds transportation to be the single largest barrier to employment (Seccombe 1999:63).

Estimates vary widely on what proportion of welfare recipients own cars, from as few as seven percent to as many as 25 percent (California 1996; Ong 1996; Sawicki and Moody 2000). The key factors appear to be destination and purpose. While only 25 percent of welfare-reliant women own a personal vehicle, Seccombe and Hoffman (2007:97) find that over 95 percent of interviewed women, both rural and urban, report that they have access to reliable transportation should they need to seek medical care. Given that employment, in contrast to healthcare, requires a daily commute and much less urgency, finding reliable transportation for employment appears to be a much larger obstacle than for healthcare.

The crucial factor for obtaining employment is automobile access, not commute distance *per se*: According to Taylor and Ong (1995, 1455) "when blacks have access to a car, employment does not appear, on the face of it, to be anymore of a problem for them than for whites or Latinos." Private vehicles benefit job seekers by enabling them to conduct a geographically broader job-search, accept employment offers farther away from home, improve work attendance, and minimize the burden of commuting (Ong 2002:240). Car ownership is associated with a statistically significant 12-percentage point increase in the odds of being employed (Ong 2002). Unfortunately, as Seccombe (1999:63) finds, several states penalize welfare-reliant women for owning reliable transportation. In some states, for example, the personal asset value of an automobile (value minus debt) must be less than $1,500; otherwise it disqualifies one from welfare.

This poses a dilemma for job-seekers; how can they be expected to maintain jobs over time without access to a reliable vehicle and with the constant threat of car repairs looming?

As a result, a logical observer might expect former welfare recipients to rely heavily on public transportation. Yet, Sawicki and Moody (2000) conclude that public transit does not adequately meet the employment needs of the poor. Many public transportation lines do not run between inner-city areas and employment-rich suburbs. Others lack off-peak travel opportunities to accommodate varying work schedules. Job-seeking women complain that it is expensive ($1, plus a 25-cent fee per transfer), unreliable, and inconvenient. They report long waits, endure even longer waits for bus transfers, and find that service is reduced or eliminated on weekends and at night. Walking, often through high-crime neighborhoods, results in increased personal risk and a larger childcare bill (Seccombe 1999:63). However, since much work on the spatial mismatch hypothesis pertains to men, questions remain about the spatial mismatch encountered by women (McLafferty and Preston 1992; Thompson 1997; Reid 1985; Tigges and Tootle 1990; see also Elliott and Joyce 2004). A growing body of work, however, shows that increased access to reliable transportation facilitates employment (Osterman 1991; Ong and Blumenberg 1998) and decreases welfare use (Blumenberg and Ong 1998).

Housing Instability and Quality

If job-seeking urban women hope to secure transportation, something that previous evidence poinpoints as particularly important, they must first secure stable

housing arrangements. A small body of literature identifies housing instability as a salient factor in constraining employment choices. Both Phinney et al. (2007) and Lein and Shexnayder (2007) define housing instability as experiencing a period of homelessness or an eviction. By this definition, 32 percent of Phinney et al.'s (2007) respondents experienced unstable housing situations at some time between 1997 and 2003, while 37 percent of Lein and Shexnayder's welfare sample reported that at some time in the previous six months they could not afford their housing. This instability, in turn, had its roots in education, health, and experiences of violence. Yet Lein and Shexnayder (2007:91-93) point out that housing instability is of the utmost importance for gaining and maintaining employment. Both job-seekers and workers must maintain acceptable hygiene and a professional appearance, both of which are difficult without a stable housing situation. They must also be well-rested and have regular access to a telephone to coordinate job searches and the scheduling of work hours.

On the other hand, not all stable housing advantages employment. Research finds that crowded homes correspond to a number of social ills. That is, as the number of persons per room increases researchers observe increased instances of physical and psychological withdrawal, poor mental health, poor physical health, higher rates of illness, lower academic achievement, and poorer social relationships both within and outside the home (Gove et al. 1979; Booth et al. 1976). Although housing instability is undoubtedly detrimental, residing in stable-but-crowded arrangements may prove even worse for a poor woman's employment outcomes.

Networks and Social Capital

Pierre Bourdieu defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable networks of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (as cited in Portes 1998:3). In other words, individuals use social networks as resources, and social capital refers to the ability to "cash in" on acquaintances in order to obtain something desirable, such as a job. Bourdieu contends that social networks are not natural, but must be actively and strategically constructed and maintained. Once in place, however, these networks are "durable" and can allow individuals access to social and economic resources.

How does social capital ease disadvantaged women's transition to employment? The literature suggests two mechanisms involving networks. First, social networks convey information about job openings to job-seekers and information about the hireability of job-seekers to employers. Lein and Shexnayder's (2007) interviewees reported that higher-paying jobs were often reserved for those who "had connections" or knew someone at a business or corporation who could "pull strings." Similarly, Newman's (1999) fieldwork at a Harlem fast food establishment uncovered

> whole closets full of completed applications by walk-ins. A job seeker's greatest asset is the chain of friends and acquaintances who are already working somewhere. Everyone in the labor force is aware that these connections are the difference between having a chance and wasting their time (Newman 1999:77).

Stack (1974) found that the urban poor possessed dense networks of family, friends, and acquaintances who they could rely on during times of need. Why do these close ties seemingly fail to produce employment? The answer exists in Granovetter's

(1983) division of social network ties into "strong" and "weak" ties, and his empirical finding that weak ties often provide better opportunities than strong times. Newman's (1999:161) findings exemplify Granovetter's work; according to Newman, fast food workers "do have networks, but they don't produce opportunity. They are of like-situated friends working in the same types of jobs." Put differently, in poor neighborhoods, networks are more likely to "include a higher proportion of individuals who, because of their experiences with extreme economic marginality, tend to doubt that they can achieve societal goals" (Wilson 1996:76). In short, "welfare mothers interacted with other welfare mothers" (Wilson 1996:66), who have no better access to job information. Conley (1999:90) contends that "individuals do not hear about opportunities from the people they have strong bonds with, since they likely share many of the same experiences." Rather, good information tends to come from weak ties that span race, class, and neighborhood boundaries.

Second, access to social networks can ease other employment barriers. For example, Scott et al.'s (2004) study finds that single mothers often utilize strong network ties for childcare when seeking employment. Similarly, Lein and Shexnayder (2007) find that welfare recipients often utilize family and friends to provide transportation to and from work, decreasing costly automobile repairs and use of time-consuming public transportation. They also note that almost 40 percent of their sample stayed with family and friends when they could not find affordable housing, lessening the effect of housing instability on employment outcomes.

Despite some evidence of ability of networks to provide information about job opportunities and to ameliorate other employment barriers, some recent evidence

suggests that women residing in poor neighborhoods both strong and weak times. Edin and Kefalas (2005:174) find that although "Americans assume that the poor have rich social and emotional ties…[But] many mothers cannot name one person they would consider a friend, and the turmoil of adolescence often breeds alienation from family as well." This suggests Stack's (1974) findings that the poor possess rich social networks may need updating or reanalysis. Alternatively, these divergent findings may be explained by the fact that networks typically stem from the workplace. According to Putnam's (2000:87) groundbreaking work on social capital, people obtain about 90 percent of their non-family social connections from the workplace. This implies a circular network barrier for disconnected women, whereby those chronically disconnected from the labor market lack the ability to generate the contacts needed to secure employment.

But, even with networks in place, recent debate questions the efficacy of social networks in procuring job opportunities for residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods (Elliott 1999a), owing to the principle of homophily, whereby the networks of disadvantaged individuals contain others with similarly little information about job prospects (McPherson et al. 2001). Fernandez and Fernandez-Mateo (2006) note that minorities actually do worse in finding a job when they utilize personal networks. One explanation is that in areas of concentrated poverty, networks serve more to ensure survival than to promote upward mobility. When one person achieves some degree of success, he or she is bombarded by requests from others in their network, undermining individual progress (Massey 2007:192). Waldinger and Lichter (2003) find that for some employed people, procuring job information for family and friends proves risky. A bad

recommendation can jeopardize employment. Realizing this, many keep job leads to themselves.

Neighborhood Conditions

A final barrier to employment for disadvantaged urban women, but one that is under-examined, concerns the very neighborhoods in which they live. Raudenbush and Byrk (2002:xix) argue that the basic problem of sociology involves relating the properties of individuals to the properties of groups and structures to which those individuals belong, such as neighborhoods. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Chicago School of sociology used space to understand how and why actors engaged in particular actions and was fundamentally interested in issues of space. Robert Park, for example, believed that social relations, by definition, were necessarily spatial relations (see Massey 2001). The spatial emphasis within urban sociology remained for several more decades; even as late as 1959, Otis Dudley Duncan accepted as an obvious fact that the structure of human societies stemmed from the interplay among population, social organization, environment, and technology (Massey 2001:41). Inquiry focused on "natural areas," or neighborhood-like urban spaces that developed as a result of competition between businesses for land use and between populations for affordable housing (see Sampson et al. 2002:445). With the arrival of the 1960's, however, focus shifted from an inherently spatial paradigm to the status attainment model of social relations, a paradigm that is profoundly aspatial, unecological, and behavioralist (Massey 2001:41). During the next 20 to 30 years, some sociologists resisted ecological and related structural explanations for individual action. Until recently, "it has been almost

an article of faith that differences between places are reducible to differences between the type of people living there" (McIntyre and Ellaway 2003:25).

In the mid-1980s academic inquiry began to critically reconsider the role of urban spaces (particularly neighborhoods) in shaping interaction and individual outcomes. Wilson's (1987) *The Truly Disadvantaged* noted poverty's increasing geographic concentration and the additional penalties the poor incurred for living in a poor neighborhood. This work provided a point of departure for the more analytically sound, theoretically informed urban sociology that developed further during the 1990's. Even so, the field struggles to grasp which neighborhood-level mechanisms matter for which outcomes and in what ways. In the words of Sampson (2001), "something ecological is happening here, even if we don't know fully what it is."

The ecological hole in modern sociology is certainly problematic. But as Lieberson and Lynn (2002) point out, potentially useful theories are too often discarded because of holes that persist despite empirical investigation. Darwin's theory of evolution, for example, contained many holes. When asked about the evolutionary reason for a particular adaptation, he responded "I can give no satisfactory answer. The case at present must remain inexplicable; and may be truly urged as a valid argument against the views here entertained" (cited in Lieberson and Lynn 2002:5). Some urban sociologists take a similar stance on neighborhood effects literature to date; although scholars do not yet fully understand how neighborhoods affect people, there remains hope that empirical tools may one day be refined enough to fill in the remaining holes. Although everything we study is "emplaced" (it happens somewhere and involves

material things), research typically uses places only to bound the unit of analysis (Gieryn, 2000:466).

How exactly might neighborhood context affect employment outcomes? Neighborhood effects research asserts that they matter for various outcomes in three main ways. First, neighborhood culture may either underscore or deemphasize the importance of employment (Wilson 1996). Second, access to opportunities in the immediate area may be limited (Kain 2004; 1968). This mechanism involves the flow of information over geographic distances (Fernandez and Su 2004), the efficacy of neighborhood-based social networks (Elliott 1999a), a mismatch between the available jobs and residents' skill sets (Moss and Tilly 1996), or access to services that mitigate employment barriers, such as mental health services (Allard and Danziger 2003). Third, unruly neighbors or signs of physical decay can entrap residents inside their dwellings (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999; Klinenberg 2002). Taken together, this budding literature suggests that disadvantaged neighborhoods constrain job and educational opportunities in many ways, sometimes functioning as a mediating mechanism and other times serving as a crucial causal factor.

What evidence exists as to the effect of neighborhoods on employment? Jobs are situated within neighborhoods and a worker's potential jobs are shaped by his or her ability and willingness to commute. Jargowsky (1997) calculates wages by neighborhood and finds that the estimated mean wage is $13.00 an hour in low-poverty neighborhoods, $8.21 in mid-poverty and $5.72 in high-poverty neighborhoods. Based on these figures, full time employment in ghetto-poverty neighborhoods (usually considered 40 percent poverty or higher) yields $11,440 (in 1989 dollars)—less than the poverty line for a

family of four ($12,674). In low-poverty neighborhoods the average wage yields a yearly income almost twice the poverty threshold.

High-poverty neighborhoods also appear to be growing in number. Between 1970 and 1990 the number of people living in high-poverty neighborhoods increased from 4 million to 8 million. This 92 percent increase surpasses the 28 percent population growth of metropolitan area populations as a whole (Iceland 2003:53). Dwyer (2008) finds that poor neighborhoods actually decreased in number and deconcentrated between 1990 and 2000, however, she cautions that this apparent "dispersal" of the poor into non-poor neighborhoods was actually an out-migration of non-poor and affluent residents, effectively increasing the relative distance between the groups even as the concentration of the poor into the most extremely poor neighborhoods declined. Employers tend to stigmatize job seekers residing in high-poverty, high-disorder neighborhoods (Tilly et al. 2003). Thus, the HOPE VI program aimed to deconcentrate poverty and destigmatize poor, blighted neighborhoods.

Recent research remains split on whether and to what extent neighborhood disadvantage serves as a barrier to employment, beyond individual characteristics. Allard and Danziger (2003) find that greater proximity to employment opportunities associates with both a higher probability of employment and a higher probability of leaving welfare, for both whites and blacks. This pattern can be explained by shifting opportunities; from 1993 to 1997 welfare recipients in cities experienced a 3.9 percent loss in job access, whereas suburban residents saw a 2.9 percent increase. In contrast, Bania et al. (2008) find that job access matters little for employment. Rather, differences in employment are reducible to individual barriers such as having a disabled child, poor work history, and so

forth. They find that "regardless of the specification, the job access measure used or the dependent variable selected, there is virtually no statistically relationship between job access and labor market outcomes" (P. 31). Despite the divergent evidence, a general consensus is emerging that neighborhoods do affect certain lifecourse events (South and Crowder 1999:113). In 23 of 25 studies reviewed by Pickett and Pearl (2001:119), researchers found a statistically significant association between health and at least one neighborhood measure of socioeconomic status, controlling for individual socioeconomic status. But, findings for employment research typically leave theoretical questions unanswered or suffer from methodological pitfalls, which the following chapter discusses more thoroughly.

Despite contradictory findings on whether neighborhood characteristics and conditions affect individual outcomes, particularly employment, available evidence and theory suggest that answering these questions is of the utmost importance for women who left welfare after 1996. Coulton (2001) finds that large numbers of welfare recipients cluster in disadvantaged neighborhoods. This finding suggests that if neighborhood characteristics do indeed affect employment outcomes, welfare recipients and leavers will be disproportionately affected by neighborhood poverty, disorder, joblessness, and other forms of neighborhood disadvantage. The present study provides entrée into this important but often neglected topic.

Discussion

This chapter accomplished four primary tasks. First, it established that the late 1990's in general, and welfare reform in particular, marked a time of rapid change and

eroding opportunities for many disadvantaged urban women. Second, it demonstrated that PRWORA marked an important milestone in the historical drive of capitalism, but one that surfaced in the 1990s because of specific economic conditions and policy precedents. Third, this chapter established that although various aspects of the post-reform welfare-to-work transition have been thoroughly documented, much of the existing research focuses on one particular barrier or set of barriers (ignoring questions of hierarchical importance), these analyses are largely aspatial, and for the most part, they are incapable of explaining change over time. The following chapter will more fully document how this project overcomes many of these common problems. Lastly, this chapter reviewed literature on many of the barriers to employment pinpointed by previous research. Here I offer a word of caution; prior research offers a comprehensive list of employment barriers, making it possible to become overwhelmed intellectually, politically, and emotionally. Therefore, one task of the upcoming chapters is to assess which barriers actually matter for moving into employment (Chapter III), steady employment (Chapter IV), and high-quality employment (Chapter V). These distinctions carry important policy implications; even if we find the political impetus, which barriers to employment should be targeted by social policy? Answering this question, Herculean as it may be, remains one of the most important intellectual tasks of our time.

CHAPTER II

DATA, METHODS AND HYPOTHESES

The problem of causal inference is fundamentally one of unobservables, and unobservables are at the heart of the contribution of panel data. [Yet] sociologists have only just begun to exploit the power of panel data.
(Halaby 2004:508; 541)

Nothing of interest to sociologists is nowhere: Everything we study is emplaced; it happens somewhere and involves material stuff...Place is not merely a setting or a backdrop, but an agentic player in the game—a force with detectable and independent effects on social life.
(Gieryn 2000:466)

Published research on the labor market barriers faced by disadvantaged women in the post-welfare reform era would fill most researchers' offices many times over. Indeed many scholars have given up this line of research, some purely from fatigue. Yet several pressing questions remain unanswered: which factors are primarily responsible for enabling and constraining women's employment? How do these factors change over time? How do spatial barriers and neighborhood characteristics contribute to or detract from the importance of individual circumstances? As the excerpts above allege, much contemporary research that does ask these questions does so aspatially, in only one geographic location, or cross-sectionally. These gaps remain in large part because of methodological constraints. In order to properly understand these dynamics, we must tackle these questions using longitudinal, spatially rich, multi-site data, information that until very recently did not exist.

This chapter details how the methodological approach adopted by this dissertation expands on the approaches typically taken by researchers to yield a methodologically sound, theoretically informative study of the barriers to employment faced by urban women following 1996's Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act. The chapter begins by outlining the data used for this research. Next, it documents the variables used in the analysis, including the construction of appropriate indices. Third, it addresses how this research will circumvent many of the common methodological problems with "neighborhood effects" research before describing the broader longitudinal modeling strategy utilized in subsequent chapters. Finally, I conclude the chapter with hypotheses for the coming chapters.

Data

During 1998-1999, the MDRC (formerly the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation) surveyed 3,960 women in four U.S. cities who had received AFDC in 1995 and were living in neighborhoods characterized by high rates of poverty and welfare receipt (30 percent and 20 percent, respectively). In the first wave of data collection, most were recent welfare leavers, aged 18-45. The second wave (2001) included follow-up surveys of 3,260 women, 82 percent of the original sample. The resultant dataset, called the Project on Devolution and Urban Change (hereafter referred to as "Urban Change") provides the best possible glimpse into the work and personal lives of disadvantaged urban women following welfare reform. Although all received cash welfare transfers in 1995, only 50 percent, however, received Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds at the first wave. This distinguishes the present study

from welfare "leaver" studies which track a group of women who leave TANF at the same time, either by choice or due to program specifications, and enter the labor market (Corcoran et al. 2000; Hofferth et al. 2005; Pavetti 2001; Moffitt 2002; Lichter & Jayakody 2002; Harris 1996; Pavetti & Bloom 2001; Turner & Main 2001; Danziger et al. 2002). Thus, my study analyzes the labor market activity of poor urban women, but not necessarily welfare leavers and without a primary focus on the length of welfare receipt or mode of exit.

The Urban Change data contain sufficient breadth to fully analyze nearly every possible explanation for poor women's labor market activity. Despite its richness, academic use of the multi-city survey data has been sparse, except for a few publications on the MDRC website (Polit et al. 2001a; Polit et al. 2001b; Polit et al. 2000). Given the project's cost and the richness of the data, little research based on it has appeared in academic journals (exceptions are Scott et al. 2004; Gooden 2004). Even fewer of the existing MDRC studies utilize multivariate models or both waves of data. Thus, this study will not only contribute to scholarly knowledge about the post-welfare reform employment of poor urban women, but will provide MDRC with a more comprehensive examination of their under-utilized data, which will hopefully spark even more creative research using the Urban Change survey.

The Urban Change survey data present a unique opportunity for studying the fortunes of poor urban women since welfare reform, but I further augment these individual survey data with 2000 U.S. Census data, at the tract level, gleaned from the GeoLytics Neighborhood Change Database. This program contains all long-form Census variables at the tract level from each of the decennial Censuses since 1970. Before using

these neighborhood-level data, I offer a word of caution. MDRC intentionally drew their sample from impoverished neighborhoods; those with at least a 30 percent poverty rate and a 20 percent welfare-receipt rate (prior to reform). Thus, the values of neighborhood-level variables observed in the Urban Change dataset represent a truncated sample of the possible values. We know that selecting on the dependent variable in such a manner can have disastrous consequences for reaching valid conclusions (Berk 1983); selecting out the higher values of the dependent variable, for example, alters the observed relationships between independent and dependent variables (i.e., the slope of the regression line changes). Even when this happens to independent variables, we must proceed cautiously. York and Clark (2005:430) recall that a concern of critical scholars is the positivist, empiricist branch of sociology's over reliance on data that fail to reflect the true range of possible variation. A researcher may observe neighborhood poverty rates between 30 percent and 80 percent, for example, and draw conclusions about the effect of living in a neighborhood with 50 percent poverty on the odds of employment, but this says nothing of the effect of living in a neighborhood with 100 percent poverty (or, more appropriately for this study, no poverty at all). I share their concern, but ameliorate it in two ways; first, I argue that few women reside in neighborhoods of 100 poverty or zero percent poverty. Rather, most fall somewhere in the middle and are included by the range selected by MDRC. Second, owing to these concerns, I expand beyond the poverty rate itself, as it is the variable used to draw the sample. Instead, I rely on other neighborhood-level measures, which admittedly may be somewhat correlated with poverty rate, but are not variables on which the sample was drawn. I also do this while recalling that Jencks and Mayer (1990) lament the tendency for contemporary researchers too often rely on a

"black box" neighborhood effect, invoking neighborhood poverty rates to explain individual outcomes without theoretical justification or insight.

Variables

Table 1 provides a list of independent variables included in these analyses, including the original questions asked of participants. When variables are computed by using two or more variables, all questions are listed. This list of variables includes both control variables and variables relating to the seven potential barrier-types: human capital, family responsibilities, health, transportation, networks, substance abuse, housing and neighborhood conditions. Each of the variables in the table corresponds to one or more of the barriers identified by previous research (see previous chapter).

Table 1. Original Instrument Questions for All Independent Variables.

	Variable	Questions from Instrument
Demographics		
1.	**Age**	What is your date of birth?
3.	**Race**	a. White b. Black/ African American. c. Hispanic/Latino d. Other Race
4.	**Foreign Born**	What is your place of birth? (recoded as U.S. and elsewhere)
5.	**Childhood AFDC**	Did your family receive AFDC benefits at any time before you turned 18?
Human Capital		
6.	**H.S. Diploma or GED**	Do you have a high school diploma or a GED certificate?
7.	**Associate's Degree (or higher)**	What is the highest grade or level of school or college you have ever completed (Associate's, 4 years of college/Bachelor's degree, graduate degree).
8.	**English Proficiency**	How well do you understand a conversation in English? (very well, well, some, little, not at all)
Family Responsibilities		

Table 1. (continued).

		Variable	Questions from Instrument
	9.	**Current Marital Status**	Are you currently: married and living with your husband, separated or living apart from your husband (both coded as "married"), divorced, widowed (both coded as unmarried)?
	10.	**Cohabiting**	Are you currently living with a boyfriend or partner as a couple?
	11.	**Pregnant**	Are you currently pregnant?
	12.	**Number of Children**	In the past month, how many of your own children were living at home with you?
	13.	**Child Under Six**	Please tell me (Child A, B, C, etc)'s birthdate, beginning with the month.
	14.	**Child with Disability**	Does your child (do any of your children) have an illness or disability that demands a lot of your attention and makes it hard for you to work or go to school?
Health			
	15.	**Self-Reported Health**	Would you say your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?
	16.	**CESD Depression Score**	Composite score (60-point scale) from multiple questions aimed at detecting high levels of clinical depression (supplied with data)
	17.	**Violence**	Has someone hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically harmed you in the past year?
	18.	**Alcohol Use**	Please tell me how often each of the following statements was true during the past thirty days: I drank enough alcohol, including beer, wine, wine coolers, or liquor, to get drunk. (never, once or twice, 3 to 5 times, 6 to 10 times, more than 10 times).
	19.	**Drug Use**	I used cocaine or crack, heroin, PCP or ice (never, once or twice, 3 to 5 times, 6 to 10 times, more than 10 times).
Networks			
	20.	**Network Index**	a. In past month, did you receive any money from family or friends outside the household/family to help pay for living expenses? b. Did you take in family or friends because they needed a place to live? c. How did you use [your] tax [return] money? (option: loaned or gave money to friend or relative)
Transportation			
	21.	**Car Ownership**	Do you or anyone in household/family own a car, van, truck, not including RV's or motorcycles?
Housing and City			
	22.	**Housing Stability**	Have you had trouble finding a good place to live in last year?
	23.	**Subsidized Housing**	Does your household pay less rent because the government pays for part of it, such as in Section 8 housing?
	24.	**Number of Rooms Per Person**	Calculated by survey administrator at time of administration

Table 1. (continued).

	Variable	Questions from Instrument
25.	**City**	a. Cleveland b. Los Angeles c. Miami d. Philadelphia
Neighborhood Conditions		
26.	**Disorder Index** [asked of Interviewer]	Within one or two blocks of R's home, were there any of the following things? a. Large groups of teenagers hanging out on the street? b. Vacant lots? c. Litter and garbage on the street or sidewalk? d. Abandoned or boarded up houses or buildings? e. Vandalism such as broken windows or graffiti?
27.	**Poverty Rate**	Tract-level 2000 U.S. Census data obtained from GeoLytics Neighborhood Change Database
28.	**Female Joblessness Rate**	Tract-level 2000 U.S. Census data obtained from GeoLytics Neighborhood Change Database
29.	**Residential Stability**	Tract-level 2000 U.S. Census data obtained from GeoLytics Neighborhood Change Database
30.	**Female Headed HHs**	Tract-level 2000 U.S. Census data obtained from GeoLytics Neighborhood Change Database
31.	**Vacancy Rate**	Tract-level 2000 U.S. Census data obtained from GeoLytics Neighborhood Change Database
32.	**Car Ownership**	Tract-level 2000 U.S. Census data obtained from GeoLytics Neighborhood Change Database
33.	**Homeownership**	Tract-level 2000 U.S. Census data obtained from GeoLytics Neighborhood Change Database

Index Construction

Empirical analyses in this study include two different indexes, each comprised of several variables. Here I discuss the appropriateness of each of these indexes. As discussed in the previous chapter, existing research indicates that both the amount of physical and social disorder in one's neighborhood and an individual's access to social networks can affect job attainment. Thus, I construct an index for each of these factors. The first, disorder, is typically utilized as an index or latent factor variable (see Haney 2007) comprised of respondent-observed neighborhood characteristics. The choice to

use interviewer-observed characteristics rather than respondent-observed characteristics follows from both data availability and from Sampson and Raudenbush's (1999:606) observation that the majority of studies on disorder have been based on residents' subjective perceptions drawn from survey responses and that estimates of the same neighborhood can vary considerably from one resident to the next. Tables 2 and 3 present correlations and Cronbach's coefficient alpha for these two sets of variable at both waves of data collection. Each variable is dichotomous, measuring whether the particular sign of disorder was observed (1) or not (0).

Table 2. Correlations of Disorder Variables at Wave 1.

	Teens	Vacant	Litter	Abandoned	Vandal
Teens	--				
Vacant	.420	--			
Litter	.490	.562	--		
Abandoned	.428	.676	.577	--	
Vandalism	.489	.581	.650	.695	--

Cronbach's alpha for disorder index= .863

Table 3. Correlations of Disorder Variables at Wave 2.

	Teens	Vacant	Litter	Abandoned	Vandal
Teens	--				
Vacant	.385	--			
Litter	.463	.541	--		
Abandoned	.367	.582	.561	--	
Vandalism	.449	.537	.640	.682	--

Cronbach's alpha for disorder index= .842

Results of Tables 2 and 3 indicate that these five variables are moderately-to-highly correlated, and therefore prone to multicolinearity problems if included in the

same regression model. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients suggest that all five of these variables are measuring the same underlying concept, which I call neighborhood disorder. Therefore, the variables will be included as an additive index, each with equal weight. These variables are added because I am interested in the aggregate effects of these indicators, not the effects of each one individually. The variable has a possible range of 0 to 5, and has a mean of 2.00 at Wave 1 and 1.58 at Wave 2. These means suggest that the interviewers viewed respondent's neighborhood as less disordered in 2001 than in 1999.[8]

I repeat the above procedure for the network variables. Although the Urban Change dataset contains few variables appropriate for assessing an individual's network ties, I approximate the presence of personal networks by whether the respondent received (borrowed) money from friends or relatives in the last year, loaned money to friends or relatives, and lived with family during the past year. Tables 4 and 5 present correlations and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for both waves of data.

Table 4. Correlations for Network Variables at Wave 1.

	Rec. Money	Loan Money	Live w/ Fam
Rec. Money	--		
Loan Money	-.015	--	
Live w/ Fam	.035	-.017	--

Cronbach's alpha for network index= .056

[8] Women who did not move between waves saw their assessed disorder level decrease by .55 points (out of five), whereas women who moved saw their disorder level decrease by only .30 points. Thus, the downward shift in interviewer-observed disorder can be partially attributed to improving neighborhood conditions and partially to moves to less disordered neighborhoods. Yet, the majority of this change seems to be attributable to improving neighborhood conditions, as women who did not move between waves saw a *larger* drop in assessed disorder than women who did move. These findings support the work of Clark (2008), who finds that households leaving public housing often moved into similarly poor neighborhoods. Indeed, even households who relocated to non-poor neighborhoods through the Moving to Opportunity program eventually made subsequent moves back to poor neighborhoods, often their origin neighborhoods.

Table 5. Correlations for Network Variables at Wave 2.

	Rec. Money	Loan Money	Live w/ Fam
Rec. Money	--		
Loan Money	-.018	--	
Live w/ Fam	.063	.049	--

Cronbach's alpha for network index=.094

Results indicate low correlations, inconsistent in direction, and a very low alpha coefficient. Thus, we can conclude that these three variables do not measure the same underlying construct (presence of social networks). This may be due to the low numbers of respondent who answered "yes" to these questions; only 10 percent had received a loan, 3 percent had given a loan, and 14 percent had lived with a family member. In order to achieve enough variation, I add the three variables together into an index, ranging from 0 to 3. When combined, 52 respondents had engaged in two of these activities, 632 respondents had engaged in one, and 2,449 had not engaged in any of them. Out of 3,133 valid cases, 22 percent had engaged in at least one.[9]

[9] Because these questions involve both giving and receiving assistance, the important issue is whether there are two separate groups (givers and receivers) or whether folks who did one typically did the others as well. In short, they provide some evidence that women who provided housing assistance also received money (at least, just as often as those who did not provide such assistance). At Wave 1, there were 422 women who had a family/friend to stay with them. Of those 422 women, 12 percent also received money. By contrast, of the women who did not have a family/friend stay with them, 9.5 percent received money. So, there is no evidence that some women give and others receive. Additionally, the variable about loaning money does not tell us much: there were only 9 women who loaned tax return money at Wave 1, and 6 folks at Wave 2.

So, the logic of the network index is that the women with a higher value on the network index have more people they can rely on in times of need than folks with lower values (who did not live with family/friends and did not receive money). The real surprising finding, is that given the population sampled, only 14% of women had a family/friend stay with them, 9.5 percent received money, and practically nobody loaned (tax return) money. I would have expected far more borrowing, lending, etc. These are not the best indicators of networks or social capital, but it is something that the literature has said is important and utilizing the variable helps to minimize accusations of omitted variable bias.

Neighborhood Effects Research

Recall Raudenbush and Byrk's (2002:xix) claim in Chapter I that the basic problem of sociology involves relating the properties of individuals and the properties of groups and structures to which those individuals belong. Despite many attempts to relate the properties of neighborhoods to the behaviors, choices, and outcomes of individuals, for many scholars it remains "an article of faith that differences between places are reducible to differences between the type of people living there" (McIntyre and Ellaway 2003:25). Although the theory is attractive enough (individual choices are enabled or constrained by the spaces in which they are made), the problems are largely methodological. At the same time, another school of thought contends that neighborhood conditions matter for individual outcomes, above and beyond the characteristics of individual residents; in short, residents of poor neighborhoods are disadvantaged by their own characteristics, but also by the problems of their neighbors (Wilson 1996; Jargowsky 1997; Gotham 2003). In fact, one review of literature concludes that we have now reached a general consensus that neighborhoods do affect certain lifecourse events (South and Crowder 1999:113). This research hopes to contribute to this increasingly heated debate. But to understand whether neighborhood conditions affect individual outcomes (such as employment) researchers must also first hypothesize how neighborhoods affect us. The remainder of this section addresses that topic.

Diez-Roux (2003) writes that group-level effects ultimately are mediated through individual-level processes. Accordingly, they cannot affect individuals "independently" of all individual-level attributes, but she argues convincingly that they are not simply reducible to individual-level constructs (i.e., neighborhood effects are not simply an

artifact of unobserved individual-level variables). Rather, they affect individuals through mediating mechanisms. Haney (2007), for example, suggests that neighborhood disadvantage affects an individual's psyche through the mediating mechanism of jeopardized physical health, although this effect appears to be ameliorated by increased civic engagement levels in disadvantaged neighborhoods, and civic engagement appears to enhance psychological well-being. But testing this causal pathway requires rare geographically-linked longitudinal data. Therefore, the Urban Change survey data permit relatively sophisticated models of change over time (for example, the effect of moving from a disadvantaged neighborhood to a more advantaged neighborhood).

In the remainder of this section I discuss the logic of neighborhood effects inquiry, several of the current and most pressing methodological concerns, and I conclude by making a case for more methodologically sound inquiry.

Logic

The logic behind contemporary neighborhood effects research is straightforward. The spatial concentration of poor people acts to magnify poverty and exacerbate poverty's individual effects (Jargowsky 1997:1). Neighborhoods therefore have socially significant attributes, or emergent properties, over and above the individual attributes of those residents who live there (Gotham 2003:727). These effects can be transmitted through the development of a normative system that operates in closed communities, the collective socialization by adults and peers in the community, or the institutional resources model, in which neighborhood residents share the same police protection, schools, streets, libraries, and youth programs (Furstenburg and Hughes 1997:24).

Wilson (1996) and Massey and Denton (1993) find that living in a neighborhood with concentrated poverty has serious consequences above and beyond those of growing up in a poor family due to the absence of role models, isolation from job networks, and weakened social institutions (although Wilson focuses on economic shifts and middle-class out-migration and Massey and Denton concentrate on the consequences of racial segregation). Thus, the logic of the argument implies that researchers must use the properties of groups or spaces to explain the behavior of individuals.

Methodological Constraints

Despite the theoretical reasons why neighborhoods matter for individuals, academic inquiry into neighborhood effects faces several major obstacles. Primarily, neighborhood research, multi-level by nature, is prone to the self-selection and clustering criticisms. Proponents of this viewpoint argue that neighborhoods contain individuals who are very similar in many measured and unmeasured ways including background socioeconomic status, attitudes toward education, childbearing and employment. Therefore, deciphering which effects stem from the neighborhood context and which effects stem from pre-existing, unmeasured similarities between residents is difficult, conceptually and statistically. Furthermore, individuals are not randomly assigned to neighborhoods; rather, they choose neighborhoods subject to prices and income (housing affordability, information accessibility, and discrimination limit this "choice"). A group of people living in a "bad" neighborhood will likely have some unobserved characteristics in common (characteristics that affected their location there to begin with). The observed effect is therefore spurious. In quantitative terms, all of the un-modeled

contextual information ends up pooled into the single individual error term of the model. Individuals of the same neighborhood will have correlated errors, violating the basic regression assumption of independence (Luke 2004:7). While we know that similar individuals cluster together and likely share a number of observed and unobserved characteristics, recent theory and evidence contend that individuals actually have much less residential choice than previously assumed. Both Sampson (2001) and Kawachi and Berkman (2003) contend that processes of exclusion and issues of affordability systematically sort individuals into neighborhoods. In effect, "many people have no choice about where to live... [and]... very seldom do people with means deliberately 'choose' to move into disadvantaged neighborhoods" (Kawachi and Berkman 2001:11). Common approaches to ameliorating this problem include the utilization of a robust standard error correction (Elliott 1999a) and the use of only a very limited number of individuals per geographic unit (Haney 2007).

Additionally, neighborhood-based models are sensitive to the inclusion of particular control variables. Generally, the richer the individual control variables, the lower the neighborhood influences. This finding, of course, suggests that a neighborhood effect might be the artifact of a parsimonious or misguided choice of control variables (Durlauf 2001:403-404). When researchers find a strongly significant neighborhood effect, they often encounter the critical response, "you can't have controlled for enough individual characteristics" (Mcintyre and Ellaway 2003: 25). Multi-level modeling (such as Hierarchical Linear Modeling, used in Rankin and Quane's (2000) study of neighborhood poverty and social isolation) circumvent this problem, to some extent, but no empirical model using cross-sectional data can truly parcel out the effects that stem

from neighborhoods, family, and other sources. And, unfortunately, very little multi-level, longitudinal, multi-city data exists. Some large geographically-linked data sets, like the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, are cross-sectional while other longitudinal data sets are not geographically-linked (like the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health or the Panel Study of Income Dynamics). Although some recent data collection efforts, such as the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, produced geographically-linked, longitudinal data, these data concern only Chicago, leaving questions about whether neighborhoods affect individuals the same way in other cities. This lack of data makes the Project on Devolution and Urban Change particularly useful as it includes two waves of data, tract identifiers, and data from multiple cities.

Any methodological inquiry into the neighborhood effects literature must also successfully define neighborhood boundaries. Small and Supple (2001:162) define a neighborhood as "a physical place, defined by socially shared boundaries that include a population of people who usually share similar life chances, socioeconomic status, and physical proximity." As simple as this seems, actually defining neighborhood boundaries for the purpose of academic research often proves perilous. The U.S. Census Bureau utilizes a spatial unit called the Tract, which contains about 4,000 individuals, often more in urban areas (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). Although urban sociologists have debated the appropriateness of Tracts, and their sub-units, Block Groups, for many years, and many interesting methods have been developed for drafting neighborhood boundaries as residents see them (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999; Korbin 2001; Lee 2001), Jargowsky (1997:8) argues that census tracts are "the only realistic choice" for large neighborhood effects studies given the limits of time and money. Additionally, Duncan and

Raudenbush (2001) argue that larger spatial units may ameliorate the simultaneity problem (whereby the neighborhoods that influence individuals are also influenced and changed by those individuals). Because an individual makes up only one person in 4,000 within a census tract, that person's overall influence on the neighborhood is small, compared with a block group or a block itself, both of which contain far fewer people. Therefore, using a slightly larger spatial unit is preferable. The disadvantage, of course, is that people living several blocks away from an individual may not have very much influence on his or her actions and larger geographic units contain far more variation; i.e., one side of a census tract may appear and function very different than the opposite side. Put differently, larger units will typically contain much more individual variation.

Most researchers admit that Census tracts are marginally suitable, but probably do not depict the neighborhood as experienced by residents (Furstenburg and Hughes 1997:34). When neighborhood residents are asked to outline their neighborhood on a map, they typically draw areas larger than a block group, about the size of a census tract, but not necessarily overlapping their own census tract (Korbin 2001). Other available evidence suggests that tract boundaries do not overlap precisely with resident-reported neighborhood boundaries. A study of Nashville teenagers revealed an average neighborhood size of 12.6 blocks, but the arithmetic mean is dwarfed by the 29.5 block standard deviation (i.e., estimates of size varied wildly). Male teens reported a larger mean neighborhood size (24.2 blocks) than female teens (15.6 blocks) (Lee 2001). Furthermore, we know that residents traverse the boundaries of multiple neighborhoods during the course of a day, meaning that behaviors and outcomes result from multiple ecological contexts, not solely the place they live (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999:614).

Unfortunately, few datasets delineate neighborhood boundaries in ways that are meaningful to residents (for an exception, see Sampson and Raudenbush [1999]), and even fewer contain good measures of exposure to neighborhoods (South 2001). Admittedly, invoking tract-level data as predictors of individual-level outcomes uniformly across individuals and without measures of intra-neighborhood contact provides only a crude approximation of the actual influence of neighborhoods on their residents' lives.

Theoretically, despite prevalent theory on why neighborhoods might matter for individual outcomes, many neighborhood studies provide little conceptual and theoretical insight into why neighborhoods matter. Crane (1991), for example, used the percentage of professional and managerial workers in a neighborhood as indicators of neighborhood socioeconomic status, finding that this variable helps predict teenage pregnancy and drop-out rates (discussed in Bowles et al. 2006:157). But, what does this say about causality? Does it suggest that these professionals provide stable role models for young people, thereby discouraging teenage pregnancy? Like many neighborhood effects analysis, it treats the neighborhood effects as a black box. To date there is no consensus on which outcomes are most affected by neighborhood context and which are most resistant to it (Yinger 2001:368). To reiterate Sampson (2001), "Something ecological is happening here, even if we don't know fully what it is."

Despite the methodological problems that confound neighborhood effects research, several possible solutions do exist. The best solution would be the development of a national longitudinal set of survey data linked to neighborhood-level or tract-level data. Longitudinal data would allow for the tracking of residents into and out of poor

neighborhoods while observing how that residential movement translates into individual outcomes. When we study neighborhood disadvantage cross-sectionally, it is simply not possible to determine how much of the measured effect was brought into the neighborhood and how much can truly be causally linked to the neighborhood. And, even when we have information on residential movement, we rarely have information on the prior neighborhood (i.e., people often move between demographically similar neighborhoods). Results from the Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity residential relocation experiments reveal that moves from a poor neighborhood to a non-poor neighborhood often translate into gains in employment, wages, and well-being (Rosenbaum et al. 2002; Rosenbaum and Popkin 1991). Yet these experiments are not geographically and temporally generalizeable and are inconclusive. But, by moving some residents and not others, the experiments provide a counterfactual case, a scenario where it is possible to ask what would have happened without the intervention, a tool usually missing from neighborhood effects research. In a similar vein, Harding (2003) utilizes a "counterfactual model" of neighborhood effects, whereby he employs propensity score matching. In this method, the researcher estimates neighborhood effects by comparing individuals growing up in poor and non-poor neighborhoods who are otherwise identical, and then testing the robustness of the results to the presence of unobserved covariates. In using this method, Harding finds larger neighborhood effects (on school dropout and teen pregnancy) than are usually found utilizing traditional, non-matched, samples (P. 713). The Project on Devolution and Urban Change circumvents many of the causation problems by incorporating two waves of panel data. The

following sections will demonstrate how I overcome many of the problems generally associated with neighborhood effects research.

Generating Contextual Data

Following Jargowsky's (1997) suggestion that census tracts are the only "realistic" choice for neighborhood proxies, this research will utilize tract-level data for all neighborhood predictors. I obtained tract level data from the Neighborhood Change Database, produced by the GeoLytics Corporation. The program generates and maps tract-level U.S. Census data from 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000. Given that tract boundaries change somewhat between censuses, the program will also generate 1970, 1980, and 1990 boundaries according to the 2000 boundaries, allowing for comparisons of neighborhoods through time. Because Urban Change data were collected in 1998-1999 and 2001, however, this analysis uses only data from the 2000 Census. Thus, a respondent who does not move from one tract to another will have identical neighborhood-level values at both waves. Since approximately half of the sample (n=1,620) moved between waves, I am able to gauge the some of the effects of moving from a more advantaged neighborhood to a less advantaged neighborhood. Tract-level data are then imported into the individual datafile. For example, if Tract 21's poverty rate is 0.295, each person residing in Tract 21 at Wave 1 receives a value of 0.295. If that person remains in Tract 21 at Wave 2, their value for the poverty rate variable remains 0.295.

Selection of Tract-Level Variables

Debate exists as to the proper neighborhood-level variables to use for explaining individual outcomes. Research typically finds many neighborhood-level variables to be highly correlated, raising the question of how many neighborhood-level constructs or processes truly exist (Sampson et al. 2002:457). Most variables cluster around the larger concept of neighborhood disadvantage. Sampson (2001) argues that for most outcomes, relevant neighborhood predictors include poverty, wealth, occupational attainment, family and life cycle, female-headed households, child density, residential stability, racial composition, and the density of dwellings. Lein and Shexnayder (2007:118) suggest using a neighborhood joblessness or unemployment measure. Their interviewees from high-unemployment neighborhoods were unable to locate work, but those in neighborhoods with higher employment rates seemed to locate more opportunities.

Recent research primarily agrees on the appropriate measures of neighborhood disadvantage. For instance, Boardman and Robert (2000) measure neighborhood socioeconomic status by: 1) the poverty rate, 2) the adult unemployment rate, and 3) the percentage receiving public assistance. Likewise, Hannon (2005) uses an index that includes four highly correlated neighborhood variables. These include: 1) the poverty rate, 2) median family income, 3) the percentage of households receiving public assistance income, 4) and the percentage of families that are female-headed. In a slight deviation, McNulty (2001) uses: 1) the percent of persons with 1989 incomes below the poverty threshold, 2) the percent of families headed by females with children under 18, and 3) the percent of civilian noninstitutionalized males (16+) who are unemployed or not in the labor force. Taken together, the important neighborhood measures seem to be: 1) poverty

and income, 2) joblessness or unemployment, 3) family structure, specifically female-headedness, and 4) welfare receipt.

Other studies move beyond the typical disadvantage indices in three ways. The first involves utilizing measures of mobility or other housing characteristics, owing to the fact that stable neighborhoods can breed strong social networks (Sampson et al. 2002:446). The second involves utilizing measures of wealth as well as disadvantage, since exposure to wealth may be just as important as exposure to poverty (Massey 2001). In other words, the presence of concentrated affluence can generate opportunities, rather than the presence of concentrated poverty exerting the primary effect on individual outcomes. The third approach involves utilizing respondent-observed or interviewer-observed neighborhood characteristics to understand issues of disorder and urban decay that may affect sociability and available opportunities (Sampson and Raudenbush 2004).

Owing to the above concerns, this research will utilize three of the typical measures of neighborhood disadvantage, plus other theoretically important neighborhood variables. When appropriate, I adjust these measures to the Urban Change sample. For instance, rather than utilizing the overall neighborhood joblessness rate, I utilize the rate for females only.[10] Accordingly, these measures of disadvantage include:

1) Neighborhood Poverty Rate
2) Female Joblessness Rate
3) Percentage of Families with Children that are Female Headed

I also expand on the typical measures of neighborhood disorder by including other measures found in the literature to be of notable importance. These include vacancy

[10] Female and male joblessness are highly correlated, meaning it would be impossible to use both. Given the general thrust of the study, I have chosen female joblessness, but this result indicates that neighborhoods providing opportunities for women also provide opportunities for men, and so forth.

(Swaroop and Morenoff 2006; Kissane and Gingerich 2004), residential stability (Kleit 2001; Rosenbaum et al. 2002; Pettit and McLanahan 2003; Sampson 2001), car ownership (Ong 2002), observed disorder (Sampson and Raudenbush 2004) and homeownership. These variables, taken together, approximate the ability for neighborhood residents to form attachments to one another and to the neighborhood itself. On this subject, prior research has identified two particularly salient factors: residential stability and home ownership. Studies show that if these two factors are high, neighbors tend to get to know one another and that these interactions "gel over time to create the form and consequences of the social climate of the community" (Schieman 2005: 1033; see also Campbell and Lee 1992; Gerson, Stueve, and Fischer 1977; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). Thus, these neighborhood variables are:

4) Interviewer Observed Neighborhood Disorder
5) Percentage of Housing Units that are Vacant
6) Proportion of Residents Living in Same House as 5 Years Ago
7) Percentage of Households in Tract that Own a Vehicle
8) Percentage of Owner-Occupied Residential Units

I eschew three popular neighborhood measures for practical reasons. First, I exclude the percentage of families receiving welfare (TANF/Food Stamps/Medicaid), as participants were selected for the study only from neighborhoods with at least a 20 percent welfare receipt rate. Although participants were also chosen from neighborhoods with a high poverty rate, I include this variable because past research finds it to be a consistently significant, if not theoretically ambiguous, predictor of various individual outcomes (Jencks and Mayer 1990). Secondly, I exclude the median income of the neighborhood because it is theoretically similar to and highly correlated with the poverty

rate, utilizes a different metric than the other neighborhood variables, and was also utilizing to select the sampled areas (i.e., women were drawn from high-poverty neighborhoods). Third, I am forced to exclude racial composition (see Massey and Denton 1993), owing to high correlations with other variables (i.e., .80 with the female-headedness).

The Pearson's R coefficients, listed in Tables 6 and 7, demonstrate low-to-moderate correlations between tract-level variables, ranging from .015 (mobility and female joblessness at Wave 2) to .721 (poverty and female unemployment rate at Wave 1). Yet no steadfast rules exist for how large a Person's R is too large. Thus, many scholars have opted instead for the Variance Inflation Factor, which I discuss shortly.

Table 6. Tract-Level Variable Pairwise Correlations at Wave 1.

	Poverty	Fm Jobless	Fem HH	Vacancy	Mobility	Car Own	Home Own
Poverty	--						
Fm. Jobless	.724	--					
Fem HH	.523	.176	--				
Vacancy	.459	.275	.608	--			
Mobility	.027	.001	.499	.372	--		
Car Ownership	-.648	-.498	-.630	-.649	-.371	--	
Homeownership	-.552	-.351	-.106	-.094	.423	.279	--
Cronbach's Alpha: .758							

Table 7. Tract-Level Variable Pairwise Correlations at Wave 2.

	Poverty	Fm Jobless	Fem HH	Vacancy	Mobility	Car Own	Home Own
Poverty	--						
Fm. Jobless	.743	--					
Fem HH	.518	.177	--				
Vacancy	.488	.302	.652	--			
Mobility	-053	-.055	.443	.332	--		
Car Ownership	-.676	-.529	-.642	-.679	-.300	--	
Homeownershp	-.577	-.394	-.134	-.116	.470	.301	--
Cronbach's Alpha: .754							

As an additional check, I calculate a Cronbach's alpha for each wave of data. According to Kline (2005:59)

> Cronbach's coefficient alpha measures internal consistency reliability, the degree to which responses are consistent across the items within a single measure. If alpha is low, the content of the items may be so heterogeneous that the total score is not the best possible unit of analysis for the measure.

In other words, the Cronbach's coefficient alpha tests whether several items are really different measures of the same concept and logically, should be analyzed together, as one latent factor variable or index. Beneath the correlation tables, I present a Cronbach alpha for the tract-level variables at Wave 1 (.758) and Wave 2 (.754). According to Kline (2005:59) "reliability coefficients around .90 are considered 'excellent,' values around .80 are 'very good,' and values around .70 are 'adequate'" [for creating one latent factor variable] (Kline 2005:59). In other words, we can conclude that these variables adequately measure the same latent construct (neighborhood [dis]advantage), and may be utilized as a single latent factor score. Because this research hypothesizes that some of these neighborhood conditions may influence employment while others may not, I regress each one separately.

A reasonably high alpha, however, suggests that the variables may indeed be collinear, making them inappropriate for individual inclusion in a regression model. In order to minimize this concern, I include all independent variables, individual and tract-level, in a regression model and calculate Variance Inflation Factors (VIF). VIFs measure the extent to which the variance of a coefficient contributes to colinearity. VIF values are always higher than one, but values larger indicate the effect of multicolinearity on the standard errors (McCLendon 1994:162). According to O'Brien (2007:681) "even when

VIF values greatly exceed the rules of 4 or 10, one can often confidently draw conclusions from regression analyses." In other words, individual VIF values are assumed to become problematic if over 4 (conservatively) or 10 (more liberally), or if the average of all VIFs greatly exceeds 2.0. Yet, even when these thresholds are exceeded, the coefficients might be unbiased. VIF values for both waves appear in Table 8. Age and age-squared are excluded because these variables are highly correlated, but included in regression models intentionally, to test for a nonlinear effect of age. The highest VIF values, at both waves, are black and Hispanic (between 5.0 and 6.0), followed by two the tract-level variables, the percentage of female-headed households (3.62 at Wave 1, 3.50 at Wave 2) and the poverty rate (3.26 at Wave 1 and 3.90 at Wave 2). The other tract-level variables fall between 2.0 and 3.0. In this case, none of the VIFs (with the exception of race/ethnicity and car ownership) exceed 4.0 and the average VIFs of 2.05 and 2.08 hover very close to the 2.0 threshold. Thus, we can conclude with some certainty that multicolinearity does not bias the forthcoming estimates.

Table 8. Variance Inflation Factors for all Independent Variables

Individual Predictors	Wave 1	Wave 2
Employed at Wave 1	--	1.11
Black	5.43	5.29
Hispanic	5.93	5.98
Other Race/Ethnicity	1.36	1.38
Foreign Born	2.54	2.84
Speaks English Well	1.70	2.12
AFDC as Child	1.23	1.23
Married	1.45	1.82
Cohabiting	1.48	1.92
Pregnant	1.04	1.02
Number of Children	1.58	1.72

Table 8. (continued).

	Wave 1	Wave 2
Individual Predictors		
Child Under Six	1.23	1.30
Child with a Disability	1.05	1.08
H.S. Diploma or GED	1.16	1.20
Associate's Degree	1.10	1.08
Household Has a Car	1.21	1.22
Network Index	1.06	1.08
Self-Rated Health	1.23	1.29
CESD Depression	1.30	1.38
Drinking	1.20	1.16
Drug Use	1.13	1.13
Suffered Abuse	1.08	1.07
Trouble Find Housing	1.12	1.11
Subsidized Housing	1.14	1.12
Rooms per Person	1.63	1.66
Los Angeles	3.16	2.81
Miami	2.05	1.98
Philadelphia	1.93	1.91
Disorder Index	1.28	1.20
Tract-Level Predictors		
% Poor	3.26	3.90
% Female-Headed	3.62	3.50
% Females Jobless	2.23	2.68
% Moved, Last 5 Years	1.70	2.38
% Units Vacant	1.94	2.01
% Own Cars	4.29	4.32
% Homeownership	2.27	2.24
AVERAGE VIF	2.05	2.08

Descriptive Statistics

Table 9 presents descriptive statistics for survey respondents at both waves of data collection. I include all variables utilized in analyses.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics for All Respondents Surveyed at Both Waves (n=3,260).

	Min	Max	W1 Valid N	W1 Mean	W1 S.D.	W2 Valid N	W2 Mean	W2 S.D.
Tract-Level Variables								
Poverty Rate	.040	.823	3080	.390	.119	2911	.351	.134
Female Joblessness Rate	.204	.926	3080	.620	.084	2902	.599	.092
Prop. in Same House, 5 Years	.142	.821	3080	.570	.108	2911	.544	.126
Prop. Units Vacant	0.0	.875	3078	.138	.007	2907	.126	.076
Prop. Female-Headed HH	0.0	1.0	3080	.552	.177	2911	.525	.183
Prop. of HHs with Vehicle	.144	.991	2904	.649	.174	3006	.666	.175
Prop. Homeownership	.000	.977	2904	.436	.196	3006	.455	.202
Individual Variables								
Age	18	50	3082	33.65	7.01	--	--	--
Race and Ethnicity								
Black	0=No	1=Yes	3248	.688	--	--	--	--
White	0=No	1=Yes	3248	.050	--	--	--	--
Hispanic/Latino	0=No	1=Yes	3248	.246	--	--	--	--
Other Race	0=No	1=Yes	3248	.016	--	--	--	--
Foreign Born	0=No	1=Yes	3259	.181	--	--	--	--
Trb Understanding English	0=No	1=Yes	3260	.084	--	3193	.091	--
Received AFDC/TANF as Child	0=No	1=Yes	3041	.456	--	--	--	--
Married	0=No	1=Yes	3260	.090	--	3252	.143	--
Cohabits with Spouse/Partner	0=No	1=Yes	3166	.240	--	3243	.279	--
Currently Pregnant	0=No	1=Yes	3246	.037	--	3260	.024	--
Number of Own Children at Home	0	6	3260	2.44	1.36	3260	2.39	1.42
Child Under Six	0=No	1=Yes	3260	.547	--	3260	.374	--
Child w/ Disability	0=No	1=Yes	3260	.182	--	3260	.152	--
Highest Degree Earned								
No Degree	0=No	1=Yes	3259	.442	--	3257	.397	--
High School	0=No	1=Yes	3259	.513	--	3257	.574	--
Assoc. or B.A.	0=No	1=Yes	3259	.036	--	3257	.031	--
Household has a Vehicle	0=No	1=Yes	3252	.371	--	3249	.500	--
Network Index								

Table 9. (continued).

	Min	Max	W1 Valid N	W1 Mean	W1 S.D.	W2 Valid N	W2 Mean	W2 S.D.
Received Money	0=No	1=Yes	3251	.010	--	3251	.099	--
Lived with Family	0=No	1=Yes	3134	.135	--	3110	.136	--
Loaned Money	0=No	1=Yes	3251	.002	--	3251	.003	--
Self-Rated Health	0=Poor	5=Exc	3141	3.30	1.15	3134	3.21	1.15
CESD Depression	0=Low	60=Hi	3142	17.81	11.57	3145	17.09	11.71
Drunk in Past 30 Days	0= Never	4=10+ Times	3126	.381	.732	3116	.400	.762
Drug Use in Past 30 Days	0=No	1=Yes	3120	.022	.146	3086	.025	.154
Experienced Viol.	0=No	1=Yes	3260	.073	--	3033	.064	--
Trouble Finding Housing	0=No	1=Yes	3143	.277	--	3144	.250	--
Lives Subsidized Housing	0=No	1=Yes	3256	.451	--	3256	.295	--
Number of Persons Per Room	0.17	12.0	3234	1.41	.746	3240	1.48	.822
City								
Cleveland	0=No	1=Yes	3260	.266	--	--	--	--
Los Angeles	0=No	1=Yes	3260	.237	--	--	--	--
Miami	0=No	1=Yes	3260	.243	--	--	--	--
Philadelphia	0=No	1=Yes	3260	.254	--	--	--	--
Disorder Index [Asked of Interviewer]								
Teens Hanging	0=No	1=Yes	2990	.357	--	3011	.277	--
Vacant Lots	0=No	1=Yes	2990	.431	--	2998	.319	--
Litter	0=No	1=Yes	2988	.430	--	2989	.366	--
Abandoned Build.	0=No	1=Yes	2986	.404	--	2968	.318	--
Vandalism	0=No	1=Yes	2986	.374	--	2946	.304	--

Consistent with the MDRC's sampling strategy of selecting women from disadvantaged neighborhoods, descriptive statistics (shown in Table 9 if used in analyses, others omitted) reveal several dimensions of disadvantage. Although welfare receipt is not used in the analyses (and therefore not included in the table), more than half of the

sampled women received Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) transfers in 1999, but only one-quarter received TANF by 2001. In Chapter I, I suggested that the turn of the 21st century represents a particularly important time for understanding the labor force participation of disadvantaged urban women, as welfare reform removed many important safety nets and forced many women to search for employment despite personal obstacles. Thus, this transition in welfare use is particularly poignant; since half of the women who utilized TANF in 1999 were no longer utilizing TANF by 2001, the need for employment burgeoned noticeably, even within this tiny two-year period. Similarly, 45 percent of the sample reported living in subsidized housing in 1999, but only 30 percent by 2001.

Second, Table 9 shows that 49 percent of sampled women did not have a high school diploma or GED in 1999. By 2001, an additional five percent earned a GED, however, this still points to a crucial lack of academic credentials and human capital. Meanwhile, only 37 percent of women in the Urban Change sample lived in households who owned personal vehicles in 1999, but by 2001, 50 percent owned vehicles. Although upcoming empirical analyses will assess the importance of the transportation burden, descriptive results indicate that more than half of sampled women do not have immediate access to a vehicle (although they may certainly have friends or relatives who do indeed own a vehicle), but transportation access improved between waves.

Whereas the frequency of some hypothesized barriers appears to have increased between waves, childcare responsibilities for the sample appear to have eased. The proportion with a child under six years old dropped from 55 percent to 37 percent, the proportion caring for a disabled child dropped from 18 percent to 15 percent, whereas

both marriage and cohabitation increased (adding more adults to the household who can presumably participate in carework and secure extra income).

Descriptive statistics also point to the typical woman in the sample living in a neighborhood marked by disadvantage. Sampled women lived, on average, in a neighborhood with a 39 percent poverty rate in 1999 and a 35 percent poverty rate in 2001. Wilson (1996) characterized "poverty tracts" as those in which more than 30 percent of residents were poor and "ghetto poverty tracts" as those with poverty rates higher than 40 percent. These numbers, according to Wilson, indicate important tipping points; somewhere between 30 and 40 percent, neighborhoods change qualitatively for the worse, experience eroding institutions and a decaying of neighborhood social life. Thus, the typical woman in the Urban Change data lived in a neighborhood of relatively extreme poverty. Similarly, sampled women lived in tracts where more than 50 percent of households with children were female-headed (a proxy for single parent households). Respondents also lived in neighborhoods exhibiting a substantial degree of residential mobility, with only about half of residents residing in the same housing unit as five years ago.

Most important for studying women's employment, however, is the joblessness rate among other women in the neighborhood. The data indicate that around 60 percent of women in the sampled women's census tracts were jobless. Yet despite high poverty, mobility, joblessness, and mobility rates, there are some encouraging findings; principally, nearly two-thirds of households in sampled women's neighborhoods own a personal vehicle, and this proportion rose slightly between waves. For those lacking access to a vehicle, having relatives or neighbors with a vehicle would logically aid the

transition to employment, although this is an empirical question to be tested in the following chapter. Furthermore, levels of social and physical disorder (combined as one index) are low, on average. Each of the signs of disorder was observed in between 37 and 43 percent of the neighborhoods, however, when taken together, the average sampled woman lived in a neighborhood with only 2.0 out of a possible five signs of disorder in 1999 and 1.58 in 2001. And, while many of the tract-level variables suggest that Urban Change women reside in disadvantaged neighborhoods, an unsurprising finding given the sampling strategy, a surprising amount of variation exists. For example, 11 percent of the sample (369 women) lived in a neighborhood with less than 20 percent poverty in 1999 and 16 percent (516 women) lived in a low-poverty neighborhood in 2001. If we expand our definition of low-poverty to a 25-percent poverty rate, the figures rise to 18 percent and 24 percent, respectively. Thus, even though the MDRC drew their sample primarily from disadvantaged neighborhood, many of the women in the sample resided in neighborhoods that did not meet Wilson's (1996) criteria for neighborhood poverty, providing substantial variation in the neighborhood measures.

Although the descriptive statistics place sampled Urban Change women within a neighborhood context, we still know little about how neighborhoods enable and constrain their employment opportunities. Chapter I addressed many of the most important and most recent findings in "neighborhood effects research," and the beginning of the chapter covered the many methodological constraints that have plagued this line of research during the past 20 years. The following section addresses this concern and makes a case for a new neighborhood effects research, one that is both theoretically sound and methodologically appropriate.

Modeling Strategy

This dissertation uses a multi-level, longitudinal dataset constructed by both MDRC and the author. To make a causal argument one must establish that the studied phenomena covary, that the cause precedes the effect, and that the observed effect is not attributable to any unobserved variables (Menard 2002:15). Traditional cross-sectional approaches for understanding employment face serious problems, as they can never fully satisfy two of these three criteria (nonspuriousness and temporal ordering). Fortunately, researchers have developed a number of innovative longitudinal methods for at least partially satisfying these criteria, and the data used in this dissertation project present a near-ideal opportunity for employing these methods. Before providing specific hypotheses for this study, I briefly describe the various quantitative modeling strategies employed in this manuscript.

Assumptions Inherent to Modeling Strategy

I begin by reiterating a key point made in the first chapter; this dissertation parts with the traditional assumption that each additional barrier decreases a woman's odds of employment in a linear fashion and in some measurable amount (Turner et al. 2006; Danziger et al. 2000a; Danziger et al. 2000b; Olson and Pavetti 1996). Prior models implicitly assume that each barrier is of equal importance (i.e., poor health is equally as important as a lack of access to transportation), yet these assumptions have gone untested. Thus, at no point does this dissertation project add up the number of barriers faced by individual women and regress that number on the odds of employment. Rather, I include

a variable for every commonly-cited explanation for women's labor force participation in hopes of singling out which factors matter more than others, and for which specific outcomes. This leads to a relatively long list of independent variables and comes at a cost with regard to parsimony, but adds the possibility that particular barriers may emerge is larger in magnitude and more consistent across employment outcomes than other barriers.

Importance of Longitudinal Analysis

Much prior neighborhood research relies on cross-sectional data, including my own previous work (Haney 2007). But, as Lee (2001:37) points out, "the causal terrain is more rugged than this" and that cross sectional data take a "slice out of a cyclical process." For example, the stress of poverty can lead to failing health, which handicaps individuals in their occupational functioning, thereby exacerbating their descent into poverty (Dooley and Prause 2002:788). The fundamental question for longitudinal research is therefore gaining a better understanding of when and how particular causal mechanisms take effect. McIntyre and Ellaway (2003) note that there exists a time-lag between exposure to neighborhood influences and their expression in health outcomes. But, might we expect an equally lengthy lag for employment outcomes, or one markedly shorter? Lieberson and Lynn (2002:14) note that this is one of the fundamental problems of making causal arguments from quantitative data; we may conclude that a particular predictor has "no effect" even though the effect may be substantial, but not noticeable for many years.

Menard (2002:18) alerts us to the issue of left-hand censoring, or the "failure to detect when a change has occurred because it happened before the first period for which data were collected." Thus, a "no effect" might also be interpreted as a false-negative in which a particular predictor did indeed have an effect on the dependent variable, but the effect happened before data collection began. Unfortunately no previous work properly addresses these issues, although the models involved in this study provide a best-case scenario by utilizing predictors that have been tested and for which we have measures at multiple points in time. The larger point remains that the rather admittedly imperfect way in which many of these barriers were measured (at only two points in time, two years apart from one another) makes a Type II error (false negative) a distinct possibility; even barriers that are found non-significant may indeed have significant but lagged effects on employment. Perhaps women who experience declining health do not typically face employment problems for more than two years; on the other hand, perhaps the effects of housing instability are felt immediately and have no effect on employment outcomes measured a year or two later. These limits of the data should not be overlooked.

Even when longitudinal analysis is utilized in neighborhood effects research, the academic community does not always appropriately utilize neighborhood-level predictors. Sampson and Raudenbush (1999:640) lament that neighborhoods are often treated as static constructs, even though we know they change, sometimes rapidly. Individuals move during the course of longitudinal studies, yet census tracts are assigned based on residence at one point in time. Thus, this dissertation utilizes a more dynamic measure of neighborhood membership, one that can change between waves of data collection; when an individual respondent moves between waves, her Census Tract number changes as

well, as do her values for all neighborhood-level variables. Although we do not know how many moves she may have made in the interim, unlike most neighborhood effects studies, this research includes a fluid measure of neighborhood characteristics.

Despite the growing appeal of panel data, Halaby (2004:535) finds that most panel research remains static "insofar as all explanatory variables are dated contemporaneously with the response variable." Thus, he compellingly advocates for increased use of lagged endogenous variables (also referred to as static-score models). Following the recommendation of Halaby (2004) and Finkel (1995), this research utilizes such models where the Wave 2 dependent variable (Y_t) is predicted not only by a range of Wave 2 independent variables, but by an earlier value of Y, here denoted as Y_{t-1}. This variable is commonly referred to as a lagged endogenous variable. Such a strategy is appropriate when the dependent variable may theoretically be dependent, at least in part, upon its earlier values. Halaby (2004:536) calls this a model of "state dependence" where there exists a causal effect of past values of the response variable on current values (i.e., holding employment at Wave 1 makes it more likely that a respondent will hold employment at Wave 2). By reviewing the literature, he finds that few panel studies rigorously develop a case for true state dependence.

Beyond modeling state dependence, research more typically uses a lagged endogenous approach to rectify estimation problems such as unobserved confounding variables and heterogeneity bias (the confounding effect of unmeasured time-invariant variables that are omitted from the regression model). In short, "a panel design achieves a measure of protection against the threats of unit heterogeneity and temporal instability. It also offers relief with respect to the disturbances because it permits identification under

a weaker exogeneity assumption" (Halaby 2004). Importantly, since the "problem of causal inference is fundamentally one of unobservables" (Halaby 2004:508), panel models contribute significantly to the minimization of such omitted-variable bias (Menard 2002:19). Furthermore, Markus (1979) notes that using a change score as the dependent variable ($Y_2 - Y_1$) is the same as using a lagged endogenous variable; research using these approaches typically reaches the same conclusions (cited by Menard 2002:57).

Not only does a static score model, one using a lagged endogenous variable, better predict values of Y, but it maintains other distinct advantages. Omitting earlier values of the dependent variable fails to take into account the likely negative correlation between initial scores on a variable and subsequent change ("regression to the mean"). Including the lagged dependent variable controls for this phenomenon. The inclusion of a lagged endogenous variable also helps control for the effects of unmeasured variables (Menard 2002:19). Thus, this model may be characterized as,

$$Y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_t + \beta_2 Y_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$$

Although these are indeed benefits of a lagged endogenous modeling strategy, this research also carefully advocates for a true state dependence, where a particular employment outcome at Wave 2 depends on that same employment measure two years earlier. Here, I borrow from human capital theory and argue that being employed in 2001 is due, at least in part, to employment two years earlier (Andersson et al. 2003; Heckman and Krueger 2005). Employers look more favorably upon those with more work experience. If employment happened without reference to prior employment, the

inclusion of employment at Wave 1 would be inappropriate. The literature on employment, particularly the employment of disadvantaged women, points to the importance of past employment as a predictor of future employment. For example, recent research found that recent interruptions in employment figured into hiring decisions (Spivey 2005:137) and that nonworking individuals are particularly "locked" into their status the next year, with more than 90 percent of nonworking individuals remaining jobless (Theodos and Bednarzik 2006:43-44).

Owing to the fact that too few panel studies take a sophisticated approach to modeling change (Halaby 2004), some of the ensuing models utilize change-scores for relevant independent variables. This model hypothesizes that, in some cases, it is not the barriers at Wave 1, per say, that influence employment two years later; rather it is the changes in barriers (decreasing childcare responsibilities, improving health) that matter. I borrow this theoretical approach from Myrdal (1944:1067), who believed that inequality is dynamic. Thus ,"what we shall have to study," Myrdal explained, "*are processes of systems actually rolling* in one direction or the other" (original emphasis). Methodologically, I borrow this approach from London and Scott (2005), who use change-scores to predict transitions to food security among the food-insecure.

Following these recommendations, I adopt four general modeling strategies. First, I set the baseline using typical cross-sectional models in both 1999 and 2001 (see Tables 10 and 11). Next, when necessary, I utilize lagged endogenous predictors to model change in the dependent variable (see Table 14). Third, I calculate change scores for relevant independent variables (at times in conjunction with lagged endogenous variables, to model contemporaneous change, and including neighborhood variables). Lastly, I

subdivide the sample as needed to observe how changes affect particular groups of women differently (see Tables 15 and 16, which analyze how various barriers affect employed and jobless women differently). Taken together, these strategies yield several different approaches for modeling change and allow for the exploration of barriers to employment from a number of angles.

Issues in Multilevel Modeling

In order to correct for problems associated with the correlated error structures inherent in multilevel modeling (e.g., analyzing both individual-level and tract-level variables), many researchers use Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM). But, we know that HLM is inappropriate when data contain a large number of sampling groups (in this case, census tracts) and a small number of respondents per group (discussed in Boardman and Robert 2000) because HLM corrects for violations of regression's independence assumption, yet in these cases the assumption is not violated. The resulting correlated error structure increases the likelihood of committing a Type I error (false positive). In the case of the Urban Change data, the relatively small number of women per tract calls into question the appropriateness of HLM. At Wave 1, 3,091 women have a valid census tract number and these women are scattered amongst 524 different tracts, for an average of 5.89 women per tract. At Wave 2, the number of women with a valid tract number drops to 2,931 but the number of tracts rises to 849, for an average of only 3.45 women per tract. Thus, even if three to six women in the sample originate from the same tract and share some unmeasured characteristics in common, any threat to regression's independence assumption will be relatively minimal.

Researchers employing similar data (with a low number of cases per contextual unit) often bypass multilevel procedures in favor of traditional regression methods (Elliott 1999a; Haney 2007). Like Elliott (1999a), I utilize a robust standard error correction to ameliorate any associated problems. This procedure provides a correction to standard errors when observations are clustered (not independent within groups, but independent across groups). In statistical terms, it accommodates heterogeneity and also accounts for unsuspected serial correlation and lends a conservative bias to tests of statistical significance (Frees 2004:52; Halaby 2004:524), both potential problems when individuals, clustered in neighborhoods, likely share characteristics in common. Because of significant skewness and kurtosis, I also transform each tract-level variable using the natural log (ln) function, thereby approximating a normal distribution.[11]

Imputation

One of the fundamental problems of statistical analysis involves dealing with item nonresponse. Some researchers choose to include only cases for which there is complete data (example is Danziger et al. 2000a). This method called listwise deletion is the default option for most data analysis computer programs. Yet, owing to the loss of statistical power (Allison 2001), statisticians developed a range of alternative procedures. According to Menard (2002:42), "in general...maximum likelihood imputation of missing data on scales or unscaled items is regarded as preferable to simpler methods such as listwise deletion," especially if listwise deletion decreases the sample size by more than five or ten percent, as is the case in the upcoming analyses.

[11] Each of the tract-level variables exhibits significant skewness and kurtosis, except for neighborhood poverty rate, which exhibits no kurtosis and the proportion of female-headed households, which exhibits no skew.

When all independent variables used in the subsequent analyses are included in the same regression model, listwise deletion results in 2,627 valid cases (a net loss of around 20 percent of the cases). This large net loss results, in part, from the large number of independent variables utilized; even if each only contains a few missing cases, it will still result in a deletion of many cases. Therefore, I impute all variables missing more than 50 cases (about 1.5 percent of the sample). The final models utilize 3,227 and 3,191 cases (98.9 and 97.8 percent of the full sample, respectively). Any variation in this sample size stems from missing values associated with the particular dependent variable utilized in that analysis.

To impute missing observations, I utilize the best-subset regression method available in STATA, whereby a variable's missing values are filled in by calculating a probable value given the value of other variables for that same case. For filling in missing values, I use every independent variable present in these analyses, with the exception of many attitudinal or opinion variables. Thus, missing values are calculated using age, race/ethnicity, nativity, English proficiency, marital and cohabitation statuses, pregnancy, number of children, a child younger than six, a child with a disability, highest degree earned, household car ownership, city of residence, residence in subsidized housing, self-reported health, vehicle access, and AFDC/TANF receipt during childhood (prior to age 18). In effect, the best-subset regression procedure calculates what a missing value would be, contingent on that person's values on a number of other pertinent variables. Although all methods of imputation make untestable assumptions about patterns of missing data and the similarity of missing and nonmissing cases, regression-based approaches, like the best-subset regression method, are generally

considered preferable to listwise deletion or mean-substitution methods (Menard 2002:42).

Hypotheses

Following previous research and the limits of the data (discussed in Chapters I and II, respectively), I list several main hypotheses, each linked to a particular mechanism of interest and spanning several different employment-related outcomes (and several chapters of analysis). Hypotheses denoted by "C" refer to contextual effects and those denoted by "I" refer to individual effects. In all of these hypotheses, "better" employment outcomes refers to a higher odds of employment at either wave of data collection, more consistent work between waves, more hours of paid work per week, jobs that pay higher wages, provide higher earnings, and provide various benefits including health insurance, health insurance for children, and paid sick days.

C1: Neighborhood conditions, both observed and those derived from U.S. Census data, will remain predictive of employment after individual controls are added. In short, the neighborhood in which a woman resides will affect her employment outcomes above and beyond her individual characteristics and circumstances.

C2: As the neighborhood poverty rate increases, women will not experience worse employment outcomes (owning to other more important neighborhood effects, C3 – C10).

C3: As the level of neighborhood joblessness increases, women will experience worse employment outcomes.

C4: As the neighborhood car ownership rate increases, women will experience better employment outcomes.

C5: As the neighborhood mobility rate increases, women will experience worse employment outcomes.

C6: As the neighborhood homeownership rate increases, women will experience better employment outcomes.

C7: As the neighborhood vacancy rate increases, women will experience worse employment outcomes.

C8: As the proportion of female-headed households (single-parent families) increases, women will experience worse employment outcomes.

C9: As the level of interviewer-observed neighborhood disorder increases, women will experience worse employment outcomes.

C10: Women who move to a new census tract between waves will experience better employment related outcomes than women who do not move.

I1: Heavier childcare responsibilities (more children, younger children, or caring for a disabled child) will be related to worse employment outcomes than lighter childcare responsibilities.

I2: Better health, both physical and mental (and including fewer experiences of violence), will be related to better employment outcomes

I3: Women who own a personal vehicle will have better employment outcomes than women who do not own a personal vehicle.

I4: Barriers to employment that are insignificant when analyzed cross-sectionally will emerge as significant predictors of employment once change scores are employed for independent variables and once changes in the dependent variable are modeled.

CHAPTER III

EMPLOYED AGAINST ALL ODDS OR CHRONICALLY DISCONNECTED?

A MULTI-LEVEL PANEL ANALYSIS

> *[Welfare reform] marks a long-developing and fundamental change in women's responsibilities for reproduction that have accompanied increases in women's paid labor: women are now expected to be wage earners as well as carers, and are only entitled to give full-time care to children if they have a nongovernmental source of income, such as a husband.*
> (Acker 2005:147)

This chapter focuses on the issue of employment and, specifically, connection to the labor force over time. As Acker (2005) suggests, 1996's welfare reform legislation fundamentally altered the calculus involved in poor women's "decisions" to pursue paid employment and the turn of the millennium provides a particularly fertile test case to explore these dynamics given the burgeoning economy. The issue of employment, more generally, matters not only because authors of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) focused on the importance of paid employment in ending welfare dependence, but empirical research also attests to the importance of employment for averting hardship. Regardless of race, gender or age, poverty rates differ considerably between those who work full-time year-round and those who work less. Poverty is endemic among those with no work experience; however, for the country as a whole, just 2.6 percent of all Americans who were employed outside of the home full time year-round were in poverty in 1999. By comparison, 13.1 percent of those who worked either part-time or for only one part of year, and 19.9 percent of those

who were not employed at all earned incomes below the poverty threshold (Freeman 2002:114).

Before 1996, many women facing childcare burdens, poor health, domestic violence, substance abuse problems, low skill sets, or pervasive neighborhood poverty, could rely on government aid to remain out of the labor force while still receiving a basic subsistence income. Since PRWORA, this support has atrophied, meaning the odds of experiencing poverty now stand higher than ever for those women who cannot obtain steady employment. Thus, those who become chronically disconnected from the labor market presumably encounter lower earnings and lower overall well-being for longer periods of time.

With this in mind, this chapter asks several important questions related to the employment of poor urban women. Principally, it seeks to understand why some women become chronically disconnected from the labor market, experiencing prolonged bouts of joblessness, while others do not. In pursuit of this goal, I advance several critical issues. First, to establish a baseline, I explore the extent to which poor urban women are employed in formal-sector work. This includes assessments of current employment and changes in employment over time. Secondly, drawing on theory and prior empirical research, I assess many relevant barriers to employment for this demographic group. Next, I distinguish between those women who were chronically disconnected from the labor market between 1999 and 2001, those who worked continually, those who transitioned to employment, and those who lost employment. Finally, I assess which factors predict transitions to employment for previously jobless women and which factors predict remaining employed for those who held employment at the baseline. In doing so,

I utilize change scores for relevant predictors to assess the effect of changing circumstances on the odds of employment. Given PRWORA's push for full employment of former welfare recipients, the chronically jobless group merits special attention, as welfare reform failed these women and their families.

Prevalence of Labor Market Activity

Contrary to popular images characterizing poor urban women and welfare recipients as largely disconnected from the labor market, academic literature finds substantial labor force activity among the poor. For example, Iceland (2003:3) finds that half of poor, working-age Americans are employed at least part-time, and shows that 63 percent of poor families contain at least one worker (Blank 2001:31). Although these statistics are not disaggregated by household composition or gender, we do know that by many measures poverty has "feminized" during the past 50 years (Bianchi 1999).

Even when we consider parenthood, samples of women exhibit high levels of labor market activity. At the dawn of welfare reform, Harris (1996) found that 60 percent of formerly welfare-reliant women with children less than two years old were employed, while by 2002, Baum (2002:139) found that 75 percent of all mothers engage in employment activities before their children reach two years of age.

Other studies corroborate the conclusion that poor mothers (of young children), who public policy historically exempted from labor market activity, were pushed into the labor market during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Devine and Sams-Abiodun (2001:291), for example, found in their study of public housing residents in New Orleans that in 1996, only 24 percent of public housing households (largely female-headed) had a

member in the labor force; by 1997, this had climbed to 30 percent; and 42 percent had a member in the labor force by 1999. Although these New Orleans-specific figures are lower than national samples (in part due to the particular struggles faced by public housing residents; see Reingold et al. 2001), the general pattern is a move toward employment during the late 1990's. In their groundbreaking work on welfare mothers, Edin and Lein (1997:190) find that more than half of welfare-reliant women had engaged in employment within the past 12 months. Thus, the 1990s were a time when changing public policy compelled women who previously remained out of the labor force to seek employment, often despite numerous obstacles.

This chapter uses data from the Urban Change project to assess the extent of labor market participation among poor women. I ask how their employment patterns changed between 1999 and 2001, a relatively short span of time, yet one situated in a temporally critical period following the enactment of welfare reform mandates (see Chapter I).

In order to begin assessing labor market activity, I first must establish the extent to which sampled women work in the formal labor market. Similar to the work cited above, I find evidence of substantial labor force participation and I find that participation accelerated between 1999 and 2001; in 1999, 91 percent report having been employed at some time in the past. By 2001, 96 percent held a job at some point, meaning that more than half of the never-employed women obtained their first job between 1999 and 2001.

PRWORA, however, removed many of the safety nets that allowed poor women and mothers to remain out of the labor force. It also included mandated job searches and other employment related activities (often varying by state) for those who remained on welfare. Scott et al. (2005:375) find that 60 percent of those on Temporary Aid to Needy

Families (TANF), and not employed, moved from welfare to work between 1999 and 2001. I expand upon this estimate by taking a cross-sectional look at the extent to which sampled women worked in 1999. At that time, roughly 50 percent of participants report being currently employed while the other 50 percent were jobless.[12] By 2001, however, 63 percent report employment while 37 percent report joblessness. Thus, consistent with literature suggesting that many former welfare recipients found work in the years following PRWORA, the data indicate that by 2001, over two-thirds of sampled urban women were working for pay. Yet, we cannot assume that 13 percent of the sample simply overcame barriers and entered the labor market, joining the 50 percent who were already employed. Although policymakers pictured that in the post-welfare reform era,

> a compact, homogenous group of formerly 'dependent' welfare recipients meeting up with a precise set of rules and an efficient set of caseworkers, and hearing the message that is was time to go. They then stood up straight, smoothed over the wrinkles in their attire, and simply went out and got jobs, or otherwise found a way to take care of themselves and their children (Hays 2003:95),

this superficial caricature fails to account for the complexity of the welfare-to-work experience.

Hays points out that this contrived image diverged substantially from reality. Not only did many women encounter significant barriers to employment, but this image obscures the frequent cycling between work and bouts of unemployment that many women encounter (Butler 1996; Harris 1996). For example, the Urban Change data

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[12] I use the term "jobless" because "unemployed" refers to those persons aged 16 years and older who had no employment during the reference week, were available for work, except for temporary illness, and had made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the four-week period ending with the reference week (U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008). Persons who were waiting to be recalled to a job from which they had been laid off need not have been looking for work to be classified as unemployed. Thus, by using the employed/jobless dichotomy, I avoid any confusion over whether the respondent has recently searched for work. Given PRWORA's push for full employment among former welfare recipients and the relationship between employment and poverty, I judge whether or not the respondent works to be the centrally relevant question.

reveal that 40 percent of the sample was continuously employed, while nearly 28 percent of the sample was continually jobless. Between 1999 and 2001, nearly ten percent of the Urban Change sample became newly-jobless, while fewer than 23 percent became newly employed. Of only those employed in 1999, more than 25 percent were jobless by 2001. Similarly, of those who were jobless in 1999, 40 percent had found employment by 2001. Thus, although the general pattern indicates a shift toward employment and away from joblessness, the data reveal some cycling back and forth, and also that a majority (68 percent) experienced no change in employment status whatsoever.

These results call into question Scott and colleagues' (2004:68) conclusion, from a subsample of the Urban Change data, that despite "considerable work activity in the first year, very few managed to find stable, full-time work by the time they were interviewed for the second wave." On the contrary, the entire dataset reveals a tangible movement away from joblessness and toward employment, even in the relatively short two-years between data collection efforts. Of course, the quality of continuity, stability, and overall quality of this employed is yet to bet determined (Chapters IV and V). First, the following section assesses which barriers matter most for employment in cross-sectional fashion.

Predictors of Employment Across Both Waves

Although panel data allow for the analyses of changes through time, it is first instructive to analyze which factors predict employment across both waves of data. To do this I begin by pooling (or stacking) the data so that each individual counts as two separate observations (for example, person 1 in 1999 will be a separate observation from

person 1 in 2001), making the unit of analysis person-years. Results of this model appear in Table 10.[13] This table provides odds ratios, not logits, so there will be no negative values; any odds ratio below 1.0 indicates decreasing odds and a ratio over 1.0 indicates and increased odds.

Table 10. Pooled Logistic Regression Model Predicting Employment.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

	Model 1	Model 2
Year	1.631***	1.590***
	(0.084)	(0.159)
Tract-Level Variables		
Poverty	0.787**	1.026
	(0.092)	(0.130)
Female-Headedness	1.575***	1.182
	(0.173)	(0.152)
Females Jobless	0.848	0.865
	(0.219)	(0.241)
Moved, Last 5 Years	1.009	0.913
	(0.139)	(0.145)
Units Vacant	1.027	0.989
	(0.064)	(0.069)
HH with Car	1.539***	1.440*
	(0.214)	(0.276)
Homeownership	0.975	0.984
	(0.055)	(0.063)
Indiv.-Level Variables		
NH Disorder Index	0.924***	0.956***
	(0.014)	(0.016)
Age		0.970
		(0.041)
Age^2		1.000
		(0.001)
Black		1.045
		(0.148)

[13] Many researchers would calculate fixed effects models using stacked data. However, fixed effects models assume that a particular variable changes over time (if not, multicolinearity problems arise), but several important variables in this analysis do not change over time (nativity, AFDC during childhood, race/ethnicity, and city). Therefore, I opt for a pooled logistic regression model without fixed effects.

Table 10. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2
Hispanic		0.844
		(0.135)
Other Race/Ethnicity		1.101
		(0.292)
Foreign Born		1.193
		(0.136)
AFDC as Child		0.885*
		(0.057)
Married		0.930
		(0.105)
Cohabiting		1.156*
		(0.095)
Pregnant		0.482***
		(0.076)
Number of Children		0.932***
		(0.024)
Child Under Six		0.732***
		(0.052)
Child with Disability		0.665***
		(0.051)
Trouble Und. English		0.839
		(0.107)
H.S. Diploma or GED		1.634***
		(0.095)
Associate's Degree		1.779***
		(0.274)
Self-Rated Health		1.219***
		(0.034)
CESD Depression		0.981***
		(0.003)
Drinking		1.087**
		(0.045)
Drug Use		0.423***
		(0.086)
Suffered Violence		0.733***
		(0.085)
Household Has a Car		2.025***
		(0.219)
Network Index		0.979
		(0.060)
Trouble Find Housing		0.988
		(0.066)
Subsidized Housing		0.856**
		(0.055)
Rooms per Person		0.986
		(0.045)
Los Angeles		0.713***
		(0.078)
Miami		0.862
		(0.078)

Table 10. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2
Philadelphia		1.019
		(0.105)
Car Own *NH Car Own		0.723
		(0.149)
Constant	0.880	1.581
	(0.208)	(1.148)
Observations	6377	6353
Pseudo R-squared	0.0228	0.116

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The most noteworthy finding in Table 1 involves the Year variable (1999 or 2001, with 1999 coded as "1" and 2001 coded as "2"), which is significant and positive. This finding indicates a general shift toward employment between waves. That is, even when controlling for every other variable in the model, more women worked for pay in 2001 than in 1999. Such a finding indicates that, consistent with policymaker ideals, women found ways to overcome barriers and find employment (although the quality and stability of this employment will be assessed later). Significant neighborhood characteristics include the poverty rate, which lowers the odds of employment. This finding provides evidence that would lead us to reject Hypothesis C3, which posited that the poverty rate would not be significant in the presence of other neighborhood conditions, a hypothesis that followed Jencks and Mayer's (1990) complaint that neighborhood effects studies too often utilize the neighborhood poverty rate as an atheoretical predictor of various outcomes, even though those outcomes would be better explained by other neighborhood conditions. Additionally, neighborhood car ownership increases the odds of employment; having neighbors who own vehicles appears to provide commuting options and aid in the acquisition of employment. Similarly, the proportion of female-headed

households is significant and *positive*, suggesting that across both waves of data, women living in neighborhoods with high rates of single-parent families actually did better in terms of employment. This may relate to the development of strong support networks of single mothers that can develop and provide necessary services (childcare, transportation assistance, etc.) for one another (see Stack 1974; Edin and Kefalas 2005). As hooks (2000:40) recalls "women in our [poor] community understood [the material strains of raising a family] and had the best networks for figuring out ways to give and share with others without causing embarrassment or shame." Additionally, interviewer-observed disorder is significant and negative, indicating that living in highly disordered neighborhoods is related to a lower odds of employment. This finding is consistent with other work on the isolating effect of neighborhood disorder (Haney 2007; Sampson and Raudenbush 2004).

Childcare and family responsibilities are highly significant—the number of coresident children, having a child under six, having a child with a disability all lower the odds of employment. Owning a personal vehicle *doubles* the odds of employment, once again suggesting that possessing more commuting options helps women obtain employment. To test whether individual car ownership depends upon neighborhood car ownership I include an interaction effect variable (the logic being that owning a car matters more if one lives in a low-ownership neighborhood, and living in a high-ownership neighborhood matters more if one does not own a car). This coefficient is insignificant, indicating that both neighborhood ownership and individual ownership matter independently; living in a high ownership neighborhood is good for employment, and owning a car oneself is even better. Lastly, results indicate that better self-reported

health (as well as less depression, drug use, drinking, and experiences of violence) boost odds of employment.

Cross-Sectional Predictors of Employment

Many traditional "welfare leaver" studies provide cross-sectional estimates of employment. As a point of entry, I replicate these studies by providing cross-sectional estimates of employment at both waves (by unpooling the data, making the unit of analysis women or persons, not person-years). The following section seeks to establish a preliminary understanding of which barriers are predictive of joblessness for the poor urban women. To address this question, I utilize a logistic regression model predicting whether or not the sampled woman was employed or jobless in 1999 and in 2001. Borrowing from Finkel's (1995) work on analysis of panel data, this model may best be characterized as the following,

$$Y_{t-1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{t-1} + \varepsilon_{t-1}$$

where Y_{t-1} is the dichotomous dependent variable at Wave 1 (where t represents 2001 and t-1 is 1999), β_0 is the intercept, β_1 is the effect of independent variable X, and ε is the error term. This model, occupying the first two columns of Table 10, uses data entirely from Wave 1, and thus does not differ from typical cross-sectional research designs. Because this research is primarily concerned with the effect of neighborhood conditions on employment outcomes, I begin with a baseline model that regresses employment on neighborhood conditions alone. Table 11 asks: are those living in disadvantaged

neighborhoods less likely to be employed at either wave of data collection than those in more advantaged neighborhoods?

Table 11. Cross-Sectional Logistic Regression Models Predicting Employment in 1999 and 2001.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Tract-Level Variables	1999: Model 1	1999: Model 2	2001: Model 1	2001: Model 2
Poverty	0.827	1.137	0.741*	0.977
	(0.139)	(0.211)	(0.122)	(0.176)
Female-Headedness	1.343*	1.045	1.844***	1.302
	(0.208)	(0.195)	(0.288)	(0.241)
Females Jobless	0.815	0.645	0.896	1.075
	(0.299)	(0.259)	(0.324)	(0.423)
Moved, Last 5 Years	1.120	0.892	0.916	0.923
	(0.217)	(0.204)	(0.181)	(0.211)
Units Vacant	1.019	0.996	1.038	0.988
	(0.088)	(0.097)	(0.092)	(0.098)
HH with Car	1.517**	1.299	1.575**	1.377
	(0.298)	(0.347)	(0.313)	(0.348)
Homeownership	0.914	0.929	1.037	1.038
	(0.072)	(0.085)	(0.082)	(0.093)
Individual-Level Variables				
Disorder (Int- Observed)	0.926***	0.955**	0.924***	0.970
	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.024)
Age		0.985		0.968
		(0.057)		(0.060)
Age^2		1.000		1.000
		(0.001)		(0.001)
Black		0.841		1.247
		(0.168)		(0.252)
Hispanic		0.743		0.899
		(0.168)		(0.206)
Other Race/Ethnicity		1.143		0.970
		(0.417)		(0.380)
Foreign Born		1.051		1.444**
		(0.167)		(0.258)
AFDC as Child		1.004		0.806**
		(0.089)		(0.076)
Married		0.892		0.980
		(0.145)		(0.160)
Cohabiting		1.274**		1.011
		(0.136)		(0.129)
Pregnant		0.492***		0.500***
		(0.103)		(0.123)

Table 11. (continued).

	1999: Model 1	1999: Model 2	2001: Model 1	2001: Model 2
Num of Co-resident Children		0.903***		0.943
		(0.033)		(0.036)
Children Under Six		0.753***		0.735***
		(0.073)		(0.078)
Child with Disability		0.640***		0.691***
		(0.066)		(0.079)
Trb. Understanding English		0.982		0.818
		(0.175)		(0.166)
H.S. Diploma or GED		1.611***		1.971***
		(0.132)		(0.169)
Associate's Degree		1.663**		3.263***
		(0.340)		(0.929)
Health		1.187***		1.252***
		(0.045)		(0.053)
CESD Depression Scale		0.985***		0.978***
		(0.004)		(0.004)
Drinking		1.091		1.069
		(0.065)		(0.061)
Drug Use		0.362***		0.470***
		(0.120)		(0.124)
Suffered Violence		0.747*		0.687**
		(0.118)		(0.117)
Household Owns a Car		2.511***		2.107***
		(0.219)		(0.185)
Network Index		1.062		0.906
		(0.094)		(0.079)
Trb. Finding Housing		0.977		1.009
		(0.090)		(0.099)
Subsidized Housing		0.926		0.772***
		(0.085)		(0.071)
Num. Rooms per Person		0.937		1.010
		(0.063)		(0.063)
Los Angeles		0.744*		0.640***
		(0.116)		(0.099)
Miami		1.030		0.671***
		(0.131)		(0.088)
Philadelphia		1.100		0.891
		(0.163)		(0.129)
Constant	1.289	1.590	2.606***	4.221
	(0.400)	(1.717)	(0.839)	(5.000)
Observations	3177	3177	3200	3200
Pseudo R-squared	0.00927	0.0987	0.0133	0.127

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Results of the neighborhood-only model appear in the first and third columns of Table 11. Results indicate strong significance of neighborhood disorder (as observed by the interviewers) in 1999. Those in more disordered neighborhoods are less likely to be employed, net of other neighborhood characteristics. Other neighborhood conditions prove unimportant, including the poverty rate (marginally significant in the 2001 neighborhood-only model), female joblessness rate, mobility, vacancy and homeownership. Car ownership, on the other hand, proves important. Women in neighborhoods with higher car ownership rates are more likely to be employed in both 1999 and 2001, all else equal. Importantly, female headedness is *positively* related to employment in 2001; those living in neighborhoods with a higher proportion of female-headed households (with no male partner present) were more likely to be employed. Taken together, results in Table 11 indicate that neighborhood conditions are related cross-sectionally to employment, although many of the neighborhood conditions suggested by the literature (see Hannon 2005; McNulty 2001; Boardman and Robert 2000) fail to reach statistical significance.

How do these spatial relationships change once individual controls are added? Columns 2 and 4 add relevant individual variables, including all of the commonly discussed barriers to employment (see Chapter I). The second column models employment in 1999 and the fourth models employment in 2001.

Many control variables prove insignificant: race/ethnicity, age, and age-squared. These findings call into question previous research arguing that black women are less inclined than other women to hold employment (Murray 1984) and supports the argument that such rhetoric has been utilized primarily to defame black mothers and an excuse to

cut social programs (Quadagno 1996). On the other hand, nativity does prove significant, and positive, but only in 2001. By this time, foreign-born women were *more* likely to hold employment than native-born women. Moreover, women whose families received welfare transfers before they turned 18 were no more or less likely to be employed than those who did not receive welfare as a child in 1999. However, by 2001, having received AFDC during childhood decreases the odds of employment by about 20 percent (e^b=.806), supporting other research that indicates the need to control for the socioeconomic status of the family in which a woman grows up (Inhoe and Plotnick 2003). Why did background socioeconomic status emerge as an important predictor between waves? One possible explanation is the entry of the economy into a recession during 2001, which limited job opportunities and may have made some barriers more salient than in the past. About this same time, many of the welfare reform mandates (time limits, sanctioning policies) had taken full effect, tightening the labor market for women (Leete and Bania 1999). Although coming sections will highlight employment as a function of immediate situations, the significance of this variable indicates that past disadvantage matters for present employment outcomes, as well.

This model lends strong support to the presence of childcare barriers to employment, but suggests that this barrier is alleviated somewhat by cohabitation. Although marriage fails to be significant, cohabitation a partner is significant at the .05 level. Thus, women who have a cohabiting partner are more likely to be employed, net of the other factors. This implies that partners may absorb some childcare and household tasks, freeing women up to work for pay. By 2001, the effect had faded and women with cohabiting partners were no more or less likely to hold employment than those without

partners, all else equal. This finding can be explained by the push of many single women into the labor force by welfare reform, evening up the odds of employment for cohabiting and non-cohabiting women. Pregnant women, mothers with more children living at home, at least one child under six, and children with a disability were less likely to be employed. The strongest negative effects were having a child under six (e^b=.735), caring for a disabled child (e^b=.639) and being currently pregnant (e^b=.491), each of which cuts the odds of employment by between one-third and one-half. All of these effects persisted in 2001, however, the effect of having a greater number of children both disappeared between waves, suggesting that women who previously remained out of the labor force in order to care for children found work during the interim two years. This is likely the result of the decreased availability of TANF funds and other social safety net programs following PRWORA's passage.

Education proved highly significant, as women with a high school diploma or GED were 1.6 times more likely to be employed than those without, and those with an Associate's Degree 1.7 times more likely than those without a high school degree in 1999. These consistent odds ratios suggest that earning an Associates Degree increases the odds of employment only slightly more than having only a high school diploma, as both variables refer to the excluded category "no degree." Therefore, earning an Associate's Degree might not be worth the required investments of time and money. These effects strengthened by 2001, at which point having an Associate's Degree more than tripled the odds of employment. Another measure of human capital, lack of English language proficiency, proves insignificant. When considered with the nativity finding, we can

conclude that foreign-born women with poor English proficiency are more likely to hold employment than demographically similar native-born, English-speaking women.

Transportation, however, proved to be one of the strongest predictors of employment. Women whose households owned a car were 2.5 times more likely to be employed than those whose households did not own a vehicle in 1999 and 2.1 times more likely in 2001, suggesting that access to private transportation may indeed be one of the most formidable barriers to employment (see Ong 2002; Sawicki and Moody 2000). This transportation barrier does ease slightly between 1999 and 2001, but even at the second wave of data collection, women whose household owned a private vehicle were over twice as likely to hold employment as those who did not own a car.

Physical and mental health also proved important for understanding current employment. Women with better self-reported health were more likely to be employed while women with higher CESD depression scores were less likely to be employed. Seccombe and Hoffman (2007) point to health problems as one of the factors (if not the factor) that most limits disadvantaged women's employability. Additionally, the model reveals that experiencing domestic violence in the past year cuts the odds of employment. Drug abuse proves to be highly significant as well; women who used a hard drug in the past month were less likely to be employed than those who did not in both waves. But, alcohol use is not related to current employment.

Lastly, housing characteristics prove insignificant in 1999. Women who report trouble finding housing are no more or less likely to be employed than women with no housing difficulty, as are women who utilize subsidized housing (which one may have guessed would ease the transition to employment). In fact, far from easing the transition

to employment, living in subsidized housing emerged by the second wave as a negative predictor of employment. This finding could relate to HUD's demolition of many public housing units (Popkin et al. 2004; Elliott et al. 2004; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1999; 2000), meaning that those who continue to live in such units represent a poorer and poorer group of women. This possibility is confirmed by the descriptive statistics in Chapter II, which found that use of subsidized housing declined between waves; those who remained in subsidized housing represented a more disadvantaged group and probably faced a number of other (uncontrolled) disadvantages as well. Additionally, subsidized housing cuts one's living expenses, easing the pressure to find a job. This is the more plausible explanation, since this variable also includes those who receive Section 8 vouchers (which allows recipients to find private-market apartments at a reduced rate). Were voucher recipients increasingly likely to find themselves renting in poor neighborhoods with few opportunities? It may also reflect Reingold et al.'s (2002) finding that living in public housing actually harms the employment outcomes of residents (i.e., a direct effect of public housing, not a selection effect). The crowdedness of their housing conditions was not significant. There also prove to be no differences in the likelihood of being employed across the four cities in 1999, but by 2001, women in Los Angeles and Miami were less likely than women in Cleveland (the reference category) to be employed ($p \leq .01$ in both cases). Thus, both living in subsidized housing and the local context emerged as important predictors of work sometime between 1999 and 2001.

Given past research into the effects of residential location on employment (Bania et al. 2008; Allard et al. 2003), we might expect some significant effect of neighborhood

conditions, even controlling for a wide range of individual barriers to employment. Interestingly, none of the tract-level variables prove significant (poverty rate, percent female-headed households, female unemployment rate, mobility, vacancy rate, car ownership, and homeownership). Thus, we may conclude that, at least cross-sectionally, the neighborhood context of urban women matters far less for employment than individual barriers to employment, particularly educational attainment, access to a private vehicle, health, and childcare responsibilities.

But, the interviewer-observed neighborhood disorder scale is marginally significant at the .05 level in 1999; a higher disorder score slightly decreases the odds of current employment, net of other variables. Although this finding disappears between waves, it does provide some support for Haney (2007), who finds objective tract-level characteristics far less important than neighborhood disorder in explaining health, self-esteem, and civic engagement. The literature in this area suggests that disordered neighborhoods isolate residents from one another, chase away employers interested in relocating to the area (Klinenberg 2002; Sampson et al. 2002; Sampson and Raudenbush 1999) and prevent residents from obtaining employment, both decreasing potential network contacts that could purvey information about opportunities while also decreasing the number of opportunities that exist. Still, given recent attention paid to neighborhoods as crucial shapers of life chances (see Wilson 1987; 1996), the tract-level findings bring into question whether neighborhood conditions matter for this particular subset of women, given a complete set of individual factors.

Cross-sectionally, childcare and family responsibilities, health, transportation, substance use, and education prove to be important predictors of current employment

whereas race/ethnicity, age, English fluency, housing instability, and networks do not. Importantly, we see a number of noteworthy changes during the two-year interim. Cohabitation ceased to be a significant predictor of employment, as did the number of children living in a woman's home and the disorder index. Meanwhile, living in subsidized housing, suffering violence, nativity, receiving AFDC during childhood, and the city of residence all emerged as important predictors between waves, although in some cases this reflected a change from a $p \leq .10$ level of significance to $p \leq .05$. The overall fit of the model is acceptable, but the pseudo R-squared value of .099 in 1999 suggests that the model explains only a modest proportion of variance (about 10 percent). By 2001, the R-squared improves to .13, but given the large number of independent variables, we still know surprisingly little about the factors responsible for explaining employment for disadvantaged women.

Labor Market Disconnection

Research on the employment of poor urban women in general and specifically on former welfare recipients often analyzes the factors predictive of current employment in a cross-sectional fashion. However, scholars have begun to frame work as a process rather than as simply as a static employed-versus-jobless dichotomy. This process involves finding a job despite barriers, maintaining it, and eventually moving on in hope of achieving sufficient wages, benefits, and working conditions (Siegel and Abbott 2007:401). The remainder of this chapter begins to unpack and explore this process. Because the available data allow for analysis of four possible employment transitions (employed at both waves, jobless at both waves, gained employment, and lost

employment), this section refocuses attention on these transitions. In doing so, I often refer to the term "disconnected." Turner et al. (2006) define a disconnected woman as one who neither worked or received welfare in the prior month and did not live with a working spouse or partner. Recent research reveals that "disconnected" women now make up 20 to 25 percent of al low-income single mothers, and as many as 18 percent are disconnected from both work and welfare. Fully half of these disconnected women have no other adult in the household to provide additional income (Blank 2007:186), suggesting this group is at heightened risk for material hardship. Although this definition is widely used, this chapter is concerned primarily with disconnection *from the labor force*, not from welfare. Thus, I redefine disconnection as any woman who was not employed at either wave of data collection. This section addresses such concerns by assessing which factors provide the strongest and most consistent barriers to stable employment over time.

First, using all women who were surveyed at both waves, I divide the sample into four groups: those who were employed at both waves, those who found employment between waves, those who lost employment between waves, and those who remained jobless between waves. The first group, those employed at both waves, either found work between welfare reform and the baseline sample or were continually employed and thus relatively unaffected by policy reform (to borrow from Wilson [1996:53], this group contains those who were employed against all odds). The second group, the "newly employed," or those who found employment between waves, may be viewed as the group for whom welfare reform "worked" (although the quality of employment may very well be low, something to be addressed in the following chapter). The third group, the "newly

jobless" are those who lost employment between waves and may best be characterized as a group for whom welfare reform failed; far from getting a foothold in the labor market, the post-welfare reform era actually brought job loss to this group. The fourth group, those jobless at both waves, is of particular interest. I call this group the "disconnected." The above, of course, are ideal-type categories. There exists a substantial degree of cycling between welfare and work (Butler 1996; Harris 1996), and also between jobs. But, those who are disconnected for the longest period of time will have the higher odds of being jobless at both waves of data collection. Table 12 provides a typology of employment outcomes, including frequency distributions.

Table 12. Typology of Employment Outcomes and Corresponding Percentages.

Employed-- 1999	Employed-- 2001: Yes	Employed-- 2001: No
Yes	Continually Employed (40.25%)	Newly Jobless (9.67%)
No	Newly Employed (22.45%)	Chronically Disconnected (27.63%)

Overall, 40 percent of the sample was employed continuously, while 28 percent of the sample was jobless in both 1999 and 2001. More than twice the number of women gained employment than lost employment between waves.[14]

Next, I ask which characteristics are predictive of membership in these categories. Because the dependent variable involves data from both waves, I will utilize predictors from only Wave 1. Including Wave 2 predictors would be illogical as it is causally reversed; the dependent variable is derived in part from Wave 1 data. Thus, this model views employment changes as dependent on pre-existing barriers.[15] I utilize a multinomial logistic regression model (Table 13), which predicts membership in each of a number of categories. In this case, one category of the dependent variable must be excluded as a reference category. Since it is the largest group, I exclude the group employed at both waves. Thus, all coefficients should be interpreted relative to being continually employed.

Table 13. Multinomial Regression Predicting 1999-2001 Work Transition.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Tract-Level Variables	Disconnected	Newly Jobless	Newly Employed
Poverty	0.723	0.734	0.929
	(0.176)	(0.212)	(0.213)
Female-Headedness	1.057	1.054	0.880
	(0.252)	(0.326)	(0.203)
Females Jobless	1.876	1.415	1.488
	(0.990)	(0.879)	(0.744)
Moved, Last 5 Years	1.297	1.397	1.118
	(0.373)	(0.570)	(0.320)

[14] This table includes 3247 of the 3260 cases. The 13 omitted cases have a missing value for employment at either Wave 1 or Wave 2.

[15] By contrast, Table 14 will model contemporaneous change by calculating change scores for independent variables.

Table 13. (continued).

	Disconnected	Newly Jobless	Newly Employed
Units Vacant	0.904	0.940	1.089
	(0.110)	(0.161)	(0.136)
HH with Car	0.428**	0.417**	0.907
	(0.144)	(0.181)	(0.315)
Homeownership	1.048	0.903	1.050
	(0.118)	(0.143)	(0.124)
Indiv.-Level Variables			
Disorder (Int- Observed)	1.046	1.003	1.051*
	(0.030)	(0.039)	(0.031)
Age	1.060	1.032	1.011
	(0.077)	(0.099)	(0.075)
Age^2	1.000	0.999	1.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Black	0.936	0.633	1.228
	(0.234)	(0.180)	(0.315)
Hispanic	1.265	0.588	1.108
	(0.353)	(0.207)	(0.325)
Other Race/Ethnicity	0.916	1.056	0.859
	(0.440)	(0.581)	(0.423)
Foreign Born	0.741	1.042	1.268
	(0.145)	(0.293)	(0.261)
AFDC as Child	1.205*	1.245	0.900
	(0.134)	(0.188)	(0.102)
Married	1.063	0.718	1.011
	(0.226)	(0.187)	(0.209)
Cohabiting	0.825	1.763***	0.989
	(0.115)	(0.292)	(0.133)
Pregnant	2.403***	1.113	1.807**
	(0.628)	(0.428)	(0.475)
Num. of Co-resident Children	1.159***	1.016	1.059
	(0.053)	(0.067)	(0.049)
Children Under Six	1.227*	0.998	1.448***
	(0.150)	(0.169)	(0.184)
Child with Disability	1.943***	1.597***	1.572***
	(0.251)	(0.279)	(0.211)
Trb. Understanding English	1.280	1.412	0.844
	(0.281)	(0.441)	(0.207)
H.S. Diploma or GED	0.466***	0.610***	0.677***
	(0.047)	(0.086)	(0.071)
Associate's Degree	0.413***	0.561	0.683
	(0.119)	(0.217)	(0.181)
Health	0.724***	0.837***	0.920*
	(0.036)	(0.055)	(0.044)
CESD Depression Scale	1.024***	1.010	1.009*
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Drinking	0.945	1.135	0.961
	(0.072)	(0.107)	(0.075)

Table 13. (continued).

	Disconnected	Newly Jobless	Newly Employed
Drug Use	2.916**	1.323	3.110***
	(1.220)	(0.777)	(1.278)
Suffered Violence	1.323	0.947	1.334
	(0.261)	(0.256)	(0.268)
Household Owns a Car	0.354***	0.735**	0.391***
	(0.040)	(0.109)	(0.043)
Network Index	0.890	1.215	1.093
	(0.100)	(0.165)	(0.121)
Trb. Finding Housing	1.177	1.421**	1.052
	(0.136)	(0.211)	(0.125)
Subsidized Housing	1.118	1.523***	1.258**
	(0.128)	(0.236)	(0.147)
Num. Rooms per Person	1.090	0.954	1.020
	(0.086)	(0.130)	(0.091)
Los Angeles	2.013***	1.318	1.017
	(0.404)	(0.340)	(0.200)
Miami	1.210	1.001	0.785
	(0.198)	(0.210)	(0.124)
Philadelphia	0.882	0.678	0.788
	(0.167)	(0.167)	(0.147)
Constant	0.128	0.173	0.620
	(0.177)	(0.309)	(0.853)
Observations		3175	
Pseudo R-squared		0.0871	

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Results of the multinomial logistic regression model, which appear in Table 13, reveal several key findings. I analyze the three potential outcomes together, focusing instead on assessing each of the potential barriers to employment. Interestingly, none of the demographic and background characteristics (age, race/ethnicity, nativity, receiving AFDC as a child) were significantly related to labor market disconnection. The race finding likely relates to the uniqueness of the Urban Change sample; women were selected from neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. Therefore, sampled white women were living (at the baseline in 1995) in neighborhoods of concentrated white poverty, a

relative rarity. Thus, they represent a particularly disadvantaged group of white women. This key difference probably explains the lack of significant racial differences.

In this model childcare once again proves quite important. Women who were pregnant in 1999 were 2.4 times as likely to be chronically disconnected during the ensuing two years as those who were not pregnant in 1999. Presumably, providing care for a newborn child explains this disconnection. Likewise, each additional child in the home increases the odds of disconnection, and having at least one child with a disability doubles the odds of disconnection (e^b=1.94). Furthermore, women who cohabited in 1999 were significantly more likely to be newly jobless than continually employed. We might infer that women used the additional income provided by a cohabiting partner to leave the labor force, perhaps to care for children. We might also conclude that women without a cohabiting partner face an exacerbated need for employment income, prompting them to retain jobs they otherwise would leave. Importantly, the age of children increases the odds of being newly employed. Here we might infer that welfare reform forced women with young children, who in the past may have eschewed paid employment in favor of full-time childcare, to find jobs. Recall that this "newly employed" group represents the policymaker's ideal. Policymakers envisioned that a homogenous group of welfare "dependent" women would reevaluate their incentives following welfare reform and would rationally decide to seek employment (see Hays 2003:93). Thus, this research suggests that women with young children were indeed finding new employment opportunities between 1999 and 2001.

Tests of human capital as a barrier to employment lend mixed results. Education is one of the strongest predictors of labor force disconnection. Women with a high

school diploma or GED (but no education beyond high school) are roughly half as likely to be chronically disconnected as women who lack a high school degree. Similarly, women who have an Associate's Degree are only about 40 percent as likely to be chronically disconnected as those with no high school degree, relative to continual employment. Education does indeed provide safety from joblessness. On the other hand, English proficiency proves unimportant. Whether or not a woman reports that she is able to understand English "good" or "well" (as opposed to "fair" or "poor"), she is equally likely to be disconnected from the labor market.

Transportation proves, however, to be a strong predictor of labor market disconnection. Women whose households possessed a car in 1999 were about one-third as likely as women who did not have a car to be chronically disconnected. Although upcoming sections will explore this issue further, these results support the work of Ong (2002) and Blumenberg and Ong (2002), who point to transportation as the main factor preventing former welfare recipients from obtaining and maintaining employment.

Health also proves important, as women with better self-reported health are also less likely to be chronically disconnected than those with lower self-reported health. Mental health also predicts disconnection, whereby one additional point on the 60-point CESD depression scale increases the odds of disconnection by a factor of 1.02. Thus, a twenty-point increase in the depression scale is related to a 20 percent increase in the odds of labor market disconnection, controlling for all other variables in the model.[16]

[16] Joblessness, of course, may also be predictive of depression. Lingering labor market difficulties may actually explain higher depression. But, even with longitudinal data, the reciprocal nature of the social world makes disambiguation rather tricky. Here the causal arrow may well run in both directions.

Substance abuse proves marginally significant; having used a hard drug in the past month in 1999 nearly triples the odds of labor market disconnection during the following two years, yet the number of times sampled women became drunk in the past month bears no relationship with labor market disconnection. Similarly, experiences of violence or abuse are unrelated to labor market disconnection. Thus, it appears to be a combination of physical health, mental health, and drug use that most restricts women's work activity, but not alcohol use or experiencing violence.

Previous research identifies social networks as critical for job attainment (Granovetter 1983). Lein and Shexnayder's (2007) female, welfare-reliant interviewees contended that jobs were often reserved for those who "had connections" or knew someone at a business or corporation who could "pull strings" to get them hired. In a similar vein, Newman's (1999) ethnographic fieldwork at a Harlem fast food establishment uncovered that "job seeker's greatest asset is the chain of friends and acquaintances who are already working somewhere. Everyone in the labor force is aware that these connections are the difference between having a chance and wasting their time" (Newman 1999:77). Yet debate exists about the efficacy of such networks in procuring opportunities for residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods (see Elliott 1999a), owing to the principle of homophily, whereby the networks of disadvantaged individuals are saturated with others who possess similarly little information about job prospects (McPherson et al. 2001). Do social networks help procure jobs for disadvantaged workers? This analysis lends no support to the qualitative findings reported by Newman (1999; 2006) that networks were crucial for disadvantaged individuals seeking work. The insignificant network index coefficients suggest that having more network ties does

not necessarily help disadvantaged women locate jobs. However recall from Chapter II that the indicators comprising this variable have a very low Cronbach's alpha and correlation coefficients, meaning that they may not actually reflect the same underlying concept. Thus, the insignificant finding could relate to the quality of the indicators.

Housing difficulties prove somewhat important in predicting labor market disconnection. Women who report having trouble finding housing during the preceding year are no more likely more likely to be disconnected from the labor market than those reporting housing stability, but are indeed more likely to report becoming newly jobless (i.e., losing their job sometime between waves). The number of rooms per resident in a woman's current residence is insignificant, suggesting that the key barrier involves obtaining housing, rather than obtaining quality or spacious housing. Interestingly, although those who live in subsidized housing (either public housing or Section 8) are no more or less likely to be disconnected from the labor market over both waves, they are in fact, more likely to fall in the newly jobless category than those with non-subsidized housing arrangements. The odds ratio indicates that those in subsidized housing are 1.53 times more likely to be newly jobless (employed in 1999, but jobless in 2001) than others, all else equal. These results suggest that housing stability is important for easing the transition to employment, so long as this stability does not mean utilizing subsidized housing. This finding may have several explanations. First, those who live in subsidized housing may face a greater spatial mismatch than those who utilize the private housing market. Also, those who live in subsidized housing may differ in other unmeasured ways from those who do not. We know, for example, that because low-income housing projects use poverty as a criterion for entry, they build concentrated poverty structurally

into any neighborhood that contains them (Massey and Kanaiaupuni 1993:110). Thus, those who utilize public housing (and, since the HOPE VI initiative, those who utilize Section 8 vouchers) represent a particularly disadvantaged demographic group and that the complexity of this disadvantage is not fully captured by the variables in the model. Lastly, city of residence is largely unrelated to work continuity, suggesting that women in all three cities faced similar opportunities and constraints once all individual factors are controlled, a finding that contrasts with cross-sectional findings in Table 11. The one exception is that women in Philadelphia are less likely than women in Cleveland to become newly jobless between waves.

Importantly, previous research has identified the neighborhood context as an important predictor of employment outcomes (Kain 2004; Fernandez and Su 2004; Allard et al. 2003). Yet Bania et al. (2008) finds that the characteristics of residents and presence or absence of neighborhood employment opportunities is unrelated to actual employment outcomes. Rather, differences are due to individual circumstances. Such a finding challenges Wilson's (1996) notion that residents of poor neighborhoods are "doubly disadvantaged," both by their own poverty but also by the poverty of their neighbors. Consistent with Bania and colleagues (2008), I find only minimal evidence of a neighborhood effect with regard to employment over time. First, contrary to Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) and Haney (2007), observed neighborhood disorder fails to predict employment outcomes; whether the survey administrator noted groups of teenagers, garbage, or vacant lots does not help us understand employment continuity. This finding suggests that disorder has an immediate impact on employment (evidenced by Tables 10 and 11), but no influence on subsequent employment transitions. What

matters, it seems, are current neighborhood conditions, not one's past neighborhood conditions. Furthermore, the objective neighborhood conditions, taken from U.S. Census data, yield little additional information. Living in a neighborhood with a higher car ownership rate is associated with a lower odds of being disconnected (jobless at both waves) or newly jobless. This finding suggests that living around others who own vehicles helps women to find and retain employment. However, other neighborhood characteristics prove unimportant.

Overall, the multinomial logistic regression model reveals some interesting patterns. Education, access to transportation, fewer family care responsibilities, and better health lower the odds of being chronically disconnected from the labor market. Having access to a vehicle decreases the odds of being newly employed, newly jobless, and chronically disconnected and increases the odds of continual employment. Interestingly, contrary to Wettersten et al. (2004), experiencing violence is not predictive of less employment and substance abuse matters sporadically and inconsistently. Though previous research has found that violent experiences (particularly intimate-partner violence) can result in the destruction of homework assignments, keep women up all night prior to interviews, destroy clothing or even result in harassment on the job (Raphael 1995; 1996), such experiences are much less important than other barriers to employment. This finding is consistent with Raphael (2000), who finds that in many cases, women are able to overcome the work obstacles created by their abusers. In reality, current research indicates that the relationship between violence and work is a complex one, whereby "some battered women struggle to work, others work but cannot sustain employment over time, and still others do not or cannot obtain jobs at all" (Tolman and

Raphael 2000:668) and this research can only begin to unpack this very complex relationship. Although, drug use is predictive of chronic disconnection.

Most notably, race/ethnicity, age, nativity, and English language proficiency have been nearly missing from this discussion. None of these variables prove significant for understanding the employment transitions of poor urban women. This suggests the salience of situational rather than ascriptively assigned barriers. Perhaps most germane to recent discussions in urban sociology are the results related to neighborhood characteristics. The model reveals sparse, weak, and inconsistent results in this area. Following others who question the robustness of neighborhood effects findings above and beyond individual characteristics, the model finds no significant effect of residing in a poor, residentially unstable, high-unemployment, largely female-headed, disordered neighborhood. But, apart from those factors, residing in a neighborhood with more car ownership does aid women seeking employment.

Results of the likelihood ratio test reveal that the variables in the model do improve the model's predictive ability beyond the intercept-only model. The pseudo R-squared of the model is a relatively low .087. In other words, the independent variables in the model explain a modest nine percent of the variation in the dependent variable. Roughly 90 percent of the variation originates from variables not taken into account. We should interpret the R-squared in logistic regression with some degree of caution, as it does not perfectly match the R-squared statistic in ordinary least squares regression (Menard 1995:23). Even with this consideration in mind, we may safely assume that this model, which includes nearly all of the commonly utilized barriers to employment for poor women, still lacks many important explanatory factors. Rather than revealing

weakness of this particular model, however, I would suggest that this low value points to the complexity of the problem at hand; poor women's employment depends on a number of factors, many relating to the context of the local labor market and employer demand (something not tapped at all by this analysis) and others relating to personal barriers. Thus, I interpret this statistic as a reminder that analyzing individual (supply-side) barriers to employment only tells part of the story.

At the same time, the low R-squared may point to causal problems associated with the panel design and modeling strategies. For instance, do certain barriers change contemporaneously with employment status between waves of data collection? Table 13 assumes that the barriers a woman faces in 1999 affect her odds of employment two years later. What if the key mechanism is instead *changes* in various barriers between waves? Perhaps it is not health status, per say, that affects transitions into and out of employment, but rather *changes* in health status.

Employment Transitions and Contemporaneous Change

Up to this point, all independent variables utilized in the analysis have been static. Although Table 13 models change in the dependent variable, we also know that various barriers do indeed change over time; childcare responsibilities ease, health problems crop up, and family cars break down or must be discarded. Owing to the fact that too few panel studies take a sophisticated approach to modeling change (Halaby 2004), I utilize change-scores for relevant independent variables. This model hypothesizes that it is not the barriers at Wave 1, *per se*, that influence employment two years later. Rather, it is the changes in barriers (decreasing childcare responsibilities, improving health) that matter. I

borrow this theoretical approach from Myrdal (1944:1067), who theorized that inequality is dynamic. Thus "what we shall have to study," Myrdal explained, "*are processes of systems actually rolling* in one direction or the other" (original emphasis). Methodologically, I borrow my approach from London and Scott (2005), who use change-scores to predict transitions to food security among the food-insecure. For ascriptive and generally static characteristics, I utilize predictors from Wave 1 (1999). Owing to these considerations, I regress employment at Wave 2 on change scores for the independent variables. For ordinal, ratio and interval-level variables, the change scores are the difference between the variable's value at Waves 1 and 2 (W2-W1). These variables are denoted with Δ, the standard symbol denoting change. For dichotomous variables (Yes or No), I include three variables denoting the change. This includes, for example, gaining access to a car, losing access to a car, and having continuous access to a car. Logically, then, the omitted reference category is never having access to a car. For simplicity, the omitted reference category for each set of variables is never having the particular experience or characteristic. Furthermore, I highlight sets of variables together, to ease interpretation.

Here I shift away from multinomial logistic regression for practical purposes. Multinomial regression requires the exclusion of a reference category of the dependent variable, and the following sets of three independent variables each will have an excluded reference category. Although technically appropriate, interpretation of coefficients must then occur relative to two different excluded groups, confusing interpretation. Although the following model does not completely ameliorate these concerns, elimination of categories of the dependent variable does make interpretation much more intuitive.

Table 14 utilizes a static score model or a dynamic panel model, one employing a lagged endogenous variable, employment at Wave 1, as a predictor of employment at Wave 2. The Wave 2 dependent variable (Y_t) is predicted not only by a range of Wave 1 independent variables, but by an earlier value of Y, here denoted as Y_{t-1}. Such a strategy is appropriate when the dependent variable may theoretically be dependent, at least in part, upon its earlier values. I borrow from human capital theory and argue that being employed in 2001 is due, at least in part, to employment two years earlier (Heckman and Krueger 2005; Andersson et al. 2005); employers look more favorably upon those with more work experience. If employment happened without reference to prior employment, the inclusion of employment at Wave 1 would be inappropriate. Not only does this model better predict values of Y, but it maintains other distinct advantages. Omitting earlier values of the dependent variable fails to take into account the likely negative correlation between initial high scores on a variable and subsequent change ("regression to the mean"). Including the lagged dependent variable controls for this phenomenon. The inclusion of a lagged endogenous variable also helps control for the effects of unmeasured variables (Menard 2002:19). Furthermore, Markus (1979) notes that using a change score as the dependent variable (Y_1-Y_2) is the same as using a lagged endogenous variable; research using these approaches typically reaches the same conclusions (cited by Menard 2002:57). This model may be characterized as,

$$Y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_t + Y_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$$

Similar to the multinomial model above, the following table does indeed model change and can be interpreted as reflecting change in the dependent variable. This can be shown algebraically, through the manipulation of the above equation as,

$$Y_t - Y_{t-1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_t + \varepsilon_t$$

After Y_{t-1} is subtracted from both sides of the equation, $\beta_1 X_t$ (any of the normally included independent variables) is actually predicting change in Y from Wave 1 to Wave 2. Or, alternatively we can interpret $\beta_1 X_t$ as the effect of an independent variable (race, health, etc) on employment in 2001, controlling for employment two years earlier. And, as Beck and Katz (2008:18) point out, analysts must not interpret the coefficient of the lagged variable, *per se*; "Those who estimate LDV [lagged dependent variable] models must remember not to interpret the [lagged] coefficient.... that is, not to conclude that a unit change in last year's *y* causes (whatever that means) a *x* unit change in current *y*." Even so, others (Halaby 2004) point out that this variable can be interpreted as the stability effect of employment, and at very least, a significant coefficient suggests that those employed at one time are more likely to be employed at the next, controlling for other variables in the model. Given recent debate about the appropriateness of interpreting the lagged dependent variable, I will do so, but conclusions should be taken with a healthy degree of skepticism. Table 14 presents such an analysis.

Table 14. Logistic Regression Predicting Employment in 2001 Using Contemporaneous Predictors and Lagged Endogenous Variable.

	(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)
Lagged Endogenous Variable	
Employed in 1999 (Y_{t-1})	4.271***
	(0.382)
Tract-Level Variables	
Δ in % Poor	0.871
	(0.167)
Δ in % Female Headed	1.479*
	(0.315)
Δ in % Females Jobless	1.121
	(0.464)
Δ in % Moved, Last 5 Years	1.089
	(0.260)
Δ in % Units Vacant	0.873
	(0.100)
Δ in % HHs with Car	0.708
	(0.219)
Δ in % Homeownership	0.962
	(0.104)
Δ Tract Nos. btn. Waves	1.036
	(0.101)
Individual-Level Variables	
Δ in Disorder Index	0.981
	(0.020)
Age	0.948
	(0.059)
Age^2	1.000
	(0.001)
Black	1.687**
	(0.353)
Hispanic	1.147
	(0.277)
Other Race/Ethnicity	1.018
	(0.386)
Foreign Born	1.267
	(0.232)
Welfare as Child	0.752***
	(0.074)
Became Married	1.678*
	(0.485)
Got Divorced	1.000
	(0.329)
Continually Married	1.471
	(0.430)
Began Cohabiting	1.285*
	(0.193)
Stopped Cohabiting	0.779

Table 14. (continued).

Individual-Level Variables	
Continually Cohabiting	0.654*
	(0.160)
Became Pregnant	0.383***
	(0.104)
No Longer Pregnant	0.928
	(0.215)
Δ in Number of Children	1.030
	(0.058)
Gained a Child Under Six	0.785
	(0.206)
Lost a Child Under Six	1.294**
	(0.162)
Continually Had Child Under Six	0.920
	(0.114)
Gained Care for Disabled Child	0.746
	(0.137)
Lost Care for Disabled Child	0.820
	(0.117)
Continually Cared for Dis. Child	0.563***
	(0.086)
New Trouble Und. English	1.194
	(0.450)
Overcame Trouble Und. English	0.491
	(0.297)
Constant Trouble Und. English	0.686*
	(0.141)
H.S. Diploma or GED	1.564***
	(0.140)
Associate's Degree	1.716**
	(0.440)
Δ in Health	1.004
	(0.042)
Δ in Depression	0.991**
	(0.004)
Began Drinking Alcohol	1.298
	(0.213)
Stopped Drinking Alcohol	0.811
	(0.126)
Continual Alcohol use	0.917
	(0.154)
Began Using Drugs	0.551*
	(0.183)
Stopped Using Drugs	0.849
	(0.301)
Continual Drug Use	0.859
	(0.434)
Began Suffering Violence	0.539***
	(0.113)

Table 14. (continued).

Individual-Level Variables	
Stopped Suffering Violence	0.795
	(0.136)
Continual Violence	1.243
	(0.453)
Gained Access to Car	1.733***
	(0.199)
Lost Access to Car	0.892
	(0.139)
Continual Access to Car	1.904***
	(0.234)
Δ in Network Index	0.929
	(0.070)
New Trb Finding Housing	0.897
	(0.121)
Overcame Trb Finding Housing	0.762**
	(0.096)
Continual Trb Finding Housing	0.762*
	(0.110)
Gained Subsidized Housing	0.742*
	(0.125)
Lost Subsidized Housing	0.953
	(0.167)
Continual Subsidized Housing	0.816*
	(0.088)
Δ in Rooms per Person	1.075
	(0.061)
Los Angeles	0.645***
	(0.083)
Miami	0.701***
	(0.090)
Philadelphia	0.863
	(0.108)
Constant	2.997
	(3.437)
Observations	3142
Pseudo R-squared	0.174

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Results in Table 14 indicate that employment in 2001 is indeed highly dependent on employment two years earlier. In fact, the odds ratio of the lagged dependent variable (4.27) indicates that those employed in 1999 are four times as likely to be employed in

2001 as those who were jobless in 1999, all else equal. But, two other "control" variables are significant, as well. For the first time in this chapter, one of the race variables is significant. Black women were 69 percent more likely to transition to employment between waves as white women. This finding implies two possible interpretations. Optimistically, it may indeed suggest that once important control variables are added, black women actually have *better* employment prospects than similar white women. Yet on the other hand, the modeling logic implies a negative interpretation as well. Because the dependent variable is really *changes* in employment or the transition to employment between Wave 1 and Wave 2 (because of the lagged endogenous variable), the positive coefficient may imply that white women were more likely to be employed in the first place, i.e., they were less "at risk" of such a transition. Thus, the interpretation might be that black women were more likely than white women to make the transition between waves because they had more room to transition in the first place. And, some of this effect may involve the particularity of the Urban Change data; collected from disadvantaged, predominantly black neighborhoods, the white women in the sample represent a particularly disadvantaged subset of women. At the same time, background disadvantage significantly and negatively predicts employment; women who received AFDC transfers during their own childhoods are 25 percent less likely to transition to employment between waves than women whose families did not receive AFDC.

Marriage and cohabitation fail to be significant in the contemporaneous change model, but pregnancy is indeed significant. Women who became pregnant between waves were more than 60 percent less likely to be employed in 2001 than women who did not become pregnant, controlling for their employment in 1999. Additionally, losing

a coresident child under six years old (either because the child aged beyond six or was placed under the care of another adult in another household) positively boosts employment odds, and unsurprisingly, having continual care for a disabled child (across both waves of data collection) cuts the odds of employment in 2001 nearly in half, controlling for their previous employment.

As in all of the previous models, educational attainment is a positive predictor of employment. Similarly transportation once again proves important; gaining access to a car between waves positively increases the odds of employment by around 70 percent, although having continual access to a car nearly doubles the odds of employment, compared with those who never had access to a car. In contrast to Tables 10, 11 and 13, health status appears to matter little in this model. More specifically, changes in health do not predict employment, when controlling for previous employment. Rather, as reported earlier, better health *at any given time* facilitates employment; employment is responsive to current health conditions, but not necessarily past health problems. Also, consistent with Table 11, women who began to experience violence in between waves were less likely to be employed in 2001 than women who never experienced violence. This finding reflects the immediacy of violent situations and their imminent effects on employment (see Raphael 2000). Interestingly, however, women who stopped experiencing violence (those victimized before 1999, but not in between 1999 and 2001) are no more or less likely than women who never experienced violence to be employed, suggesting that current and recent bouts of violence are much more prohibitive of employment than violence in one's past. Relatedly, the model finds changes in the CESD

depression scale to be related to employment, with higher depression predicting lower odds of employment, controlling for previous employment.

Finally, the contemporaneous change model unearths some provocative findings with regard to local differences and neighborhood characteristics. First, women in Los Angeles and Miami were only 60 to 70 percent as likely as women in Cleveland to be employed in 2001, controlling for employment two years earlier. This finding suggests particularly robust local economies in Cleveland and Philadelphia and the presence of additional demand-side barriers for women in Miami and Los Angeles, all else equal.

Also noteworthy are the insignificant effects of every tract-level change variable, including whether women moved to a new census tract between waves. Women who moved did no better in terms of employment than women who remained in the same census tract, and for those who did move, individual neighborhood characteristics further fail to explain employment. Despite a copious literature suggesting that neighborhoods with less poverty, more residential stability, higher home ownership rates, less disorder, and less joblessness facilitate employment for movers (see Rosenbaum and Popkin 1991; Rosenbaum et al. 2002), my results indicate that the most salient barriers to employment, as indicated by this model, are changes in vehicle access, childcare responsibilities, depression and experiences of violence. These findings support the work of Clark (2008) who cautions that researchers are typically far too optimistic about the potential for residential relocation to boost economic outcomes. Rather, he finds that beneficiaries of the Moving to Opportunity program (who benefited from relocation assistance, counseling, and who moved entirely to non-poor neighborhoods) saw only minimal gains when compared to a baseline or control group who received no assistance. In some cities

there was no appreciable benefit and many of the MTO movers returned to similarly-poor neighborhoods in subsequent moves.

Who Met the Policymaker's Ideal?

One weakness of the above models is that they fail to specify a common starting point (i.e., some women begin employed in 1999 and some women begin jobless). It may be more intuitive to examine the trajectories of women who either started as employed or alternatively, started as jobless. Furthermore, the models above assume that the various barriers to employment, experienced over a two-year period, functioned similarly for those who were employed in 1999 and those who were jobless in 1999. Therefore, I disaggregate to analyze more closely those who were jobless in 1999 (n=1,620) and those who were employed (n=1,620). Which jobless women followed the policymaker's ideal and found employment by 2001? I run this analysis in two distinct ways. First, I run a simple logistic regression model using predictors from Wave 1. Whereas the multinomial model in Table 13 fails to place women at a common starting point, this model begins with only those who were jobless in 1999 (the first column) and those who were employed in 1999 (the second column). Thus, consistent with PRWORA's objectives, it asks which women who were jobless in 1999 were able to transition to employment by 2001 and asks which employed women managed to retain employment. These results appear in Table 15.

Table 15. Logistic Regression Predicting Employment in 2001 for Those Jobless in 1999 and Those Employed in 1999.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Tract-Level Variables	Jobless in 1999	Employed in 1999
Poverty	1.257	1.428
	(0.316)	(0.466)
Female-Headedness	0.857	0.879
	(0.222)	(0.303)
Females Jobless	0.922	0.645
	(0.531)	(0.431)
Moved, Last 5 Years	0.807	0.736
	(0.272)	(0.298)
Units Vacant	1.223	1.036
	(0.179)	(0.171)
HH with Car	2.096*	2.373**
	(0.806)	(1.001)
Homeownership	1.000	1.103
	(0.130)	(0.174)
Indiv.-Level Variables		
Disorder (Int- Observed)	1.006	0.985
	(0.033)	(0.038)
Age	0.969	0.980
	(0.076)	(0.100)
Age^2	1.000	1.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Black	1.388	1.605
	(0.399)	(0.472)
Hispanic	0.852	1.782*
	(0.278)	(0.625)
Other Race/Ethnicity	0.960	0.946
	(0.556)	(0.541)
Trb. Understanding English	0.657*	0.682
	(0.163)	(0.220)
AFDC as Child	0.754**	0.752*
	(0.094)	(0.117)
Married	0.991	1.360
	(0.267)	(0.349)
Cohabiting	1.236	0.544***
	(0.194)	(0.094)
Pregnant	0.771	1.021
	(0.204)	(0.414)
Number of Co-resident Children	0.909*	0.992
	(0.045)	(0.070)
Children Under Six	1.194	1.000
	(0.168)	(0.172)
Child with Disability	0.785*	0.673**
	(0.102)	(0.123)
Foreign Born	1.827***	0.918
	(0.407)	(0.258)

Table 15. (continued).

	Jobless in 1999	Employed in 1999
H.S. Diploma or GED	1.447***	1.564***
	(0.166)	(0.222)
Associate's Degree	1.751	1.610
	(0.628)	(0.628)
Health	1.251***	1.173**
	(0.064)	(0.087)
CESD Depression Scale	0.987**	0.986**
	(0.005)	(0.007)
Drinking	1.024	0.905
	(0.087)	(0.089)
Drug Use	1.006	0.805
	(0.360)	(0.457)
Suffered Violence	0.956	1.137
	(0.184)	(0.315)
Household Owns a Car	1.124	1.374**
	(0.152)	(0.207)
Network Index	1.217	0.848
	(0.148)	(0.121)
Trb. Finding Housing	0.892	0.724**
	(0.111)	(0.114)
Subsidized Housing	1.068	0.685**
	(0.131)	(0.110)
Num. Rooms per Person	0.949	1.068
	(0.088)	(0.145)
Los Angeles	0.499***	0.672
	(0.111)	(0.180)
Miami	0.698*	0.888
	(0.129)	(0.186)
Philadelphia	0.916	1.337
	(0.196)	(0.321)
Constant	3.732	5.634
	(5.541)	(10.772)
Observations	1596	1579
Pseudo R-squared	0.0739	0.0692

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

By quickly scanning over the first and third columns, it should become evident that many of the factors predicting employment for the previously jobless group are non-significant for the previously employed group (nativity, AFDC during childhood, Los Angeles residence). Similarly, the factors predictive of employment for the previously employed group are in many cases non-significant for the previously jobless group

(cohabitation, having a child with a disability, car ownership, trouble finding housing, subsidized housing). Because these are two separate models, rather than a multinomial logistic model, we can conclude that many of the factors that aid in acquiring employment for the previously-jobless do not have the same effect for the previously-employed. Similarly, some factors that aid in employment maintenance do not aid in employment acquisition. In other words, job attainment and maintenance are two separate issues with some overlapping and some distinct predictors. For instance, foreign-born women who were jobless in 1999 were more likely than native-born women to transition to employment by 2001. The nativity finding directly relates to welfare reform's tightening of eligibility requirements, particularly for foreign-born workers who quite often found themselves ineligible for continued assistance (see Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). This empirical finding does not hold for those already employed; for that group, nativity is unimportant. Thus, it seems that being foreign born helps women gain access to employment, but not necessarily retain employment. Although the literature suggests that this effect may stem from the role of strong, dense immigrant social networks (Waldinger and Lichter 2003), the network index remains non-significant for both groups.

Having received AFDC during a woman's own childhood decreases the odds of finding employment for the jobless portion of the sample, but does not affect the odds of staying employed for the working portion. In other words, coming from a more disadvantaged background serves as a barrier to finding employment, but once employed, matters little for staying employed. Caring for a child with a disability decreases the odds of staying employed for women who were employed in 1999, but has no effect on job attainment for those who were already jobless. Although the literature does point to

caring for a disabled child as a formidable employment barrier (Romero et al. 2003), little evidence exists as to why effects would differ for those seeking work and those attempting to remain employed. Results in Table 15 also indicate that cohabitation decreases the odds of remaining employed, but does not detract from nor boost the odds of finding employment for jobless women.

Other interesting contrasts pertain to transportation, housing, and city of residence. Having access to a car significantly raises the odds of staying employed, but has no effect on job attainment for the jobless. Consistent with much of the literature on transportation and employment (Sawicki and Moody 2000; Taylor and Ong 1995), access to transportation is crucial for arriving at work on-time and retaining a job, but contrary to the spatial mismatch literature (Kain 2004), perhaps it is less important for accessing employment opportunities to begin with. Employed women living in subsidized housing were less likely than employed women without subsidized housing to stay employed through 2001. This finding calls into question one of the explicit functions of subsidized housing—to provide stability and help residents obtain self-sufficiency. Subsidized housing, however, does not help women who were jobless find work, and this finding should also be stressed. But whereas subsidized housing does not aid the jobless in finding work, bouts of housing instability likewise do not decrease the odds that jobless women will find work. They do, however, decrease the odds of retaining employment (for the employed), by almost 30 percent. Accordingly, housing instability and residing in subsidized housing appear to disproportionately affect employed women rather than jobless, and presumably job-seeking, women. Finally, women living in Los Angeles or Philadelphia were less likely to find work between waves than women in Cleveland,

suggesting differences in the opportunities available in these local labor markets. For women already working, however, the city of residence proves unimportant.

Although the differences are telling, you will also note that many of the odds ratios presented above are remarkably consistent between the employed and the jobless. For both the jobless and the employed, the effect of having a high school diploma is remarkably consistent across groups, with a degree increasing the chances of finding and retaining employment by factor of about 1.5. Health and depression are also consistent, with better health improving the employment prospects for both the jobless and the employed, and depression decreasing the odds.

Lastly, one of the tract-level variables is statistically significant; although owning a vehicle proved significant only for women who already held employment, living in a neighborhood with a higher car ownership rate benefited only employed women as well.[17] Thus, while having a car or living in a neighborhood with more personal vehicles does not affect the odds of finding a job, net of other factors, both aid in job retention for the employed.

The overall fit and explained variance of the model leave much to be desired, however. Although the model explains more variation than the intercept-only model, the low pseudo R-squared values (.074 and .069) suggest that roughly 93 percent of the variation in employment is explained by variables not included in the model. Given the large number of variables included in the analysis, this low value leaves ample room for future research.

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[17] These odds ratios cannot be interpreted in an intuitive manner, as the variables used in the model are the natural log of the tract-level variables, not the original variable. Thus, suffice it to say that neighborhood vehicle ownership significantly raises the odds of employment among both groups.

Changes in Employment Obstacles Through Time

Following the logic of Table 14, it remains possible that many barriers may affect employment through mechanisms of contemporaneous change, rather than in a static fashion. Thus, I remodel Table 15 using change scores for all of the relevant predictors. Results appear in Table 16.

Table 16. Logistic Regression Model Predicting Employment in 2001 for Those Jobless in 1999 and those Employed in 1999, Using Change Scores (2001-1999) for Selected Variables.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Tract-Level Variables	Jobless in 1999	Employed in 1999
Δ in % Poor	0.712	0.982
	(0.168)	(0.294)
Δ in % Female Headed	2.064***	1.061
	(0.539)	(0.357)
Δ in % Females Jobless	1.585	0.777
	(0.829)	(0.501)
Δ in % Moved, Last 5 Years	0.808	1.905*
	(0.241)	(0.724)
Δ in % Units Vacant	0.823	0.975
	(0.118)	(0.178)
Δ in % HHs with Car	0.844	0.549
	(0.321)	(0.271)
Δ in % Homeownership	1.101	0.780
	(0.147)	(0.137)
Δ Tract Nos. btn. Waves	0.861	1.328*
	(0.107)	(0.222)
Individual-Level Variables		
Δ in Disorder Index	0.987	0.965
	(0.025)	(0.032)
Age	0.962	0.915
	(0.077)	(0.097)
Age^2	1.000	1.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Black	1.695*	1.866**
	(0.488)	(0.589)
Hispanic	0.895	1.755
	(0.297)	(0.678)
Other Race/Ethnicity	0.903	1.171
	(0.498)	(0.713)

Table 16. (continued).

	Jobless in 1999	Employed in 1999
Foreign Born	1.692**	0.876
	(0.410)	(0.263)
AFDC as Child	0.728**	0.740*
	(0.093)	(0.120)
Became Married	1.147	2.636**
	(0.436)	(1.025)
Got Divorced	1.823	0.580
	(0.885)	(0.230)
Continually Married	0.972	2.428**
	(0.389)	(0.989)
Began Cohabiting	1.383*	1.185
	(0.266)	(0.305)
Stopped Cohabiting	1.119	0.458***
	(0.302)	(0.130)
Continually Cohabiting	1.199	0.302***
	(0.389)	(0.095)
Became Pregnant	0.490*	0.340***
	(0.201)	(0.119)
No Longer Pregnant	0.766	1.246
	(0.206)	(0.580)
Δ in Number of Children	1.076	0.973
	(0.073)	(0.104)
Gained a Child Under Six	1.184	0.577
	(0.425)	(0.216)
Lost a Child Under Six	1.543***	0.957
	(0.248)	(0.201)
Continually Had Child Under Six	1.024	0.689*
	(0.162)	(0.148)
Gained Care for Disabled Child	1.047	0.466***
	(0.237)	(0.125)
Lost Care for Disabled Child	0.927	0.653*
	(0.163)	(0.157)
Continually Cared for Dis. Child	0.631**	0.431***
	(0.114)	(0.119)
New Trouble Und. English	1.235	1.202
	(0.542)	(0.988)
Overcame Trouble Und. English	0.530	0.271*
	(0.450)	(0.207)
Constant Trouble Und. English	0.652	0.672
	(0.179)	(0.243)
H.S. Diploma or GED	1.514***	1.529***
	(0.176)	(0.228)
Associate's Degree	1.692	1.397
	(0.595)	(0.586)
Δ in Health	1.001	1.028
	(0.051)	(0.083)
Δ in Depression	0.990**	0.989
	(0.005)	(0.007)

Table 16. (continued).

	Jobless in 1999	Employed in 1999
Began Drinking Alcohol	1.624**	0.930
	(0.341)	(0.239)
Stopped Drinking Alcohol	1.053	0.547***
	(0.213)	(0.125)
Continual Alcohol use	1.048	0.587**
	(0.227)	(0.148)
Began Using Drugs	0.684	0.432
	(0.257)	(0.256)
Stopped Using Drugs	0.898	0.759
	(0.370)	(0.507)
Continual Drug Use	0.911	0.845***
	(0.571)	(194.344)
Began Suffering Violence	0.779	0.284***
	(0.190)	(0.085)
Stopped Suffering Violence	0.782	0.763
	(0.166)	(0.226)
Continual Violence	1.021	5.806
	(0.443)	(6.430)
Gained Access to Car	1.776***	1.648**
	(0.254)	(0.333)
Lost Access to Car	0.947	0.924
	(0.214)	(0.219)
Continual Access to Car	1.594***	2.387***
	(0.266)	(0.485)
Δ in Network Index	0.916	0.923
	(0.084)	(0.123)
New Trb Finding Housing	0.965	0.756
	(0.164)	(0.166)
Overcame Trb Finding Housing	0.911	0.671**
	(0.148)	(0.136)
Continual Trb Finding Housing	0.828	0.651*
	(0.146)	(0.162)
Gained Subsidized Housing	0.964	0.402***
	(0.192)	(0.102)
Lost Subsidized Housing	1.368	0.524**
	(0.290)	(0.138)
Continual Subsidized Housing	0.975	0.589***
	(0.136)	(0.110)
Δ in Rooms per Person	1.043	1.140
	(0.074)	(0.117)
Los Angeles	0.571***	0.607**
	(0.097)	(0.131)
Miami	0.651**	0.693*
	(0.111)	(0.142)
Philadelphia	0.774	0.926
	(0.124)	(0.196)
Constant	2.250	35.861*
	(3.246)	(69.517)

Table 16. (continued).

	Jobless in 1999	Employed in 1999
Observations	1584	1558
Pseudo R-squared	0.0874	0.137

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Several significant findings are consistent for those employed in 1999 and those jobless in 1999. Within both groups, having a high school diploma or GED was related to being employed in 2001; for the group that was jobless in 1999, having a high school diploma predicted employment attainment and for the previously employed group, it positively predicted employment retention. Similarly, gaining access to a car and having continual access to a car are positively related to both attainment and retention. Interestingly, however, losing access to a car did not prevent jobless women from finding paid work, nor did it trigger job loss for the previously employed group.

Within both groups, having received AFDC as a child decreased a woman's ability to find work or to obtain employment by about 30 percent. Women who became pregnant between waves were less likely than women who did not become pregnant to obtain employment (if they were jobless in 1999), but were even less likely to remain employed (if they were already employed in 1999), suggesting that jobless women who become pregnant may cease searching for employment in anticipation of childcare responsibilities and women who hold employment and become pregnant leave their jobs in anticipation of care for young children.

Most of the significant barriers, however, affected either the employed or the jobless, but not both. Most poignantly, many of the variables related to childcare and

family characteristics only affect those already employed. Becoming married nearly triples the odds of remaining employed for the previously employed group (divorce has no effect), whereas both those who stopped cohabiting and those who continually cohabited were less likely to retain employment than those who never cohabited. Similarly, becoming pregnant cuts the odds of job retention by nearly 70 percent for those women who were employed in 1999, but does not impede employment prospects for the jobless women in the sample. Similar to Table 14, changes in the number of coresident children prove unimportant, but age and child disability do inhibit employment prospects. For women who were employed in 1999, beginning to care for a disabled child cuts the odds of remaining employed in half (e^b=.466). This finding points to the presence of childcare, particularly care for special-needs children, in limiting employment retention. Consistent with Scott et al.'s (2004) work, many of the women were strained by daily childcare responsibilities or possessed unstable patchworks of childcare that did not allow continued employment over time.

Whereas results in Table 15 indicated that car ownership is important for job retention, not job acquisition, results here dispute those findings. Gaining access to a car increases the odds of employment for those who were jobless in 1999 (e^b=1.78), while increasing the odds of job retention for those already employed (e^b=1.64). Similarly, having continual access to a car across the entire two-year study period is associated with higher odds of employment for both groups, as well. Interestingly, gaining access to subsidized housing and overcoming trouble finding housing are both negatively related to employment retention for the previously employed portion of the sample, relative to those who never lived in subsidized housing or experienced difficulty finding housing.

This finding suggests that housing instability, even in one's past, makes it difficult to retain work over time. And, much like in Tables 12 and 13, subsidized housing appears to detract from the ability of women to maintain employment over time (consistent with Reingold et al. 2001).

Paradoxically, jobless women who did not use alcohol excessively in 1999, but had started drinking by 2001 were *more* likely to find employment than women whose drinking behavior did not change. Women who were already employed and stopped drinking alcohol were less likely to remain employed than women who did not change their drinking behavior. This finding indicates that women who drink alcohol may actually have *better* employment outcomes than those who do not and those who stop drinking may actually suffer more trouble retaining employment. Although seemingly quite anomalous, some research has indeed found a correlation between substance abuse (usually marijuana or cocaine) and increased wages (Kaestner 1991; Register and Williams 1992; Gill and Michaels 1992), but typically ignores the theoretical reasons why this might be the case. These findings provide fertile ground for future exploration, but may indeed be a case of reverse causation; because change is contemporaneous, acquiring low-wage work may actually result in increased alcohol use. In other words, exploitation (at the hands of an employer) may lead to more drinking than the material hardship experienced via joblessness. Perhaps this finding might also indicate new friendships derived from the workplace and new forms of sociability that include alcohol. Drug use does not provide this same sociability/exploitation effect, and is a negative predictor of job retention.

A more predictable effect involves the effect of experiencing violence within the past year. Among employed women, those who began experiencing violence between waves (had not experienced it in 1999, but had by 2001) saw their odds of continued employment drop by over 70 percent. This finding is consistent with Wettersten et al. (2004:447), who conclude that employed women's work suffers from intimate-partner violence "by being late, missing work, being harassed at work, having difficulty concentrating at work, or because their partner will not allow them to work outside the home." Similar findings led Romero et al. (2004) to conclude that experiences of domestic violence are predictive of job loss, a finding consistent with Table 16.

Jobless women in Los Angeles and Miami were all less likely to find employment during the following two years than women in Cleveland (to a remarkably consistent degree), suggesting that Cleveland, and perhaps also Philadelphia, exhibited a particularly robust local economy during this period. Employed women in Los Angeles were also less likely than employed women in Cleveland to retain work during this period.

Of particular interest are the tract-level variables, only one of which is significant at $p \leq .05$ or lower. These variables represent the effect of moving from one neighborhood to another. Because tract-level variables for Wave 1 (1999) and Wave 2 (2001) were both taken from 2000 U.S. Census data, this analysis cannot capture the effect of changing neighborhood conditions. It can, however, capture the effect of moving from one neighborhood to another. Approximately half of the sample (n=1,620) have Wave 2 tract numbers that do not match their Wave 1 tract numbers, implying that at least half of the sample moved in the interim (some presumably moved within tracts). Yet, moving from a high-poverty to a low-poverty neighborhood or from a high-joblessness to a low-

joblessness neighborhood has no effect on finding employment (for jobless women) or retaining employment (for employed women). Even moving from a high-disorder to a low-disorder neighborhood makes no apparent difference. This finding speaks directly to residential mobility programs and their potential efficaciousness in moving disadvantaged urbanites from joblessness to unemployment. Although program assessments of several of these programs (namely Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity) found some encouraging results (Rosenbaum et al. 2002; Rosenbaum and Popkin 1991), the above analysis suggests that such optimism ought to be tempered with caution, as women in the Urban Change sample who relocated to neighborhoods with more residential stability, less unemployment, more intact nuclear families, fewer vacant units, a lower poverty rate and less disorder *did no better* in terms of employment outcomes than women who relocated into worse neighborhoods. This finding is cause for concern and should be investigated more fully. The one apparent neighborhood effect occurs in a rather unexpected direction. Results indicate that moving to a neighborhood with more female-headed households actually increases the odds of employment for the previously jobless group.

Best-Case and Worst-Case Scenarios

Chapter I argued that several previous studies (Danziger et al. 2000a; Danziger et al. 2000b) simply added up the number of barriers that women faced (assuming knowledge about which factors were truly "barriers" to employment) and regressed this number, with controls, on the odds of employment. As I argue in Chapter I, this approach has limited utility and is too mechanical in its approach. Up to this point

Chapter III has singled out several important barriers to employment, allowing for a more accurate additive picture of employment odds. However, we do not yet know how these factors work together to boost or lower women's odds of employment. One way of answering this question would be through the use of interaction terms. For example, does health matter only for people in stable housing arrangements? But, the infinitely large number of possible interactions makes this approach unappealing. Instead, I calculate the predicted probability of employment for a woman given certain characteristics. In order to ensure correct temporal ordering I regress employment in 2001 on a number of 1999 characteristics. These results appear in Table 17.

Table 17. Logistic Regression Models Predicting Employment in 2001 Using 1999 Predictors.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Lagged Endogenous Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Employed in 1999 (Y_{t-1})				4.148***
				(0.364)
Tract-Level Variables				
Poverty	0.855	0.865	1.315	1.302
	(0.152)	(0.154)	(0.253)	(0.256)
Female-Headedness	1.368*	1.382**	0.908	0.889
	(0.220)	(0.222)	(0.177)	(0.180)
Females Jobless	0.656	0.654	0.683	0.762
	(0.250)	(0.249)	(0.285)	(0.330)
Moved, Last 5 Years	0.986	0.992	0.786	0.801
	(0.198)	(0.199)	(0.187)	(0.204)
Units Vacant	1.168*	1.196**	1.134	1.151
	(0.103)	(0.106)	(0.115)	(0.124)
HH with Car	2.210***	2.080***	2.279***	2.251***
	(0.437)	(0.416)	(0.618)	(0.647)
Homeownership	1.019	1.029	1.020	1.053
	(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.094)	(0.105)
Moved btn. Waves		1.130	1.091	1.036
		(0.089)	(0.095)	(0.095)
Individual-Level Variables				
Disorder Index		0.967	0.989	1.004
		(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.025)

Table 17. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Age			0.964	0.965
			(0.056)	(0.059)
Age^2			1.000	1.000
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Black			1.303	1.439*
			(0.252)	(0.296)
Hispanic			1.014	1.135
			(0.224)	(0.265)
Other Race/Ethnicity			0.982	0.956
			(0.381)	(0.396)
Foreign Born			1.346*	1.383*
			(0.219)	(0.239)
AFDC as Child			0.789***	0.773***
			(0.071)	(0.074)
Married			1.107	1.166
			(0.191)	(0.220)
Cohabiting			0.933	0.853
			(0.104)	(0.103)
Pregnant			0.685*	0.838
			(0.145)	(0.185)
Num. Co-resident Children			0.911**	0.937
			(0.034)	(0.037)
Children Under Six			1.020	1.108
			(0.103)	(0.119)
Child with Disability			0.663***	0.738***
			(0.067)	(0.078)
Trb. Understanding English			0.710*	0.689**
			(0.129)	(0.130)
H.S. Diploma or GED			1.689***	1.514***
			(0.139)	(0.133)
Associate's Degree			1.935***	1.776**
			(0.473)	(0.459)
Health			1.281***	1.244***
			(0.051)	(0.051)
CESD Depression Scale			0.983***	0.987***
			(0.004)	(0.004)
Drinking			0.983	0.954
			(0.060)	(0.062)
Drug Use			0.769	1.000
			(0.231)	(0.314)
Suffered Violence			0.945	1.025
			(0.144)	(0.161)
Household Owns a Car			1.593***	1.210*
			(0.146)	(0.119)
Network Index			1.061	1.040
			(0.095)	(0.100)
Trb. Finding Housing			0.835*	0.818**

Table 17. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Subsidized Housing			0.904	0.914
			(0.083)	(0.088)
Num. Rooms per Person			0.951	0.973
			(0.064)	(0.070)
Los Angeles			0.569***	0.607***
			(0.091)	(0.101)
Miami			0.796*	0.790*
			(0.104)	(0.109)
Philadelphia			1.106	1.097
			(0.167)	(0.174)
Constant	2.982***	3.157***	5.308	2.646
	(0.923)	(1.023)	(5.871)	(3.068)
Observations	3249	3186	3186	3175
Pseudo R-squared	0.0104	0.0113	0.0907	0.158

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Like Tables 10 and 11, this table begins with only neighborhood characteristics before adding individual barriers to employment. Because neighborhood car ownership and individual car ownership have been consistently significant, I ran an interaction term (in another version of this model, not shown), which was insignificant. In other words, car ownership does not matter only when one is living in a low-ownership neighborhood; it matters in any type of neighborhood. Similarly, living in a high-ownership neighborhood does not matter only when an individual does not own a car; it matters even for those who do own cars. This finding suggests that car ownership, whether contextual or individual, is important for boosting employment odds.

But exactly how much do all of the significant variables matter in terms of employment? I utilize several of the significant barriers from Model 3 in Table 17 (which does not use a lagged endogenous variable or interaction terms, but does include all of the individual predictors). The following calculations reveal the odds of

employment for a best-case-scenario woman who faces several significant barriers to employment, and using the logits from the model above (not the odds ratios, as reported), calculates the predicted probability of employment. Using the "adjust" function in STATA, I hold all other variables in the model at their means. If not for this procedure, all variables would be held constant at zero, which would not accurately portray a "best-case" scenario (for example, a neighborhood with a zero percent home ownership rate is not the best imaginable neighborhood, nor an average or typical neighborhood). The symbol Y' represents the predicted value of the dependent variable (employment).

Characteristics
80% Neighborhood Car Ownership Rate
No Trouble Understanding English
No AFDC During Own Childhood
1 Child
No Disabled Children
High School Diploma
Car Owner
5 out of 6 on Health Scale
10 out of 60 on CESD Depression Scale
Non-Los Angeles Resident

Calculation
$Y' = 3.21$
$e^{(3.21)} = 24.77$
$P' = 24.77 / (1+24.77) = .963$

Predicted Probability of Employment = .96 or 96%

Results of the calculation indicate that this best-case-scenario woman, who possesses few of the significant barriers to employment, would almost surely be employed. This finding speaks directly to one of the key assertions of welfare reform: that the main obstacle to employment for formerly welfare-dependent women is motivation. Rather, these results indicate that without the significant barriers, women almost universally work.

But how much does this probability change when several of the statistically significant barriers are added? The following calculations address this question.

Characteristics
20% Neighborhood Car ownership Rate
Trouble Understanding English
AFDC During Own Childhood
4 Children
At Least One Disabled Child
No High School Diploma
Not a Car Owner
2 out of 6 on Health Scale
50 out of 60 on CESD Depression Scale
Los Angeles Resident

Calculation
$Y' = -.1.520$
$e^{(-1.52)} = .2187$
$P' = .2187 / (1+.2187) = .179$

Predicted Probability of Employment = .179 or 18%

This woman, with more children, more depression, worse health, no high school diploma, and markedly less car access, has only a 18 percent predicted probability of employment. By contrast, her counterpart with fewer of these problems had about a 96 percent probability of employment. Quite frankly, given the numerous barriers faced by this second woman, the 18 percent probability of employment is quite surprising; even with all of these obstacles, 18 percent of women manage to hold employment. The daunting prospect of holding employment despite this scenario points to the effort and perseverance displayed by many women forced off of public assistance following welfare reform.

Since this dissertation is chiefly about neighborhood conditions, I alter this worst case scenario woman by moving her into a neighborhood with high car ownership (the

only significant contextual variable). How much will living in a high-ownership neighborhood boost employment odds for our worst case scenario woman? I recalculate the above equation, substituting .80 for .20 with regard to car ownership:

Calcuation
$Y' = -1.0259$
$e^{(-1.0259)} = .3585$
$P' = .3585 / (1+.3585) = .264$

Predicted Probability of Employment = .264 or 26%

The new predicted probability (.264) indicates that living in a neighborhood with 80 percent car ownership (versus 20 percent) boosts the overall odds of employment by about 8 percent (from 18 percent to 26 percent). This finding points to the importance of living in neighborhoods with more transportation options as a viable means for increasing employment prospects.

Discussion

Several distinct patterns emerge from the preceding analyses. First and foremost, they reveal that different modeling strategies can yield surprisingly contrasting results. Take, for example, the effect of being foreign born versus native born. Nativity is insignificant in Table 11 (both models), Table 13, and Table 14. Yet when I run separate models for those employed in 1999 and those jobless in 1999, nativity emerges as a significant predictor ($p<.01$) of employment in 2001, but only for those who were previously jobless (see Tables 15 and 16). This finding indicates the complexity of the various barriers to employment discussed in this chapter and suggests that different barriers may not function in a linear, predictable fashion. It also reinforces a popular

adage in the social sciences: "when in doubt, disaggregate." Thus, in an effort to unpack these complex relationships, this chapter took several different angles at understanding the employment of women residing in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Taken together, the results indicate the consistent effects of access to transportation, childcare responsibilities, and health. I label these barriers to employment the "big three." By far, the most consistent of the big three is access to transportation. Without exception, women whose household owned a car were far likely to find and hold employment through time. Although employment may generate enough income to purchase a car (blurring the temporal ordering), Table 16 demonstrates clearly that when jobless women obtain vehicle, their odds of employment increase. When employed women lose access to a vehicle, their odds of continued employment are unaffected, however Table 15 also finds that employed women benefit from car access as well. Thus, as Taylor and Ong (1995) point out, access to a private vehicle is the crucial factor that closes up the spatial mismatch identified by Kain (2004).[18]

Results also indicate a consistent effect of childcare and family responsibilities on employment. Having more children, younger children, and particularly disabled or special-needs children, negatively affect women's ability to secure and maintain employment. Although this barrier appears to be somewhat alleviated by the presence of a cohabiting partner, it nevertheless signals a crucial need for subsidized or otherwise low-cost childcare. Although the General Accounting Office concluded that many subsidies go unclaimed each year and, therefore, all childcare needs are currently met

[18] They may have also obtained employment before obtaining a car; the added income may have generated the funds necessary to purchase a vehicle. Without measures at several points in time, it is impossible to tell which change occurred first.

(Behsarov and Samari 2001), these findings support those of previous researchers who discovered that work schedules often necessitated self-care, even by very young children (Capizzano et al. 2000). Other mothers avoid employment altogether because of prohibitive childcare costs (Baum 2002).

Health, both mental and physical, also play an important role in accessing employment. Cross-sectionally, better health relates to higher odds of employment, both in 1999 and 2001 (see Table 11). Better health also lowers the odds of becoming chronically disconnected and newly jobless (see Table 13). It aids the transition to employment for those who were jobless at the baseline (first column in Table 15) and in the retention of employment for those who started out employed (second column in Table 15). Although changes in health status did not have a significant effect on employment (Tables 14 and 16), the overall findings are still consistent with Seccombe and Hoffman (2007) who find that health problems constitute the primary reason that welfare-reliant women report an inability to obtain and maintain employment.

Results also indicate some noteworthy non-effects. The network index variable did not affect the odds of being disconnected (Table 13) and also failed to explain employment in any of the other models. This suggests that either network contacts are unimportant for obtaining employment in this particularly disadvantaged sample of women or, more likely, the network variables are poor indicators of network contacts. Also insignificant were race/ethnicity and, in most cases, nativity and English proficiency. Thus, black women, along with Hispanic/Latino and women of other racial groups, are no more or less likely to be employed than white women. The lone exception occurs in Table 16, where employed black women are more likely to retain employment between

waves than employed white women, once again calling into question notions that disadvantaged black women eschew work for welfare (as proposed by Murray 1984 and disputed by Quadagno 1996).

Finally, housing characteristics are generally nonsignificant. This includes housing instability and the spaciousness of women's current housing arrangements. Living in subsidized housing presents an interesting case; it decreases the odds of employment in 2001 (Table 11), increases the odds of becoming newly jobless (Table 4) and decreases the odds that employed women will remain employed (Tables 15 and 16). Far from serving as a resource or safety net, women living in subsidized housing actually face lower odds of employment than demographically similar women living in private market housing arrangements. Although skeptics may point to preexisting differences between women who inhabit public housing and women who do not, the finding also lends support to Reingold et al.'s (2000) conclusion that living in public housing actually harms the employment outcomes of its residents.

Perhaps the most startling finding is the rather consistently insignificant effect of neighborhood characteristics, both observed and objective. Contrary to the theory that residential instability fragments social networks and leads to employment difficulties (Petit and McLanahan 2003), residential stability failed to reach statistical significance in most of the models. When it did (Table 14), coefficients were in the opposite direction, whereby more stability is associated with lower odds of employment. This finding may suggest that women who moved to more stable neighborhoods also moved to neighborhoods where residents had fewer housing options and were, in essence, stuck

where they were currently living. And, previous research documents the inability of network ties to activate in extremely poor neighborhoods (Elliott et al. 2009).

The poverty rate and portion of housing units vacant also failed to be significant predictors. Similarly, the female unemployment rate is not significant cross-sectionally (Table 11), does not affect the odds of any salient work transitions (Tables 4 and 5), nor does it affect odds of gaining or retaining employment (Tables 15 and 16). Even moving from a high-unemployment neighborhood to a low-unemployment neighborhood has no effect on obtaining or maintaining employment (Table 16). More surprisingly, the disorder index significantly and negatively predicted employment only cross-sectionally in 1999 (Table 11). In all other analyses, the level of interviewer-observed disorder in a respondent's neighborhood is completely unrelated to her employment outcomes, calling into question Haney's (2007) finding that neighborhood disorder is in many cases a better predictor of various outcomes than objective neighborhood conditions, as derived from census data. Finally, female headship provides some rather anomalous results. Hannon (2005) and McNulty (2001) recommend the use of this variable as a marker of disadvantage as nuclear families with only one adult have fewer resources from which to draw and an increased childcare burden. Yet moving to a neighborhood with a higher rate of female headship is associated with higher odds of finding employment for previously jobless women (Table 16). Whereas female headship is often suggested as a measure of disadvantage, women in these neighborhoods may also provide important resources (i.e., childcare or networks used to locate job opportunities) for one another during times of need, easing other employment barriers. This finding deserves future attention.

Moreover, results from these analyses indicate the slipperiness of neighborhood effects research. When utilized alone, without individual predictors, neighborhood conditions were significant predictors of employment (Table 10). Yet when individual controls were added, but the analysis remained cross-sectional (Table 11), neighborhood conditions were wholly unimportant. Much existing research therefore concludes that neighborhood conditions are unimportant, or "explained away" by individual characteristics (i.e., concluding that neighborhoods are not more than the sum of their parts). Yet, the analyses that model change either in the dependent variable (Tables 13, 14 and 16) or the independent variables (Tables 14 and 16) reveal that context does matter for employment, albeit not all neighborhood characteristics seem to matter.

All of the findings mentioned above indicate how particular barriers to employment function independently to limit a woman's odds of employment. But, Table 17 and the subsequent calculations indicate that these barriers work together to exert tremendous influence over a woman's ability to work, decreasing her probability of employment from nearly 100 percent down to as low as 30 percent (for a woman facing each significant barrier). This finding indicates that while alleviating each individual factor should be a goal of public policy, addressing health problems alone will not make it possible for all formerly welfare-reliant women to work, nor will simply boosting resources for childcare or providing increased transportation options. Rather, findings point to the complexity of problems facing these women and the need for a multi-faceted program to alleviate multiple barriers.

Questions also linger about the insignificant effects of moving from one neighborhood to another. Changes in the poverty rate, joblessness rate, and other

contextual factors simply do not explain employment outcomes. Similarly, the dichotomous variable indicating whether a woman moved or not failed to reach significance in either change model (Tables 14 and 16). Taken together, these findings imply that moving does not appear to aid in the search for employment or employment retention. Here I offer one brief interpretation.

Could it be that the key is moving from a poor neighborhood to a non-poor or prosperous neighborhood, rather than from a poor neighborhood to a less poor (but still poor) neighborhood? Given the extreme disadvantage in the sample, coupled with the fact that they were sampled by virtue of being in poor neighborhoods, one may hypothesize that the moves were relatively parallel (from one disadvantaged place to another). But, this is an empirical question. The data reveal that non-movers had a Wave 2 poverty rate of 30.4 percent, compared with 35.7 percent for movers. In other words, women who moved between waves lived in poorer neighborhoods at Wave 2 than those who did not move (not controlling, of course, for where they started). However, utilizing change scores can account for the originating neighborhoods, and I find that the neighborhood poverty rate did not fall one bit for movers (average change score -.0002), meaning that on average those who moved relocated to neighborhoods that were every bit as poor as the neighborhoods they left. Might this mean that moves were a result of housing instability rather than attempted upward mobility? This would, at very least, explain some of the differences between my findings and some of the mobility experiments (MTO, Gautreaux), which do quite often find that relocating to a much better neighborhood improves employment prospects (Rosenbaum et al. 2002; Rosenbaum and Popkin 1991). The punchline here is that women in the sample who

moved went from poor neighborhoods to other poor neighborhoods. So, the insignificant coefficients imply that the key is not simply moving, but moving to a substantially better neighborhood, something women in the sample did not often do.

Despite many compelling findings, these analyses leave many important questions unanswered. Chief among these is the question of what exactly constitutes "employment"? This chapter relied on a simple question, asked of all survey respondents: "are you currently employed?" Lein and Shexnayder (2007) find this question problematic in one key way. Many women who reported being employed also noted that they were actually waiting to be recalled on jobs or were temporarily laid off. One woman, excited to still be employed, commented, "Oh, boy, I still have my job...but I haven't worked since August." The following chapter unpacks the ambiguousness of the term "employed" by assessing the number of months women worked for pay over a four-year period (two years prior to Wave 1 and two years prior to Wave 2), the number of jobs held during that time, and the number of jobs held concurrently. Then, Chapter V unravels a number of thorny issues related to the quality of employment. These analyses will start to assess the extent to which "employed" women were actually working for pay.

CHAPTER IV

A HOUSE OF CARDS:

EMPLOYMENT CONTINUITY, JOB CHANGES AND WORKING HOURS

These women were unable to build careers...They were much more likely to move from one dead-end job to another....Not surprisingly, mothers concluded that the future they were building through low-wage work was a house of cards."
(Edin and Lein 1997:70-71)

The job market is horrible out there...[In] most places, if you do get hired, you don't get hired for full-time. You get minimum wage, you get twenty hours, no benefits, part-time. The chances of getting a full-time job are difficult.
(excerpt from interview by Seccombe and Hoffman 2007:146)

Chapter III concluded by questioning whether an employed-versus-jobless dichotomy allows researchers to fully understand the labor market activity of disadvantaged urban women. As Lein and Shexnayder (2007) learned through their interviews of welfare recipients and leavers, many women who reported being "employed" worked only sporadically or had been laid off for some time. Thus, statistics about employment alone may overstate the prevalence of actual paid work, particularly among this demographic group. This difference is reflected in official statistics as well. Although 63 percent of poor families have at least one employed member, only 20 percent contain a full-time, year-round worker (Blank 2001:31-32). Chapter III helped us begin to understand some of the factors predictive of employment over time, yet we still do not know the extent to which disadvantaged women worked for pay during the two years in between survey administration. Furthermore, we know little about job changes

and working hours, all of which provide a starting point for determining the extent to which women were employed in jobs that would help them avert poverty and remain off of government assistance, the major objective of welfare reform. In this chapter, I will address these issues by focusing on employment continuity.

Employment continuity matters not only because it should result in higher incomes than sporadic employment, but because it helps individuals to organize their lives. Social theorist Pierre Bourdieu believes that paid employment is not simply a way to make a living. It is a framework for daily behavior and patterns of interaction because it imposes disciplines and regularities on one's life. In the absence of regular employment, people lack coherent organization of the present—a system of concrete expectations and goals. Persistent unemployment and irregular employment hinder rational planning in daily life, the necessary condition of adaptation to an industrial economy (discussed by Wilson 1996:73). This view is supported by empirical work such as that by Smith et al. (2000) who find that lack of maternal employment (i.e., welfare receipt as the primary source of income) is associated with children's elevated behavior problems and home learning environments that were rated lower than those of the continuously employed group with no welfare receipt. Much of this effect is explained by income (i.e., those who work have higher incomes than those who receive welfare alone), but the remaining portion is attributable to the lack of a regular daily framework. For instance, they find that lack of maternal work is also associated with poorer home learning environments, even when controlling for income and the mother's cognitive ability assessment score, suggesting that the cause spans beyond simply the income explanation.

Steady work also carries costs, particularly for women facing several daunting barriers to employment. Harris (1996) contends that "we cannot expect poor women to work if it means putting their children's health and well-being at risk. Yet, this is the likely consequence of welfare reform proposals that impose time limits on lifetime receipt or require work without provisions for healthcare or childcare." As Acker (2006:92-94) points out

> Work is organized on the assumption that reproduction concerns are left at home, that the worker has no other responsibilities that might interfere with total attention to tasks or projects assigned by the employer. Employees are expected to arrive at stated times, stay on the job except for toilet, coffee, and lunch breaks, accomplish certain amounts of work, and often work overtime. They are expected to show up *day after day*, no matter what is happening in other parts of their lives. Enforcement of these assumptions is probably more stringent for working class employers, such as women in lower-level service and clerical jobs or men in manufacturing jobs, than for those in managerial and professional positions.

In other words, maintaining steady work proves particularly difficult in the U.S. workforce (and specifically in the service and manufacturing sectors) where employers assume that workers will be able to leave all personal concerns behind during their shifts, day in and day out. Yet, given the numerous personal obstacles encountered by many formerly welfare-reliant women (Danziger et al. 2000), questions linger regarding how much these women will truly be able to work for pay continually and uninterrupted.

This chapter asks several important empirical questions. Principally, given that neighborhood context appeared to have only minimal effects on employment in Chapter III, this chapter seeks to unravel which barriers, both individual and contextual, prevent sampled women from holding steady employment over time. This question opens the possibility for a more theoretically-informative neighborhood effects discussion: does the neighborhood context matter less for obtaining employment, as examined in the previous

chapter, but more in maintaining employment consistently over time? Likewise, this chapter aims to understand whether and why particular women hold multiple jobs during this period and why others remain continually employed in the same job. Finally, I refocus the analysis on women who were employed in 2001. How long have they held their current jobs? How many hours per week are they working? Some research suggests that scheduling issues are a crucial determinant of the ability of poor women (especially single mothers) to hold employment through time. Edin and Lein (1997:68) report that the women they interviewed often could not predict how many hours they would work during the coming week, complicating any ability to plan ahead for future expenses. Yet we still know little about who is particularly vulnerable to such unpredictability.

How Much Did Women Work Over Time?

How steadily do employed Urban Change women work for pay? The quantitative data reveal that although the average woman was employed only 10 out of the 24 months leading up to 1999, between 1999 and 2001 the mean rose to over 14 months. Thus, on average, women were employed two months longer per year between 1999 and 2001 than they were between 1997 and 1999. If we exclude those who did not work for pay during this two-year period (n=689), the average number of months employed rises to nearly 18 (three quarters of the time). In sum, over the four-year period spanning from 1997 to 2001, women in the sample worked for pay an average of 26 out of 48 months, or roughly half of the time. But, importantly, more of this work activity occurred after 1999 than before, allowing us to infer that PRWORA's work incentives, instituted widely by

the end of 1997, were gradually pushing more women into the labor market who may have otherwise abstained from work activity.

Hays (2003:57) finds considerable job instability among her welfare sample. As an example, one caseworker she interviews reveals that of her 80 clients, only four had held a job for more than one year. In order to examine this issue, I will look briefly at the average length of time employed women have held their jobs, as well as the average number of jobs held during the course of the Urban Change study. Of those who were employed in 1999, the mean job tenure at women's current job was 26.5 months. With regard to job tenure, the general trend is toward lengthier, more stable periods of employment. Job tenure ranged from only a few days to as long as 332 months (27 years!). Consistent with Newman's (2006) depiction of low-wage workers ("high-flyers" and "low-riders"), the Urban Change data reveal that some women struggle with chronic unemployment while others remain firmly rooted in the same job for many years. However, the more important and surprising finding involves the long average job tenure. The average employed woman has held her job for 1,045 days, or slightly less than three years. This marks an improvement over 1999, at which point employed women had held her current job an average of only 845 days. In other words, women in the sample who were employed were typically employed for lengthy periods of time in the same job, but exhibited lengthier job tenure in 2001 than in 1999. Distributions of these variables of course suffer from right-hand truncation; many women were still employed in 2001, meaning we do not know how long they will keep those jobs. Other women left their jobs in between waves.

Although the sample exhibits a large amount of work activity and long job tenure, we must remember that the substantial amount of material hardship reported in the Urban Change study (see London and Scott 2005), imply that many of these jobs provide little security, poor pay, and few benefits.

In addition to job tenure, the sample exhibits relatively few job changes. Survey administrators asked sampled women in 1999 how many jobs they had held during the past two years. Responses ranged between zero and eight with a mean of 1.20 jobs. If we exclude those who did not work during that period, the mean rises to 1.60. Asked this same question two years later, the mean number of jobs held between 1999 and 2002 was 1.51 jobs for all respondents and 1.76 for only those who worked during that two-year period. Thus, women in the sample held more jobs, on average, during the 1999-2001 period than in the previous 1997-1999 period, implying that turnover increased between waves. Even so, the relatively few number of jobs held during either period calls into question Hays' (2003) conclusion that most women who work are unable to retain the same job for long periods of time. By contrast, the Urban Change study reveals that among those who work, jobs are typically held for at least a year or two and thus, women in the sample change employers relatively infrequently. This speaks directly to Andersson et al.'s (2005) finding that lengthy job tenure may serve as an impediment to attaining higher quality employment; those who change jobs typically experience more ensuing socioeconomic mobility. Their conclusion, of course, is subject to logical scrutiny. It remains unclear why a worker would leave her current job to take a job of equal or lesser quality. Rather, those who change may be those who have the opportunity to change, an advantaged group that is predisposed to mobility. Workers who remain in

one job for long period of time, by contrast, would be those who find few better alternatives. In short, the conclusion that job changes produce earnings gains than job tenure may be an artifact of selection bias.

But, even if women are remaining in one job for lengthy periods of time and largely eschewing inter-job mobility, how much are they actually working? Survey administrators asked women at both waves how many hours they worked per week in each of their jobs (some, of course, held multiple concurrent jobs, but this represents a small minority of the total sample, about six percent in 1999 and about seven percent in 2001). Adding these variables allows for an estimate of the total hours a woman works at all jobs. Interestingly, the same pattern found in Chapter III is evident once again. There, data revealed a general shift toward employment and away from joblessness. Here, the same pattern holds; employed women worked more hours in 2001 than in 1999. The average increases from 34.7 hours per week in 1999 to 37.6 hours in 2001. In only two years time, the sample worked an average of three more hours per week. In a 52-week working year, that difference translates into 156 extra hours. Even at minimum wage ($5.15 in 1999 and 2001), employed women were making $803 more in 2001 than in 1999, on average.[19] For those in jobs paying more than the minimum, this difference would be slightly larger. This pattern holds for women who were employed at both waves of data collection; average working hours increased from 35.5 to 38 hours per week. Therefore, this finding is not simply explained by women who worked fewer hours becoming displaced by women who were willing or able to work more hours.

[19] This estimate does not account for inflation, which would undoubtedly eliminate part of the apparent earnings gain.

Instead, the same women were seeing increases in their working hours over time. Consistent with policy-makers' objectives, women not only sought employment, but those who were employed began working longer hours for pay.

Although descriptive statistics can reveal general trends, they fail to answer the important *who* question: who worked for pay most months over a two-year period? Who changed jobs most frequently? Who held jobs the longest? Who worked more hours per week? Each of the following sections addresses one of these questions, but each of these sections also asks one overarching question: what factors, individual and spatial, account for differences in how much urban women worked during this two-year period?

Employment Continuity

The statistical models presented in Chapter III provide one glimpse of the barriers relevant to understanding the labor market activity of economically disadvantaged urban women. They also clarify which women were more likely to become chronically disconnected from the labor market. They take into account employment at two points in time, but these analyses reveal little about the continuity of their employment between waves of data collection. Simply, it would be possible for a woman to report being employed at the time of the survey in 1999 and in 2001, but be jobless during much of the interim. A true understanding of the labor market activity and barriers to employment faced by poor urban women would therefore benefit from multiple view of the same issue.

The Urban Change investigators included several variables to disentangle this problem. Principally, survey interviewers asked the number of months in the past two years in which sampled women worked. Values (if this variable is added for both waves)

range from a low of zero to a high of 48 months, with a mean of 25.97 months (roughly half of the time).[20] Interestingly, Table 12 reports that 1,307 women (40 percent of the sample) were employed at both Wave 1 and Wave 2. Yet, the employment continuity variable reveals that only 630 women were employed in all 48 months (20 percent of the 3,134 valid cases). Thus, only about half of the "continually employed" women in Chapter III analyses were actually continually employed, although we cannot be sure whether the 126 cases with missing data came disproportionately from the more or less continually employed end of the scale.

To take another look at the predictors of and barriers to work continuity, Table 18 presents a regression model of the number of months worked between 1999 and 2001 (with a maximum of 24 months). Although the dataset also contains the number of months worked from 1997-1999, I do not model this variable because the earliest independent variables available are from 1999, introducing temporality problems for modeling the 1997-1999 work continuity variable. Because the dependent variable is a ratio-level variable, these models use Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression techniques. Table 18 includes three separate models, beginning with only the tract-level predictors. Subsequent models add in movement between waves and observed disorder (model 2) and all other individual predictors (model 3).

[20] This variable may suffer from recall problems, as many individuals presumably have trouble accurately reporting how many months they have been employed over a two-year period. Thus, we should use caution in placing too much emphasis on the findings. I argue, however, that individuals who were more consistently employed will provide a higher estimate than those who have been employed less continuously, even if respondents are typically off by a couple months.

Table 18. OLS Regression Model Predicting Number of Months Employed Between 1999 and 2001, Using 1999 Predictors.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Tract-Level Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Poverty	-0.312	-0.230	1.315
	(0.798)	(0.802)	(0.805)
Female-Headedness	0.350	0.364	-1.251
	(0.768)	(0.772)	(0.848)
Females Jobless	-3.317*	-3.251*	-3.009*
	(1.742)	(1.749)	(1.758)
Moved, Last 5 Years	-0.397	-0.343	-1.038
	(0.945)	(0.947)	(0.996)
Units Vacant	0.562	0.650	0.476
	(0.412)	(0.415)	(0.420)
HH with Car	1.810*	1.513	1.473
	(0.934)	(0.948)	(1.172)
Homeownership	0.222	0.258	0.273
	(0.388)	(0.391)	(0.415)
Indiv.-Level Variables			
Moved btn. Waves		0.168	-0.052
		(0.376)	(0.376)
Disorder		-0.155	-0.046
		(0.105)	(0.104)
Age			0.103
			(0.259)
Age^2			-0.002
			(0.004)
Black			-0.198
			(0.815)
Hispanic			-1.060
			(0.941)
Other Race/Ethnicity			-1.543
			(1.796)
Foreign Born			1.422**
			(0.697)
AFDC as Child			-0.912**
			(0.395)
Married			0.432
			(0.707)
Cohabiting			-0.336
			(0.480)
Pregnant			-1.942**
			(0.955)
Number of Children			-0.132
			(0.168)
Child Under Six			-0.003
			(0.437)

Table 18. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Child with Disability			-1.195***
			(0.458)
Trouble Und. English			-2.275***
			(0.840)
H.S. Diploma or GED			1.860***
			(0.367)
Associate's Degree			3.221***
			(0.941)
Self-Rated Health			1.126***
			(0.177)
CESD Depression			-0.061***
			(0.017)
Drinking			-0.125
			(0.262)
Drug Use			-3.266**
			(1.298)
Suffered Violence			-0.392
			(0.704)
Household Has a Car			2.197***
			(0.390)
Network Index			0.935**
			(0.384)
Trouble Find Housing			-0.399
			(0.419)
Subsidized Housing			0.394
			(0.410)
Rooms per Person			0.041
			(0.312)
Los Angeles			-1.467**
			(0.687)
Miami			-0.493
			(0.553)
Philadelphia			0.503
			(0.647)
Constant	14.594***	15.073***	11.176**
	(1.448)	(1.524)	(4.810)
Observations	3251	3188	3188
R-squared	0.008	0.008	0.090

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 18 again reveals the near-ubiquitous non-significance of neighborhood characteristics. The female joblessness rate and neighborhood car ownership are significant, but only at the $p \leq .10$ level. Adding in disorder and inter-tract movement does

little to improve the model, as neither one is significant. Other characteristics appear more important, including having received AFDC during childhood (a rough control for background socioeconomic status), which limits the number of months worked between waves. Coming from a family that received AFDC is related to working about one fewer month during the two year period. This is likely the result of other uncontrolled measures of disadvantage (family problems, soft skills, etc.) but also suggests that coming from a disadvantaged background, even when controlling for nearly all present circumstances, still exerts a constraining influence on one's employment prospects.

Consistent with findings in Chapter III, being foreign-born appears to slightly boost the number of months worked. This finding likely reflects the sheer necessity of employment among immigrant women, who are forced to take low quality jobs to meet subsistence needs and who are often ineligible for government aid (see Waldinger and Lichter 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). This approach to employment results in more employment continuity, but the next chapter will assess the quality of jobs procured. The more robust findings involve childcare responsibilities; the number of co-resident children matters little in predicting months employed as does having a child less than six years of age. However, having care of a disabled child decreases the number of months employed during the following two years by about five weeks, or slightly more than a month, and being pregnant in 1999 decreases the number of months worked during the next two years by about two.

Probably no set of variables relates as strongly to employment continuity as human capital. I operationalize human capital as both education (high school diploma or GED, Associate's Degree) and the ability to understand English well. And interestingly,

although being foreign-born is positively related to the number of months worked, trouble understanding English is significant and negative in direction; women who have trouble understanding English worked between two and three fewer months than women with no trouble. Therefore, the best case scenario appears to be being foreign born but having good command of the English language. Similarly, having a high school degree boosts the number of months worked by about two, and having an Associate's Degree tacks on an additional three to four months.

Better health also allows women to work more consistently; each additional point on the five-point health scale is related to one additional month worked, all else equal. By contrast, each point on the 60-point depression scale is related to about .06 fewer months worked. Therefore, a 20-point increase in the depression scale would correspond to about five fewer weeks of employment during the ensuing two years (1.2 months). Drug use also negatively affects employment continuity, with women reporting use of an illegal drug (besides marijuana) working more than three fewer months than women who do not use drugs. All told, depressed drug-using women with poor self-reported health could expect to work more than six fewer months than women without these health and substance abuse problems.

Although the neighborhood characteristics are not significant predictors of the number of months worked from 1999 to 2001, some spatially-related variables do prove significant. Having a car, for instance, increases the number of months worked by about two. And, living in Los Angeles results in working about six fewer weeks, all else equal. Given the findings regarding car ownership and local economies in Chapter III, these findings should not be surprising.

The network index proved entirely non-important in Chapter III, but here it emerges as significant at the $p<.05$ level. Each point on the three-point network index relates to nearly one extra month employed. This finding challenges many of the assumptions regarding the importance of networks. Research typically posits social networks as crucial for obtaining work (Elliott 1999; Granovetter 1983), but Table 18 suggests that at least for disadvantaged urban women, networks help to work more consistently through time, rather than providing information that aids in job acquisition, *per se*. These networks may help to alleviate some of the other barriers to employment, particularly childcare responsibilities. Furthermore, it augments the finding in Chapter III that higher rates of female-headedness are *positive* predictors of employment by suggesting that women depend heavily on family, friends and proximate neighbors to ease childcare responsibilities and provide other important resources (see Edin and Kefalas 2005; Stack 1974). Research also shows that hiring through networks reduces turnover, as employees are less likely to resign if their friends or relatives share the same workplace (Waldinger and Lichter 2003), making recruitment through social networks attractive to employers.

Using the equation for an OLS regression line, I take several of the more important factors (determined by the standardized coefficients, which are omitted) and predict the number of months worked for women with particular characteristics. In doing so, I hold all other variables constant at their means, using the "adjust" command in STATA. Recall that the equation for a regression line is

$$Y' = \alpha + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_iX_i\ldots + \varepsilon,$$

where α equals the intercept, b_1X_1 equals the effect of the first predictor and ε represents the error term. Using this equation, a woman who received AFDC during her own childhood, has no high school diploma, a 1 on the self-reported health index, a 50 on the 60-point depression index, lives in Los Angeles, and has no car, would have a predicted number of months of employment of:

Y'= 6.39 months

In other words, a woman with all of these barriers could be expected to work about six months out of 24, on average, or about one-quarter of the time. By contrast, let us evaluate the same equation for a woman who did not receive welfare during childhood, who holds a high school diploma, who reports a five on the self-reported health index, a 10 on the 60-point depression scale, who does not live in Los Angeles, and who has a car:

Y'= 19.79 months

Results of this calculation indicate that a woman with significantly better physical and mental health, access to a car, living in a better local economy and with more education would work about 20 months out of 24, or about 85 percent of the time. These equations present best-and-worst case scenarios for women in the Urban Change sample. The difference is salient; a 20-hour work week, even at minimum wage ($5.15 in 2000), would generate an income of about $412 per month. For someone working 6.39 months over a two year period, that would result in an income of about $2,636. Meanwhile, for someone working 19.79 months, her income would be around $8,153. While still meager and still below the income necessary to meet the subsistence needs for a family (or even an individual), the difference in income is substantial. For a 40-hour week, the latter

woman would earn an income slightly above the poverty line for the year 2000, whereas the woman facing more daunting barriers would not even approach the poverty line. At wages higher than the federal minimum, the difference would be even more pronounced and striking. Thus, in real terms the additive effect of multiple barriers can translate into a wide gulf in income and standard of living.

Job Changes

Andersson et al. (2005) find that the primary way low-wage workers increase earnings is by changing jobs. Job changes, they find, produce far more income mobility than lengthy job tenure at one place of employment. French et al. (2006:142) come to a similar conclusion. In a mixed-gender sample of disadvantaged workers, they find that earnings gains at job switches account for about one-third of early career earnings growth (the other two-thirds coming within jobs, via raises). During a single job-to-job switch, wages increase by about three percent (P. 154). On average, wages rise about three percent during a single job-to-job switch (if made directly, without an intervening spell of joblessness). These findings indicate that if disadvantaged female workers hope to achieve earnings growth and obtain self-sufficiency (as policymakers hoped that they would), job changes would logically need to be an important part of this mobility.

This, of course, contests one of the major assumptions of welfare's reformers: that job tenure is the primary mechanism by which women will and should achieve earnings mobility (Corcoran et al. 2000; Hays 2003). Even so, recall from Chapter I that this dissertation parts with many of traditional assumptions made by neoclassical economists, particularly those related to job-seekers as "rational" decision makers with full

information about opportunities that allow for a cost-benefit analysis. To sum up this viewpoint, Andersson et al. (2005:84) argue that there is a tradeoff between initial wage levels and wage growth, implying that that "an individual might need to forgo some of his or her initial earnings within any job in order to receive on-the-job training from the employer." Rather, I argue that these job changes are often the result of changing individual circumstances and problems that arise and force resignation or termination (i.e., loss of childcare, transportation or declining health) and lack the rational planning assumed by economists. Therefore, I explore the extent to which our already established barriers to employment help us to understand job changes and whether job changes are most commonly a strategy of upward mobility or as the result of unstable circumstances and mounting obstacles to employment. Table 19 presents three OLS regression models predicting the number of jobs a woman held from 1999 to 2001, with predictors from 1999.

Table 19. OLS Regression Predicting the Number of Jobs Held Between 1999 and 2001, Using 1999 Predictors.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Tract-Level Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Poverty	-0.189*	-0.180*	0.013
	(0.103)	(0.101)	(0.099)
Female-Headedness	0.222**	0.199**	-0.168
	(0.098)	(0.096)	(0.107)
Females Jobless	-0.612***	-0.576**	-0.198
	(0.232)	(0.228)	(0.222)
Moved, Last 5 Years	-0.161	-0.156	-0.216*
	(0.110)	(0.109)	(0.118)
Units Vacant	0.082	0.049	-0.063
	(0.054)	(0.055)	(0.056)
HH with Car	-0.076	-0.100	-0.076
	(0.118)	(0.118)	(0.135)

Table 19. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Homeownership	0.003	0.013	-0.015
	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.044)
Indiv.-Level Variables			
Moved btn. Waves		-0.257***	-0.160***
		(0.044)	(0.044)
Disorder		0.019	0.004
		(0.012)	(0.012)
Age			-0.101***
			(0.029)
Age^2			0.001***
			(0.000)
Black			0.052
			(0.112)
Hispanic			-0.114
			(0.122)
Other Race/Ethnicity			-0.040
			(0.207)
Foreign Born			-0.053
			(0.069)
AFDC as Child			-0.006
			(0.046)
Married			-0.012
			(0.081)
Cohabiting			0.006
			(0.052)
Pregnant			-0.071
			(0.121)
Number of Children			0.001
			(0.019)
Child Under Six			-0.018
			(0.049)
Child with Disability			-0.163***
			(0.052)
Trouble Und. English			-0.231***
			(0.070)
H.S. Diploma or GED			0.012
			(0.043)
Associate's Degree			-0.024
			(0.106)
Self-Rated Health			0.099***
			(0.020)
CESD Depression			-0.000
			(0.002)
Drinking			0.032
			(0.031)
Drug Use			-0.213
			(0.153)

Table 19. (continued).

Suffered Violence			-0.045
			(0.093)
Household Has a Car			0.144***
			(0.044)
Network Index			0.179***
			(0.051)
Trouble Find Housing			0.023
			(0.049)
Subsidized Housing			0.020
			(0.047)
Rooms per Person			-0.028
			(0.033)
Los Angeles			-0.458***
			(0.088)
Miami			-0.385***
			(0.065)
Philadelphia			-0.042
			(0.075)
Constant	1.181***	1.214***	3.108***
	(0.183)	(0.190)	(0.563)
Observations	3251	3188	3188
R-squared	0.016	0.028	0.117

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

According to Table 19, significant contextual results are highly dependent upon the other variables in the model. For instance, female-headedness is an important and positive contextual predictor of job-changes, but only until other variables are added to the model. Similarly, the female joblessness rate is an important negative predictor. Both of these effects disappear once individual controls are added. Even though Hannon (2005) and McNulty (2001) posit that female-headedness can and should be used as a marker of disadvantage (owing to the absence of traditional nuclear families), results indicate that neighborhoods with more female-headed (read: single-parent) households actually facilitate more job changes, at least in the neighborhood-only models. This finding may point to the network of single mothers that develops in such neighborhoods,

networks which can provide childcare, financial assistance, carpooling, or otherwise alleviate barriers (see Edin and Kefalas 2005; Edin and Lein 1997; Newman 1999) or provide information about opportunities which facilitates moving from one job to another (Granovetter 1983).

Other explanations include the intentional location of some employers in neighborhoods with large shares of women workers, hoping to capitalize on this low-cost, acquiescent labor pool. Hanson and Pratt (1995) find in their study of Worcester, Massachusetts that employers often used this strategy to access inexpensive labor. In the case of one industrial park, "a number of the Upper Burncoat employers had been attracted to the industrial park because of its proximity to the neighboring public housing project; they were aware of the indirect subsidies in the form of inexpensive housing and child care facilities" (P. 160). On a larger scale, "employers are drawn to certain districts because of the availability of workers with particular skills, household assets, and desired ethnic, gender, and work-based cultural characteristics" (P. 162). Therefore, the positive effect of female-headed household can either be explained by the presence of support networks or by the intentional location of employers in neighborhoods with more single-parent, female-headed households. The absence of other contextual effects points to very individual explanations of employment and employment changes.

The more robust neighborhood effect involves moving from one tract to another. Women who moved between tracts experienced fewer jobs, on average, than women who did not relocate. Although the ideal-type situation for reformers and policymakers involves relocating disadvantaged families from job-bereft areas to job-laden areas (programs such as Moving to Opportunity and Gautreaux), women who moved between

waves held fewer different jobs during the two year interim. Thus, to the extent that switching jobs can be seen as a strategy of upward mobility, moving blocks this mobility. This corroborates findings from Chapter III that moves were generally parallel moves, into neighborhoods no better in terms of poverty or joblessness than the neighborhoods of origin. In all likelihood, such moves are made as a result of housing instability, not strategic moves with an eye on better job opportunities.

For the first time in this manuscript, age proves important. The significance of the age-squared variable indicates a non-linear effect of age, as well. In other words, younger and older women worked fewer jobs, on average, than middle-aged women, however the very small coefficient for the age-squared variable indicates that the relationship between age and number of jobs held departs from linearity only slightly. In general, older women hold fewer jobs than younger women. Measures of human capital are also important, with a high school diploma slightly increasing the number of jobs held, while trouble understanding English in 1999 was a negative predictor of jobs held during the following two years. Women who had trouble speaking English (who are likely foreign born, although the model does include a control for nativity) experience fewer different employers. Given that they also worked fewer months (see Table 18), we can conclude that English proficiency helps women work more consistently but also change jobs and take advantage of new opportunities; women who do not speak English well may not have these same avenues for mobility available.

Marriage and family responsibilities stick out because of their insignificance. The only family-related variable that is significant is having a child with a disability (which is related to fewer jobs). This finding should be underscored due to its sharp contrast from

the employment models in the previous chapter. Although marriage and family responsibilities clearly affect employment (in strict employed versus jobless terms), no matter how it is modeled, there are no effects on job changes. To the extent that job changes encourage upward mobility and wage growth, this model finds no evidence that childcare responsibilities block such mobility. However, to the extent that job changes are a result of instability and changing circumstances, the model also indicates no evidence that childcare responsibilities contribute in this regard.

Other noteworthy findings indicate that access to a car increases the number of jobs held during the ensuing two years, as does better self-reported health. Interestingly, the network index is also significant and predictive of more jobs held. Each additional point on the network index (which has a range of 0 to 3) is related to holding about one-quarter of an additional job. Thus, the difference between having zero and three of the possible network indicators amounts to roughly one extra job during the ensuing two years period. This effect points to the importance of network contacts in facilitating job changes, and perhaps even providing information about new job opportunities (despite the theoretical inadequacy of the network indicators, as noted in Chapter II). Even though social networks had apparently no effect on transitioning between joblessness and employment (see Chapter III), they do appear to facilitate moving from one job to another.

The lack of significant predictors may have an alternative interpretation; perhaps coefficients in Table 19 are masking important relationships and are effectively over-conservative in nature. This may occur if the model pooled women who experienced job changes in two different contexts. On the one hand, we might expect that some switch

directly from one job to a better paying, more stable job. This is the sort of strategic move that Andersson et al. (2005) have in mind. On the other hand, a subset of women likely experienced the elimination of their position or were forced to leave in response to one or more of the barriers discussed earlier in this manuscript. This group likely experienced a bout of joblessness before finding a new job. In short, by pooling these groups, significant relationships are not visible. French, Mazmuder and Taber (2006) find that although job-to-job switches produce wage growth, switches with an intervening joblessness spell typically accompany a slight (three percent) drop in wages (P. 154). In other words, for those who cannot transition smoothly from one job to another, the new job typically pays less than the preceding job. This is far from the upward mobility that PRWORA's writers had in mind.

The Urban Change data omit a complete employment history and do not allow for the detection of intervening joblessness spells, but they do allow analysts to split the sample into those who experienced earnings growth and those who experienced earnings losses. Table 20 disaggregates women into these constituent groups. The first column contains an OLS model predicting job changes, like the one above, but only for women whose weekly earnings increased between 1999 and 2001. In the second column, I run this same regression model, but this time only for women whose weekly earnings decreased between waves. Yet, because an increase in earnings might amount to only a couple of dollars per week, I run similar regression models for women whose weekly earnings rose by more than $50 per week (column 3) and women whose incomes declined by more than $50 per week (column 4). These last two models represent cases

of extreme progress and extreme regression. A $50 increase in weekly earnings translates into $2,600 extra dollars per year, a substantial raise in pay.

Table 20. OLS Regression Models Predicting Number of Jobs Held, 1999-2001, for Four Groups of Women.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Tract-Level Variables	Increased Earnings	Decreased Earnings	Increased by $50+	Decreased by $50+
Poverty	0.155	-0.017	0.104	0.034
	(0.129)	(0.219)	(0.132)	(0.268)
Female-Headedness	-0.268*	-0.308	-0.016	-0.366
	(0.162)	(0.208)	(0.152)	(0.256)
Females Jobless	-0.508*	0.078	-0.336	0.195
	(0.286)	(0.541)	(0.285)	(0.629)
Moved, Last 5 Years	-0.224	0.336	-0.285*	0.125
	(0.155)	(0.268)	(0.169)	(0.309)
Units Vacant	-0.044	-0.163	-0.066	-0.169
	(0.067)	(0.148)	(0.074)	(0.179)
HH with Car	-0.348*	0.285	-0.260	0.229
	(0.182)	(0.286)	(0.183)	(0.330)
Homeownership	0.082	-0.163	0.113*	-0.117
	(0.055)	(0.105)	(0.058)	(0.120)
Indiv.-Level Varibles				
Moved btn. Waves	-0.179***	-0.341***	-0.157**	-0.454***
	(0.057)	(0.107)	(0.061)	(0.123)
Disorder	-0.007	0.012	-0.008	0.014
	(0.016)	(0.027)	(0.017)	(0.030)
Age	-0.133***	-0.175**	-0.135***	-0.199**
	(0.040)	(0.078)	(0.043)	(0.095)
Age^2	0.002***	0.002**	0.002***	0.002*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Black	0.080	0.128	-0.056	0.063
	(0.136)	(0.232)	(0.151)	(0.269)
Hispanic	-0.047	0.079	-0.135	0.078
	(0.147)	(0.246)	(0.165)	(0.285)
Other Race/Ethnicity	0.116	-0.112	0.103	-0.266
	(0.310)	(0.375)	(0.358)	(0.439)
Foreign Born	-0.210**	-0.062	-0.188*	-0.113
	(0.093)	(0.162)	(0.102)	(0.191)
AFDC as Child	-0.091	0.129	-0.056	0.090
	(0.061)	(0.110)	(0.066)	(0.129)
Married	-0.006	-0.031	0.015	-0.101
	(0.109)	(0.159)	(0.119)	(0.183)
Cohabiting	0.017	-0.028	0.012	0.060
	(0.070)	(0.121)	(0.075)	(0.137)

Table 20. (continued).

	Increased Earnings	Decreased Earnings	Increased by $50+	Decreased by $50+
Pregnant	-0.005	-0.393	0.038	-0.491*
	(0.140)	(0.280)	(0.146)	(0.263)
Number of Children	0.034	0.030	0.044	0.033
	(0.029)	(0.043)	(0.032)	(0.046)
Child Under Six	-0.039	-0.104	-0.089	-0.189
	(0.066)	(0.112)	(0.072)	(0.132)
Child with Disability	-0.051	0.021	-0.057	0.024
	(0.072)	(0.130)	(0.076)	(0.150)
Trouble Und. English	-0.133	-0.409**	-0.117	-0.482**
	(0.089)	(0.168)	(0.097)	(0.208)
H.S. Diploma or GED	-0.051	-0.222**	0.003	-0.181*
	(0.059)	(0.095)	(0.064)	(0.107)
Associate's Degree	-0.251*	0.081	-0.257**	0.073
	(0.131)	(0.227)	(0.127)	(0.289)
Self-Rated Health	0.018	-0.001	0.032	0.029
	(0.027)	(0.049)	(0.030)	(0.057)
CESD Depression	0.007**	0.001	0.007**	-0.000
	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.005)
Drinking	-0.008	0.095	0.011	0.034
	(0.042)	(0.064)	(0.046)	(0.074)
Drug Use	0.220	-0.815***	0.139	-0.851***
	(0.249)	(0.226)	(0.251)	(0.268)
Suffered Violence	-0.040	0.136	-0.011	0.234
	(0.126)	(0.297)	(0.136)	(0.333)
Household Has a Car	-0.000	0.064	-0.023	0.035
	(0.059)	(0.095)	(0.064)	(0.108)
Network Index	0.083	0.164	0.087	0.236*
	(0.066)	(0.124)	(0.070)	(0.133)
Trouble Find Housing	0.106	-0.238*	0.128*	-0.215
	(0.067)	(0.124)	(0.074)	(0.135)
Subsidized Housing	0.026	-0.140	0.036	-0.136
	(0.064)	(0.119)	(0.067)	(0.133)
Rooms per Person	0.039	-0.111*	0.041	-0.115*
	(0.047)	(0.063)	(0.053)	(0.065)
Los Angeles	-0.190	-0.673***	-0.053	-0.683***
	(0.116)	(0.201)	(0.122)	(0.242)
Miami	-0.274***	-0.428***	-0.227**	-0.407**
	(0.083)	(0.158)	(0.090)	(0.197)
Philadelphia	0.085	-0.117	0.139	-0.104
	(0.100)	(0.170)	(0.107)	(0.198)
Constant	3.687***	5.403***	3.861***	5.751***
	(0.749)	(1.458)	(0.805)	(1.701)
Observations	1549	541	1340	435
R-squared	0.088	0.186	0.088	0.189

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Results in Table 20 do not unequivocally confirm the presence of two different types of job changes; those experienced by upward-movers and those of downward movers. Instead, most of the coefficients are in the same direction for both groups. For example, changing census tracts (neighborhoods) between waves is associated with fewer job changes, both for women who increased their earnings during that period and for women whose earnings decreased. This result may suggest that women who change neighborhoods lose many of the place-based networks that could help them find new jobs, and also sacrifice their own knowledge of local job opportunities. For some women, it may also indicate a positive correlation between holding a steady job and moving; one moves with the security of stable employment and if a woman finds herself changing jobs frequently, moving might be less affordable or attractive. Similarly, living in Miami is associated with fewer job changes for all groups. However, other results suggest that there may have been two separate types of job changes. For example, reporting trouble understanding English is associated with holding fewer jobs, but only for those whose weekly earnings decreased between 1999 and 2001 and for those whose earnings decreased by more than $50. For those with increased earnings, trouble understanding English made no difference. Similarly, drug use is related to fewer job changes, but only for the group whose earnings decreased. By contrast, depression is positively related to job changes, but only for the group whose earnings increased. What does this mean?

Briefly, it provides modest evidence for two types of job changes; those that increased earnings and those that did not. For example, we typically think of drug use as a barrier to employment (confirmed in Chapter III), and drug use is predictive of fewer job changes for those whose earnings decreased. Logically, we would conclude that

changing jobs is a good thing. But, we also see that for the group whose earnings increased, depression (also typically thought of as a barrier to employment) is positively related to job changes. Therefore, job changes must be a bad thing. This finding alludes to the complexity of job changing; the former effect may be observed when women lose one job due to drug use and are not able to secure another, resulting in fewer overall changes. Similarly, because depression is a more chronic problem, but not necessarily one that employers screen for (the same way that they check for drug use), depression is predictive of bouncing from one job to another. In both of these cases, changing jobs is a detriment, but the observed effect is in two different directions. Even so, the fact that many coefficients are in the same direction for both groups suggests that there are not necessarily two types of job changes.

Job Tenure

Although the number of months employed and job changes both provide glimpses of how much disadvantaged women are working for pay, the question of how much women are actually working can also be addressed by looking at how long employed women have held their current jobs. In the United States at any point in time, a typical worker has been at the same employer for 6.7 years, which compares with about 10.6 years in the European Union. Unemployment is shorter in the U.S. than in Europe (three months versus two years) and average job tenure is longer, in part because the less "generous" social safety net does not permit lengthy bouts of joblessness (Freeman

2007:13).[21] First, I ask what factors are predictive of longer average job tenure, over a two-year period. The Urban Change administrators asked two questions that permit this analysis. First, they asked the number of months a woman has been employed during the past two years (see Table 18). Second, they asked the number of jobs (non-overlapping) she held during that time. By dividing the two numbers, I am able to construct a variable measuring the average length of time over a two-year period that a woman holds a job. On average, women report holding jobs for an average of about 12 months—a relatively long time. Table 21 presents the results of this regression model.

Table 21. OLS Regression Predicting Average Duration (in Months) of Each Job Held, 1999-2001.

		(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)	
Tract-Level Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Poverty	0.662	0.704	0.892
	(0.741)	(0.734)	(0.746)
Female-Headedness	-1.312*	-1.210*	-0.374
	(0.699)	(0.697)	(0.773)
Females Jobless	1.808	1.591	-0.374
	(1.606)	(1.583)	(1.575)
Moved, Last 5 Years	1.140	1.225	0.612
	(0.845)	(0.843)	(0.930)
Units Vacant	-0.239	-0.003	0.338
	(0.388)	(0.391)	(0.404)
HH with Car	1.363	1.215	1.075
	(0.870)	(0.883)	(1.117)
Homeownership	0.069	0.029	0.204
	(0.373)	(0.375)	(0.411)
Indiv.-Level Variables			
Moved btn. Waves		1.799***	0.952***
		(0.347)	(0.358)
Disorder		-0.234**	-0.052
		(0.097)	(0.099)
Age			0.452*
			(0.245)

[21] No previous studies discuss job tenure for employed women who left welfare following reform.

Table 21. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age^2			-0.005
			(0.003)
Black			-0.859
			(0.767)
Hispanic			-0.830
			(0.886)
Other Race/Ethnicity			-1.875
			(1.633)
Foreign Born			1.679**
			(0.674)
AFDC as Child			-0.417
			(0.373)
Married			0.913
			(0.668)
Cohabiting			-0.356
			(0.446)
Pregnant			-1.035
			(0.843)
Number of Children			0.017
			(0.160)
Child Under Six			-0.031
			(0.412)
Child with Disability			-0.010
			(0.430)
Trouble Und. English			0.129
			(0.858)
H.S. Diploma or GED			1.220***
			(0.344)
Associate's Degree			2.383***
			(0.896)
Self-Rated Health			0.091
			(0.170)
CESD Depression			-0.050***
			(0.016)
Drinking			-0.226
			(0.252)
Drug Use			-1.457
			(1.312)
Suffered Violence			0.514
			(0.699)
Household Has a Car			0.796**
			(0.366)
Network Index			-0.455
			(0.348)
Trouble Find Housing			-0.787**
			(0.392)
Subsidized Housing			0.182
			(0.389)

Table 21. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Rooms per Person			0.372
			(0.293)
Los Angeles			0.726
			(0.637)
Miami			1.674***
			(0.530)
Philadelphia			0.462
			(0.610)
Constant	13.574***	13.620***	3.569
	(1.347)	(1.412)	(4.527)
Observations	2782	2727	2727
R-squared	0.006	0.018	0.068

Notes: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Model excludes those who reported working zero jobs during the two year period, as it is impossible to divide the number of months employed by zero (and, logically, if someone holds zero jobs, they should not be employed for any number of months).

Model 1 in Table 21 supports many of the earlier findings regarding the importance of neighborhood characteristics. Once again, they are unimportant for predicting average duration of employment, even without individual controls. However, Model 2 indicates that changing census tracts (neighborhoods) between waves is a positive predictor of employment duration; women who move to a different neighborhood sometime between 1999 and 2001 work in each job during that time period for a lengthier duration. Because the independent and dependent variables happen contemporaneously, we cannot be sure of temporal ordering. Do women who hold jobs longer move more often, or does moving help women hold onto jobs longer? The mechanism at play is unclear; we know that the average move in the sample is a parallel move (i.e., into a neighborhood of similar advantage/disadvantage), not an upward move. On one hand, moving severs or strains place-based networks that can provide childcare or otherwise allow women to hold paid employment. On the other hand, moving can

introduce job-searchers to potential opportunities. Therefore, theory exists for both causal directions. Apart from this problem, the general pattern persists—women who move from one tract to another typically work longer for each employer, exhibiting more job security (or a lack of better opportunities). The coefficient for interviewer-observed disorder is also significant and women in more disordered neighborhoods do not hold their jobs for as long as women from less disordered neighborhoods. Although this effect is explained away by the addition of individual controls (Model 3), so the *cause* may not be disorder itself, the observable pattern remains that women in more disordered neighborhoods do not hold jobs for quite as long.

Beyond neighborhood characteristics, the other important findings involve housing and transportation. Women whose households own a car hold each job for about three weeks longer than women whose households do not. Similarly, women who report experiencing trouble finding housing hold each job for roughly three weeks less than women with stable housing arrangements. These findings indicate the importance of securing stable transportation and housing arrangements for maintaining work over time. By contrast, unstable housing situations and a lack of car ownership (i.e., less reliable and predictable means for framing daily life and commuting to work) limit how long women are able to hold onto paid employment.

Another, more direct, variable that can be used to measure job tenure is the number of days a woman has held her current job. This variable is computed from two separate questions; the date that women began their current job and the date of survey administration. What factors, measured in 1999, predict how long women who were employed in 2001 have held their current jobs?

Table 22. OLS Regression Predicting Number of Days Employed Woman Has Held Current Job, Using 1999 Predictors.

			(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)
Tract-Level Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Poverty	87.506	81.711	86.598
	(113.961)	(112.467)	(120.963)
Female-Headedness	-184.023*	-182.721*	-24.954
	(111.473)	(110.866)	(135.853)
Females Jobless	-77.910	-165.407	-366.209
	(291.456)	(281.898)	(275.985)
Moved, Last 5 Years	139.943	145.214	41.087
	(123.612)	(122.086)	(136.312)
Units Vacant	-8.114	15.016	106.674*
	(56.777)	(56.465)	(62.656)
HH with Car	-130.869	-75.369	184.207
	(158.844)	(163.373)	(216.590)
Homeownership	9.930	-4.796	-54.240
	(65.874)	(65.965)	(72.470)
Indiv.-Level Variables			
Moved btn. Waves		346.054***	204.793***
		(59.038)	(56.631)
Disorder		8.127	20.151
		(18.864)	(19.238)
Age			69.530
			(45.038)
Age^2			-0.497
			(0.660)
Black			-30.289
			(100.638)
Hispanic			-50.638
			(125.636)
Other Race/Ethnicity			-155.966
			(197.977)
Foreign Born			-51.221
			(118.719)
AFDC as Child			40.997
			(63.040)
Married			63.351
			(110.735)
Cohabiting			-21.814
			(70.511)
Pregnant			-63.458
			(109.565)
Number of Children			4.524
			(28.471)
Child Under Six			-154.317**
			(70.396)

Table 22. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Child with Disability			8.157
			(82.121)
Trouble Und. English			-37.364
			(151.775)
H.S. Diploma or GED			143.476**
			(63.291)
Associate's Degree			181.738
			(156.255)
Self-Rated Health			39.592
			(32.656)
CESD Depression			-2.653
			(2.964)
Drinking			-18.808
			(38.361)
Drug Use			-314.548
			(268.003)
Suffered Violence			20.624
			(129.109)
Household Has a Car			145.338**
			(63.710)
Network Index			-24.758
			(60.554)
Trouble Find Housing			-42.417
			(71.273)
Subsidized Housing			-73.564
			(69.142)
Rooms per Person			24.434
			(45.410)
Los Angeles			328.249**
			(129.712)
Miami			376.551***
			(88.100)
Philadelphia			319.483***
			(110.737)
Constant	988.202***	804.459***	-1,062.725
	(236.032)	(235.714)	(797.350)
Observations	2041	1998	1998
R-squared	0.002	0.017	0.076

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 22 models job tenure for women who are employed in 2001. Results in Table 22 indicate that the most important predictor of job tenure is the local labor market. Women in Los Angeles, Miami, and Philadelphia all have longer job tenure (by about

one year!) than women in Cleveland. Given that Chapter III established that employment prospects were particularly encouraging in Cleveland and markedly less so in Miami, this finding suggests that job tenure might indicate a lack of opportunities for mobility into better jobs. In Cleveland, tenure is shorter because women are more mobile and change jobs more frequently, corroborating results from Table 19 which indicate that women in Cleveland experience more job changes than women in Los Angeles and Miami. In other words, to the extent that changing jobs results in better pay and benefits (as Andersson et al. 2005 suggests that it does), women in Cleveland are able to take advantage of such changes. This means that they have less longevity at their current jobs than women in other cities, but given the literature suggesting that many of the jobs held by welfare leavers are dead-end jobs with inadequate pay and benefits (Edin and Lein 1997; Hays 2003; Newman 1999), longer job tenure may actually be disadvantageous.

Inter-neighborhood mobility also proves important; women who moved to a new tract between waves had held their current jobs by about 205 more days than women who did not move. Such mobility may help women maintain their current job, or alternatively, that moving is done in response to housing instability and therefore limits opportunities for job changes and upward mobility. In essence, it points to two competing possibilities and suggests an important question; does job tenure reflect the ability to keep a job through time (positive) or the inability to advance by locating a better job (negative)? The local labor market would suggest the latter, as we know that many other outcomes were better in Cleveland than the other three cities, yet women in Cleveland had less job tenure. This suggests that longer job tenure may reflect an inability to locate a better opportunity. The results for many other variables suggest that longer tenure may actually

be a good thing; car ownership and a high school diploma both increase job tenure. In short, this model leaves some important questions unanswered. Principally, it leaves us wondering about the ability of longer job tenure to bring upward mobility. Although this issue is examined more thoroughly in Chapter V, the following model will attempt to arrive at a preliminary answer.

Weekly Working Hours

To reiterate, the goal of this chapter is to answer the "how much" question; once we have established whether and to what extent disadvantaged women are employed, the task becomes assessing how much they are working for pay. The preceding two sections looked at employment continuity and job changes over a two-year period. This section narrows the focus on the number of hours that employed women are working in a given week. Urban Change administrators asked sampled women how many hours they typically worked per week, allowing for an analysis of the factors predictive of the number of hours per week worked. Respondents reported an average of slightly less than 35 hours per week in 1999 and slightly less than 38 hours in 2001.

We know that in nationally representative samples, researchers find that about one-in-six workers holds part-time employment, and about 25 percent of those workers do so involuntarily, preferring full-time work (Quigley 2003:62). Tilly (1996:48) finds that many of these involuntary part-time workers can be categorized as "secondary part-time jobs," characterized by few skill requirements, poor pay, and little prospect of advancement. Employers use these jobs to attract workers, such as housewives and students, who will accept minimal compensation. They also attract workers with few

better options, leaving a segment of the secondary part-time workforce as involuntarily part-time. Tilly contrasts these jobs with "retention part-time jobs," which have skill requirements and compensation levels comparable to or above those of full-timers, but are created by employers to retain valued skilled employees who desire fewer hours and may otherwise resign. Depending on local and state-level policies, some women voluntarily choose to work fewer hours. Seccombe and Hoffman (2007:138; 157) find that some women worked fewer hours than they needed (or desired) so that they would remain eligible for medical benefits, which they consider to be of the utmost importance. Remaining under the income cut-off often meant sacrificing hours. Even so, controlling for welfare receipt would be extremely problematic, as the use of programs such as TANF or Food Stamps will logically be correlated with other types of disadvantage, many not included in the model. In effect, it will blur the extent to which women are really "choosing" to work fewer hours in order to remain eligible. Therefore, I proceed cautiously under the assumption that women desire as many hours as possible, owing to the numerous barriers that many face.

Table 23 begins unpacking these dynamics by revealing the cross-sectional predictors of the number of hours employed in 2001(only for the portion of the sample who report being employed, of course). Here I rely on cross-sectional estimates because the number of hours worked at any given time will be much more dependent on current situations than on past circumstances. Even this cross-sectional model incorporates some degree of temporality-- beyond including the variable for whether women changed census tracts between waves, I also add the number of days women have held their current jobs (the same variable modeled in Table 22) and the number of jobs women held

between 1999 and 2001 (modeled in Table 19). In doing so, I test whether longer job tenure or the number of job changes help us understand who works more hours, controlling for all other variables in the model.

Table 23. Cross-Sectional OLS Regression Models Predicting Number of Hours Worked Per Week in 2001.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Tract-Level Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Poverty	-0.146	0.003	0.445	0.511
	(0.924)	(0.924)	(0.976)	(0.969)
Female-Headedness	-0.572	-0.629	-0.719	-0.717
	(0.987)	(0.991)	(1.132)	(1.114)
Females Jobless	-3.297	-3.178	-4.249**	-4.271**
	(2.123)	(2.126)	(2.072)	(2.038)
Moved, Last 5 Years	1.609	1.552	2.090*	2.252*
	(1.138)	(1.144)	(1.191)	(1.179)
Units Vacant	0.139	0.130	-0.057	0.076
	(0.583)	(0.593)	(0.627)	(0.616)
HH with Car	-0.576	-0.778	-2.519	-1.928
	(1.267)	(1.270)	(1.627)	(1.627)
Homeownership	0.450	0.463	0.916	0.745
	(0.517)	(0.521)	(0.591)	(0.595)
Indiv.-Level Variables				
Moved btn. Waves		-0.827	-0.602	-0.471
		(0.520)	(0.553)	(0.546)
Disorder		-0.054	0.003	0.051
		(0.145)	(0.144)	(0.144)
Age			0.053	0.072
			(0.379)	(0.371)
Age^2			-0.003	-0.003
			(0.005)	(0.005)
Black			0.069	-0.161
			(1.360)	(1.356)
Hispanic			-0.942	-1.003
			(1.450)	(1.438)
Other Race/Ethnicity			2.649	2.623
			(3.093)	(3.209)
Foreign Born			1.713*	1.578
			(1.037)	(1.000)
AFDC as Child			0.128	0.247
			(0.533)	(0.520)
Married			0.765	0.748
			(0.857)	(0.830)
Cohabiting			0.053	-0.123
			(0.695)	(0.678)
Pregnant			-0.387	-1.127
			(1.882)	(1.894)

Table 23. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Number of Children			-0.254	-0.216
			(0.230)	(0.226)
Child Under Six			0.288	0.562
			(0.587)	(0.569)
Child with Disability			-0.686	-0.643
			(0.739)	(0.737)
Trouble Und. English			-0.379	-0.339
			(1.207)	(1.167)
H.S. Diploma or GED			2.017***	2.110***
			(0.547)	(0.538)
Associate's Degree			1.101	1.012
			(1.292)	(1.267)
Self-Rated Health			0.170	0.052
			(0.266)	(0.258)
CESD Depression			-0.010	-0.008
			(0.025)	(0.024)
Drinking			0.270	0.222
			(0.306)	(0.306)
Drug Use			-2.182	-2.339
			(1.999)	(2.049)
Suffered Violence			0.029	0.092
			(1.105)	(1.106)
Household Has a Car			1.546***	1.207**
			(0.525)	(0.514)
Network Index			0.547	0.364
			(0.546)	(0.546)
Trouble Find Housing			-0.077	-0.005
			(0.581)	(0.575)
Subsidized Housing			-1.156**	-1.020*
			(0.563)	(0.546)
Rooms per Person			0.062	0.038
			(0.389)	(0.368)
Los Angeles			0.231	0.912
			(0.952)	(0.944)
Miami			-1.618**	-1.202
			(0.758)	(0.753)
Philadelphia			-1.249	-0.708
			(0.872)	(0.875)
Job Tenure (Days)			-0.000*	-0.000*
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Num. Jobs, 2 Yrs			-0.429*	-0.332
			(0.260)	(0.263)
Hourly Wage			-0.161*	-0.187**
			(0.090)	(0.088)
Hours Worked, 1999				0.170***
				(0.025)
Constant	36.726***	37.295***	38.865***	33.066***
	(1.901)	(1.987)	(7.126)	(7.180)
Observations	2059	2024	2011	2011
R-squared	0.007	0.008	0.048	0.085

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 23 indicates that we know comparatively less about the number of hours worked in a given week than we know about employment continuity or job changes. This conclusion is confirmed both by the surprising number of non-significant coefficients, and also by the remarkably low R-squared values (.061 in the most comprehensive model). Thus, even with the lengthy list of predictors, we still explain only about six percent of the variation in the number of weekly hours worked. This likely means that working hours have less to do with the salience of various barriers and much more to do with the demand-side of the labor market; in Tilly's (1996) secondary jobs, employers dictate how many hours one can work.

Despite the low explanatory power of the models, the significant coefficients do reveal some interesting patterns. First, similar to earlier models, any significant neighborhood effects disappear with the addition of individual variables. In the first two models, neighborhood mobility is significant and positive; women in high-mobility neighborhoods work more hours per week than women in low-mobility neighborhoods. But, this effect is explained away by the other variables added to the model.

Secondly, although we may suspect that childcare responsibilities limit the number of hours women work, none of the childcare variables are significant. This finding calls into question the importance of childcare responsibilities as a barrier to full-time employment. Given this finding, I question whether women were choosing fewer hours in response to childcare needs. Even having a child with a disability, which is undoubtedly very time-consuming, is insignificant. To the extent that it is possible for a non-significant finding to be meaningful, I would underscore the meaningfulness of this

result. The non-significant family characteristics point to the critical need for employment income in the post-welfare-reform era. In the past, where women could opt out of paid employment limit their hours in order to care for children, they appear no longer able to do so. Instead, women in the sample are working as many hours as employers give them, regardless of the number of children they have, ages of children, disability status of children, or presence/absence of a male partner.

Similarly, having a high school diploma increases the number of hours worked by slightly less than three hours per week. Not surprisingly, car ownership boosts working hours by a modest one-and-a-half hours per week, though neighborhood car ownership is entirely unimportant. Coupled with the significant effects of neighborhood car ownership in Chapter III this finding suggests that neighborhood car ownership may indeed be important for finding a job but does not help women remain employed through time, change jobs, or work more hours per week in their current job. This makes logical sense because it is possible to borrow a neighbor's vehicle on occasion to search for jobs, but unpredictable work schedules and long commutes limit daily carpooling options and render neighborhood car ownership unimportant for maintaining work. This conclusion finds support in the work of Seccombe and Hoffman (2007), who find that poor women have many options for emergency car access should a health emergency arise—in emergencies neighbors are generous with their vehicles-- but options for daily vehicle use are much more limited. For daily commutes, the onus shifts to whether a woman owns a car herself. This finding once again suggests the inability for women to control the number of hours they are allotted. Although owning a vehicle allows a worker to arrive at work on time more easily, travel greater distances to work (Ong 1996; Blumenberg and

Ong 2001), the ease with which she is able to travel fails to permit her to work more hours (and therefore, increase earnings). Car ownership may be predictive of higher earnings (to be determined in the following chapter), but if that were the case, any significant effects would logically be the result of car ownership facilitating job searches, not of permitting women to work more hours per week.

Also included in Table 23 are measures of job tenure (how long a woman has held her current job) and the number of different employers she has held during the past two years. Policymakers argued that once women who utilized AFDC/TANF found jobs, they would eventually work their way into steadier, higher quality jobs. Although the quality will be assessed later, here I ask whether job tenure helped women work more hours per week. Conversely, some labor economists (i.e., Andersson et al. 2005) contend that job changes provide the best opportunities for workers, rather than loyalty. Each job change, if strategic and well-timed, will yield more steady work and better wages. This model yields no evidence for their theory. Job tenure is significant at the .10 level, but negative in direction, meaning that women who have held their current job longer work *fewer* hours than women who have just started working for their current employer. Although the effect is marginally insignificant, there appears to be a very slight penalty for loyalty, not a reward. Alternatively, the effect could suggest that women with more job tenure (and higher wages) utilize this to limit the number of hours worked in order to care for children. However, the model controls for hourly wage and for childcare and family responsibilities, suggesting that a very small penalty for job tenure persists. Similarly, women who have changed jobs more often do not work more (or fewer) hours per week than women with fewer job changes. Coupled with the low R-squared value

(especially given the exhaustive list of predictors utilized) these results a great deal of randomness in women's working hours, perhaps due to employers' needs at particular times.

Table 24 models the same dependent variable, but uses change scores as predictors. Thus, I ask how changes in various circumstances from 1999 to 2001 affect the number of hours worked at the conclusion of this period. Did having a child, gaining access to a car or declining health decrease the number of hours that women were able to work? Importantly, in Model 4 I add a lagged endogenous variable to control for the number of hours worked in 1999 and also to model change in the dependent variable.

Table 24. OLS Regression Models Predicting Number of Hours Worked Per Week in 2001, Using Change Scores and Lagged Endogenous Variable.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Tract-Level Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Δ in % Poor	-1.050	-1.107	-0.879	-0.825
	(0.947)	(0.957)	(0.953)	(0.937)
Δ in % Female Headed	-0.176	-0.790	-0.482	-0.562
	(1.101)	(1.110)	(1.078)	(1.068)
Δ in % Fem. Unemp.	0.003	-0.030	-0.215	0.081
	(2.227)	(2.230)	(2.116)	(2.087)
Δ in % Moved, 5 Years	2.456**	2.072*	1.688	1.636
	(1.191)	(1.235)	(1.234)	(1.214)
Δ in % Units Vacant	0.487	0.572	0.269	0.373
	(0.635)	(0.650)	(0.628)	(0.625)
Δ in % HHs with Car	-1.701	-2.608	-2.923*	-2.402
	(1.637)	(1.712)	(1.663)	(1.691)
Δin % Homeownership	1.371**	1.488**	1.398**	1.352**
	(0.679)	(0.706)	(0.693)	(0.687)
Individual-Level Variables				
Moved btn. Waves		-0.919*	-0.761	-0.585
		(0.511)	(0.561)	(0.556)
Δ in Disorder Index		0.058	0.076	0.092
		(0.110)	(0.112)	(0.112)
Age			-0.115	-0.105
			(0.382)	(0.375)
Age^2			-0.001	-0.001
			(0.005)	(0.005)

Table 24. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Black			0.265	-0.027
			(1.324)	(1.327)
Hispanic			-1.153	-1.216
			(1.463)	(1.461)
Other Race/Ethnicity			2.875	2.973
			(3.161)	(3.251)
Foreign Born			1.405	1.260
			(1.078)	(1.035)
Welfare as Child			-0.177	-0.078
			(0.545)	(0.534)
Became Married			2.489	2.526*
			(1.537)	(1.496)
Got Divorced			2.089	1.683
			(1.712)	(1.726)
Continually Married			-1.250	-1.315
			(1.600)	(1.561)
Began Cohabiting			-0.234	-0.467
			(0.778)	(0.756)
Stopped Cohabiting			-0.656	-1.092
			(1.028)	(0.995)
Continually Cohabiting			-0.337	-0.475
			(1.354)	(1.326)
Became Pregnant			-0.258	-1.137
			(1.949)	(1.965)
No Longer Pregnant			1.206	1.259
			(1.850)	(1.819)
Δ in Number of Children			-0.436	-0.441
			(0.329)	(0.322)
Gained a Child Under Six			0.245	0.775
			(1.647)	(1.568)
Lost a Child Under Six			-0.135	-0.288
			(0.669)	(0.671)
Continually Child Under Six			0.132	0.346
			(0.642)	(0.633)
Gained Care for Disabled Child			0.016	0.230
			(0.909)	(0.949)
Lost Care for Disabled Child			0.226	0.431
			(0.861)	(0.854)
Continually Cared Dis. Child			-1.127	-1.069
			(1.097)	(1.062)
New Trouble Und. English			-1.292	-0.269
			(2.496)	(2.562)
Overcame Trb. Und. English			-0.460	0.335
			(3.190)	(2.228)
Constant Trouble Und. English			-0.231	-0.238
			(1.245)	(1.188)
H.S. Diploma or GED			1.567***	1.532***
			(0.523)	(0.516)

Table 24. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Associate's Degree			2.470*	2.298*
			(1.328)	(1.265)
Δ in Health			0.287	0.201
			(0.237)	(0.234)
Δ in Depression			0.011	0.010
			(0.023)	(0.022)
Began Drinking Alcohol			-0.514	-0.519
			(0.764)	(0.751)
Stopped Drinking Alcohol			-0.849	-1.214
			(0.799)	(0.788)
Continual Alcohol use			1.421*	1.360*
			(0.796)	(0.778)
Began Using Drugs			-0.097	-0.275
			(2.227)	(2.262)
Stopped Using Drugs			-1.878	-1.336
			(3.029)	(2.858)
Continual Drug Use			-1.533	-1.837
			(3.030)	(3.403)
Began Suffering Violence			-0.052	0.206
			(1.223)	(1.230)
Stopped Suffering Violence			-0.198	-0.075
			(1.217)	(1.172)
Continual Violence			-0.843	-0.878
			(2.531)	(2.622)
Gained Access to Car			1.462**	1.279*
			(0.674)	(0.666)
Lost Access to Car			1.230	0.697
			(0.920)	(0.912)
Continual Access to Car			2.563***	1.824**
			(0.729)	(0.709)
Δ in Network Index			-0.313	-0.479
			(0.410)	(0.405)
New Trb Finding Housing			-0.512	-0.433
			(0.748)	(0.735)
Overcame Trb Finding Housing			-0.115	0.191
			(0.685)	(0.683)
Continual Trb Finding Housing			0.091	0.243
			(0.819)	(0.795)
Gained Subsidized Housing			-1.836**	-1.789**
			(0.892)	(0.889)
Lost Subsidized Housing			-0.013	0.158
			(0.927)	(0.920)
Continual Subsidized Housing			-0.856	-0.719
			(0.645)	(0.626)
Δ in Rooms per Person			0.025	0.060
			(0.316)	(0.323)
Los Angeles			-0.747	-0.119
			(0.765)	(0.757)

Table 24. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Miami			-1.517**	-1.144*
			(0.689)	(0.685)
Philadelphia			0.228	0.552
			(0.701)	(0.699)
Job Tenure			-0.000**	-0.000**
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Num Jobs, 2 Yrs.			-0.336	-0.250
			(0.252)	(0.259)
Hourly Wage			-0.169*	-0.186**
			(0.088)	(0.087)
Hours Worked, 1999				0.167***
				(0.026)
Constant	37.526***	38.001***	43.630***	37.505***
	(0.238)	(0.370)	(6.936)	(6.978)
Observations	2059	1988	1975	1975
R-squared	0.009	0.012	0.059	0.093

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Results in Table 24 indicate that childcare and family responsibilities do not explain working hours. Because none of the changes in family characteristics or childcare responsibilities are significant predictors, either of static employment or employment changes, we might conclude that women who work fewer hours do not do so voluntarily and make job-family tradeoffs in response to a heavy childcare burden, as some of the literature suggests (see Menino and Brayfield 2002). Rather, other factors are at work limiting the number of hours worked. The significant coefficients for having a high school diploma and for continual car access (which increases the number of weekly hours worked by between two and three) indicates that working more hours is less of a choice than some literature suggests (see Seccombe and Hoffman 2007). It does support the work of Edin and Lein (1997) who find that women often could not predict

how many hours they would work the following week. Like Edin and Lein, I find a great deal of randomness (confirmed by the low R-squared values) in working hours. Women who can work more hours for pay (those who have more human capital and more reliable transportation) do work more hours.

Much like Table 23, none of the tract-level variables remain significant once individual controls are added. Indeed only one tract-level variable begins as significant, and only at the .10 level. However, moving between waves appears to decrease the number of hours worked in 2001. Once again we see the destabilizing effect of moving to a new tract, rather than the strategic moves suggested by the literature as a means of upward mobility. The only other finding that may be deemed contextual involves residence in subsidized housing. Women who gained subsidized housing between waves worked about three fewer hours per week than similar woman who live in private housing. This finding likely relates to the concentration of subsidized housing (including public housing and Section 8 units) in neighborhoods without as many opportunities. The opportunities that do exist do not provide as many hours for each employee because of high demand and low supply. Other explanations include a culture that deemphasizes employment and instead emphasizes childcare (Wilson 1996; Edin and Kefalas 2005). More generally, it suggests that the women who moved into public housing between 1999 and 2001 represent a particularly disadvantaged subset of the population and one that probably also suffers from numerous uncontrolled barriers to employment. Whether these women will use the housing stability provided by subsidized housing as an avenue for upward mobility remains to be seen, but at least in the short term they experienced a penalty in terms of working hours. As Sanchez-Jankowski (2008:84) points out, the

causal arrow also runs the other way, of course; "as the local job opportunities in production declined, many people who held these jobs found themselves unemployed, underemployed, and/or without social and medical benefits. A significant number of these individuals were forced to move into the projects to compensate for income lost." Thus, although subsidized housing (particularly high-rise public housing) has indeed been found to erode employment prospects for residents (Reingold et al. 2001) it also takes on residents who face employment troubles to begin with.

The final model in Table 24 adds a lagged endogenous variable, meaning that the model utilizes changes in characteristics to predict *changes* in working hours from 1999 to 2001. The most obvious finding is the significance of the lagged endogenous variable itself, which is positive. Therefore, women who worked more hours in 1999 were more likely to see increases in working hours during the next two years than women who worked fewer hours. Put more simply, working hours have a certain momentum, above and beyond individual and neighborhood characteristics, whereby more working hours in 1999 is related to more working hours in 2001. Indeed, adding the lagged endogenous variable increases the r-squared from .075 to .119, meaning that prior weekly working hours alone explains about three or four percent of the variation in current working hours, nearly one-third of the total variation accounted for by the model. This finding provides some support for reformers who assumed that once women were hired, they would gradually work more hours, earn higher wages, and move into self-sufficiency. However, this perspective still ignores whether many of these women should be working more hours, given health considerations and childcare responsibilities.

Once again, women appear to pay a penalty for lengthier job tenure; women who have held their jobs longer work fewer hours, on average, than women who started their jobs more recently. The same finding appears in the lagged endogenous model, whereby women who have held their current job longer saw less of an increase in working hours between waves. These effects are significant at $p<.05$ and persist even with the inclusion of hourly wage. Therefore, women are not necessarily limiting hours once they have built up job tenure and higher wages, but actually do pay a price for loyalty in terms of working hours. In order to highlight differences in working hours for women with combinations of barriers to employment, I calculate a regression equation from the regression coefficients in Model 3 in Table 24 (without the lagged endogenous variable). First, I calculate a best-case scenario, for a woman who did not change tracts between waves, has a high school diploma, continual access to a vehicle, did not move into subsidized housing between waves, lives in Cleveland, and has just started her current job. Once again, all other variables are held at their means using the "Adjust" command in STATA.

$$Y' = 41.13$$

The equation indicates that a woman with these characteristics would actually work *more* than full-time—about 41 hours per week. Yet, as we will see below, this number drops dramatically when we move that woman to a new tract between waves, take away her diploma, remove her car access, move her into subsidized housing and to Miami, and give her a job tenure of 2 years (730 days).

$$Y' = 33.32$$

Changing these characteristics decreased her predicted weekly working hours by around 8 hours, to about 33 hours per week. Much like the predicted probabilities in Chapter III, this finding is surprising to the extent that a woman with several daunting barriers to employment is still able to work a surprising number of hours (or, in the case of Chapter III, she has a surprisingly high predicted probability of employment). This calculation, more than anything else, demonstrates the perseverance that many women exhibit in the post-reform era. Those without substantial barriers to employment typically work more than full-time, while those with several daunting barriers to employment still approach full-time employment. This finding corroborates indications that formerly welfare-reliant women are more commonly working now that means-tested aid has dwindled (Corcoran et al. 2000), but the quality of such jobs remains a hot topic of contention and one in need of more systematic examination.

Discussion

With a few notable exceptions, the analyses in this chapter suggest that neighborhood context matters little for employment continuity and working hours once relevant individual controls are taken into account. That said, the fact that many neighborhood effects are better explained by individual controls may obscure the larger point that women in objectively "worse" neighborhoods do indeed have worse employment outcomes. This conclusion becomes apparent by assessing Model 1 in each table, the neighborhood-only model. For example, results indicate that women in high joblessness neighborhoods experience fewer job changes, while women in high female-

headedness neighborhood experience more. Similarly, women in high mobility neighborhoods hold jobs longer than women in low-mobility neighborhoods, but there is no evidence that this job tenure is particularly advantageous or particularly damaging. Some women likely possess short job tenure because they leave one job for a better quality job, while other women leave their jobs because of workplace conflict, childcare, health, or transportation issues. However, sorting these women proves particularly difficult, as administrators asked no questions about the context of job changes. Women in disadvantaged neighborhoods do differ in terms of employment outcomes than women in more advantaged neighborhoods, but this effect has more to do with the clustering of individual disadvantage than the emergent "effect" of place. Even if these effects disappear with the addition of relevant covariates, the patterns are still observable and speak to existing spatial inequalities.

One of the most striking findings involves the role of networks in allowing disadvantaged women to perform more work for pay. Results indicate that having more network contacts allows women to work more months over a two year period (Table 18) and to hold more jobs during that same period (Table 19). To the extent that working more consistently and changing jobs more frequently help women gain income, having larger social networks appears to help. The explanation for this effect is relatively simple; a core group of family or friends can provide transportation, childcare, financial assistance, food, housing, or a number of other commodities which free women to pursue paid employment and, importantly, to arrive to work on-time each day. That networks do not help us understand how many hours per week women work suggests the demand-driven side nature of working hours.

The low explanatory power of the models suggests a great deal of randomness in women's work situations. However, as much of the qualitative work in this field suggests, this lack of explanatory power cannot simply be attributed to randomness or noise, but points to women as responsive to the demand side of the labor market; when demand is high (for their particular skills), they work more months/hours/jobs for pay (see Hays 2003; Newman 1999; Edin and Lein 1997). Conversely, when demand is low, they may not work as consistently—or at all. Although individual circumstances matter, they appear to matter less than employer demand. As Economist and Nobel Laureate Robert Solow once wrote, "There is absolutely no reason to believe our economy holds a substantial number of unfilled vacancies for unqualified workers" (Quigley 2003:56). Therefore, I argue that much of the unexplained variation can be attributed to employer preferences and (a lack of) demand for low-skilled labor. Unfortunately, conceptualizing, recording, mapping, and quantifying employer demand is onerous and expensive, although at least one post-welfare-reform study has attempted to do so, but only for one city (Bania et al. 2008).

These findings speak directly to PRWORA's mandates and underlying assumptions. That disadvantaged women's work activity is extremely responsive to changes in the economy (see Blank and Danziger 2006, various authors) underscores the futility of removing safety net programs in order to provide motivation for disadvantaged women to seek employment. This strategy would be effective only if motivation (or economic rationality as Murray [1984] posits) was indeed the factor keeping many women out of the labor market and on AFDC/TANF and also if employment opportunities were abundant. But, the low explanatory power of many of the above

models, coupled with the non-significance of salient family characteristics, suggests that women are not simply choosing not to work for pay in order to care for families. Nor are they blocked entirely by individual barriers and disadvantage as other existing research implies (Danziger et al. 2000). Rather, they work for pay (and work more hours) when the stars align and jobs become available for workers with their levels of education and within a commutable distance (either by car or bus, depending on availability).

The preceding image carries implications in terms of the dialectical relationship between structure and agency. Although reformers viewed welfare-reliant women as agentic—as choosing to receive AFDC/TANF and eschewing employment—these empirical models paint them as reactive and responsive to a larger social structure; a number of factors, most beyond their individual control, need to congeal in order to permit steady employment over time. Despite including *every* common explanation for employment, these models still explain only about 10 percent of the variation. The recognition of demand-side constraints explains the seemingly punitive nature of welfare reform; its proponents viewed the policy as punishing women who received welfare without working (at worst) or motivating them to choose work (at best)—the same objectives undertaken by the English Poor Law more than 400 years earlier (see Patterson 2000). To that end, the policy is dependent on an agentic view of disadvantaged women's social worlds.

As Sewell (1992:20) points out, "agency arises [only] from the actor's control of resources, which means the capacity to reinterpret or mobilize an array of resources in terms of schemas other than those constituted in the array." We know that this particular group commanded very few resources that would allow them to freely choose

employment, as policymakers suggested they must. As Hays (1994) points out, social structure is durable, powerful, and not subject to the whims or actions of a few individuals, particularly those with few resources. At the same time, structure is not entirely exogenous. It is created by someone (or some group) for an explicit purpose (although some aspects of social structure can certainly be partly unintentional and emergent). This perspective highlights the inability of many women affected by welfare reform to change its mandates. Instead, they could only respond by seeking employment, where available, and attempting to stave off material hardship. But, a specific group, with specific interests and command over more resources, enacted the law. Therefore, to understand the employment patterns of disadvantaged women, particularly many of the patterns we observe above, we must understand the location of women affected by the legislation within a policy context and social structure created and perpetuated by legislators making faulty assumptions about women's individual situations, abilities for exerting agency, and the overall limitations of the economy.

Even if we cast the work trajectories of these women as agentic, we cannot ignore structure. Copious research finds that welfare-reliant women and other inner-city residents hold traditional value orientations about the inherent value of paid employment (Monroe and Tiller 2001; Newman 1999:98; Edin and Lein 1997:78; Wilson 1996:67). But, even if agents are motivated to find and maintain employment, this motivation often cannot change the structure already in place, in this case the demand for labor. Focusing on these women as free agents simply in need of motivation or work ethics ignores the reality that many wish to hold paid employment, but even if they are able to overcome

personal barriers to employment, can do little about the demand for labor and the quality of available jobs.

Although we now understand how individual characteristics and neighborhood conditions enabled and constrained women to work more or less consistently for pay, the arguably more important question involves the extent to which formerly welfare-reliant women have found their way into "good" jobs, capable of supporting a family and avoiding hardship. The following chapter poses this problem and attempts to uncover the reasons why many women have not.

CHAPTER V

WORKING BUT POOR?

ACCESS TO DESIRABLE, HIGH QUALITY EMPLOYMENT

[Women] made repeated efforts to attain self-sufficiency through work, but the kinds of work they could get paid too little, offered too little security in the short term, and provided few opportunities over time...Mothers who chose to work were even worse off in material terms than their welfare counterparts. To "make it" while working, one had to be very lucky.
(Edin and Lein 1997:220)

Maternity leave, sick leave, and paid vacation are touted as bad for business, and are relegated to the realm of personal problems, rather than as social problems. Low-income workers are not outranged because they have come to believe the view that these are "fringe" benefits, not necessarily remuneration for a job.
(Seccombe and Hoffman 2007:111)

Upon PRWORA's passage, legislators assumed that any job was a good job and the key policy challenge involved finding a way to get welfare-reliant women into paid employment. Very little discussion tackled the issue of whether available job opportunities for low-skilled job seekers were of high enough quality, in terms of pay and benefits, to support exiting women and their dependents. Indeed, the wording of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act entirely avoids the issue of job quality. Haskins (2001:106) contends that this omission results from the widely held Republican belief that there is no such thing as a lousy job and that any job is preferable to welfare.

Job quality should be of central importance to any study of recent welfare-leavers. Although Table 10 indicates a general movement toward employment between 1999 and

2001 (even taking into account many barriers to employment) and even though Chapter IV reveals a shift to more weekly working hours, we do not yet know if women were working in positions with sufficient wages and benefits to support themselves and their children. Are these women who transitioned to employment working in "good jobs"? Many argue that they are not. Using data from the Urban Change study, Scott et al. (2004) find that the average monthly income for women was $996 in 1999 and $1,229 in 2001. Although this increase outpaces inflation (about three percent per year), it amounts to only $11,952 per year in 1999 and $14,748 in 2001, below the 2001 poverty threshold for a family of four of $18,022 (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). This, of course, assumes work during all 12 months, and as Chapter IV demonstrated, many women do not work during each and every month of the year. Even if they did work all 12 months, these yearly income figures are both below the poverty line for a family of four and are generally insufficient to raise and support a family in the cities studied. Indeed, they found that "stable employment and [even] large income gains do not bring positive changes to family life" (Pp. 70-72). Why not? This chapter seeks to answer this fundamental question and in doing so, it covers several important measures of job quality.

The causes are complicated, but they begin with large-scale macroeconomic trends that have left inner-city neighborhoods bereft of opportunities for quality employment. In the 1970s and 1980s "older factories that once employed thousands of well-paid, unionized workers were replaced by new, capital-intensive plants where a few workers operated automated, continuous-flow production lines monitored by computers assisted by robots. Employment in manufacturing plummeted, especially in older urban areas" (Massey 2007:31; discussed in even more detail by Wilson 1996). These jobs,

which paid a living wage and typically provided health and retirement benefits, were replaced by service sector jobs like the fast food establishments studied by Newman (1999) which, overrun with applicants, pay rock-bottom wages. At the same time, and largely in response to these changes, union membership fell from 37 percent of the labor force in 1955 to around 12.5 percent in 2005, with some states such as North Carolina as low as 2.7 percent in 2005 (Freeman 2007:75-78). At least some of this precipitous drop can be attributed to the 1959 Landrum-Griffin Act, which allowed employers to hire scab (non-union) workers to replace striking workers and then compel the scabs to vote as employees to decertify the striking union (Massey 2007:162). Although only part of a much larger policy context, legislation like this converted many of the remaining "good" jobs into low-wage jobs incapable of supporting a family.

Occupational sex segregation (as well as job-specific sex segregation) blocks many women from obtaining "good" jobs, as well. For instance, as of the 1990 census, one-third of the 56 million women in the labor force worked in just 10 of the 503 detailed occupations. Of these occupations, secretary still topped the list as the most frequently occurring occupation for women. "Other traditionally female lines of work that employ millions of women include retail sales…food preparation…school teaching…nursing…and cashiering" (Reskin and Padavic 1994:52-53). This segregation, to the extent that these occupations provide fewer financial rewards and less prestige than traditionally male occupations, help to explain much of the gender inequality in earnings over time.

But, how have urban women who left welfare reform done in this political and economic context? Available evidence suggests that they have not very well. Johnson

and Cochrane (2003) studied women on welfare in Michigan in 1997 and found that by the fall of 2001, only one-quarter were working in "good jobs," defined as full-time jobs paying at least $7 an hour and offering health insurance (or $8.50 per hour without insurance). At the same time, although we may label the remainder "low skill" jobs, not deserving of good pay, research finds that "low skill" jobs often require substantial skill. According to Newman (1999:144), a fast food worker

> has to make sure she keeps the sequence of orders straight so that the Big Burger goes to the man in the blue Mustang and not the woman right behind him in the red Camaro who has now revised her order for the third time. Doing the job right requires them to process information, coordinate with others, and track inventory. These valuable competencies are tucked away inside jobs that are popularly characterized as utterly lacking in skill.

What factors delineate a good job from a bad job? Kalleberg et al. (2000) set out some of the characteristics that define "good" and "bad" jobs. Good jobs, they argue, are defined by better wages (particularly wages above the bottom quintile), employer-provided health benefits, a pension of some sort, a fixed full-time schedule at the employer's place of business, and the expectation of continued employment. Bad jobs are characterized by the absence of these characteristics, including swing-shift part-time work or rotating hours. This difference is particularly salient for disadvantaged women who require health benefits for themselves and for their children to nurse health conditions and importantly, who require fixed schedules in order to obtain childcare or to sync their working hours with the times of day that children attend school. But, to what extent do disadvantaged urban women surveyed by the Urban Change administrators work in these good jobs and to what extent, when they do work for pay, are they relegated to low-paying, benefit-bereft jobs with rotating or otherwise nonstandard scheduling? The

following sections answer this question, beginning first with wages and earnings, then the provision of health insurance (for women and their children), the provision of paid sick days (important for providing childcare), and lastly, the employment in jobs with regular daytime schedules.

Wages and Income

Studying the wages of formerly welfare-reliant women is a complicated matter. Most studies of wages and earnings begin with the assumption that every worker seeks to maximize his or her earnings from employment. But studies of welfare leavers sometimes find quite the opposite. Although such women often have little control over how many hours they work, many actively avoid raises so that they will remain eligible for medical benefits (Medicaid), which they view as of the utmost importance. According to one woman, "These raises are killing me. You almost want to say 'Don't give me no raise!'" (Seccombe and Hoffman 2007:146). In their study of "overemployment mismatches," Golden and Gebeselassie (2007) find that a nontrivial proportion of workers, particularly women with children, report being "overemployed," or having to work more hours than desired. Workers, they argue, often place a higher value on extra, non-market time than on the income generated by an additional hour of paid work. Even so, within the shrinking safety net and the end of means-tested entitlement, more and more women would indeed be seeking to maximize their incomes from employment. And it is also telling that this woman uses the term "almost," suggesting that she does accept every raise in pay given and tries to maximize her income. Furthermore, Golden and Gebreselassie (2007) find that the proportion of overemployed

workers is only about seven percent of the workforce and that most were in professional and managerial occupations. And, despite the propensity for some women to keep wages low in order to retain benefits, research shows this could be detrimental to their long-term earnings. According to Theodos and Bednarzik (2006:37) individuals tend to earn less in the future the longer they are exposed to minimum wage jobs.

One important factor for understanding wages would naturally be working hours. In 1993, part-timers earned less per hour and received fewer benefits than full-timers. Part-timers (male and female) had a median hourly wage of $5.55, only 62 percent of the full-time median of $7.43. Part-time workers comprised 65 percent of all people working at or below the minimum wage (Tilly 1996:53). Part-timers in 1993 earned about $135 a week at the median, against full-timers' $463. Among the Urban Change women, the mean wage in 1999 (for all women employed in 1999) was $7.61 per hour. By 2001, this mean had climbed to $9.19 (for all women employed in 2001). The 2001 mean, calculated over a 40-hour workweek and over 52 weeks per year, generates an income of only $19,115 per year. Although this is above the 2001 poverty threshold for a family of four ($18,022), the reality is that most women in the sample worked fewer than 40 hours. At their average of 36 hours per week, average yearly income would be $17,023, a value below the poverty threshold for a family of four. This assumes employment during all 52 weeks and as Chapter IV demonstrated, many women worked less consistently than this. Beyond working hours, what other factors account for which employed women earn higher wages and higher incomes? Do women with children really suffer a wage penalty for motherhood? Do women without car access suffer a wage penalty for having fewer opportunities to commute to better jobs? More importantly, do women living in

disadvantaged neighborhoods earn less than women in ostensibly better neighborhoods? The following models begin to assess these questions. Table 25 begins by modeling hourly wage.

Table 25. OLS Regression Model Predicting Hourly Wage in 2001, Using 2001 Predictors.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Lagged Endogenous Var.	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Wage in 1999				0.362***
				(0.048)
Tract-Level Variables				
% Poor	-1.174**	-1.103**	-0.884**	-0.813**
	(0.472)	(0.468)	(0.426)	(0.400)
% Female Headed	0.423	0.391	0.351	0.161
	(0.452)	(0.452)	(0.466)	(0.440)
% Fem. Unemp.	-0.725	-0.665	0.924	1.029
	(0.948)	(0.950)	(0.889)	(0.840)
% Moved, 5 Years	-0.270	-0.245	-0.616	-0.458
	(0.573)	(0.586)	(0.573)	(0.538)
% Units Vacant	-0.354	-0.274	-0.436*	-0.329
	(0.237)	(0.238)	(0.225)	(0.210)
% HHs with Car]	-1.042*	-1.198**	0.254	0.285
	(0.556)	(0.558)	(0.607)	(0.566)
% Homeownership	0.288	0.273	-0.239	-0.288
	(0.202)	(0.202)	(0.211)	(0.198)
Indiv.-Level Variables				
ΔTract Nos. btn. Waves		-0.112	-0.221	-0.231
		(0.220)	(0.206)	(0.197)
Disorder Index		-0.153***	-0.122**	-0.108**
		(0.057)	(0.054)	(0.053)
Age			-0.319**	-0.313**
			(0.161)	(0.153)
Age^2			0.004	0.004*
			(0.002)	(0.002)
Black			-0.672	-0.365
			(0.590)	(0.590)
Hispanic			-0.590	-0.387
			(0.646)	(0.644)
Other Race/Ethnicity			-0.436	-0.150
			(1.154)	(1.082)
Foreign Born			-0.346	-0.138
			(0.354)	(0.334)
AFDC as Child			-0.238	-0.147
			(0.218)	(0.210)
Married			0.332	0.096
			(0.372)	(0.350)

Table 25. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Cohabiting			0.341	0.426
			(0.323)	(0.314)
Pregnant			-0.181	-0.164
			(0.613)	(0.580)
Number of Children			0.092	0.044
			(0.104)	(0.101)
Child Under Six			-0.168	-0.249
			(0.242)	(0.235)
Child with Disability			-0.200	-0.132
			(0.290)	(0.279)
Trouble Und. English			-1.892***	-1.691***
			(0.454)	(0.413)
H.S. Diploma or GED			0.854***	0.622***
			(0.206)	(0.202)
Associate's Degree			2.619***	1.814***
			(0.528)	(0.477)
Self-Rated Health			0.149	0.121
			(0.106)	(0.099)
CESD Depression			-0.026**	-0.020**
			(0.010)	(0.010)
Drinking			0.181	0.054
			(0.135)	(0.138)
Drug Use			-1.422**	-0.992
			(0.638)	(0.603)
Suffered Violence			-0.182	-0.166
			(0.547)	(0.531)
Household Has a Car			1.218***	1.079***
			(0.195)	(0.187)
Network Index			-0.184	-0.241
			(0.243)	(0.237)
Trouble Find Housing			0.083	0.110
			(0.230)	(0.227)
Subsidized Housing			-0.761***	-0.577***
			(0.202)	(0.194)
Rooms per Person			0.424**	0.332**
			(0.175)	(0.159)
Los Angeles			-0.168	-0.273
			(0.339)	(0.322)
Miami			-0.532**	-0.454*
			(0.250)	(0.239)
Philadelphia			1.297***	1.051***
			(0.353)	(0.322)
Job Tenure			0.000***	0.000***
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Num Jobs 2 Yrs			-0.056	-0.016
			(0.102)	(0.100)
Hours Per Week			-0.023**	-0.024**
			(0.010)	(0.010)
Constant	6.465***	6.974***	13.229***	10.936***
	(0.841)	(0.868)	(2.909)	(2.780)

Table 25. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Observations	1483	1455	1439	1439
R-squared	0.029	0.033	0.210	0.282

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 25 presents OLS models predicting women's hourly wages in 2001 (for employed women). Because wages will be more responsive to immediate situations (to be verified later), I use 2001 predictors. Model 1 includes only neighborhood predictors. The only variable significant at $p<.05$ is the poverty rate, which is unsurprisingly related to lower wages. Model 2 adds the interviewer-observed disorder index, which is highly significant and negative; women in neighborhoods with more observable disorder earn lower wages, on average. In this model, car ownership becomes significant, but *negative* in direction—women who live in neighborhoods with more car ownership earn lower wages. This is a particularly anomalous result; why would living in a neighborhood with more car ownership decrease one's wages? Even if car ownership is only a stand-in for neighborhood socioeconomic status (neighborhoods with higher incomes purchase more cars), the effect should still be positive in direction. The effect disappears when individual controls are added (Model 3).

Many of the individual effects are in predictable directions. For example, trouble understanding English is related to lower wages, as are drug use, depression, and residence in subsidized housing arrangements. Meanwhile, educational credentials are related to higher wages. These are all expected relationships. The coefficient for age is negative, suggesting that older women receive lower wages than younger women (effect is not curvilinear).

The final three variables in Table 25 (Model 3) are included to test the effect of work history and hours per week worked. Tilly (1996) found that full-timers earned higher wages than part-timers. Results, however, indicate the opposite—each hour per week is associated with a very slight decrease in wages. This situation places women in a difficult quandary; to work more hours at lower pay or fewer hours at higher pay? (This is naturally a false dichotomy; it is hard to imagine one actually being asked to make such a decision; instead, workers are typically presented with only one of these scenarios). Of course, many women would simply be forced to work as many hours as the employer permits for whatever wage the employer pays. Additionally, job tenure is related to a small wage gain, suggesting that loyalty to one employer carries benefits in terms of wages (but penalties in terms of working hours, as Chapter IV found). This finding supports some of the rhetoric surrounding welfare reform, that the key obstacle is finding a job; after that, job tenure will bring mobility.

Model 4 adds a lagged endogenous variable. Because it is significant, we can conclude that women who earned higher wages in 1999 continued to do so in 2001—the stability effect of wages. All other results in this model are the same as in Model 3, suggesting little need to differentiate between wages in 2001 (Model 3) and changes in wages between waves (Model 4).

But, wages are not wholly dependent on current circumstances. A woman's current job quality also depends on a constellation of past circumstances and experiences. As the coefficient for the lagged endogenous variable and job tenure (above) indicate, the past plays an important role in shaping current wage patterns. Table 26 expands upon

these models by incorporating change scores as predictors and testing whether changes in characteristics from 1999 to 2001 affect hourly wages in 2001.

Table 26. OLS Regression Model Predicting Hourly Wage in 2001, Using Change Scores (2001-1999).

			(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)	
Lagged Endogenous Var.	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Hourly Wage in 1999				0.360***
				(0.050)
Tract-Level Variables				
Δ in % Poor	-0.090	-0.102	-0.206	-0.294
	(0.545)	(0.549)	(0.495)	(0.475)
Δ in % Female Headed	-0.074	-0.150	-0.191	-0.257
	(0.487)	(0.505)	(0.459)	(0.444)
Δ in % Fem. Unemp.	-0.499	-0.440	0.213	0.256
	(0.972)	(0.997)	(0.893)	(0.874)
Δ in % Moved, 5 Years	0.634	0.601	0.224	0.203
	(0.683)	(0.721)	(0.654)	(0.638)
Δ in % Units Vacant	-0.090	-0.034	-0.032	0.037
	(0.273)	(0.289)	(0.273)	(0.265)
Δ in % HHs with Car	1.142*	1.226*	0.750	0.437
	(0.639)	(0.709)	(0.712)	(0.730)
Δ in % Homeownership	-0.424	-0.510*	-0.495*	-0.462*
	(0.281)	(0.291)	(0.271)	(0.268)
Indiv.-Level Variables				
Δ Tract Nos. btn. Waves		-0.290	-0.341	-0.328
		(0.223)	(0.211)	(0.207)
Δ in Disorder Index		0.001	0.015	-0.003
		(0.043)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Age			-0.240	-0.250*
			(0.150)	(0.141)
Age^2			0.003	0.003
			(0.002)	(0.002)
Black			-0.682	-0.461
			(0.601)	(0.595)
Hispanic			-0.523	-0.380
			(0.666)	(0.659)
Other Race/Ethnicity			-0.301	-0.115
			(1.179)	(1.107)
Foreign Born			-0.385	-0.097
			(0.346)	(0.334)
Welfare as Child			-0.301	-0.218
			(0.217)	(0.207)
Became Married			1.424***	1.160**
			(0.539)	(0.511)

Table 26. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Got Divorced			1.228	1.035
			(0.871)	(0.811)
Continually Married			1.346**	0.946*
			(0.581)	(0.525)
Began Cohabiting			0.586	0.630
			(0.406)	(0.402)
Stopped Cohabiting			0.065	-0.080
			(0.368)	(0.340)
Continually Cohabiting			-0.819*	-0.600
			(0.483)	(0.457)
Became Pregnant			-0.293	-0.250
			(0.624)	(0.599)
No Longer Pregnant			0.630	0.687
			(0.451)	(0.450)
Δ in Number of Children			0.123	0.118
			(0.152)	(0.149)
Gained a Child Under Six			0.662	0.199
			(0.592)	(0.640)
Lost a Child Under Six			0.993***	0.788***
			(0.291)	(0.274)
Continually Child Under Six			0.154	0.003
			(0.249)	(0.233)
Gained Care for Disabled Child			-0.391	-0.408
			(0.325)	(0.310)
Lost Care for Disabled Child			-0.713**	-0.562**
			(0.310)	(0.285)
Continually Cared Dis. Child			-0.210	-0.045
			(0.477)	(0.463)
New Trouble Und. English			-1.726**	-1.819***
			(0.732)	(0.647)
Overcame Trb. Und. English			-3.078***	-3.274***
			(0.719)	(0.727)
Constant Trouble Und. English			-1.948***	-1.671***
			(0.467)	(0.426)
H.S. Diploma or GED			0.943***	0.699***
			(0.212)	(0.210)
Associate's Degree			2.792***	2.016***
			(0.559)	(0.504)
Δ in Health			0.093	0.078
			(0.090)	(0.084)
Δ in Depression			-0.008	-0.012
			(0.009)	(0.008)
Began Drinking Alcohol			0.174	0.025
			(0.283)	(0.258)
Stopped Drinking Alcohol			0.357	0.383
			(0.433)	(0.415)
Continual Alcohol use			0.090	0.142
			(0.371)	(0.361)
Began Using Drugs			-0.852	-0.801
			(0.648)	(0.651)

Table 26. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Stopped Using Drugs			-1.189**	-1.274*
			(0.592)	(0.675)
Continual Drug Use			-2.170	-1.516
			(2.107)	(1.835)
Began Suffering Violence			-0.313	-0.233
			(0.609)	(0.596)
Stopped Suffering Violence			-0.111	-0.176
			(0.541)	(0.506)
Continual Violence			-2.084*	-1.730*
			(1.164)	(1.015)
Gained Access to Car			1.083***	1.012***
			(0.237)	(0.234)
Lost Access to Car			0.922***	0.631**
			(0.319)	(0.301)
Continual Access to Car			1.957***	1.604***
			(0.285)	(0.269)
Δ in Network Index			-0.238	-0.218
			(0.177)	(0.171)
New Trb Finding Housing			-0.025	0.002
			(0.299)	(0.287)
Overcame Trb Finding Housing			-0.139	-0.059
			(0.261)	(0.247)
Continual Trb Finding Housing			-0.542**	-0.325
			(0.258)	(0.261)
Gained Subsidized Housing			-0.971***	-0.913***
			(0.284)	(0.275)
Lost Subsidized Housing			0.586	0.596*
			(0.367)	(0.340)
Continual Subsidized Housing			-0.613***	-0.415*
			(0.227)	(0.219)
Δ in Rooms per Person			0.049	0.046
			(0.198)	(0.187)
Los Angeles			-0.021	-0.080
			(0.310)	(0.297)
Miami			-0.656**	-0.554**
			(0.255)	(0.246)
Philadelphia			1.056***	0.810***
			(0.285)	(0.266)
Job Tenure			0.000***	0.000***
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Number of Jobs, 2 Yrs			-0.016	0.019
			(0.105)	(0.102)
Hours Per Week			-0.026**	-0.028***
			(0.011)	(0.011)
Constant	9.153***	9.317***	13.611***	11.266***
	(0.101)	(0.170)	(2.758)	(2.614)
Observations	1483	1430	1414	1414
R-squared	0.007	0.008	0.216	0.285

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The findings in Table 26 are striking with regard to neighborhood context. None of the neighborhood change variables are significant, even in the neighborhood-only model (Model 1). This indicates that wages depend much more heavily (or entirely) on where a woman lives now, not the neighborhood transitions she has made (although we might take this conclusion with a grain of salt, as the neighborhood effects dropped out of Table 25 once individual predictors were added).[22]

With regard to individual predictors, this more dynamic model does provide some new information. In Table 25, none of the family responsibility variables were significant. Here, they are significant. Becoming married between waves appears to be related to higher wages, as does being continually married (by about $1.50 per hour). Similarly, losing care for a child under six increases wages by nearly $1 per hour. Yet losing care for a disabled child, though it should provide women with more flexibility, is related to lower hourly wages. This finding probably relates to the reference category (never had care for disabled child). Even women who once had care for a disabled child, but no longer do, still face a wage penalty relative to women who never cared for a disabled child. This again provides evidence that past circumstances and barriers to employment, even once they have been overcome, still exert an influence on job quality.

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[22] A possible explanation for the non-effects is that the "moved between waves" variable is highly correlated with the other tract change variables. This would occur because women who did not move between waves are coded as "0" in this variable. Similarly, women whose values did not change (because they did not move) on the other tract variables were likewise coded as "0" for these variables. Yet, running these models without the "moved between waves" variable reveals no substantial changes in findings. Even calculating variance inflation factors (VIFs) for the variables included in the model reveal that the "moved between waves" variable has a very low VIF, 1.03 and the other variables also have relatively low values, generally 2.5 or below. This indicates no problems associated with multicolinearity.

Similarly, trouble understanding English is particularly damaging. Women with new trouble (although it is unclear why someone's English would deteriorate, some women did report this), continual trouble and those who overcame trouble all encountered lower hourly wages, relative to those who never had trouble understanding English. This finding points to employers' preference for hard skills, particularly in service sector jobs where interacting with clients or customers is of the utmost importance (see Newman 1999; Waldinger and Lichter 2003).

With regard to inequalities that can most easily be addressed with good public policy, the primary findings relate to car ownership. Unsurprisingly, women who gained access to a car between waves earned higher wages than women who never had access, as did those with continual access. And, even women who lost access still had higher wages than women without access, suggesting residual effects of past car ownership (i.e., a woman may have used her vehicle to find a job with higher wages outside of her immediate neighborhood, and once she lost access to the vehicle she found a way to keep that job). Housing also proves important. Women who moved into subsidized housing between waves saw nearly a $1 per hour drop in wages, relative to women who never used it. Similarly, women who faced continual housing instability (trouble finding housing), earned about 50 cents less per hour than women with no instability. Together, these findings suggest that housing problems do not simply prohibit women from finding paid work, but they negatively affect the quality of employment obtained for those women who are able to find work.

Like Table 25, job tenure appears to increase earnings, and hours worked per week decreases earnings. Although Seccombe and Hoffman (2007) found that women

limited hours to keep Medicaid assistance, I find yet another reason to limit working hours: each hour worked per week carries a slight wage penalty. A skeptic might argue that higher wage earners are using the extra income generated to reduce working hours and care for household responsibilities, but since this model does control for a number of childcare and family characteristics, it is doubtful that this explanation fully accounts for the observed effect. Overall, the Pseudo R-squared value in Model 3 of Table 26 mirrors the value in Model 3 of Table 25, meaning that both the cross-sectional and the dynamic model capture about the same amount of variation. To this end, it seems that wages are best explained both by current circumstances and by changes in circumstances over time.

Hourly wage by itself is only one indicator of job quality. What really matters in terms of living standards, of course, is total earnings. Table 27 models weekly earnings, beginning with the neighborhood-only model.

Table 27. OLS Regression Model Predicting Weekly Earnings in 2001, Using 2001 Predictors.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Lagged Endogenous Var.	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Earnings in 1999				0.253***
				(0.027)
Tract-Level Variables				
% Poor	-33.059*	-29.436	-21.901	-16.717
	(18.582)	(18.556)	(15.337)	(14.406)
% Female Headed	7.816	5.398	0.461	-2.062
	(17.984)	(17.863)	(16.004)	(15.293)
% Fem. Unemp.	-72.462*	-66.848	4.885	-0.290
	(42.323)	(42.232)	(32.478)	(30.929)
% Moved, 5 Years	18.797	19.348	3.199	0.082
	(20.941)	(21.080)	(17.171)	(15.827)
% Units Vacant	-22.949**	-18.849*	-14.777*	-11.411
	(9.749)	(9.757)	(8.278)	(7.781)
% HHs with Car	-33.924	-39.959*	4.489	13.006
	(21.096)	(21.026)	(20.580)	(19.402)

Table 27. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
% Homeownership	5.652	4.955	-8.159	-10.342
	(9.149)	(9.160)	(7.489)	(7.134)
Indiv.-Level Variables				
ΔTract Nos. btn. Waves		-5.291	-3.234	-10.236
		(8.873)	(7.108)	(6.769)
Disorder Index		-7.080***	-6.040***	-4.954***
		(2.320)	(1.895)	(1.821)
Age			-9.801*	-8.139
			(5.209)	(4.981)
Age^2			0.103	0.089
			(0.074)	(0.071)
Black			-20.148	-9.045
			(20.037)	(18.904)
Hispanic			-20.462	-12.390
			(21.577)	(20.413)
Other Race/Ethnicity			-8.350	-11.020
			(47.190)	(43.478)
Foreign Born			-11.473	-3.799
			(13.096)	(12.886)
AFDC as Child			-7.292	-5.218
			(7.302)	(6.951)
Married			18.989	10.756
			(12.670)	(12.082)
Cohabiting			10.641	11.710
			(10.024)	(9.766)
Pregnant			-9.785	-13.233
			(22.267)	(22.731)
Number of Children			1.016	2.304
			(3.345)	(3.218)
Child Under Six			-5.006	0.038
			(8.293)	(7.872)
Child with Disability			-13.235	-7.449
			(9.901)	(9.775)
Trouble Und. English			-66.880***	-64.259***
			(17.151)	(15.897)
H.S. Diploma or GED			33.895***	25.106***
			(7.091)	(6.898)
Associate's Degree			110.637***	79.499***
			(20.089)	(18.064)
Self-Rated Health			6.874*	5.020
			(3.696)	(3.495)
CESD Depression			-1.401***	-1.258***
			(0.376)	(0.351)
Drinking			7.617	4.101
			(4.744)	(4.699)
Drug Use			-92.999***	-76.363***
			(30.312)	(27.997)
Suffered Violence			-0.284	5.421
			(19.110)	(18.274)
Household Has a Car			39.491***	30.576***
			(6.727)	(6.540)

Table 27. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Network Index			-3.755	-4.121
			(8.785)	(8.560)
Trouble Find Housing			7.436	9.327
			(7.891)	(7.728)
Subsidized Housing			-24.228***	-17.061**
			(6.962)	(6.817)
Rooms per Person			10.668*	10.236*
			(6.101)	(5.625)
Los Angeles			9.044	12.141
			(12.991)	(12.337)
Miami			-17.545*	-14.335
			(9.025)	(8.798)
Philadelphia			43.856***	49.831***
			(12.308)	(11.642)
Job Tenure			0.013***	0.005**
			(0.003)	(0.002)
Num Jobs 2 Yrs			-4.513	-4.706
			(3.188)	(3.163)
Hours Per Week			7.299***	6.714***
			(0.548)	(0.524)
Constant	213.532***	238.595***	174.506*	127.607
	(33.478)	(34.541)	(98.465)	(93.548)
Observations	1744	1714	1695	1695
R-squared	0.029	0.035	0.430	0.483

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

In this model, the only variable significant at $p \leq .05$ is the neighborhood vacancy rate; women in neighborhoods with more vacant housing units earn less per week than women in neighborhoods with less vacancy (because individual variables have not yet been added, this finding does not control for the number of weekly hours worked, which will be an important predictor of earnings). This effect disappears with the addition of interviewer-observed disorder, which is highly significant and remains so across all models. Taken together, we can conclude that the largest contextual effect on overall earnings is the amount of disorder, not poverty or joblessness or even car ownership. The significance of disorder provides some modest support for urban sociologists who argue

that disordered neighborhoods isolate residents, prevent place-based social networks from developing, and keep residents from hearing about new opportunities (Klinenberg 2002; Haney 2007; Sampson and Raudenbush 1999). Such neighborhoods prevent the free flow of information about better jobs, childcare arrangements, health clinics, or transportation options.

When individual variables are added, human capital stands out as the important factor, both English proficiency and educational credentials. In effect, women are penalized for trouble understanding English and rewarded for earning a diploma. Rewards are even higher for an Associate's Degree. The implications, of course, are that investing in human capital might indeed raise earnings for these women. Although the literature questions the potential payoff of human capital-based strategies (Heckman and Krueger 2005), the results are clear that, all else equal, women with English proficiency and more degrees command higher earnings. This does not necessarily imply that job training programs (offering no degree) would have the needed effect, and we know that PRWORA's mandates avoided paying for higher education opportunities, instead opting for a work-first approach (Corcoran et al. 2000:246; Autor and Houseman 2006:322; Gais et al. 2001:40), however it appears that at very least, subsidized English classes would help raise the earnings of women who struggle with English proficiency.

Although health is marginally unimportant ($p<.10$), depression and drug use both limit earnings. Meanwhile, owning a car is associated with weekly earning about $39 higher than for non-car owners, but given that fuel and maintenance can easily surpass this amount, particularly if the trek to work (and childcare arrangements) is long, this gain would be offset by the costs, and may even result in a net loss!

Finally, job tenure increases earnings, even net of hours worked per week, and hours worked does the same. Each day of job tenure increases earnings by about 1.3 cents (meaning that an additional year of job tenure adds only about $5 to weekly earnings, a very modest amount), while each hour per week worked increases earnings by about $7. In effect, job tenure and hours worked combine to increase earnings, but only very slightly. Contrary to Andersson et al. (2003), job changes over a two-year period are unrelated to earnings—it is not simply a matter of achieving upward mobility by frequent job changing. In fact, it appears that loyalty to one employer is more important for boosting earnings, although not by very much. On the other hand, job changes are also not particularly damaging (i.e., some may be strategic, but some changes result from instability).

Since differences in income can translate into important differences in material comfort, I once again calculate best and worst-case scenarios using significant variables from Model 3 of Table 27. First, the best-case scenario woman lives in a neighborhood with no noticeable disorder, does not suffer from trouble understanding English, has an Associate's Degree, has a value of 10 on the CESD depression scale, does not use drugs, owns a car, does not live in subsidized housing, has held her job for two years (730 days), and works 40 hours per week. As before, all other variables are held at their means using the "Adjust" command in STATA. This calculation derives predicted earnings for women with these characteristics:

Predicted value = $415.29

In other words, a woman with all of the "good" characteristics, which were positively related to earnings, would earn about $415 per week. If she were to work 52 weeks a year, this would produce a yearly income of about $21,595 per year. Although still a modest income, this value is approximately 120 percent of the poverty line for a family of four in 2001. In other words, to earn an income about $3,600 above the poverty line, a woman needs numerous factors to work in her favor. How much less would a woman earn who lived in a highly disordered neighborhood (5 out of 5), has trouble understanding English, has no high school diploma, a score of 50 (out of 60) on the depression scale, uses drugs, does not own a car, lives in subsidized housing, just started her job (0 days), and still works 40 hours per week?

Predicted value = $ - 52.34

This finding, a negative income, suggests that a woman facing all of these barriers would be extremely unlikely to have any earnings from employment whatsoever. Even moving her into a neighborhood with no disorder does not raise earnings above the zero point. These findings point to very large differences in earnings (and presumably standard of living) between women who face several daunting barriers to employment and women who face few. Yet it is telling that even our woman with no barriers to employment only earning an income about $3,600 more than the poverty line for a family of four. This suggests that many women in the sample have other barriers to employment that are not controlled by this model and it also once again suggests that such women are facing local labor markets that may have little demand for workers with their skill sets. Table 28 models earnings once again, this time using change scores.

Table 28. OLS Regression Model Predicting Weekly Earnings in 2001, Using Change Scores (2001-1999).

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Lagged Endogenous Var.	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Earnings in 1999				0.258***
				(0.029)
Tract-Level Variables				
Δ in % Poor	-6.018	-6.206	1.250	-0.669
	(21.512)	(21.638)	(17.770)	(16.875)
Δ in % Female Headed	-13.593	-23.165	-27.662	-23.508
	(20.492)	(20.641)	(19.682)	(18.937)
Δ in % Fem. Unemp.	-49.536	-52.457	-38.262	-38.204
	(42.796)	(42.836)	(40.302)	(37.893)
Δ in % Moved, 5 Years	45.215*	37.818	26.990	16.727
	(24.135)	(24.627)	(19.724)	(18.868)
Δ in % Units Vacant	-13.692	-12.267	-4.838	-3.975
	(10.440)	(10.693)	(8.913)	(8.872)
Δ in % HHs with Car	-25.302	-37.619	-20.620	-25.544
	(24.970)	(26.210)	(26.443)	(25.522)
Δ in % Homeownership	-5.672	-6.078	-9.550	-5.555
	(11.632)	(11.923)	(9.389)	(9.000)
Indiv.-Level Variables				
Δ Tract Nos. btn. Waves		-13.134	-10.917	-15.644**
		(8.860)	(7.136)	(6.841)
Δ in Disorder Index		0.070	-0.481	-1.136
		(1.783)	(1.418)	(1.369)
Age			-8.226	-6.580
			(5.009)	(4.755)
Age^2			0.092	0.076
			(0.071)	(0.068)
Black			-20.305	-13.195
			(20.499)	(19.134)
Hispanic			-18.771	-14.900
			(22.475)	(21.205)
Other Race/Ethnicity			-12.790	-15.512
			(48.318)	(44.366)
Foreign Born			-20.315	-7.947
			(13.060)	(12.954)
Welfare as Child			-10.821	-8.265
			(7.409)	(7.031)
Became Married			53.247***	44.661**
			(20.263)	(18.898)
Got Divorced			48.531	36.785
			(32.377)	(29.263)
Continually Married			48.244**	39.526**
			(21.519)	(19.684)
Began Cohabiting			13.336	14.157
			(11.743)	(11.702)

Table 28. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Stopped Cohabiting			-9.885	-14.940
			(14.386)	(13.024)
Continually Cohabiting			-28.627*	-23.823
			(16.836)	(15.541)
Became Pregnant			-12.470	-19.200
			(22.562)	(21.889)
No Longer Pregnant			15.397	27.317
			(19.002)	(19.061)
Δ in Number of Children			2.159	2.468
			(4.443)	(4.365)
Gained a Child Under Six			32.895*	25.091
			(16.982)	(17.077)
Lost a Child Under Six			33.477***	29.711***
			(10.101)	(9.501)
Continually Child Under Six			6.637	11.373
			(8.974)	(8.603)
Gained Care for Disabled Child			-11.407	-7.518
			(11.901)	(11.671)
Lost Care for Disabled Child			-16.744	-10.155
			(11.133)	(10.573)
Continually Cared Dis. Child			-28.741*	-18.061
			(15.652)	(15.234)
New Trouble Und. English			-24.241	-16.757
			(20.547)	(19.245)
Overcame Trb. Und. English			-90.633***	-59.113
			(24.247)	(42.947)
Constant Trouble Und. English			-71.601***	-68.873***
			(17.425)	(16.196)
H.S. Diploma or GED			38.474***	29.260***
			(7.188)	(7.006)
Associate's Degree			118.890***	91.088***
			(21.347)	(19.116)
Δ in Health			1.066	1.084
			(3.352)	(3.155)
Δ in Depression			-0.417	-0.575**
			(0.298)	(0.286)
Began Drinking Alcohol			5.393	1.161
			(10.145)	(9.498)
Stopped Drinking Alcohol			-0.769	-2.260
			(12.257)	(12.267)
Continual Alcohol use			6.892	8.202
			(13.212)	(12.668)
Began Using Drugs			-74.201**	-61.934*
			(34.237)	(31.969)
Stopped Using Drugs			-44.501*	-34.703
			(24.670)	(24.510)
Continual Drug Use			-104.757	-90.886
			(67.039)	(65.548)
Began Suffering Violence			-8.094	1.497
			(21.721)	(21.217)

Table 28. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Stopped Suffering Violence			-16.997	-12.836
			(16.815)	(16.404)
Continual Violence			-60.369*	-44.102
			(36.320)	(32.701)
Gained Access to Car			34.597***	29.427***
			(8.128)	(7.989)
Lost Access to Car			40.493***	19.593
			(12.625)	(12.065)
Continual Access to Car			71.027***	45.166***
			(9.679)	(9.678)
Δ in Network Index			-7.000	-8.084
			(6.352)	(6.233)
New Trb Finding Housing			-0.537	1.116
			(10.654)	(10.402)
Overcame Trb Finding Housing			-4.984	-4.391
			(9.585)	(9.238)
Continual Trb Finding Housing			-14.159	-8.958
			(9.630)	(9.912)
Gained Subsidized Housing			-35.513***	-30.503***
			(9.482)	(9.081)
Lost Subsidized Housing			16.131	23.878**
			(12.358)	(11.561)
Continual Subsidized Housing			-20.506**	-11.916
			(8.363)	(8.170)
Δ in Rooms per Person			-5.598	-5.354
			(5.925)	(5.834)
Los Angeles			15.360	20.326*
			(10.886)	(10.373)
Miami			-16.709*	-15.045*
			(9.069)	(8.847)
Philadelphia			40.102***	39.734***
			(9.659)	(9.338)
Job Tenure			0.013***	0.005**
			(0.003)	(0.002)
Number of Jobs, 2 Yrs			-4.083	-4.112
			(3.296)	(3.286)
Hours Per Week			7.256***	6.659***
			(0.534)	(0.513)
Constant	337.142***	343.150***	193.735**	145.934
	(4.267)	(6.277)	(95.668)	(90.872)
Observations	1744	1688	1669	1669
R-squared	0.008	0.010	0.426	0.478

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 28 expands upon the previous model by including dynamic independent variables. Once again, changes in neighborhood characteristics are unimportant, even

when modeled separately. However, moving to a new census tract between waves is significant in Model 4, the lagged endogenous model. Women who changed tracts between waves are *less* likely to increase earnings between waves than women who did not move. This again suggests that moves are made as a result of instability, not as an income generating strategy. In contrast to Table 27 (where marriage was not significant), becoming married between waves increases earnings. Other findings generally mirror Table 27, however the high R-squared in the final model (.48) indicates that this model explains almost half of the variation in earnings. This is a welcome finding given the very low r-squared values in Chapter III, many below .10. This indicates that we know comparably more about earnings than we do about work continuity.

Employer-Provided Benefits

Wages and earnings are only one piece of the job quality puzzle, however, and only a portion of the factors that identify a "good" or "bad" job (Kalleberg et al. 2000). Seccombe and Hoffman (2007) find that many women who left welfare since the late-1990's struggle to provide health care for themselves and their families. In fact, many conversations with these women, initially about employment, wound up revolving around healthcare. In this context, obtaining employer-provided health insurance is of the utmost importance. In 1999, about 40 percent of employed women received health insurance from their employers, and by 2001 this had increased to 46 percent. These numbers fall below the 60 percent of Americans under age 65 that report receiving insurance through employers. However, there is good news. Nationwide, the percentage fell from 65

percent in 2000 to 60 percent in 2005, a downward trend. And, Urban Change data reveal a sharp upward trajectory—a six percentage point gain in only two years. Seccombe and Hoffman (2007:172). Although these time periods do not align perfectly, the general pattern is that Americans are less and less likely to receive health insurance through an employer, but disadvantaged urban women are increasingly likely to do so. But, which employed women are most likely and least likely to receive health insurance from their employers? Most importantly, is it the women with the most health problems who are the least likely to receive it? Table 29 presents a logistic regression model predicting the receipt of employer-provided health benefits (for the woman, but not her family).

Table 29. Logistic Regression Model Predicting Receipt of Health Insurance from Employer in 2001, Using 2001 Predictors.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Lagged Endogenous Var.	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Hlth Ben in 1999				3.150***
				(0.377)
Tract-Level Variables				
% Poor	0.694*	0.691*	0.731	0.760
	(0.147)	(0.148)	(0.173)	(0.188)
% Female Headed	1.378	1.346	1.269	1.115
	(0.292)	(0.286)	(0.325)	(0.287)
% Fem. Unemp.	0.566	0.553	0.875	0.795
	(0.267)	(0.262)	(0.447)	(0.427)
% Moved, 5 Years	1.073	1.135	0.932	1.025
	(0.285)	(0.303)	(0.292)	(0.336)
% Units Vacant	0.931	0.961	0.937	1.016
	(0.110)	(0.115)	(0.137)	(0.152)
% HHs with Car	0.556**	0.530**	0.663	0.761
	(0.153)	(0.148)	(0.250)	(0.300)
% Homeownership	1.339**	1.334**	1.209	1.101
	(0.159)	(0.161)	(0.174)	(0.168)
Indiv.-Level Variables				
Δ Tract Nos. btn. Waves		1.204*	1.038	1.031
		(0.132)	(0.128)	(0.132)
Disorder Index		0.949*	0.960	0.973
		(0.030)	(0.034)	(0.036)

Table 29. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Age			0.984	0.975
			(0.085)	(0.086)
Age^2			1.000	1.000
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Black			1.371	1.523
			(0.393)	(0.426)
Hispanic			1.708*	1.937**
			(0.551)	(0.621)
Other Race/Ethnicity			1.374	1.278
			(0.833)	(0.719)
Foreign Born			0.790	0.818
			(0.189)	(0.197)
AFDC as Child			1.085	1.013
			(0.133)	(0.131)
Married			1.134	1.081
			(0.230)	(0.226)
Cohabiting			1.002	1.010
			(0.168)	(0.177)
Pregnant			0.680	0.652
			(0.279)	(0.287)
Number of Children			0.980	1.014
			(0.058)	(0.061)
Child Under Six			0.885	0.852
			(0.123)	(0.126)
Child with Disability			0.803	0.788
			(0.141)	(0.143)
Trouble Und. English			0.381***	0.397***
			(0.124)	(0.130)
H.S. Diploma or GED			1.762***	1.641***
			(0.212)	(0.204)
Associate's Degree			4.331***	3.114***
			(1.267)	(0.915)
Self-Rated Health			1.078	1.039
			(0.065)	(0.065)
CESD Depression			0.995	0.995
			(0.006)	(0.006)
Drinking			1.030	0.988
			(0.085)	(0.085)
Drug Use			0.497	0.546
			(0.256)	(0.290)
Suffered Violence			0.463**	0.461**
			(0.149)	(0.146)
Household Has a Car			1.698***	1.566***
			(0.205)	(0.196)
Network Index			0.912	0.887
			(0.115)	(0.122)
Trouble Find Housing			0.840	0.863
			(0.124)	(0.134)
Subsidized Housing			0.912	0.966
			(0.122)	(0.135)

Table 29. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Rooms per Person			1.032	1.039
			(0.096)	(0.098)
Los Angeles			0.838	0.934
			(0.187)	(0.217)
Miami			0.888	0.964
			(0.152)	(0.174)
Philadelphia			1.290	1.328
			(0.251)	(0.271)
Job Tenure			1.000***	1.000***
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Num Jobs 2 Yrs			0.873**	0.864**
			(0.048)	(0.050)
Hours Per Week			1.034***	1.032***
			(0.007)	(0.006)
Constant	0.454*	0.462*	0.091	0.094
	(0.194)	(0.206)	(0.149)	(0.160)
Observations	1707	1675	1652	1652
R-squared	.	.	.	.
Pseudo R-squared	0.0179	0.0204	0.130	0.171

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

With regard to contextual findings, one is particularly anomalous and troubling. Women in neighborhoods with more car ownership are significantly less likely to receive health benefits from their employers than women in low ownership neighborhoods. The reasons for this finding remain mysterious, although it does disappear in Model 3 when individual predictors are added. Coupled with the insignificance of neighborhood car ownership for obtaining higher earnings (in Table 27), we can conclude that having neighbors with cars may indeed help obtain employment and remain employed (Chapters III and IV), but it does not help women gain higher quality jobs. However, women in neighborhoods with high homeownership rates (residentially stable neighborhoods) are more likely to receive health insurance than women in low-ownership neighborhoods. This finding suggests the importance of place-based social networks for providing information about available "good" jobs (Elliott 1999).

Interestingly, health itself does not affect whether a woman receives health benefits from her employer. On the one hand, it is reassuring that those who need health insurance the most are not the least likely to receive it. On the other hand, it would be encouraging if this group was the most likely to receive it. However, suffering from violence during the past year cuts the odds of receiving health insurance by more than half! This suggests that these women may have trouble performing their job duties reliably (Romero et al. 2003) and therefore finding a "good job" or moving into positions that carry health benefits. As we might expect, owning a car increases the odds of having employer-provided health insurance by around 70 percent, all else equal. This car access allows women to expand their search areas (and creates a larger commutable distance), allowing them to access better jobs and to be more selective about the jobs they take.

Work history also plays into this discussion. As we might expect (and as federal law dictates), women who work more hours per week are more likely to receive health benefits from their employer. The findings regarding job tenure and job changes are similarly unsurprising; increased job tenure is related to a higher odds of receive health insurance, all else equal, and each job change decreases the odds of receiving health insurance by about 13 percent. In other words, women are apparently rewarded for loyalty to their employers and penalized by changing jobs. Although some of the earlier findings were inconclusive with regard to the effects of job tenure and job changes, these findings are extremely clear; job tenure increases the ability of women to obtain health insurance from their employers, and changing jobs frequently diminishes this ability. In other words, employers are more likely to provide benefits to women who remain in the jobs longer.

As informative as this may be, most of the women who left welfare in the years following PRWORA cared for at least one child, many of them without a spouse or partner. To what extent did employers provide health insurance for children? In 1999, about 31 percent of employed women with children received health insurance for their children from employers and this number increased only marginally, to 33 percent, by 2001. Table 30 models whether women received health insurance for their children from employers.

Table 30. Logistic Regression Model Predicting Employer-Provided Health Insurance for Children in 2001, Using 2001 Predictors.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Lagged Endogenous Var.	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Health for Kids 1999				2.780***
				(0.358)
Tract-Level Vars				
% Poor	0.589**	0.586**	0.673	0.690
	(0.130)	(0.131)	(0.163)	(0.170)
% Female Headed	1.745**	1.709**	1.489	1.319
	(0.389)	(0.381)	(0.391)	(0.348)
% Fem. Unemp.	0.611	0.602	1.249	1.192
	(0.305)	(0.302)	(0.681)	(0.666)
% Moved, 5 Years	0.836	0.879	0.800	0.811
	(0.232)	(0.245)	(0.262)	(0.275)
% Units Vacant	0.936	0.958	0.853	0.928
	(0.117)	(0.122)	(0.132)	(0.147)
% HHs with Car	0.629	0.612*	0.727	0.856
	(0.185)	(0.182)	(0.295)	(0.360)
% Homeownership	1.179	1.175	1.071	0.990
	(0.148)	(0.150)	(0.163)	(0.157)
Indiv.-Level Variables				
ΔTract Nos. btn. Waves		1.161	1.062	1.060
		(0.134)	(0.141)	(0.143)
Disorder Index		0.965	0.965	0.976
		(0.032)	(0.037)	(0.038)
Age			0.890	0.894
			(0.081)	(0.084)
Age^2			1.001	1.001
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Black			1.866**	2.059**
			(0.579)	(0.633)

Table 30. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Hispanic			2.472***	2.641***
			(0.851)	(0.913)
Other Race/Ethnicity			2.577	2.579
			(1.691)	(1.591)
Foreign Born			0.620*	0.665
			(0.158)	(0.172)
AFDC as Child			0.913	0.868
			(0.118)	(0.118)
Married			1.346	1.321
			(0.287)	(0.287)
Cohabiting			0.875	0.847
			(0.155)	(0.154)
Pregnant			0.501	0.436*
			(0.235)	(0.210)
Number of Children			0.964	0.972
			(0.060)	(0.061)
Child Under Six			0.762*	0.736**
			(0.116)	(0.115)
Child with Disability			0.895	0.923
			(0.170)	(0.175)
Trouble Und. English			0.281***	0.304***
			(0.114)	(0.121)
H.S. Diploma or GED			1.804***	1.644***
			(0.240)	(0.223)
Associate's Degree			3.238***	2.388***
			(0.878)	(0.665)
Self-Rated Health			1.052	1.025
			(0.065)	(0.065)
CESD Depression			0.982***	0.982***
			(0.007)	(0.007)
Drinking			1.027	0.984
			(0.089)	(0.088)
Drug Use			0.862	1.014
			(0.484)	(0.572)
Suffered Violence			0.511*	0.494*
			(0.185)	(0.182)
Household Has a Car			1.822***	1.675***
			(0.236)	(0.222)
Network Index			1.008	0.981
			(0.136)	(0.141)
Trouble Find Housing			0.812	0.791
			(0.132)	(0.134)
Subsidized Housing			0.797	0.825
			(0.116)	(0.124)
Rooms per Person			0.857*	0.829**
			(0.078)	(0.076)
Los Angeles			0.646*	0.681
			(0.151)	(0.165)
Miami			0.478***	0.530***
			(0.088)	(0.101)

Table 30. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Philadelphia			1.081	1.167
			(0.219)	(0.242)
Job Tenure			1.000***	1.000***
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Num Jobs 2 Yrs			0.921	0.917
			(0.054)	(0.056)
Hours Per Week			1.029***	1.027***
			(0.006)	(0.006)
Constant	0.214***	0.217***	0.630	0.593
	(0.098)	(0.103)	(1.088)	(1.053)
Observations	1692	1660	1637	1637
Pseudo R-squared	0.0159	0.0172	0.134	0.165

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Most notably, race and ethnicity appear particularly important here. Both black and Hispanic/Latino women are more likely than their white counterparts to receive health insurance for their children. In fact, both groups are about *twice* as likely as white women to receive such benefits, a finding suggesting that black and Latino women actually have a slight advantage over white women in gaining access to higher quality jobs. By contrast, trouble understanding English cuts the odds of receiving health benefits for children by about 70 percent, suggesting that women who have low levels of English proficiency are forced to perform work unlikely to provide such benefits (see Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Waldinger 2003). Other results mirror the model above, with one notable exception; holding more jobs during the preceding two years does not affect the odds of receiving health benefits for children, as it did for receiving health benefits for oneself. However, once again more working hours and longer job tenure both increase odds, as they did above.

In terms of performing care work, one of the most important benefits mentioned by the women in Seccombe and Hoffman's (2007) and Lein and Shexnayder (2007) interviewed was the availability of paid sick days. Such paid time off allows women to care for themselves (and dependents) during times of illness or emergency without sacrificing much needed income. It also provides assurance that they will not be terminated for missing paid work to perform care-work. Indeed, Monroe and Tiller (2001:824) found that personal illness or illness of child could result in a day or a few days of missed work and subsequent termination. In short, the provision of paid sick days represents employer recognition of employees as individuals with important roles and responsibilities outside of the workplaces, as advocated for by Acker (2005). Despite the importance of paid sick days, only 39 percent of employed women received this benefit in 1999, but only two years later, this proportion rose to more than half—53 percent. Given the importance of paid sick days to nurse health conditions and provide carework, this 14 percent increase in only two years is noteworthy and meaningful. Both statistics exceed the 25 percent of respondents that Seccombe and Hoffman (2007:110) reported as having paid sick leave. But, what patterns exist with regard to which women were able to access paid sick days? Table 31 models the receipt of paid sick days, for all women employed at Wave 2.

Table 31. Logistic Regression Model Predicting Whether Current Job Provides Paid Sick Days in 2001, Using 2001 Predictors.

				(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)
Lagged Endogenous Var.	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Sick Days 1999				3.675***
				(0.482)

Table 31. (continued).

Tract-Level Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
% Poor	0.869	0.860	0.970	1.055
	(0.180)	(0.179)	(0.227)	(0.261)
% Female Headed	1.447*	1.423*	1.254	1.115
	(0.302)	(0.298)	(0.324)	(0.297)
% Fem. Unemp.	0.421*	0.432*	0.629	0.566
	(0.197)	(0.202)	(0.319)	(0.298)
% Moved, 5 Years	1.035	1.067	1.065	1.034
	(0.266)	(0.275)	(0.313)	(0.312)
% Units Vacant	0.681***	0.710***	0.655***	0.697**
	(0.080)	(0.085)	(0.093)	(0.103)
% HHs with Car	0.388***	0.385***	0.489**	0.502*
	(0.102)	(0.103)	(0.171)	(0.190)
% Homeownership	1.406***	1.380***	1.252	1.281*
	(0.161)	(0.160)	(0.172)	(0.181)
Indiv.-Level Vars.				
ΔTract Nos. btn. Waves		1.186	1.030	1.031
		(0.124)	(0.122)	(0.127)
Disorder Index		0.945*	0.958	0.965
		(0.029)	(0.033)	(0.034)
Age			0.920	0.942
			(0.077)	(0.083)
Age^2			1.001	1.001
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Black			1.889**	2.014***
			(0.528)	(0.546)
Hispanic			2.114**	2.417***
			(0.659)	(0.739)
Other Race/Ethnicity			1.748	1.611
			(1.082)	(0.893)
Foreign Born			0.884	0.827
			(0.196)	(0.186)
AFDC as Child			1.104	1.007
			(0.133)	(0.127)
Married			1.245	1.116
			(0.245)	(0.228)
Cohabiting			0.974	1.007
			(0.155)	(0.165)
Pregnant			0.881	0.767
			(0.310)	(0.280)
Number of Children			1.022	1.029
			(0.054)	(0.058)
Child Under Six			1.116	1.063
			(0.147)	(0.145)
Child with Disability			1.008	1.029
			(0.171)	(0.179)
Trouble Und. English			0.357***	0.403***
			(0.105)	(0.120)

Table 31. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
H.S. Diploma or GED			1.780***	1.575***
			(0.204)	(0.188)
Associate's Degree			2.738***	2.077**
			(0.817)	(0.653)
Self-Rated Health			0.996	0.971
			(0.058)	(0.059)
CESD Depression			0.996	0.995
			(0.006)	(0.006)
Drinking			1.076	1.063
			(0.082)	(0.083)
Drug Use			0.701	0.780
			(0.323)	(0.365)
Suffered Violence			0.812	0.875
			(0.224)	(0.235)
Household Has a Car			1.596***	1.524***
			(0.187)	(0.186)
Network Index			0.798*	0.760**
			(0.097)	(0.096)
Trouble Find Housing			0.897	0.994
			(0.123)	(0.140)
Subsidized Housing			0.949	1.046
			(0.121)	(0.139)
Rooms per Person			1.061	1.060
			(0.086)	(0.091)
Los Angeles			0.921	0.973
			(0.195)	(0.214)
Miami			0.810	0.822
			(0.135)	(0.145)
Philadelphia			1.378*	1.296
			(0.261)	(0.266)
Job Tenure			1.000***	1.000***
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Num Jobs 2 Yrs			0.834***	0.816***
			(0.046)	(0.046)
Hours Per Week			1.038***	1.037***
			(0.007)	(0.006)
Constant	0.295***	0.317***	0.146	0.095
	(0.121)	(0.136)	(0.228)	(0.156)
Observations	1820	1786	1766	1766
R-squared	.	.	.	.
Pseudo R-squared	0.0185	0.0202	0.130	0.174

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

In this case, a number of neighborhood variables are important in the neighborhood-only model, including the vacancy rate, which is negatively associated

with the likelihood of receiving paid sick leave (suggesting the same network mechanisms as above, as well as the possibility that neighborhoods that are emptying of residents also lack opportunities for employment as well). Once again, women are penalized for living in a high car ownership neighborhoods. Women also benefit from more female-headed households in their neighborhoods, but this is significant only at the $p<.10$ level. These effects persist when we control for inter-tract mobility between waves as well as neighborhood disorder (Model 2).

Model 3 reveals that once again race and ethnicity are important, whereby black and Latino women are actually more likely to receive paid sick days than white women (about twice as likely). Given the racist history of welfare reform dialogue and the criminalization of black women as "welfare cheats" (Quadagno 1993) this finding that black and Latino women are actually more likely to receive paid sick leave than white women is particularly encouraging. Education and car ownership are both significant and positive as well. The only other significant effects include work history, where once again weekly working hours and job tenure are rewarded, while job changes are penalized. The inclusion of the lagged endogenous variable reveals that women who received this benefit in 1999 were four times as likely to receive it in 2001 as women who did not receive it in 1999, even controlling for job changes during the interim.

All previous models view the aspects of job quality separately, obscuring the larger picture that many of these characteristics co-occur. Many of the women who receive one benefit are also receiving others, bifurcating women into those in "good" jobs and those in "bad" jobs (Kalleberg et al. 2001). How many women worked in jobs without any of these benefits? In 1999, 56 percent of employed women worked in a job

with at least one of the above-mentioned benefits, but 44 percent worked in jobs *without a single one*! By 2001 the situation had improved slightly and 64 percent of women had at least one benefit, but that still leaves about 35 percent of women working in jobs without any employer-provided benefits, even paid sick days. To clarify, Table 32 models the dependent variable measuring whether a sample woman receives any fringe benefits (1) or no fringe benefits (0). In this model three different contextual effects persist, even with the inclusion of individual controls. The vacancy rate and homeownership rate (both related to place-based networks) and car ownership all matter for the receipt of benefits, writ large. Living in a neighborhood with high homeownership and low vacancy increases the odds of working in a job with at least one type of benefit (including health insurance, health insurance for children, or paid sick days), but living in a neighborhood with more car ownership appears to have the opposite effect. Again, the reasons for this finding are unclear.

Table 32. OLS Regression Model Predicting Whether Job Provides Any Fringe Benefits in 2001, Using 2001 Predictors.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Lagged Endogenous Var.	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Fringe Ben 1999				3.566***
				(0.368)
Tract-Level Variables				
% Poor	0.892	0.870	1.139	1.196
	(0.164)	(0.161)	(0.231)	(0.259)
% Female Headed	1.371*	1.369*	0.972	0.883
	(0.258)	(0.258)	(0.221)	(0.211)
% Fem. Unemp.	0.580	0.572	0.838	0.836
	(0.245)	(0.241)	(0.386)	(0.400)
% Moved, 5 Years	0.752	0.782	0.649*	0.618*
	(0.171)	(0.180)	(0.166)	(0.166)
% Units Vacant	0.782**	0.807**	0.717***	0.754**
	(0.081)	(0.085)	(0.091)	(0.099)
% HHs with Car	0.483***	0.486***	0.477**	0.506*
	(0.118)	(0.119)	(0.159)	(0.180)

Table 32. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
% Homeownership	1.434***	1.419***	1.408***	1.390***
	(0.133)	(0.133)	(0.164)	(0.167)
Indiv.-Level Variables				
ΔTract Nos. btn. Waves		1.257**	1.132	1.119
		(0.120)	(0.123)	(0.128)
Disorder Index		0.965	0.975	0.979
		(0.026)	(0.029)	(0.031)
Age			1.061	1.059
			(0.078)	(0.081)
Age^2			0.999	0.999
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Black			1.270	1.324
			(0.288)	(0.321)
Hispanic			1.192	1.346
			(0.308)	(0.373)
Other Race/Ethnicity			1.385	1.389
			(0.656)	(0.622)
Foreign Born			0.960	0.911
			(0.195)	(0.192)
AFDC as Child			1.003	0.956
			(0.109)	(0.110)
Married			1.159	1.052
			(0.209)	(0.201)
Cohabiting			0.988	1.012
			(0.142)	(0.155)
Pregnant			0.727	0.823
			(0.206)	(0.236)
Number of Children			0.979	0.989
			(0.046)	(0.049)
Child Under Six			0.909	0.882
			(0.110)	(0.112)
Child with Disability			0.950	0.977
			(0.134)	(0.145)
Trouble Und. English			0.576**	0.555**
			(0.147)	(0.141)
H.S. Diploma or GED			1.641***	1.497***
			(0.165)	(0.159)
Associate's Degree			2.361***	1.730*
			(0.651)	(0.494)
Self-Rated Health			1.063	1.060
			(0.054)	(0.057)
CESD Depression			0.999	1.001
			(0.005)	(0.005)
Drinking			1.036	1.037
			(0.071)	(0.075)
Drug Use			0.348**	0.318**
			(0.150)	(0.146)
Suffered Violence			0.556***	0.537***
			(0.122)	(0.119)
Household Has a Car			1.626***	1.514***
			(0.167)	(0.163)

Table 32. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Network Index			0.824*	0.806**
			(0.083)	(0.084)
Trouble Find Housing			0.786**	0.832
			(0.095)	(0.106)
Subsidized Housing			1.016	1.050
			(0.115)	(0.124)
Rooms per Person			0.994	0.983
			(0.085)	(0.087)
Los Angeles			0.552***	0.573***
			(0.103)	(0.112)
Miami			0.581***	0.599***
			(0.088)	(0.097)
Philadelphia			0.900	0.892
			(0.158)	(0.169)
Job Tenure			1.000***	1.000***
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Num Jobs 2 Yrs			0.960	0.944
			(0.045)	(0.047)
Hours Per Week			1.034***	1.029***
			(0.005)	(0.005)
Constant	0.533*	0.522*	0.044**	0.040**
	(0.199)	(0.203)	(0.061)	(0.057)
Observations	2234	2195	2158	2158
Pseudo R-squared	0.0115	0.0139	0.114	0.169

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Individually, trouble understanding English cuts the odds of receiving at least one benefit in half, while owning a car boosts the odds by about 60 percent. The network index is negative, meaning that a higher score (more giving/lending/receiving) is associated with a decreased odds of working in a job with any benefits (a "good job"). Contrary to Stack's (1974) work on the importance of strong networks for surviving poverty, this finding pints to two (not mutually exclusive) conclusions. First, women who work are bombarded with requests for help, straining them for time and resources (see Venkatesh 2005; Newman 1999; Newman 2006; Edin and Kefalas 2005). Second, the networks they do possess are homophilous and do not purvey information about

"better" jobs (although Chapter IV found that they do help women work more over time, possibly by providing resources to compensate for other barriers, like childcare). They do not, however, provide entrée into better quality jobs. This is an important distinction.

Whereas Chapter III found a penalty for living in Los Angeles with regard to employment (jobs were harder to come by), there apparently is no Los Angeles penalty in terms of job quality. But, there is a Miami penalty. Women in Miami are only about half as likely than women in Cleveland (the reference city) to have a job with some benefits. So, while the tightest job market is Los Angeles, the largest barriers to good jobs are present in Miami. And, once again we observe a reward for working hours and a penalty for job changing, providing evidence that some women are able to work their way into better quality jobs through loyalty and seniority.

Scheduling

Maintaining a regular daytime work schedule is central to the ability of many women (especially mothers) to hold work over time. Ehrenreich (2001) found that some firms offered "mother's hours" to women in order to help them remain employed, but still pick children up from school shortly after 3:00 p.m. each day (although she also found that her employer often violated that tacit agreement by compelling women to work much later). Similarly, Edin and Lein's (1997:124) interviewees recall that the hours that many childcare centers would care for children did not often line up with the hours that women required childcare. Scott et al. (2004) find that 74 percent of women who utilize multiple childcare arrangements found these arrangements to be unstable. This situation, they find, was often a result of working "multiple jobs, erratic schedules,

and very long hours in jobs that were far from home" (P. 376). In short, "*erratic schedules* and long days...required them to patch together creative child-care arrangements [emphasis added]" (P. 379). Yet having predictable schedules alone was not enough; some mothers worked nighttime jobs, like Maria who delivered pizza from 5:00 p.m. until 1:00 a.m. (P. 379). Although her schedule was predictable, securing childcare and supervising children's daily activities proves difficult when one works late at night. For many women, employment becomes manageable to the extent that hours are predictable and that this work takes place during normal daytime working hours. Research even suggests that some employers (Wal-Mart in particular), knowing that variable and nighttime schedules are undesirable, use this knowledge to squeeze out more senior (read: higher earning) employees (Freeman 2007:75).

Urban Change administrators asked women a question that allows for analysis of this issue. They asked whether a woman's job provided her with a regular (predictable) daytime schedule, a regular (predictable) nighttime schedule, or a scheduled that varied in the hours it required. By using this variable, it is possible to assess the extent to which women have access to a regular (predictable) schedule and daytime work. Presser (2003) finds that about two-fifths of Americans work at non-standard or varying times. This is fairly consistent with data from the Urban Change study. In 1999, about 67 percent of employed women classified their jobs as regular daytime jobs. This is particularly encouraging to the extent that regular daytime work facilitates the use of public transportation and childcare. By 2001, this percentage dropped to around 60 percent. Although the likelihood of employment increased between waves, as did weekly working hours, wages, and the availability of benefits, there was a slight shift toward work that

took place either on a varying schedule or a strictly nighttime schedule. This shift may have to do with many of the work requirements, time limits, and sanctions imposed by welfare reform. Although women would not logically seek out varying-schedule or nighttime jobs, the new need for employment income forced some women to accept jobs they otherwise would not have accepted, and despite the difficulties this imposed on their families and perhaps their own personal safety. What were the patterns in who gains access to regular daytime schedules? Table 33 answers this important question.

Table 33. Logistic Regression Model Predicting Whether Job Provides Regular Schedule with Daytime Work, Using 2001 Predictors.

(Robust Standard Errors in Parentheses)

Lagged Endogenous Var.	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Reg Day Sched. 1999				2.475***
				(0.301)
Tract-Level Variables				
% Poor	0.829	0.826	0.698	0.680
	(0.177)	(0.177)	(0.160)	(0.161)
% Female Headed	1.269	1.282	1.817**	1.836**
	(0.268)	(0.271)	(0.439)	(0.461)
% Fem. Unemp.	1.854	1.838	1.893	1.955
	(0.888)	(0.886)	(0.940)	(0.997)
% Moved, 5 Years	0.573**	0.555**	0.527**	0.483**
	(0.155)	(0.152)	(0.159)	(0.150)
% Units Vacant	0.860	0.852	0.917	0.923
	(0.106)	(0.107)	(0.122)	(0.126)
% HHs with Car	0.878	0.876	0.923	0.823
	(0.244)	(0.246)	(0.325)	(0.300)
% Homeownership	1.089	1.091	1.051	1.080
	(0.125)	(0.126)	(0.140)	(0.147)
Indiv.-Level Variables				
ΔTract Nos. btn. Waves		0.956	0.880	0.862
		(0.105)	(0.103)	(0.103)
Disorder Index		1.013	1.037	1.035
		(0.032)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Age			0.990	0.997
			(0.079)	(0.080)
Age^2			1.000	1.000
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Black			0.921	0.949
			(0.230)	(0.234)

Table 33. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Hispanic			1.823**	1.870**
			(0.542)	(0.547)
Other Race/Ethnicity			0.742	0.780
			(0.354)	(0.379)
Foreign Born			0.873	0.869
			(0.193)	(0.196)
AFDC as Child			0.961	0.935
			(0.114)	(0.113)
Married			1.148	1.175
			(0.222)	(0.231)
Cohabiting			0.869	0.862
			(0.136)	(0.136)
Pregnant			1.546	1.855
			(0.565)	(0.707)
Number of Children			1.034	1.049
			(0.056)	(0.059)
Child Under Six			1.049	1.058
			(0.138)	(0.143)
Child with Disability			0.753*	0.758*
			(0.122)	(0.126)
Trouble Und. English			0.869	0.846
			(0.250)	(0.246)
H.S. Diploma or GED			1.303**	1.300**
			(0.147)	(0.150)
Associate's Degree			1.185	1.191
			(0.314)	(0.326)
Self-Rated Health			1.016	0.992
			(0.058)	(0.058)
CESD Depression			1.002	1.003
			(0.006)	(0.006)
Drinking			1.077	1.112
			(0.081)	(0.086)
Drug Use			0.926	0.885
			(0.396)	(0.392)
Suffered Violence			0.841	0.854
			(0.221)	(0.233)
Household Has a Car			1.039	1.041
			(0.120)	(0.121)
Network Index			0.868	0.876
			(0.105)	(0.109)
Trouble Find Housing			0.798*	0.801
			(0.108)	(0.111)
Subsidized Housing			0.810*	0.824
			(0.101)	(0.105)
Rooms per Person			1.012	1.043
			(0.092)	(0.096)
Los Angeles			1.174	1.158
			(0.242)	(0.246)
Miami			1.076	1.024
			(0.177)	(0.174)

Table 33. (continued).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Philadelphia			1.045	1.021
			(0.196)	(0.197)
Job Tenure			1.000	1.000
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Num Jobs 2 Yrs			0.942	0.947
			(0.049)	(0.051)
Hours Per Week			0.993	0.994
			(0.005)	(0.004)
Constant	1.011	0.988	1.727	0.805
	(0.432)	(0.440)	(2.615)	(1.230)
Observations	1713	1680	1658	1658
R-squared	.	.	.	.
Pseudo R-squared	0.00374	0.00402	0.0269	0.0524

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 33 models whether an employed woman worked in regular daytime job (1) or one that required her to work nights or a varying schedule (0). Results indicate a couple of significant neighborhood effects that persist even after the inclusion of individual controls. Female-headedness, for example, is related to increased odds of a regular daytime schedule. Once again, we see the positive effects of living in a neighborhood with more single-parent households. Living in high-mobility neighborhoods is also related to lower odds of such a schedule. Why might we see these two contextual effects? I would suggest that both of these results involve network mechanisms that operate at the neighborhood level. Having a stronger network of single mothers would logically provide information about job opportunities, childcare arrangements, and other advantages that would help women be more selective about the jobs they take. Similarly, living in a high mobility neighborhood would decrease interactions between neighbors that would similarly purvey information about job opportunities, transportation options, or childcare arrangements. The ideal situation

involves living in a neighborhood with a high female-headedness rate but low mobility rate, both of which facilitate the smooth functioning of neighborhood based networks. It is telling that even when individual controls are added (Model 3), two of the four significant coefficients are contextual.

One of the more interesting individual effects involves ethnicity. Hispanic/Latino women are almost twice as likely as white, non-Hispanic women to have regular daytime schedules. This almost surely reflects the employment of many Latino women as domestic workers, a job that usually entails regular, predictable work during daytime hours (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). The only other significant effect is education; having a high school diploma or GED increases the odds of regular daytime work by around 30 percent. Evidently women are able to use their credentials to be a bit more selective of the jobs that they take. This is consistent with Seccombe's (1999:59) finding that women with a high school diploma, or less, are disproportionately found working irregular schedules that include night and weekend shift, and varying hours. Unsurprisingly, the lagged endogenous variable in Model 4 is significant, meaning that women who worked regular daytime schedules in 1999 were more than twice as likely to have such a schedule in 2001 as women who did not.

Overall, the lack of significant findings, coupled with very low coefficients of determination (.05 in the most comprehensive model) indicate that women once again have very little control over the types of schedules they work. One positive finding, however, is the insignificance of the childcare and family variables. Fortunately, women with more children are not more likely to work varying or nighttime hours than women with fewer children. At the same time, they are also not less likely.

By the same token, women who own a car are not more likely to work regular daytime schedules than women who do not. This is a surprising finding, as car ownership should allow women to increase their commuting radiuses, be more selective about the jobs they take, and be more likely to work in jobs with regular daytime hours. However, women without a vehicle, as it turns out, are equally as likely to find a job with regular daytime hours. Once again, this finding has at least something to do with selection effects. The sample used for this model contains only employed women. Therefore, the women without a car who could not find a job have been selected out. The only carless women who remain are the fortunate few who have found jobs near their homes, who can utilize public transportation, or who have found other commuting options.

Discussion

Results of the preceding job quality analyses should come as no surprise. Previous research established that jobs with better wages, more earning potential, healthcare benefits, paid sick days, and regular schedules are inherently preferable to jobs without these characteristics, particularly for women with numerous childcare, health, and transportation barriers. And, to the extent that these good jobs are limited in number, women with access to a car are better able to gain access to these opportunities, presumably through a larger commuting radius. In fact, women who own cars are earn higher wages, higher overall earnings, are more likely to have employer-provided health insurance, health insurance for children, and paid sick days.

Similarly, health is an important predictor of who gains access to better quality employment. Although self-reported health has little to do with job quality, depression and experiences of violence both make it less likely that women will gain access to good jobs. This is tragic, as women who suffer from depression are in greater need of health insurance and paid sick days, and women who have experienced violence, beyond needing health insurance, would be less dependent on violent partners (see Scott et al. 2002) if they had higher earnings.

Despite these important health and transportation findings, there is no effect of childcare responsibilities on job quality. This is largely a selection issue. Many of the women with heavy childcare responsibilities (a child with a disability, a larger number of children, at least one child under six years of age) are significantly less likely to be employed at either wave of data collection (see Chapter III), and only employed women are included in these analyses. Thus, the women analyzed in this chapter are those who have fewer childcare responsibilities to begin with, on average. They are the women who cleared the first hurdle, so to speak, by gaining access to a job. Beyond that, their childcare responsibilities appear to matter little.

The preceding regression models also offer some lessons in terms of contextual or neighborhood effects. Table 25 reveals that women in neighborhoods with a higher poverty rate earn lower wages, on average, than women in lower poverty neighborhoods. This finding is telling, given Jencks and Mayer's (1990) complaint that too many researchers utilize neighborhood poverty rate in lieu of more informative neighborhood measures and without good theoretical reason. Even though this model includes a number of neighborhood measures suggested by prior theory, neighborhood poverty still

proves important. The likely mechanism at work here is the lack of well-paying job opportunities in impoverished neighborhoods (see Wilson 1996). Job seekers in these neighborhoods have fewer opportunities from which to choose and cannot afford to be picky in terms of job quality. Similarly, interviewer-observed disorder is a negative predictor of wages, indicating that residents are indeed isolated by signs of disorder (Klinenberg 2002; Haney 2007; Sampson and Raudenbush 1999). However, changes in these characteristics over time prove unimportant (i.e., women who moved into neighborhoods with less poverty do not earn higher wages than women who moved into poorer neighborhoods, or women who do not move at all). The one exception to this rule occurs in Table 28, where women who changed census tracts between waves earned about $15 less per week than women who did not move. This finding confirms results in Chapter III that indicated many inter-neighborhood moves were made as a result of housing instability, not as a strategy for upward mobility (or, at very least, these strategic moves were not successful in bringing income gains).

The truly paradoxical neighborhood results involve car ownership. Women who live in neighborhoods with higher car ownership rates are actually *less* likely to receive health benefits from their employers than women in lower ownership neighborhoods. They are also less likely to receive employer-provided sick days. This again has something to do with selection effects. Car ownership was positively related to employment (see Chapter III), but for women who found employment, it does not help them procure better quality employment. Logically, having more neighbors with cars should provide more commuting options and allow women to apply for jobs farther from home and to be more selective of the jobs they do take. But, like Seccombe and Hoffman

(2007) discover, women find it easy to locate a car for occasional use (for job hunting or a medical emergency) but neighbors are not likely to allow them to use it each and every day. This explains why there is no positive relationship between neighborhood car ownership and job quality, however it does not explain why the coefficient is negative. This provides fertile territory for qualitative researchers to explore.

The most striking neighborhood findings involve the functioning of neighborhood-based networks. Although the data contain no perfect indicators of strong place-based networks, past research has used homeownership and mobility to approximate areas with neighborhoods that are more rooted to place (Elliott et al. 2009). With this in mind, results indicate that high-mobility neighborhoods prevent women from gaining access to jobs with regular daytime schedules (Table 33), something crucial for women trying to balance childcare arrangements or school schedules. Similarly, women in neighborhoods with high homeownership rates are more likely to receive health insurance from their employers and also more likely to receive paid sick days. These findings have two possible explanations. First, homeownership and mobility could serve as markers of neighborhood socioeconomic status, and more advantaged neighborhoods have more to offer in terms of job opportunities. On the other hand, homeowners and those living in low-mobility neighborhoods have a greater stake in their neighborhoods, are more likely to know their neighbors, and quite likely discuss job opportunities amongst themselves. In this light, it is possible that these variables are picking up the effect of place-based networks functioning in residentially stable neighborhoods. Quite likely, both explanations contribute to this finding.

Although the above findings regarding the efficacy of place-based networks are encouraging, the larger picture remains dismal. The wage and earnings difference between our best-case scenario and worse-case scenario woman were relatively large, but even the woman facing few or no barriers to employment still earned a yearly income (assuming she worked 52 weeks a year, which was not the modal category by any means) that only exceeded the federal poverty line for a family of four by about $3,500 per year. And, fewer than half of employed women received the employer-provided benefits analyzed in this (remembering that only about half of the women were employed at either wave of data collection). Although women with more education, better health, and access to a car have advantages in gaining access to these jobs, most women simply do not have jobs that provide these benefits. Coupled with the wage and earnings data, the overall conclusion supports much of the welfare-leaver research that has found that the jobs women do find offer low wages, little security, little room for promotion or advancement, and are by in large incapable of supporting a family or meeting basic material needs (see Polit et al. 2000; Corcoran et al. 2000; Acs and Loprest 2004; Scott et al. 2004). Given these low-quality jobs it should come as no surprise that samples of women who left welfare following PRWORA exhibit frequent material hardships, such as food insecurity (London and Scott 2005).

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS FOR METHODS, THEORY AND PUBLIC POLICY

The working poor, as they are approvingly termed, are in fact the major philanthropists of our society. They neglect their own children so that the children of others will be cared for; they live in substandard housing so that other homes will be shiny and perfect; they endure privation so that inflation will be low and stock prices high.
(Ehrenreich 2001:25)

Laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind... We might as well require a man to still wear the coat which fit him when a boy, as civilized society to remain under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors.
Thomas Jefferson, 1816 (Quigley 2003:96)

This manuscript sought to accomplish two primary tasks. First, it sought to better understand the employment situations of urban women who left welfare following the United States' 1996 welfare reform legislation. It also aimed to understand the extent to which neighborhood context mattered for these outcomes. Sociologists often forget that everything social happens somewhere and involves material things (Gieryn 2000); finding and keeping employment is no different. Women who seek employment must choose from the often limited employment options present in their neighborhoods or they must find reliable transportation to take them out of their neighborhoods each and every day. All the while, they must find reliable childcare (taking their children there and picking them up), nurse health conditions, deal with unstable housing situations, and otherwise compensate for a number of barriers to employment. This research has helped to better explain some of these situations. But, to what extent does neighborhood context actually matter for employment outcomes?

Overall results are somewhat mixed. They fail to support the general consensus in urban sociology that neighborhood conditions *cause* particular outcomes or that neighborhoods are "agentic players" (Gieryn 2000) or "emergent" (Gotham 2003). Of 518 total tract-level coefficients in this manuscript, only about 12 percent are significant at or below $p<.05$. This includes 11 percent in Chapter III (employment), 6.5 percent in Chapter IV (work continuity) and 16 percent in Chapter V (job quality). Although neighborhood conditions appear to exert more influence on job quality than on employment or work continuity, these estimates include the neighborhood-only models. In the comprehensive models that include individual characteristics, the percentage of significant neighborhood characteristics drops to below 5 percent, suggesting that employment outcomes are much more dependent on individual circumstances than on neighborhood conditions.

But, the story does not end there. In each chapter, the neighborhood-only models reveal at least one significant neighborhood characteristic. In many cases, neighborhood car ownership is significant. In other cases, disorder or female headedness is significant. Yet, when individual characteristics and circumstances are added to the model, many of these effects disappear. What does this mean? I address the findings of this research in four separate sections. First, I briefly highlight some of the significant individual effects. Then, I discuss the implications of this research for methods, theory, and policy.

The Big Three

Although the neighborhood findings largely fail to support the general consensus in the literature that contextual factors should influence women's employment outcomes,

three individual factors are indeed consistently significant and important predictors of employment. Before discussing implications of these findings, I briefly discuss the empirical findings related to these three factors.

Car access stands out across chapters and across models as most consistent predictor of positive employment outcomes. Although not an exhaustive list, the analyses found that increased car access improves odds of employment (Tables 10 and 11 in Chapter III), aids in the maintenance of employment for those employed in 1999 (Table 15 in Chapter III) and also those jobless in 1999 (Table 16, Chapter III). It is predictive of more months employed over 2 years (Table 18, Chapter IV), more jobs held (Table 19), decreased average job tenure over time (Table 21), increased current job tenure (Table 22), increased number of hours worked per week (Table 23), and both gaining access to a car and having continual access to a car are predictive of more hours worked per week for those employed (Table 24). In terms of job quality, car access is predictive of higher hourly wages (Tables 25 and 26, Chapter V), more weekly earnings (Tables 27 and 28), increased access to employer-provided health benefits both for women and their dependent children (Tables 29 and 30) and more access to paid sick days (Table 31). These findings, taken together, indicate a substantial and meaningful mismatch between the places that women live and the places they work. Car ownership would prove important for this many outcomes only if both job-seeking and employed women faced critical unmet transportation needs. These findings reflect the disinvestment, deindustrialization and commercial decline in many urban, inner-city neighborhoods that necessitate lengthy daily travel for employed residents of these neighborhoods (Wilson 1996; Ong 1996).

Childcare and family responsibilities also stand out as a consistent barrier to employment. Having more children, a child under six, or a child with a disability are related to lower overall odds of employment (Chapter III, Tables 10, 11, 13 and 14) and changes in these characteristics over time are important for understanding employment as well (Tables 15 and 16). Similarly, having a child with a disability decreases the number of months worked over time (Table 18, Chapter IV) and the number of jobs held over time (Table 19). Women with a child under six years of age report holding their current jobs by 154 fewer days than women without this barrier. By the same token, childcare and family responsibilities do not appear to block access to better quality jobs. Although having a child under six decreases the odds that a woman will transition from a job without health insurance for children to a job with such insurance, no other childcare variables are significant in Chapter V. This indicates that childcare responsibilities pose a problem for gaining access to employment in the first place. However, if this barrier can be overcome, childcare responsibilities do not limit access to better pay, benefits or a regular daytime work schedule.

Finally, a number of disadvantaged urban women face daunting health barriers. Across years, women who report better overall health have a higher odds of employment, all else equal (Table 10). Better health also decreases the odds of becoming disconnected from employment (Table 13), and better health improves the odds of employment both for women who were previously jobless and for women who were previously employed (Tables 15 and 16). Women with better health also work more months over a two-year period (Table 18 in Chapter IV), and hold more jobs during that same period of time (Table 19). However, we also know that mental health poses a serious problem for

women who left welfare following PRWORA (Romero et al. 2003), and this research consistently finds effects of mental health on employment. Women with a higher CESD depression score have a lower cross-sectional odds of employment (Tables 10 and 11 in Chapter III), a higher odds of becoming disconnected from the labor market (Table 13), and a lower odds of becoming employed between waves or staying employed between waves (Tables 15 and 16). Unsurprisingly, women with more depression also work fewer months (Table 18 in Chapter IV), do not hold jobs as long, on average (Table 21), earn lower wages (Table 25 in Chapter V) and earnings (Table 27), were less likely to increase their earnings between waves (Table 27, Model IV), and are less likely to receive employer provided health insurance (Table 30). These findings point to unmet mental health needs that must be addressed by public policy if we hope all women in this demographic group to become employed and self-sufficient. Finally, experiences of violence also decrease a woman's odds of employment (Tables 10 and 11, Chapter III), and cut the odds of remaining employed between waves by more than 70 percent (Table 16). Surprisingly, though, experiencing violence played no part in employment continuity; women who experienced violence in the past year work just as many months over a two-year period, just as many jobs, and just as many hours per week as women without such experiences. And, although experiences of violence do not appear to affect most measures of job security, women who report violence are only about half as likely to receive health insurance from their employers as other women. This is a particularly important finding, as women who experience domestic violence might need this benefit more than any other group. Similarly, they are only about half as likely as women who did not experience violence to receive any benefits at all from their employers.

The findings related to car ownership, health, and childcare responsibilities point to crucial inequalities that must be addressed by sound, humane public policy. I discuss these policy alternatives later in the chapter. Before moving on, we must also discuss the explanations for employment that did not pan out. In most analyses, demographic characteristics including age and race/ethnicity proved insignificant. Instead, employment situations depend much more heavily on circumstances. Additionally, the substance abuse (read: "individual choice") variables, alcohol and drug use, failed to reach statistical significance in many cases. Interestingly, alcohol use emerged as a *positive* predictor of employment in some instances. Results also indicate the insignificance of the network index. This finding has two possible explanations; first, it could indicate that women in the sample maintain network contacts who do not possess knowledge of job opportunities, or they possess "strong" ties which are homophilous and of "weak" quality (Granovetter 1983). However, the emergence of female-headedness suggests there is indeed a network explanation at play. Therefore, I find strong support for the second explanation—that the network indicators are less than ideal and lack validity. Finally, marriage and cohabitation, in most models, fail to help us understand employment outcomes. Married and cohabiting women, who often have employed partners to provide additional income, are no more or less likely to be employed (and do not receive higher or lower wages) than women without partners.

Before discussing public policy alternatives to alleviate The Big Three, I discuss the contributions of this research to both methods and theory.

Methods

The longitudinal and geographical nature of this study provides advances in terms of understanding how place affects individuals and the potential independent or emergent properties of place. To what extent do the findings challenge the rapidly-evolving "neighborhood effects" literature? By including several (modestly correlated) neighborhood measures, all suggested by prior theory and research, it provided the potential to single out the key contextual mechanism(s). However, in most cases, neighborhood context proves unimportant, particularly when compared to individual constraints. This allows us to infer that at least some neighborhood effects found in other research have been a function of models that are too parsimonious (omitted variable bias). By including a lengthy list of individual factors, much of the observed neighborhood effect is erased.[23]

However, as I discuss in the next section, there are important theoretical reasons for not abandoning neighborhood effects research. Future research could unpack this relationship further by reexamining the neighborhood variables used. For example, maybe it is not the *absolute* poverty rate that matters for employment, but a neighborhood's poverty rate relative to the city's average. This approach would adopt a relative (not absolute) approach to studying contextual disadvantage, acknowledging that people assess and respond to situations with specific frames of reference (usually other

[23] To a certain extent, however, as I discuss in Chapter II this research observes only a truncated range of different neighborhoods. Because women were originally selected from neighborhoods of at least moderate poverty, there is less inter-neighborhood variation than would be present in the general population. This truncation might limit the explanatory power of tract-level variables and we might suspect that neighborhood effects would be more apparent when comparing a fuller range of neighborhoods. This truncation is mitigated by the fact that many women had moved into less disadvantaged neighborhoods by the first wave of data collection, meaning that a number of women did live in non-poor neighborhoods at both waves.

parts of their city). Additionally, perhaps neighborhoods do not matter for this demographic group during this chaotic period in U.S. history (recall the punctuated equilibria argument from Chapter I), but are more salient for men, for more advantaged populations, or in other cities.

The longitudinal nature of the project also proved particularly fruitful. In some cases, static cross-sectional factors had little influence on employment outcomes but changes over time (new access to a car, decreased childcare responsibilities) did indeed prove important. This finding suggests that circumstances are best viewed as dynamic, not static; even past circumstances have an effect on current situations. Not only is this empirical reality exemplified by the myriad of significant change scores, but by the occasional significance of receiving AFDC during one's own childhood. Past circumstances, particularly past disadvantage, have staying power. This is consistent with Bourdieu's (1977:79) notion of *habitus*, whereby he argues that

> In each of us, in varying proportions, there is a part of yesterday's man; it is yesterday's man who inevitably predominates us, since the present amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we formed and from which we result. Yet we do not see this man of the past—he makes up the unconscious part of ourselves. We are very much aware of the most recent attainments of civilization, because, being recent, they have not yet had time to settle into our unconscious.

In other words, our present behaviors cannot and should not be interpreted and understood apart from our past experiences. True, we respond to present opportunities and constraints, but we do so by referencing lessons learned from past experiences. Although this informs our theory on the topic, this finding also carriers important methodological implications. Employment outcomes should be viewed not only as a result of current situations, but also of past experiences. Like Myrdal (1944:1067), I

argue that inequality is dynamic and we must focus on systems and processes rolling in one direction or another. To this end, both the use of change scores and the inclusion of background disadvantage as a predictor, improve upon basic cross sectional models of employment. Indeed, future research on the employment situations of disadvantaged women must be more careful to assess how changing circumstances, not just the cross-sectional status quo, affect these outcomes.

Lastly, the frequent and strong significance of local contexts suggests that models and datasets capturing employment dynamics in one city alone may miss important inter-city variation (i.e., the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods). Moreover, it implies that pooling multi-city data must at least control for city of residence or that they must model each city separately (assuming sufficient statistical power to do so). Why might city of residence matter? I suggest two main mechanisms: first, demand for labor differs in each city, meaning that a negative coefficient for Los Angeles residence involves demand-side constraints that make it more difficult to obtain paid employment in that city. Second, some cities contain particular barriers because of size, layout, or transportation options. This might also explain the Los Angeles effect observed in many of the models in this research, as Los Angeles is known to have particularly poor and inefficient public transportation (see Ong 1996; Davis 1990:122; 205).

Theory

The findings from this research speak to the very ways we think about and conceptualize "advantage" and "disadvantage." Both Hannon (2005) and McNulty

(2001) advocate the use of the percentage of households that are female-headed as a marker of neighborhood disadvantage. In doing so, they assume that the lack of male breadwinners is related to socioeconomic disadvantage, just as the lack of male role models is related to social disadvantage. In short, they make a number of assumptions about the importance of male partners for the social and financial stability of a community. Yet, many of the models in this research find a *positive* relationship between female headedness and better employment outcomes; women who live in neighborhoods with more single parent families actually do better in the labor market, all else equal. This finding points to the ability of single mothers to create support networks with other single mothers to help one another overcome barriers to employment. This may mean providing childcare, transportation, or even providing housing during times of need. Although consistent with other research findings (Stack 1974; Edin and Kefalas 2005; Venkatesh 2006), this knowledge has not yet informed current theory about neighborhood advantage and disadvantage. This research provides some of the strongest evidence to date that female headedness or single parenthood should not be assumed *prima facie* to be a marker of disadvantage. In similar fashion, it supports the work of Sanchez-Jankowski (2008:8) who argues powerfully that "there is no way to understand the longevity of poor neighborhoods through disorganization theory." In similar fashion, Small (2004) and Klinenberg (2002) also remind us that viewing a neighborhood simply in terms of "advantage" and "disadvantage" obscures many of the important inter-neighborhood differences that are crucial for everyday survival, not least of which is the presence or absence of network connections that can be used to gain access to important resources.

This research also speaks directly to how we theorize "neighborhood effects" on individuals and families. Despite a growing consensus that neighborhoods play an agentic role in shaping the life chances of residents, I find that neighborhood effects, at least for this particular population, are easily explained away by a comprehensive list of individual circumstances and characteristics. True, individual disadvantages are clustered and we observe that by viewing the neighborhood-only models in each table. But few of these effects persist when individual controls are added. Therefore, theory on neighborhood effects, at least for this group, should reconceptualize neighborhoods as a container, not a causal mechanism in individual outcomes. This does not imply a full-scale rejection of the neighborhood effects literature. It remains possible that neighborhood characteristics play a more important role in shaping employment prospects for mixed-income or mixed-gender samples. It may also be that neighborhood context matters less during the best of economic times, such as the late-1990s. These effects may be more salient during economic downturns, as marginalized workers struggle to find and retain employment. But, for women who left welfare following welfare reform (a group with pressing needs for income and employment), the type of neighborhoods in which they reside simply do not seem to matter as much as their childcare responsibilities, health, and car ownership. To this end, and because these individual disadvantages appear to be clustered, neighborhoods serve as containers of individual advantage or disadvantage, but do not play an important role in shaping employment prospects for neighborhood residents.

Finally, this research informs the ongoing debate within social theory on the relationship between structure and agency. Chapters III and IV reveal that we know little

about the reasons why some women are employed and others are not (between 10 and 20 percent of the variation, judging by the R-squared values). Although we know comparatively more about job quality (Chapter V), the overall pattern remains that women's characteristics and circumstances, even a relatively comprehensive list of them, only explain a small proportion of variance in their employment outcomes. I argue that these values reveal that women by in large are responsive to the demand-side of the labor market; they work for pay when opportunities present themselves and are jobless when opportunities are scarce. Therefore, although some individual predictors are indeed significant, the overall explained variance is low because models in this research entirely omit employer demand. This carries implications for research that focuses women's employment situations primarily as the result of one particular barrier or factor such as health (Seccombe and Hoffman 2007). Although understanding the impact of health upon employment activity is important, health by itself is only one of a number of factors responsible for limiting women's employment prospects. But even analyses of all individual factors and circumstances (such as this one) still overlook the lack of demand for employees with few credentials or marketable skills, as well as larger macroeconomic conditions, all of which play a part in who gains access to living-wage jobs. Therefore, one limitation of this research, and of almost all research in this field, is that it places too much emphasis on individual situations, often ignoring structural and economic constraints that often play a large part (perhaps the largest part) in shaping employment prospects for disadvantaged workers.

Although reformers envisioned women as agentic—as actively choosing to seek employment or remain jobless based upon a crudely rational cost-benefit analysis—these

results indicate that women are by in large responsive to a social and economic structure that simply does not permit full assimilation of welfare leavers into (living wage) jobs, a fear that many social scientists had on the eve of welfare reform (see Leete and Bania 1999). Empirical research demonstrates that disadvantaged women typically do wish to work for pay (Monroe and Tiller 2001; Newman 1999; Wilson 1996:67) but their agency is stymied by a low demand for labor, particularly labor with few marketable skills, as well as by a host of personal barriers. If we as a nation determine that this group of women should work for pay (as we did by passing PRWORA), it is crucial that we avoid strategies aimed at encouraging women to make difficult work related "choices" and that we adopt policies that deal with structural and macroeconomic constraints that limit the efficacy of such choices.

Policy

The quotation by Thomas Jefferson at the start of this chapter urges us to break with our "barbarous" past in the name of progress. Unfortunately, PRWORA marked a return to our past, reminiscent of OBRA, the English Poor Law and a litany of other legislation, by stripping away the safety net that provided security from the vicissitudes of the labor market for many women. To this end, the results in this manuscript suggest that a radical change in the direction of our public policy is long overdue. In the remainder of this chapter I highlight how the findings imply certain policy alternatives and importantly, what some of these policies may look like.

Results indicate that neighborhood context does matter for employment, but may not be a causal factor. Instead, individual disadvantages and problems (health problems,

low skill sets, heavy childcare responsibilities) are clustered into neighborhoods. In this sense, neighborhoods can be viewed best as containers. This does not mean that neighborhood context can be ignored by public policy, however. On the contrary, the clustering of individual disadvantage opens possibilities for spatially-targeted policies aimed at channeling resources into poor neighborhoods, ostensibly to address individual problems and disadvantages. This could include, for example, funding for low-cost, subsidized neighborhood childcare centers. Having such centers in low-income areas would address both the childcare barriers and the importance of car ownership, as for many women it would mean shorter, easier commutes if quality, low-cost childcare options existed close to home. It should also include providing incentives for employers to relocate in high-poverty neighborhoods or better transportation alternatives to help residents of poor neighborhoods find and secure jobs in other neighborhoods. But, these policy initiatives should be spatially-targeted. In short, although neighborhoods are not the problem, they can be the solution.

Both these findings and the overall policy implications part from the litany of traditional neighborhood effects studies that imply that neighborhood conditions are the problem (Haney 2007; Allard 2003; Boardman and Robert 2000; Diez-Roux 2001; Harding 2003; Hannon 2005; Kleit 2001; Rankin and Quane 2000; South and Crowder 1999). Many of these studies conclude that since neighborhood conditions are predictive of various individual outcomes (and imply that they, at least in part, *cause* the outcomes), the solution must be deconcentrating poor neighborhoods. The traditional approach involves providing residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods with vouchers or other assistance to move into non-poor neighborhoods (Rosenbaum and Popkin 1991;

Rosenbaum et al. 2002) and following them to see how they do in their new neighborhoods. Although the models in this manuscript do not suggest that relocation will fail, they do indicate that it may not be necessary and the cost may not be justified. Instead, providing direct assistance to residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods may eliminate some of the neighborhood effects, and may very well cost less than large-scale relocation programs. Moreover, given that many problems in disadvantaged neighborhoods were caused by out-migration in the first place (Wilson 1987), I question whether allowing more residents to leave inner-city neighborhoods for the suburbs will solve the problems confronting the inner-city. It seems we have a fundamental choice: Should we invest in the residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods, helping them to overcome the barriers to employment that they face, or should we provide the resources to relocate them to more advantaged neighborhoods, hoping that they will be exposed to more opportunities and better role models in their new neighborhoods? This research provides strong support for the first approach.

Of course, a fundamental difference exists between what we *should* do to alleviate the barriers to employment faced by welfare leavers and what we have the political will to do. As Quigley (2003:140) points out

> When medical scientists lack a cure for an epidemic disease, research funds are provided. But when faced with unemployment, some economists, governments and the corporate interests that they often reflect, proclaim it cannot be cured or does not exist or it is "natural."

Many of these same scholars and business leaders contend that the government has no business interfering in the market by developing more progressive social programs. According to Quigley (2003:7), this really means that these people "are satisfied with

current government arrangements and opportunities that favor business interests. Some say the economy will solve these problems on its own. No. The market has no inherent interest in the common good. The market is interested in making money. That is its job. Period." Accordingly, I reject suggestions that decreased corporate tax burdens, a weakened safety net, and increased reliance on the free market will generate employment opportunities (see Murray 2006).

Another common criticism of more progressive social programs is that they simply do not produce results. This indictment is often heard with regard to the Head Start program (Karoly 2001). But, as Albelda et al. (1996:1) point out, not every defense contractor has yielded a perfect product at a minimal cost. Not every cancer project has brought a cure. Not every space launching has succeeded. Not every diplomatic initiative has brought peace. But, we continue to fund them. "Why should a less than perfect record for social programs be less tolerable to society than failed economic, military, or diplomatic policies?"

Further, as Acker (2005:92) contends, employers make a number of gendered assumptions that make continued employment difficult for many women, but particularly disadvantaged women. According to Acker,

> Work is organized on the assumption that reproduction concerns are left at home, that the worker has no other responsibilities that might interfere with total attention to tasks or projects assigned by the employer. Employees are expected to arrive at stated times, stay on the job except for toilet, coffee, and lunch breaks, accomplish certain amounts of work, and often work overtime. They are expected to show up day after day, no matter what is happening in other parts of their lives. Enforcement of these assumptions is probably more stringent for working class employers, such as women in lower-level service and clerical jobs or men in manufacturing jobs, than for those in managerial and professional positions.

Another method of alleviating the "big three" barriers that women face (childcare responsibilities, transportation, health) would be drafting policies that compel employers to view women as whole individuals, with numerous responsibilities outside of the workplace. And, as Acker points out, other countries have adopted this model. In Sweden, for example, workers can choose to limit the hours they work for pay in order to take care of other responsibilities (P. 93). Putting such laws on the books would allow women to better care for medical conditions and children without fear of losing their jobs.

We also know that too few jobs exist for each and every woman who desires work. Therefore, the safety net must be strong enough to care for those who are unable to find paid employment, for a variety of reasons. As I discuss earlier, many policy initiatives should be spatially-targeted, such as low-cost childcare centers, medical clinics, and subsidized, efficient public transportation. But, what other sorts of policies should be passed at the federal level?

The job training component of PRWORA, first coined by Clinton, seems to have fallen by the wayside. I remain unconcerned about this omission as empirical research has generally found modest to nonexistent long-term results from programs such as the federal JOBS program (Karoly 2001:343; Blank 2001:174; Heckman and Krueger 2005:295), and given the large initial costs and a long latency period before its effects are known, even Head Start is often criticized for failing to procure long-term human capital gains relative to non-participating peers (Karoly 2001; O'Connor 2001:187). These results, along with the results from this research, suggest that the key to better employment outcomes are educational credentials, not job training programs or skill acquisition. Therefore, programs that help disadvantaged urban women obtain a GED or

an Associate's Degree would indeed help their long-term employment trajectories, but programs aimed (paternalistically) at teaching women the culture of the workplace, deference, timeliness, or basic mathematics (see Hays 2003) cannot be expected to procure positive results.

Policy recommendations from academics are rather unitary in nature. These include the development of education programs for the most disadvantaged portion of a state's caseload (Zedlewski and Loprest 2001), counting approved job training or educational programs as fulfillment of the TANF work requirement (Hasksins and Blank 2001), short-term leave and enhanced government support for women caring for children with temporary illnesses, taking them for doctors' visits, or for parent-teacher conferences (Acker 2006), and a removal of the expectation that women with very young children engage in formal work activity (Harris 1996).

More broadly, I concur with scholars who advocate for a minimum wage increase (at least to 40 percent of the average wage, and indexed to inflation), which is often found to generate less unemployment and inflation than economists suspect (Rank 2005:197-199; Blank, Danziger, and Schoeni 2006; Blank 2001:114). Furthermore, I support an enhanced and expanded Earned Income Tax Credit (Wilson 1996; Corcoran 2002), and a renegotiated tax policy that imposes a larger marginal tax rate on higher income brackets, a policy for which Rank (2005:239) finds widespread and overwhelming popular support.

Lastly, we must pay more attention to the demand-side of the labor market and to policies aimed at stimulating the demand for otherwise-overlooked workers, a set of policies often ignored by academics (O'Connor 2001:240; Heckman and Krueger 2005:289). These policies might include an improved Targeted Jobs Tax Credit or Work

Opportunity Tax Credit (Blank 2001:116) or perhaps a consortia of linked low-wage, service-sector employers and semi-skilled, moderate-wage employers who work together to provide opportunities for mobility and advancement. Primary-sector employers would be gaining employees who are tested and proven, while low-wage employers would lose their best workers, but could be encouraged with a tax-break or transfer for each employee promoted (Newman 1999:286).

Given the failures of PRWORA in improving the lives of America's poor, I favor Blank's (2001) suggestion for welfare re-reform. She proposes a three-tiered system where the first tier includes evaluation of the applicant and short term assistance. This includes programs to help avoid TANF receipt altogether, such as help fixing a car or paying overdue medical bills. In other words, the first question would be "What can we do to help you get back to work?" Next, recipients would engage in short-term job search and employment assistance, additional education and training programs, limited-time job placements. As a last resort, they would receive cash assistance. But, the transfer amounts would need to be enhanced, as Blank (2001:145) contends that all else equal, when transfers are higher, poverty is lower; if we seek to reduce poverty, increasing cash transfers is a wise policy.

The three tiers of this program would be fluid and clients would be able to move between the levels until they find the strategy that best suits their responsibilities, barriers, and aspirations. The policy recognizes that clients are each at a different point along the spectrum of job-readiness (Blank 2001:254). At the same time, I would encourage policymakers to reconsider the block-grant funding format, as it is unresponsive to increasing need during economic downturn, and at the same time, to reconsider the five-

year lifetime benefit limit, as some clients simply cannot garner the human capital and social supports necessary to maintain a steady job at a living wage within five years. This, of course, would be coupled with a more humane and less esoteric sanction policy.

However, given that PRWORA did pass, is often heralded as a success, and is not likely to be challenged in the near future, I add to this ongoing policy discussion by proposing a series of spatially targeted programs. This general approach would ensure that residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods would have increased access to resources aimed at alleviating many of their individual barriers to employment (particularly health, childcare and transportation). This would involve channeling funds for the establishment of free or reduced-cost medical facilities in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Current policies do not require states to identify or provide services for women with physical or mental health problems, although a few (very few) do anyway (Romero et al. 2003:1232). Consistent with findings from this research that physical health, mental health, having a child with a disability, and experiencing domestic violence all limit the extent to which a woman is able to work, and importantly that women with these barriers are clustered spatially, this approach would help to alleviate many untreated or undiagnosed medical conditions and would permit many additional women to seek employment.

Similarly, government officials should identify neighborhoods of need and advocate for the development of low-cost or heavily subsidized childcare centers in these neighborhoods. This approach carries a double benefit. Not only does it free up women with heavier childcare responsibilities to search for employment, but if the centers are located in the neighborhoods of need, they will remove one leg of a potentially costly and

time-consuming commute (i.e., women will no longer have to spend long hours on public transportation both taking children to childcare arrangements and then commuting to work).

Finally, we must find a way to ease the transportation burden faced by many women. Individual car ownership was significant across all models and chapters, while neighborhood car ownership also proved important in many instances. Although few concerned with environmental damage or traffic congestion would advocate helping disadvantaged individuals purchase automobiles, the significance of these variables indicates crucial unmet transportation needs, or a spatial mismatch. Following a litany of empirical research, I advocate strongly for high-speed, reliable rapid transit that serves disadvantaged communities and can freely take commuters across municipal lines (see Sawicki and Moody 2000; Ong 2001; Ong 1996; Taylor and Ong 1995). Development of such and infrastructure will surely be expensive, but the results of this research indicate that it is of the utmost importance as transportation access is perhaps the single largest factor preventing many disadvantaged urban women from finding paid employment. There are other solutions as well. Currently, car insurance companies charge higher rates for individuals who live in high-crime areas (owing to the fact that these individuals are the most likely to file a claim), disproportionately impacting poor communities. Ong (2002:240) finds that lowering insurance premiums by $100 can increase the odds of employment for those individuals by about four percentage points.

Yet, as Blank (2001:268) cautions, there is no way to both improve public assistance and cuts costs. There is no cheap solution to the poverty problem, despite what some (Murray 2006) would have you believe. In fact, the real solution may cost

even more than writing monthly checks. But, crafting a humane, logical public assistance program and providing women with necessary financial and social supports is crucially important, as a full two-thirds of Americans between ages 20 and 65 have turned to a public assistance program at some point. This reality led Rank (2005:107) to conclude, "We have met the enemy and they are us." Unless we confront the structural and economic problems that severely limit the availability of living-wage jobs in disadvantaged neighborhoods, our only option involves strengthening our existing social safety net programs.

We possess the skill but have not yet found the will.

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