
Manufacturing Mammies: The Burdens of Service Work and Welfare Reform among Battered Black Women¹

Dana-Ain Davis *Purchase College, State University of New York*

We cannot become a nation of short-order cooks and saleswomen, Xerox-machine operators and messenger boys. (Felix Rohatyn, 1981)²

Abstract: The impact of economic restructuring from industry to service that began in the 1970s continues to leak across cities in the United States. One outcome of restructuring has been the targeted focus of corporate interests in realizing profits. To that end, corporations have become increasingly engaged in policy issues, specifically decreased wages and deregulation. The confluence of economic restructuring, corporate interests and neo-liberal policy have converged at the lived experience of battered Black women on welfare. This paper examines the links between these broader processes that have influenced welfare reform policy, battered Black women and historically constructed images of Black women.

Keywords: welfare reform, neo-liberalism, Black women, battered women, Mammy, economic restructuring

Résumé: L'effet de la restructuration économique à partir de la manufacture jusqu'à l'industrie des services datant des années 1970 continue à se propager à travers les villes américaines. Un des résultats de cette restructuration a été une convergence des intérêts corporatifs sur la réalisation des profits. Pour ce faire, les corporations sont devenues largement impliquées dans le domaine politique, surtout en ce qui concerne la dérégulation et la diminution des salaires. La confluence de la restructuration économique, des intérêts corporatifs et de la politique néo-libérale a convergé sur l'expérience de la vie quotidienne des femmes noires abusées qui dépendent de l'assistance sociale. Le présent travail propose d'examiner les liens entre ces processus plus larges qui ont influencé la réforme de l'assistance sociale, les femmes noires abusées et des images historiquement construites des femmes noires.

Mots-clés : réforme de l'assistance sociale, néolibéralisme, femmes noires, femmes abusées, «Mammy», restructuration économique.

Introduction

Contemporary welfare reform in the U.S. has been praised by conservative policy elites for its role in disciplining the poor and reducing the numbers of people receiving public assistance and focussing on work, not welfare (Horn and Bush, 2003; O'Neil and Hill, 2003). However, outside those circles, social scientists including anthropologists have generated a considerable critical body of work emphasizing the tensions within welfare reform. They have pointed out the corrosive effects of reform in structural terms showing how it actually produces new forms of poverty and increases inequality. This is the case, they argue, in part because people on welfare must now work or engage in work-related activity—for very low or no wages—in return for assistance. For example, Goode and Maskovsky (2001) have suggested that welfare reform is flawed because it sustains inequity in two ways. The first is related to the economic context of restructuring, specifically de-industrialization, in which such policies are implemented. Economic restructuring has meant a decline in the employment options for workers as well as falling wages for those employed. The second is related to the context of the prevailing neo-liberal ideologies that pervade the design and implementation of welfare reform. The result is the devolution of the responsibility for social policy to state governments, the implementation of incoherent tax policies, and forcing people to work to alleviate poverty even though there has been a decline in real earnings. Thus, although neo-liberal policies appear to decrease “dependency” of the poor on the state, ultimately they generate new forms of inequality (Morgen and Maskovsky, 2003). Other scholars have focussed on race in their critiques, both the role it played in facilitating welfare reform's implementation as well as

the disparities it has aggravated (Davis, Aparicio et. al., 2003). These writers indeed offer a serious challenge to the merits of welfare reform often touted by policy elites. However astute such critiques are, they do not necessarily capture the complex intersection of economic restructuring, neo-liberalism, and racism on the conditions of work, living and making a living for a particular group who constitute up to 60% of welfare caseloads (Curcio, 1997; Kenney and Brown, 1996). This group is made up of people who have experienced intimate violence. They are Black women who are battered.

The goal of this article is to examine the implications that welfare reform, specifically the mandatory work policy, has for Black women who have experienced violence. The political and economic changes that have been taking place in the U.S. beg an analysis of the distinctive ways that battered Black women are triply punished by the interacting dynamics of intimate violence and public welfare policy, which skate on racism. Battered Black women have been pressured to participate in work or work related programs that are dead-end, precarious and low-status, that do little to enable them to move out of the traps of poverty and violence, and to achieve economic security and independence from abusive partners. I will argue that there are consequences from the interplay of the proliferation of negative racial images, neo-liberal social policy and, the effects of de-industrialization on a local labour market. In exploring the relationship between these domains I argue furthermore that welfare reform work mandates have resuscitated one particular historical image of Black women—"Mammy," a derogatory image that has been mapped on to Black women. I raise two questions in this article. First, to what extent is this historical construct of Black women contemporarily reproduced in the context of welfare reform? Second, what are the material disadvantages of this construct for battered Black women as they navigate welfare reform? To address these questions, my discussion focusses on the impact of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), known as welfare reform, on battered women. PRWORA is the act that ended assistance as a federal entitlement for poor and working poor people. Through the PRWORA a new program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), was ushered in along with the imposition of time-limited assistance and rapid entrée of welfare recipients into approved workforce participation activity. I address these questions using a critical race analysis.

A Critical Race Analysis

With the exception of Josephson (2002) few scholars have attempted analyses of battered women and welfare reform

from a racial perspective. Moreover, few have looked beyond the physical violence that poor Black women experience to include an analysis of the materiality of structural violence. By this I mean that few authors have problematized the relationship between de-industrialization, neo-liberalism and racism. To remedy this gap, I will first argue that there is a confluence between current social policies influenced by economic shifts, neo-liberalism, and racism. Second, I explore, using my research, the question of how welfare policy mandates draw on stereotypes of Black women through what I call "mute racism" that circumscribes Black women's access to economic security and independence. Although I discuss mute racism below, I want to clarify here that it is a covert form of racism, a vehicle through which racial tensions and hierarchies are articulated and sustained. Mute racism may be expressed in a verbal and/or non-verbal communicative exchange that indexes race—generating a type of racial profiling without using racial terms, but rather using associations whose meanings are understood to be raced by those involved in the interaction. Labelling is one form of mute racism. To illustrate, the label "teenage mother" opportunistically profiles a young Black woman. Another example of a label that profiles race and attaches particular types of work, abilities or statuses to racial/ethnic groups is "migrant worker" associated with Mexicans and illegal immigrant status. One final example germane to this discussion is the term "welfare queen" or "welfare mother," indices for race without direct reference to race, but nonetheless understood to represent a poor Black woman receiving public assistance.

My research with battered Black women on welfare reveals another example of muted racism manifested in the implementation of welfare reform's mandatory work policy, which has become a prominent feature of neo-liberal governance in U.S. social welfare programs. This is the image of the Mammy. As Black women are coerced into low-status jobs in the low-wage service sector in order to receive benefits, the work they tend to do conforms to distorted ideas about the traditional occupational roles historically filled by Black women. This dynamic as I will show resuscitates the Mammy.

The Research

This article draws on 23 months of research at Angel House, a shelter for battered women in New York State where I began fieldwork in February 1998. The project examined various dimensions of the lives of Black battered women on welfare just as welfare reform was being implemented nationally. Fieldwork took place in an area which

I refer to as River Valley County, in the city of Laneville, New York. River Valley County is located in the Upstate Region of New York and has over 280 000 residents of whom 84% are White. River Valley residents live in one of over 20 municipalities, including the city of Laneville, which has a population of nearly 30 000 and is where most of the county's Black population resides.

Participant observation was conducted and life histories were collected from 22 women, of whom 13 were Black, 4 White, 3 Latina, 1 Asian, and 1 Indian out of a total shelter population of 125 (see Davis, forthcoming).³ Participants were self-selected and all had applied for social services to ensure payment to the shelter. Whether or not a woman has previously received social services, in New York she must apply or reapply for assistance. If an applicant is eligible for assistance, shelters submit requests to the Department of Social Services for reimbursement of a per diem rate to cover the cost of the client's shelter stay. Through this process eligible women living in shelters are able to secure food stamps, Medicaid, cash and housing assistance which often facilitates their ability to leave their batterers. These supports are available during the maximum 90-day shelter stay and often continue after departure. The average age of the interviewees was between 30 and 39 years old and the average income, upon shelter entry, was less than \$9 999. Fourteen of the women were single when they arrived at the shelter and 13 had children. While 17 women had achieved a high school diploma or higher, Black women were more likely to have had a high school degree or some vocational training than Latina, White and women of other ethnic backgrounds. In addition to the 22 interviews with battered women, 40 interviews were conducted with 8 community residents, 19 battered women's and poor people's advocates, and 13 professional staff of public agencies such as the River Valley County Department of Social Services (RVCDSS) and the New York State Department of Labor. Of the public agency staff and advocates interviewed, all but five were White.

This article is organized into four sections. The first explores how Black women have been imagined in U.S. ideology and examines four prevailing stereotypes; "Jezebel," "Mammy," "matriarch" and "welfare queen." Discussion of these images will serve as the theoretical context used to critique welfare reform policy. The second section attempts to draw out the logic of neo-liberalism in relation to economic restructuring. The expansion of the service sector with its need for workers feeds the idea that the market place is the most effectual sphere to address social problems like poverty. It is within this logic that specific forms of Black women's work rests in balance. The

third section provides the ethnographic background of River Valley County the research site. Here I examine the impact of de-industrialization on River Valley as it paved the way for exploiting poor Black battered women. In the fourth section I consider how the Mammy is manufactured in the localized context of River Valley and offer several case examples to illustrate the process by which she is produced. I conclude with a discussion of why the Mammy image is an ideological framework through which to understand the basis and bias of mandatory work programs.

Theorizing Images of Black Women: Jezebels, Mammies, Matriarchs and Welfare Queens

Four stereotypes have cloaked Black women since the 19th century; each in some way representing public imaginings of Black women's failure as women. The stereotypes are the Jezebel, the Mammy, the matriarch and the welfare queen. Stereotypes typically are deployed as a form of control; a mechanism marking members of a group as "other." These public representations have essentially functioned to justify Black women's exploitation, maintaining gendered/racial subjugation. Jezebel is a construction describing lascivious and seductive women but actually reveals and rationalizes the sexual violence to which Black women were subjected during slavery. The Mammy, envisioned as an older Black woman, also has her origins in the slave economy and evolved from late 19th-century fiction as a capable, valuable character. However, she acquired repugnant characteristics in the visual media which typecast Black women as defeminized and performing menial services for Whites (Jewell, 1983). The matriarch is the middle-aged Black woman who severely emasculates men with her dominant and aggressive behaviour. This image "came to life" in Moynihan's report, *The Negro Family* (1965) and was the impetus for policy agendas directed toward "fixing" the problems of poverty and the matriarchal Black family in the 60s and 70s. Finally, the welfare queen and/or welfare mother represents Black women's failure as "productive" members of society. Welfare queen was a phrase originally used by the Chicago press to describe one woman, apparently imaginary, who managed to live a lavish lifestyle while collecting welfare checks. The welfare mother simply produces children while receiving government money. This image, although fictitious, became ingrained in the national psyche when presidential candidate Ronald Reagan grossly exaggerated one Black woman's fraudulent actions.⁴ Despite the fiction, the terms "welfare queen" and mother established for the public an association between Black

women and welfare use, situating them as cheaters of the welfare system, presumably living better than the White working class. The term has been egregiously appended onto almost all Black women on welfare who are viewed as “lazy, breeding machines, living off the largesse of the state” (Roberts, 1997: 17).

There are a number of ways to organize these images revealing their persistence and the harm they have done to Black women. The most general formulation is to historicize the stereotypical images from slavery to the 20th century, each one’s emergence corresponding to a period of heightened anxiety about Black women’s role in U.S. society. Organized in this way, we see an ideological evolution of Black women’s representation that directly correlates with U.S. racial and economic relations. Legislated forms of racism in the 19th century and a slave economy motivated the genesis of the Jezebel and the Mammy as “degenerate sexual others” (James, 1999: 140). Whereas positioning Black women as libidinous Jezebels rationalized and comforted uneasiness about sexual abuse, the ascription of asexuality to the Mammy was an ideal counter-image that rectified “slavery’s racial intimacy” (Morton, 1991: 10) and pacified gender and racial anxiety that Whites felt. Products of the industrial and postindustrial economies, the matriarch and welfare queen have been positioned, respectively, as emasculating and, economically non-productive. Societal angst about the constitution of the Black family unit and Black women’s role as heads of household are reflected through these stereotypes since they are considered to be non-normative.

A second schema considers a life-stage trajectory of Black women’s images. Across the lifespan, from young to old, the stereotypes would be Jezebel, welfare queen, matriarch and Mammy. This order cumulatively casts Black women as dysfunctional both historically and throughout their own life cycles; hypersexual in youth, economically incompetent as adults, toxic as middle age women and desexualized as older women. Thus, from adolescence to menopause, Black women are afflicted by pathology. A third schematic organization is to place the images in dyads representative of temporal shifts in nomenclature and conflicting assessments of similar characteristics. In the Jezebel/welfare queen (mother) dyad sexuality and reproduction are the thread connecting both. Sexual licentiousness attributed to the Jezebel is a necessary adjunct to her reproductive potential, which was deemed important to the slave economy based on the need for her offspring. Alternatively, in the industrial and postindustrial economy, the supposed hyper-fertility of the welfare queen/mother is problematic. The other dyad is

the Mammy and the matriarch where the former is revered as the ideal caregiver while the latter is castigated for caregiving in the absence of a male partner. While both are motherly, their status is differentiated according to the house in which nurturing takes place, the White household or their own. Although the matriarch cares for her own family, the Mammy is always a caregiver for others, most commonly for White children.

Despite the degrading connotations associated with each of these figures, in this paper, I will argue that the Mammy may be viewed as a corrective to all of the other images of Black women, particularly the Jezebel and welfare queen/mother images. She is the most redemptive of the four and, in fact, holds the most promise for the service economy—the economic context of welfare reform.

Welfare Reform, Welfare Programs and Battered Black Women

When President Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act in 1996 (PRWORA or the Act) a number of changes occurred including; reassignment of welfare program administration from the federal to the state level. The Act also dismantled a former program used primarily by poor women and children, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and instituted a temporary program called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and developed a program for single adults called Safety Net. The Act imposed five-year lifetime limits on the receipt of TANF and strict and extensive employment obligations on adult recipients of benefits (Nathan and Gais, 1999). Receipt of assistance became contingent upon a number of conditions, one of which is the focus of this article, participation in mandatory work and work related activities. Work activity may include employment for wages, being assigned to public service sector work sites (such as parks and food pantries) to work off benefits, and attending vocational training or other programs leading to work such as substance use and job readiness programs.

While historically the U.S. has been the least generous welfare state of any advanced industrial democracy (Huber and Stephens, 1999: 10), it is here that stiff eligibility for welfare programs has been ideologically driven along gender and racial lines (Howard, 1999; Mink, 1990; Mink, 1998). Major revisions in welfare law, notably diversion of public funding from social welfare programs to reliance on market-based strategies for dealing with poverty represent new forms of gender control, especially over single mothers, who constitute the largest percent of adults needing assistance. Control through social welfare policy is exaggerated through Black women who,

as others have shown, have been denied assistance since 1935 when welfare policy was institutionalized (Fraser and Gordon, 1994) and stigmatized since the 1960s (Quadagno, 1984). This stigma has continued and facilitated passage of PRWORA because the public viewed welfare first and foremost as a "Black" program. Thus, it is not unreasonable to view work requirements for recipients as gendered racism and social control especially since the low-wage sector benefits from tactics employed to push poor women towards it (O'Connor, 2001).

These measures were seen as problematic and were met with criticism for many reasons although only three are highlighted here. First it was noted that welfare reform made the working class and poor responsible for ending their own poverty in a compromised economic climate (Goode and Maskovsky, 2001). As the quintessential neo-liberal project, welfare reform unambiguously draws poor people into wage labour, forcing consumption patterns that serve the interest of gross capitalism (Maskovsky, 2001). As noted earlier reform was criticized because of how it played the race card. The passage of the PRWORA was facilitated by warped representations and the public's view that welfare was a program solely intended for Black women (Hancock, 2000; Neubeck and Cazenave, 2001). Further, critics charged that welfare reform intensifies racialized inequalities because racial discrimination exists as a barrier to employment (Burnham, 2001; Schram, Soss and Fording, 2003). Finally, early in the welfare reform debates, the issue of intimate violence was posited as an impediment to meeting various requirements, particularly the work mandate (Brandwein, 1999; Chanley and Alozie, 2001). But few have examined how neo-liberalism, racism, and intimate violence overlap within the context of economic shifts and coalesces into a web that victimizes Black battered women because they are unable to secure permanent employment, a situation which could cause them to return to their batterers.

One strategy to address the particular needs of women on welfare was the Family Violence Option (FVO or The Option). The FVO exempts victims of violence from having to meet certain welfare reform policy mandates including the work requirements for a specified time period.⁵ A corollary of the FVO was that battered women were rhetorically distinguished as deserving of welfare in contrast to other women, who risked being viewed as undeserving and resistant to the disciplines of work (Chanley and Aloize, 2001). At the same time, however, persistently antagonistic images of Black women complicate effective use of The Option because Black women have also been depicted as a population pathologically dependent on welfare. Furthermore, as Ammons

(1995) and James (1996) suggest, Black women are rarely viewed as victims of violence because it is believed that violence is normative in Black life. I suggest that for Black battered women on welfare, social welfare policy is not only motivated by economic imperatives but is informed by racial images and ideology facilitated by the shift from a manufacturing to a service economy.

Neo-liberalism and the Burden of Service (Work)

During the 1970s as manufacturing industries lagged and the service economy rose, many who had skilled labour and manufacturing jobs were disproportionately left unemployed. At the same time, the labour needs of the service economy favoured low-waged, unskilled workers. The proliferation of technology led to labour force bifurcation resulting in more skilled professionals clustered at one end and low-wage service workers, or in many cases unemployed workers, at the other. It is only vaguely unclear how much labour force division in the past 20-30 years is the result of conscious policies by the government, egged on by crises in corporate profits and by the move toward off-shoring production. But one thing is very clear: The dissolution of the Keynesian welfare state overlapped with the motivations of changes in the global economy.

According to Huber and Stephens (1999) welfare states contract within the context of globalization, because they constitute an interference with the goals of achieving unencumbered markets. Unencumbered markets require international competition typically attained via compression of labour costs, consequently resulting in reduced wages and reductions in welfare state program contributions. One way to maintain low wages is by glutting the market with job-seekers, intensifying competition among workers and cheapening labour power. Economic transformations through the 1980s and 90s unevenly affected poor communities, a situation exacerbated by devolution initiatives (Susser, 1998). Concurrently, businesses capitalized on poor people's labour through subsidies and tax credits because TANF recipients are forced to work in order to remain eligible for cash assistance. Both Piven (2001) and Helleiner (1994) suggest that unfettered greed is at the root of policy forcing people to engage in work with little or no job protections. In mandating people with similar skills to enter training programs leading to specific occupational niches, welfare reform policy may be seen as a handmaiden to the larger project of consolidating employer dominance thereby contributing to increased profitability. Further, relocation of the global economy has moved manufacturing away from the U.S., while domestic economies have become reliant on service

sectors, and has created a regime of control in which policy and institutions (i.e., government agencies, business and labour markets) interact, (see Huber and Stephens, 1999).

The retrenchment the U.S. welfare state is one outcome of this shift as public sector resources have contracted and public funds are used to “seed” private ventures. Since welfare reform is based on the assumption that government “handouts” have created a “culture of poverty” that will only be cured by work, the market orientation of new policies restructures the poor as consumers of public services (Cruikshank, 1999). But given that subjects of poverty are constituted in gendered and racialized ways, the work mandate, not surprisingly, reinforces labour force hierarchies. As Williams notes:

...African-American women had always been expected and required to do wage work in U.S. Society, predominantly as domestic and agricultural workers. Thus as the new image of welfare recipient was constructed as African-American, it was only to be expected that they (unlike white women) should be required to work. (Williams, 1997: 5)

Williams’ analysis accurately portrays the paradox between White privilege and Black disenfranchisement elaborated upon by Stafford, Salas, and Mendez (2003). They note that middle-class White women, benefiting from corporate maternal leave policies, are encouraged to stay home with their infants while poor women of colour with children are forced to work for low wages. Whereas social policy uses Black women as instruments in regimes of labour control, White women are offered latitude to revive the ideology of domesticity. These profound differences in work obligation based on race and class, which have been historically constructed, demand constant manipulation of policies to organize labour participation. Accordingly, we find that Black women have had an almost uninterrupted employment trajectory as low-wage workers, rather than as high-wage earners or caregivers for their families. This observation is corroborated by my own research with Black women who were battered, on welfare, and who were guided toward training programs incongruent with their personal interests. They were discouraged from pursuing higher education, and coerced into low-paying service work, mostly as day care workers, home health aides, and cashiers—positions historically held by Black women.

Black Women and Service Work

Black women’s relationship to work, according to Mullings (1997), has straddled the space of coercion

and contradiction. They have been forced to work outside their homes, first by slave-owners, then out of economic necessity, and currently by virtue of welfare reform policy. In addition, for Black families to maintain a middle-class lifestyle due to the lower pay earned by Black men and women, two incomes are necessary. Often, Black women are engaged as service workers, including domestic, clerical, health service, food-service and retail work, jobs they entered in growing numbers after World War II.

In the early 1900s, barred from nearly all forms of employment, approximately 44% of African-American women were employed as domestic servants or laundresses (Amott and Matthaei, 1991). Industrialization created few opportunities for Black women until World War I, when a small number benefitted from war related employment (Harley, 2002). By the 1930s although Black women’s occupational choices expanded, they continued to be segregated in the lowest rung of the economic ladder working primarily as domestics. The World War II wartime economy incorporated Black women into industrial occupations, but again after the war, they lost their jobs. Instead of returning to domestic labour, a four-decade entrée into the service and clerical field ensued, reflecting the growth of the postindustrial economy.⁶

Black women’s participation in service work continued through the 1970s and 1980s, with one in four employed in this sector compared to one out of every six White women (Harley, 2002). In the 1990s although educational attainment precipitated a rise in Black women’s employment opportunities, in 1995, 1.7 million were employed in the service sector (U.S. Department of Labor, 1997). In the 21st century, they continue to be over-represented among those working in service occupations and according to the U.S. Department of Labor (2001) nearly 25% of Black women or 2 million, were employed in service occupations in 2001 compared to 16% of White women. One explanation for their dominance in this sector is offered by Jewel (1983) who argues that standards of occupational segregation are established through the circulation of negative images (Jewell, 1983: 44). The very fact of their historical participation in service work rationalizes the expectation that Black women will continue filling those types of jobs. Of course, this assumption obscures the fact that they have broader interests and skills. Black women’s role as service workers is neither unique nor new. What is unique is that their continued participation in this occupational segment is maintained through the advent of policy situated at the interstices of neo-liberalism and de-industrialization.

De-industrialization: Labour Needs in Laneville, New York

In this section I discuss how de-industrialization shaped the employment needs of a small city as both prologue and context to understanding the backdrop against which Black battered women are poised as they entered into the newly reformed welfare system. By localizing their experience with work mandates in Laneville, the processes that move Black women into the service sector and serve as a mechanism to revive the city's economy begin to unravel.

Over nearly half a century Laneville mushroomed, becoming home to a major manufacturing corporation, which will be referred to as Zytron. Zytron began its sprawl just before World War II and by the 1980s, employed 30 000 people in River Valley supporting one in three jobs in the county (Surdey, 1992). As the major manufacturer facing little competition, the company perpetuated a "job for life" image and positioned the area as one of New York's most stable manufacturing economies.

In July 1990, as the nation went into recession, River Valley County's economy and by extension Laneville's, spiralled downward. Zytron downsized and the dynamic of labour saving technologies coupled with the expansion of international labour markets resulted in the company posting its first-ever financial loss. Layoffs continued, as manufacturing moved overseas. Businesses in Laneville closed and there was population flight. Re-employment rates were low, as wages offered by companies absorbing former Zytron employees were less than what the company had paid. By 1995, 52% of the city's 12 000 households fell into the low, very low and extremely low-income categories, and 30% of those households were headed by women.

In the interest of economic revitalization an aggressive plan was developed to lure new businesses to the area. Occupational outlook studies and economic analyses showed the major area of economic growth for the county lay in the service sector especially with respect to health care and retail sales (State of New York Department of Labor, 2001). Welfare reform policy, with its attendant mandatory work requirements, became a strategy to resolve River Valley's economic problems as the River Valley County Department of Social Services (RVCDSS) developed a workforce plan to move poor people to service industry jobs. This was done in collaboration with the county's economic development corporation, the Laneville Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Labor, and other agencies. Essentially the River Valley County Department of Social Services was an employment broker, recruiting for and satisfying corporations that con-

tributed to the local economy. The RVCDSS Commissioner saw these partnerships as positive:

...We wanted to develop that trust with business...I told them I have over a million dollars in training monies. What training are you going to need in the next five years for people that are in your business? Do you want keyboarding skills?...At this meeting [set up with business by the Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Labor and RVCDSS], we said we were going to put our money into the skills...how a person should come to work everyday, how you should dress, what you should do when your boss may be crabby.

It was this milieu in which Black battered women found themselves, as they applied for social services. While they wanted an opportunity to create their own lives, free from violence and domination, their need for social services placed them at the cusp of Laneville's compromised economy while welfare reform policy dictated the course of their lives. Black women were not encouraged to obtain training or college degrees, even when they expressed a desire to do so because most of the jobs available demanded only a high school diploma. Instead, they were used to meet local low-skill labour needs under threat of being sanctioned or having their benefits cut. The situation in Laneville is one localized example of a national phenomenon taking place in other cities like Philadelphia and deserves ongoing investigation (see for example Coll, 2004).

Manufacturing "Mammies"

One of the most pervasive of all the images symbolizing African-American womanhood (Jewell, 1983: 37) is the Mammy who has served as a security blanket in the effort toward racial social control (Williamson, 1986). The Mammy image is produced within particular social, economic and political contexts "related to the distribution of power" (Mullings, 1997: 110) and is subject to many interpretations.⁷ Here I rely on the version that soothes contemporary anxieties about the racial politics of labour needs. Both friendly and protective as far as Whites are concerned (Santiago-Valles, 1999: 24), "her" accommodation and devotion to White needs are viewed favourably by Euro-Americans, and epitomize one fiction of Black women's role in U.S. society (Collins, 2000).

Expansion of the service sector and mandatory work requirements act upon pre-existing images, invoking job segregation and settling problematic behavioural characteristics. Concretized through policy, we may consider this nexus of policy, images and ideology as a mechanism used in the service of mobilizing Black women to labour

under circumscribed occupational possibilities. As service workers, Black women's labour is aligned with White hegemonic views of their place within capitalism. As a recipient of temporary assistance, Black women work hard and are to be satisfied with their station in life, articulating the idea of the Mammy which presumes Black women will not challenge welfare reform's work requirement, which is ensured through sanctioning measures. Welfare reform updates the Mammy by transforming her from an icon into a contemporary figure well-suited to fill an occupational niche in the service sector. This is achieved by policing Black women's work activities and by directing them primarily to low-wage jobs. As Amott and Matthei (1991) point out, jobs are often connected to ideas about who should do what type of work in relation to gender, race and ethnicity. Evidence of how occupations are racialized in River Valley County is corroborated in labour force data, which shows that presently 3.1% of women in the labour force are Black, but are over represented in one occupational category; making up 8.4% of service workers, more than any other minority group.

When the Black women in the study went for their interviews at the Department of Social Services, caseworkers immediately told them they had to find a job. If no job was found they had to enter into a training program that would lead to work, or participate in community service work for a total of 30 hours each week. Rarely were women's self-determined goals taken into account, I would argue, in part because some caseworkers perceived the women as welfare queens or Jezebels. And although no caseworker ever called them either, women sensed they were viewed as such. For example, one caseworker raised her eyebrow, and peered over her glasses upon finding out that Iliana, a mother of two, was pregnant. She inquired: "Why do you *keep* having children?" Burdened by the subtext, Iliana was both defensive and shamed by the muted racist question. Attention must be paid to these unspoken but taken-for-granted presumptions; what Bilig (1995) calls "ordinaries"—things that should be said but are not. In Iliana's case the ordinary that was omitted was "Are you going to keep having more babies to get more welfare? Are you a welfare queen/mother?" Ordinaries hold some explanatory power in clarifying women's non sequiturs. For instance take the comment made by Michelle, a young Black Latina. Upon her return from a meeting at the Department of Social Services, I asked Michelle how things went during her appointment with the caseworker. She responded, "*I did not grow up on social services. We got it one year, when my father was laid off.*" Michelle's proclamation did not specifically follow my question. I asked her if the caseworker *said* Michelle grew up

on social services, and Michelle reported she had not. Thus, we can interpret her response to me as a response to an "ordinary" an unarticulated, but inferred, accusation. Like Michelle, other women responded to "ordinaries" by drawing on their own life histories to challenge unspoken beliefs that they were long-term dependents on welfare who inculcate a "culture of poverty" in their children.

Women interpreted muted racism from interactions with caseworkers. One woman, Sherita, spoke directly about the negative association between Black women and welfare: "They (caseworkers) think only we (Blacks) use it. A lot of us have *real* needs [emphasis, hers]. But when we have need, we get looked at and treated badly." Sherita's comment reveals that she thinks caseworkers view welfare as solely as a "Black" program. Her comment that "a lot of us have *real* needs" suggests awareness of the myth that Black women on welfare do not *really* need assistance and are therefore fraudulent or that they are pathologically dependent on public assistance and know no other way of life. A case of muted racism was evident to me during a conversation with the RVCDS Commission who linked race, welfare and fraudulence when he praised welfare reform for reducing the number of welfare "cheats." Applauding the success of new mechanisms that monitor and discipline recipients, he summoned up "Black" when he said, "Now they can't be thinkin' they can take free trips to Disney." Race was indexed by his use, of what I took to be, a Black tone of voice. Reports of a similar conflation between race and welfare through voice comes from Roberts (1997) who relates that Bob Grant, a New York Radio Talk show host used a "Black" accent and addressed the problem of welfare by mimicking a Black woman, saying "I don't have no job, how'm I gonna feed my family?" (Roberts, 1997: 18).

Poor Black women are up against tenacious racializing and according to current welfare policy only seem able to counter stereotypes by complying with work mandates. Doing so constitutes proof of their ability to be "responsible," their willingness to follow requirements and being remade as "good" citizens. However, this forced compliance manufactures the Mammy in three ways. It reproduces racially segmented occupations, it engenders acceptance of restricted educational attainment, and it demands selflessness. With this in mind, case examples drawn from my fieldwork represents the three manifestations linked to historical material exploring the Mammy. The first indication of Mammy production shows how Black women were disproportionately directed to subordinate occupations. The second exemplifies how Black women's formal educational opportunities were circumscribed, effectively limiting their job options. And the

last shows evidence of the expectation that Black women should be engaged in acts of self-sacrifice.

Sherita and Iliana

Discouraging Black women from professional competence had particular meaning in 1910 when the "Black Mammy Memorial" Institute was vigorously lauded in Athens, Georgia (Patton, 1980). The Institute was designed to raise the industrial and moral standards of the workers who did not constitute W.E.B. Dubois' "Talented Tenth." Those attending the industrial school were essentially the other 90% of Blacks who would be trained in the arts and industries, such that they could "go forth and serve" (Patton, 1980: 153). Ultimately, the Institute focused on the merits of *reliable service*. For Black women, this meant working as domestics for which they were considered particularly well-suited (Patton, 1980). Interestingly, this same goal of fostering reliability and responsibility in subordinate jobs, is found in welfare reform policy and illustrated by Sherita's experience and to a lesser degree that of Iliana.

Sherita is a 38-year-old single Black woman who moved to River Valley County from New York City to start her life anew. She found temporary employment at Zytron as an administrative assistant, but she lost the job because she did not have reliable transportation to work. She met her batterer, who was on disability, at a low point in her life but tried to sustain the relationship even after he began using cocaine. His increasing violence included banging Sherita's head against the bathroom floor. She applied for welfare in order to flee the beatings, but was not approved, although she indicated she was a victim of violence. The denial was attributed to Sherita's dismissal from Zytron and she was labelled irresponsible, an assessment she often challenged.

Subsequent beatings forced Sherita to find safety at Angel House. Only after resubmitting her application to social services for shelter payment did Sherita discover she had been wrongly denied access to the Family Violence Option and was then certified to receive benefits, including housing assistance. She also found a job working part time at K-mart.

Later, after moving into her own place, Sherita's caseworker told her that she had to either work more hours at K-Mart or enter a training program to meet the 30-hour-a-week work activity requirement and continue receiving benefits. Presumably this would foster the kind of responsibility spelled out in PRWORA's title, (Personal Responsibility) even though Sherita's past achievements included completing high school, finishing one year of community college, and having been an administrative

assistant for all of her adult working life primarily at one company. Sherita's history suggests that she was anything but irresponsible and unmotivated, but her positive attributes were lost on the caseworker, who constantly referred to Sherita's having been "let go" as proof that she was unreliable. The caseworker shepherded Sherita into a certified nursing assistant (CNA) program, despite the fact that Sherita clearly stated that she really wanted to be a social worker. Sherita attended the CNA program 3 and 1/2 days each week, and worked at K-Mart on weekends. To meet the work-activity requirement, Sherita was assigned to a community work experience program (CWEP) distributing food at a local pantry. As she put it:

I was doing everything. They wanted to me work full time, but I was in training 3 1/2 hours a day...I would go to work...then they put me in a CWEP, which meant I would have to work off my grant. I go to school, I go to CWEP, and I go to work. Every other weekend I work 12 hours....

Sherita completed the CNA program and obtained a job at a nursing home making \$8 per hour. Shortly after securing the job, she was informed by her supervisor that the nursing assistant certificate was unacceptable and that she needed to be certified as a personal care assistant. The news was devastating. Sherita wondered, "How am I going to find time to go back to get training as a personal care assistant and work?" The availability of health-related jobs in the area permitted Sherita to change jobs three times over eight months, which she did in an effort to make practical use of her existing certificate, never earning more than \$8 an hour and never securing full-time employment.

Similarly, Iliana, a 23-year-old Dominican woman of African descent with three children, wanted to work in the tourism industry, another growth sector in River Valley. She told me that she had been directed to the certified nursing assistant program by her caseworker and subsequently found part-time work making \$8.25 an hour working 25 hours a week, again, not full time.

When questioned about the contradiction between recipients' desire for training of their choice, and the training programs they are permitted to enter, the RVCDSS Commissioner commented that Social Services only trains recipients for employment where the demand was greatest, not based on self-interest, and that training was not based on the recipients' own interests.

On one level Sherita and Iliana's training and job placements meet the demand for health care workers a labour need identified by the county based on occupational surveys. On another level being guided toward low-

wage health care work echoes ideas of what Black women are supposed to do. They are to take any service job to prove their worth, just as the Mammy did. Women on welfare are obliged to take any job or risk losing their benefits, so it is not surprising that they would be directed into specific job tracks that mirror the identified labour needs of the county. Neither Sherita nor Iliana viewed themselves only as subjects of domination and both questioned why they were funnelled to health care work. Yet they were also clear that in order to live free of male domination and violence, they had to take those jobs.

Shawnice and Joanne

The second manifestation of the Mammy actualized through work mandates is the focus on experiential learning. Restrictions on formal educational attainment were notably associated with the "Mammy Memorial Association" Institute. The founder believed that Mammies did not require classical education but, though she might be unlettered, "her" lessons learned, through contact and experience afforded her the benefit of dignity (Parkhurst, 1939: 353). The benefit derived from work experience is, of course, the trump card that renders work an acceptable alternative to education. The logic of experiential rather than formal education is scripted in welfare reform policy that limits access to higher education and focusses on short term or vocational training, similar to the educational attainment scripts for the Mammy. The cases here represent an ideological continuity about what some poor Black women should be taught to do.

That Black women's caseworkers value experience more than education is apparent in the case of Shawnice, the 19-year-old daughter of a woman I interviewed. Shawnice's mother Clemmie is 38 years old and has four children all of who moved with her to Laneville. They came after Clemmie's abuser had perpetrated several acts of violence including putting a gun in her mouth in front of the kids. The family's TANF budget was based on a family of five, even though one of her daughters returned to the elite college from which she had received full scholarship. In this new environment Shawnice decided to attend River Valley County Community College, studied in the mornings, attended class from 12 to 4 p.m. each day, and worked daily from 6 to 9 p.m. at a college internship program.

However, Clemmie was informed that her TANF grant hinged on Shawnice leaving school and finding employment. Shawnice was traumatized because she found school stimulating and was doing well. It was also shocking to Clemmie who had instilled the importance of higher education in all of her children. She went to great

lengths to explain her perspectives on educational attainment to the caseworker, who according to the Clemmie, said: "DSS does not care about school. College doesn't mean anything. She has to get a job. If she has to miss school to get a job, she has to go look for a job."

Clemmie inquired about the possibility of removing Shawnice from her budget so she could continue attending classes, but the caseworker informed Clemmie that in order to receive adequate funds to cover the family's needs, Shawnice would have to remain on the budget. If she did, then searching for employment was mandatory. She said to me: "...My daughter does not understand why school is not important, when everybody is telling [her] that [you] need an education to get a job." Clemmie could think of no reason why a caseworker would demand she pull her daughter out of school unless she thought that Shawnice was not worthy of going.

Shawnice had to complete a minimum of 10 job searches each week and had to bring in a job search log verifying that applications had been submitted, every two weeks. Shawnice tried to juggle both school and job hunting for a few weeks and then dropped out of school.

Joanne, another Black woman, 28 years old with one child and pregnant with her second, shared with me her interest in completing her education. Joanne had finished one year toward her Associates' Degree, but was told she could not complete the program if she wanted to receive assistance. As she explained,

If you're receiving social services, you have to do like a community work thing. They send you to places...to work to put in hours like a regular job would be...When I came here [to the shelter] I wanted to go to school, but I had to do that [the community work experience program]. I couldn't finish school, and that was something I wanted to do. I'm not a school person, but I know you need a degree.

Instead of pursuing her education, Joanne worked as a clerk at a small company.

Redirecting poor women from higher education to work in low-wage work exemplifies a distorted sense of a person's abilities, or seen another way represents the failure to recognize where the client's greatest potential lies. Hillary is a White woman in her fifties with a Masters Degree and is an advocate at Angel House. She expressed dismay about elimination of support for college education as result of reforms:

...It keeps the underclass in place and is destructive to human beings that want to learn and grow. It is one of the worst things about welfare reform—not being

able to go to school. We used to have a programme that allowed a woman to get her Associates Degree....[a] woman could get tutoring, child-care and a range of supportive services. Now it has been transformed into a certificate programme. It doesn't have the same quality or meaning as it did when it was an Associates Degree programme. In terms of human rights, welfare reform, time limits and not being able to get an education ensures people will live their lives without dignity.

One study of Black and White women on welfare living in Virginia conducted by Gooden (1998) found that while African-American program participants were on average better educated than Whites, none were encouraged by caseworkers to go to school. On the other hand, 41% of Whites were encouraged to pursue further education. One explanation for decreased educational support, according to the White co-director of the River Valley County Department of Social Services Temporary Assistance Unit, Ms. D'Angelo, is that,

...We are now (unintelligible) on actual training classes as opposed to a college education....The idea is that we are time-limited. I mean, we're time-limited...so that if we put them into some sort of training that takes too long, we will end up...losing money. We are under pressure to get people into the work force.

It is ironic that college is restricted when it is known that every semester of college adds several thousand dollars to one's lifetime earnings, leading to economic stability (Carnevale and Reich et. al., 2000). However, under the PRWORA guidelines only 20% of a locality's caseload is permitted to go to school, for up to a period of 12 months. Despite both Shawnice and Joanne's self-initiated enrolment in college, their efforts were undermined by policy. However, there must also be some link between caseworkers' perceptions about the abilities of these women, if they—the caseworkers—can in theory, exercise some discretion in terms of approving a particular client's eligibility to attend school. Their refusal to give women information about education can be analyzed from the perspective of labour needs. Low-skilled positions were difficult to fill in the county in three industries: construction, services and retail trade; industries that do not require greater than a high school diploma. One solution to address labour needs is to restrict access to education and to force a vulnerable segment of the population (i.e., welfare recipients) to take those jobs and loosen the labour market.

Leslie and Iliana

The Mammy has been cultivated in popular imagination as a nurturer who puts aside her own needs in the interest of others. "Her" acts of self-denial are applauded and viewed as positive testament that she will do anything. This inappropriate expectation was thrust upon Leslie an 18-year-old Black woman who was 6 months pregnant when we met; her pregnancy had recently been diagnosed as "high risk." Leslie came to the shelter to get away from her boyfriend, Dre who had pushed Leslie causing her to hit her head on a metal pole in the park. When she first arrived at RVCDS, the caseworker was quite taken by Leslie's demeanour and soft-spoken affect. Within 10 minutes, after discovering that Leslie was pregnant, she became hostile and I had to intervene. Because of her age, the caseworker denied Leslie's application on the basis of a new welfare policy which allows minors to receive assistance only if they live with an adult. The caseworker told Leslie the only assistance she could receive was a bus ticket to Ohio where her mother lived. But Leslie's mother also had a history of abusing her. With some coaching from me, Leslie asked to see the Domestic Violence Liaison, but the caseworker accused Leslie of lying about parental abuse to get out of moving to Ohio and said it "sounded suspicious." The decision denying Leslie public assistance was overturned after a human rights violation was filed.

Once her eligibility was established, Leslie was immediately directed to see a job counselor at social services who she told of her high risk pregnancy. Having been warned to limit her physical exertion, Leslie requested a medical waiver from the work requirement. No waiver was provided. During the meeting with the job counselor Leslie said she had a GED as well as some culinary experience and inquired about attending culinary school, an interest that she viewed as a realistic career option since there was a culinary school in the vicinity. The job counsellor dismissed her career interests, and instead strongly recommended that Leslie apply for one of two jobs; one as a cashier at a home improvement store and the other as a cashier at clothing store at the Mall. Leslie questioned why culinary school was unacceptable given her experience and interests, yet work was not, given her health limitations. Instead of taking a job that required standing all day, which she had been told not to do by her doctor, Leslie found a job through the Private Industry Council working 25 hours a week at a day camp earning \$5.25 per hour.

From June to August when she was eight months pregnant, Leslie met the work mandate putting her own health at risk as well as that of her unborn child in order

to care for other people's children at a day camp, a job which, as one might imagine, involves physical exertion. At the summer camp's conclusion in August, and with one month left to before the baby's birth, Leslie was informed that she would have to find *another* job.

You know those people at Social Services want me to get another job and work until the baby is born? They've sent me letters about coming in. What kinda job am I going to get for a couple of weeks being eight months pregnant?

Iliana, who is briefly mentioned earlier, found herself being forced to work though her pregnancy. She told me:

I worked 28-30 hours a week...I still had to go to the [Food Pantry]. They sent me a letter saying I had to be there from 8:30 am to 2:00 p.m. But I worked from 7:00 to 2:00 p.m. I called them and said "This conflicts with my work schedule. I have to be at work by 7:00 am." They told me I had to work on my day off...I told them I have a hard job, I lift people and I'm pregnant. On my day off I should relax, I don't want my baby to be born sick.

Leslie and Iliana's significance and value was in a way calculated in terms of their acts of self-denial. Their worthiness was "rewarded" with the receipt of assistance in part because they "proved" themselves by responding to directives. It is interesting to note that these two cases underscore other aspects of the Mammy, inasmuch as both women were encouraged to be nurturers and caretakers for *other people's children*, and the elderly, respectively, despite the fact that their own health and well being and that of their own children was knowingly jeopardized.

Josie

For the sake of comparison a brief discussion of a White woman's story underscores differences between Black and White women's experiences with welfare reform to show that it was in fact more positive for some women. Although this discussion relies on only one woman, her experience replicates those of other women in the study whose whiteness produced emotional and informational support from mostly White caseworkers.

Josie is a 25-year-old White woman with a high school diploma and the mother of eight-month-old Shaneva. Shortly after Shaneva was born her boyfriend Luke, began abusing Josie. She left him and came to Angel House, where like all the other women she made an appointment with a social services caseworker. Josie, who had been an informal child-care worker for most of her

adult life, told her caseworker that she wanted to go to school. The worker was incredibly supportive and encouraged Josie to enroll at River Valley County Community College. The offer was sweetened with incentives that would be covered by RVCDDSS including paid transportation costs to get to school and the provision funding for day care. She was even told about the Family Violence Option by her caseworker who noticed Josie had not checked off being a victim of violence on her application. Clearly Josie's treatment at RVCDDSS was quite different from that of Sherita, Iliana, Shawnice, Joanne and Leslie. Whereas the Black women were limited to certain jobs and training that kept them in the service sector, making no more than \$8.25 an hour, Josie was offered an opportunity that might ostensibly lead her away from low-wage service work, possibly into some other sector.

What are we to make of these differences? Is it possible to look at these situations and not at least consider why some Black women are steered toward low-wage contingency work that demarcates the service sector, toward certificate level training and away from educational attainment? What is it about welfare reform that consolidates subordinate status and occupational segregation and reifies women's positive attributes which are supposedly based on acquiescence to circumstances that restrain their possibilities? One obvious reason is the value of their labour within a bifurcated economy. The other reason lies in the colour of their skin, which influences the value and content of their labour.⁸ By using the Mammy as a lens, we see that women like Sherita, Iliana, Shawnice, Joanne and Leslie were manipulated. They worked in contingent service jobs, were unable to attend school, and were expected to nurture others. These expectations in many ways replicate the work responsibility, achievement, and behavioural characteristics associated with Mammy training and work in the 19th and 20th centuries (Morton, 1991). This analysis is a compelling point at which to end this discussion, but as I continue to mull over the impact of welfare reform's mandatory work obligations, I think it is incomplete. In the concluding section I attempt to offer a more nuanced interpretation to explain why the Mammy is such an important lens through which to examine economic restructuring, neo-liberalism and battered Black women's experience with welfare reform.

Conclusion: From "Welfare Queen" to "Mammy"—The Corrective

The lack of debate about the PRWORA's work-first policy was reinforced by the racialization of both poverty and welfare utilization. Neubeck and Cazenave (2001) argue that welfare reform used cultural representations

that positioned Blacks as illegitimate interlopers on the nation's emotional and economic psyche. Distortions of Blacks have driven U.S. social policy in the past, for example in the 1960s when the deviant head-of-household matriarch spawned legislation and programs to quell riots and support Black male privilege. Having lived with the welfare queen or welfare mother long enough since the 1970s, U.S. social policy has been poised to dismantle welfare (Zucchini, 1999), in no small measure to put people to work. The need for workers can be addressed by implementing policy that demands participation in the wage labour market. Those most easily moved to meet that demand are among the economically vulnerable. Poor people on welfare are already viewed as irresponsible (like Sherita), unintelligent (possibly like Shawnice and Joanne), sexually promiscuous women (like Leslie and Iliana) who cheat the system. They are the Jezebels, welfare queens and mothers who have been invoked by conservative scholars like Mead who claims that "the worldview of blacks makes them uniquely prone to the attitudes contrary to work and thus vulnerable to poverty and dependency" (Mead, 1997: 148). Welfare queen/mother discourse in particular has circulated in academia, the press and in Congress, collectively solidifying "her" public identity as a Black woman (Hancock, 2000). Full blown analyses of "her" dependency have found their way into the public domain for instance when Jon Mica (R-FL) held up a sign during the 1996 welfare reform debate comparing women on welfare to animals stating "Don't Feed the Alligators. We post these warnings because unnatural feeding and artificial care create dependency" (Connolly, 2000: 154) and caseworkers translate this discourse into their interactions with clients. This discourse clearly promotes disgust for poor Black women on welfare especially since the "welfare queen" is incompatible with a capitalist vision of production and had to be transformed.

I suggest that one way to transform the image of the welfare queen so "she" may be seen as industrious and compliant, dignified, and reliable has been to turn her into a woman like the Mammy, who both works hard and, knows her place in society (Morton, 1991: 35). I argue that the welfare queen has been transformed into a Mammy through forced labour and training, through educational deprivation and self-denial, moves not at all likely to reduce Black women's poverty or increase economic autonomy, but certainly likely to engender greater social and political acceptance of poor women. Public support for welfare and work requirements reveals the threat of and hate for the welfare queen or mother who simply had to be replaced with a re-manufactured Mammy. This contemporary Mammy is not only seen as more benign and

compliant but also as one who does her "fair share" rather than living off the generosity of taxpayers and who just so happens to fit a particular niche in the service economy.

For Black battered women on welfare this mutation also has the effect of adding another form of violence to the physical, which they already experience, that is structural violence. Structural violence includes social and government policies that withdraw support from the "undeserving." It emphasizes disciplinary techniques and exposes people to risk by limiting their access to resources (Anglin, 1998). I recognize that this perspective of the Mammy may reflect meanings and elisions that may not have been originally intended or predicted but ideologies, as Arendt points out, are often transformed into unanticipated projects (Dolan, 1994: 169).

In trying to understand what was so seductive about welfare reform and work requirements in an economic climate that is generating neither survival nor security, I suggest that current welfare policies invoke the idea and image of the Mammy as both a funnel and a filter. As a funnel the image justifies directing specific groups to certain jobs to meet specific labour demands and to support elite consumer needs. As a filter the image and the work she does "protects" Black women on welfare from ideological demonization because the Mammy is beloved, rather than an outcast. In other words work mandates have "rescued" Black women from the image of the demonic welfare queen and welfare mother image and have resolved those deficits by shaping poor Black women into Mammies. Through this resolution, women like Sherita, Iliana, Shawnice, Joanne and Leslie lubricate the service industry in Laneville, and are praised for doing so. But none of them are any closer to economic stability, because they work in jobs with no protections and are unable to access a level of education that will help them move away from the violence of poverty.

In closing it is important to consider that those who laud the success of welfare reform do so because I think they knowingly or unknowingly rely on the idea of Mammy. By so doing they offer reassurance to elites that poor Black women are under control; they are forced to take any job, participate in any work experience or training program and can therefore be tolerated. But we should not forget that as the service sector continues to grow and as racial/ethnic demography shifts, there may very well be others who can fill the role of the Mammy.⁹

Dana-Ain Davis, PhD, Department of Anthropology, Purchase College, State University of New York. E-mail: dana-ain.davis@purchase.edu

Notes

- 1 An earlier version of this paper, "The Burdens of Service: Economic Restructuring, Welfare Reform and Battered Black Women" was presented at Society for the Anthropology of North America Conference, May 2002. I thank Gail Garfield, Jeff Maskovsky and John Clarke for encouraging me to write and revise this article. I am deeply grateful to Gail Garfield, Kim Christensen, Mamadi Matlhako, Pem Davidson Buck, Susan Hyatt, Rich Nasissi and the two anonymous reviewers for their instructive comments.
- 2 Felix G. Rohatyn, as quoted in *Newsweek*. See Alpern, 1981.
- 3 I use the term "Black" fully cognizant that it is a social construction rooted in the mythology of biological racial difference and knowing that there are multiple tensions and consequences in its meanings. Even though the term "Black" is a problematic category, at the same time it is also a social category that people use to refer to their own existence as members of a group with specific histories and political trajectories in relation to others in the U.S. (Lubiano, 1992). Research participants often identified themselves in ethnic terms, as Afro-Latina and African-American, however the category Black was relevant to the extent that race was signified in their status as poor women. For example some forms requested race data, a reflection of the subtle way that the category Black is embedded in mainstream American culture. Also as a Black woman, I was acutely aware of the ways that race and racism were reproduced during observations of caseworker/client interaction. Often, welfare use and race converged, influencing Black women's treatment by caseworkers.
- 4 According to Zuchino (1997), Ronald Reagan described the woman as "having eighty names, twelve Social Security cards and collecting veterans' benefits on four non-existing deceased husbands...Her tax-free income alone is over \$150,000" (65). Although the facts were dramatically different, the public bought the story and by the time it was revealed that the woman had defrauded the state of only \$8,000 and used four aliases, not eighty, the welfare queen was inserted into American lore.
- 5 The Family Violence Option is an amendment introduced by Senators Patty Murray and Paul Wellstone. The FVO allows states to provide exemptions for their welfare population if a person is battered, as long as the percent of those exempted does not exceed 20% of the state's caseload. Implementation of the FVO was problematic evidenced by a New York City study (Hearne, 2000) and my own study (Davis, forthcoming) which found that women were not always informed about the Option.
- 6 The service sector includes high-wage positions such as dental hygienists and nurses requiring higher educational levels.
- 7 The Mammy has been cast as a traitor, martyr and as worldly. For a discussion of various interpretations of the Mammy, see Morton, 1991.
- 8 In a study of the impact of welfare reform, Davis, Aparicio, Jacobs, et. al. (2003) found racial differences in work assignments.
- 9 The Bureau of Labor Statistics (1999) projected a total employment increase of 14.4%, adding 20.3 million jobs between 1998 and 2008. The service-producing sector will

remain the dominant source of employment, accounting for 3 out of every 4 jobs (or 19.1 million) by 2008. Similar occupational trends are anticipated in River Valley County (Rodick, 2001) and I suspect that poor Black women on welfare will continue to be the labour force of choice for those positions. Of course given the racial/ethnic composition of the United States, with current trends in Hispanic population growth and in poverty it is likely that Hispanics will also bear the burden of service work.

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