

Quiz #5 Thursday April 23rd covers Haskins & Sawhill (2003) [Work and Marriage](#) and Welfare Reform and Beyond *[WRAB *8](#), [chapt 16*](#) [chapt 17*](#) [chapt 18*](#). Also if you have time take a look at the [Clinton-election article](#), an [update on SCHIP](#) and the first few figures a 2007 [CBO review of welfare reform](#) (don't read the whole thing, use the lecture notes). [WRAB Ch 21](#) [Myths about Fathers](#). The CEA Report (2001) Chapt 5 pp. *199-205 and (2000) *165-72 are also short and helpful. Use the questions below to guide your reading. Also, please take a look at the pre and post-TANF [welfare reform diagrams](#) and the updated [2006 EITC numbers](#). Skim the summary and pictures in the [2007 CBO study](#). [Winship and Jencks](#) study and its brief summary and conclusions (how do they identify severe poor families with children?). [PRWORA was finally renewed as part of the deficit reduction act of 2005](#) which includes the [healthy marriage initiative](#) discussed in the PBS documentary.

TANF/PRWORA Review Questions

1. [Haskins and Sawhill \(2003\) Work and Marriage: the way to end poverty and welfare](#) (a) Haskins and Sawhill (2003) use simulations to argue that poverty in families with children would fall from 13% to 3.7% if everyone would just: (1) finish high school or a least family heads (2) get married (when?) (3) have at most two kids and (4) work full time (both parents?). Which of these alone is most important for reducing poverty (see Figure 1)? Why does family poverty fall so much when you do all four together? Which of these is hard for government to encourage? In which of these four areas has the 1996 welfare reform had some success? How do Haskins and Sawhill propose extending that success? (b) [EITC marriage tax](#): See [Ellwood](#), p. 7 or the [2006 CBPP EITC](#) p. 6 to answer this one. *Why is the marriage penalty reduced if a mother marries the father of her children?* (c) [Ellwood \(1986\) thought child-support collection would be an important element of welfare reform—why is child support a good source of income for SPFs? But in light of the FF study results](#) Mincy's "fragile father" arguments ([WRAB Brief 17](#)) why might it pay to tread lightly on child support penalties for poor fathers?
2. ([WRAB brief 16](#) +family structure [slides](#)) The share of births to fragile families (unmarried mothers) increased from about 5% in 1960 to over 30% in 2000. (a) What happened to share of children living with two parents? How does PRWORA try to discourage unmarried women from having children? Have "family caps" or abstinence education worked? (b) Do the young children of welfare mothers do better or worse in school when their mothers work? (see [WRAB 8](#)) (c) Which states won "bonuses" for rapid reductions in non-marital birth rates? Among which groups is the birth rate falling most rapidly? What happened to increase the "agency" of women during the 1990s? Are there parallels between these trends and birth rates in India, China and Indonesia?
3. [WRAB brief 17](#):and "It Takes a wedding" below and the video]. (a) What is a fragile family? Roughly what % of unwed fathers are in close contact mother of their child at birth? How do you know (hint: what % out their name on the birth certificate and/or are still romantically involved with the mother?) What makes "fragile families" fragile? What are [some common myths about men in fragile families](#)? (b) What programs successfully stabilize "fragile families?" (hint: Elmira) What are "shotgun weddings?" Should the government promote these improve the "marriageability" of unwed parents? Explain and give an example of each sort of policy reform. What are the risks of promoting early marriage, as opposed to delaying child birth? (c) Please take a look at the [five year follow report on these fragile families, see especially Figure 1](#). Figure 1 is a somewhat easier to follow update of [Table 2](#), which gives basically the same information at the end of 18 months to 2 years. Of all FF parents, what % are still romantically involved, cohabitating or married after five years? Not coincidentally, what % of fathers had seen their child in the month prior to the five year interview? Of the mothers no longer involved with their child's father at the end of five years, what % have new partners or are married to someone else? The couples most likely to stay together are those cohabiting when the child is born? Should the government give tax breaks to couples that live together (or get married)? Why or why not? (d) *EC The "Let's get Married" documentary follows 3-4 couples through child birth and marriage. What were the most commonly cited reasons for not getting married mentioned by the young mothers (and their mothers or aunts)? What is the problem the men or the women in this film? What can government do to encourage marriage under these circumstances? Should government do something to help men (quite a few programs target mothers)? Both the film and the Fragile families study suggest jobs and education for men is likely to increase marriage rate. Should the government help fathers get into school or to get*

jobs. Why? (think about the CCTs and the EITC). Discuss policies that encourage night cohabitation, school attendance and employment of young fathers. Compare this with what the governments says it is doing for fathers in the [Deficit reduction act of 2005](#)...

4. Medical insurance: ([S-CHIP](#) and [WRAB 20](#))” Ellwood (1986) begins his discussion of how to help single and two-parent families with medical insurance. (a) Why is medical insurance a potential obstacle to work for young parents with children? What did the 1996 welfare reform do for medical insurance—eventually—that has been continued by SCHIP (skim [WRAB 20](#) briefly). (b) Discuss the carrots and sticks PRWORA-TANF-EITC programs use to draw and push welfare mothers into the workforce (the EITC is not part of TANF, but expanded greatly during the 1990s). List the penalties for not-working and some key rewards for working. Use the welfare to [work diagrams](#) to illustrate your points. Comparing the EITC and the AFDC pictures—what is the most dramatic difference about the new welfare system put in place during the 1990s? (c) How does the EITC help overcome the targeting-social isolation conundrum? Take a look at the updated [2006 EITC numbers](#) here. b) Has welfare reform worked? Who has suffered due to welfare reform, and who has gained?

5. ([WRAB Chapter 18*- optional not required for quiz](#)) While just 30% of non-marital births are to teenagers, Isabel Sawhill argues reducing teen pregnancy should be a top priority. Why? What is the trend in teen pregnancy and birthrates over the past two decades? Rebecca Maynard says each teen pregnancy costs the government about \$3,200. *How much should the government spend per teen girl on pregnancy prevention programs (realizing that 40% of teen girls get pregnant, 20% give birth and 90% ignore the advice of people who know better). Why, in your view, has the teen pregnancy rate been falling over the past 10 years? Did welfare policy contribute to this decline? Charles Murray argues teen mothers under 18 should be forced to live with their parents. Is this a good idea? What does TANF force teen mothers to do?*

It Takes a Wedding

Alex Kotlowitz, New York Times OpEd page November 13th, 2002.

CHICAGO — With the Republican victory last week, Congress now appears likely to set aside funding for programs that promote marriage among the poor. A friend who provides services for inner-city children declared this marriage push "nuts." That had been my initial reaction, as well. But now I wonder if the conservatives who are driving this effort might be on to something. There's a shift in the winds in our inner cities. On the heels of a fatherhood movement (which, incidentally, also had conservative roots), more and more young couples are considering marriage.

A long-term study of 5,000 low-income couples has found that eight of 10 who have a child together have plans to marry. "I was out in the field all of the time, interviewing low-income single mothers," Kathy Edin, a sociologist at Northwestern University, told me. "And what really struck me in those interviews was how many people talked about the desire to get married. And I would go back, you know, and talk to my friends in academia and they would say, 'Oh, they can't mean that.' But I would hear it again and again."

Might marriage be making a comeback in communities where the vast majority of children are born to single parents? A minister on Chicago's West Side told me that when he began preaching there 10 years ago, his congregation scoffed at his efforts to foster matrimony. But this year his church co-sponsored an event called "Celebrating Contentment," in which long-married couples testified to their happiness together. Last summer, there was such demand for the minister's weekly marriage enrichment workshops that he had to put some parishioners on a waiting list. In Baltimore, Joe Jones, who runs a program to promote fatherhood, is adding marriage classes to his curriculum. And the Nation of Islam, which organized the Million Man March, has now taken up the mantle of marriage, declaring it "a social institution in need of restoration."

Marriage can be treacherous terrain. In 1965, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then a young official in the Department of Labor, issued a report titled "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action." It suggested that the breakdown of the black family — one-third of all black children at the time lived with only one parent — was keeping African-Americans from finding their way into the middle class. Mr. Moynihan was pilloried by progressives; he was accused of blaming the victim. Liberals essentially abdicated the discussion about family to the conservatives, and have had a tough time finding their way back since.

But there is now growing consensus among social scientists that, all things being equal, two parents are best for children. It would seem to follow that two-parent families are also best for a community. It may take a village to raise a child, but it takes families to build a village. While liberals haven't done enough to emphasize the importance of marriage in reinforcing the bonds that hold society together, conservatives have put too much faith in the power of marriage alone to lift people out of poverty.

In 1988, Vince Lane, director of the Chicago Housing Authority, conducted top-to-bottom searches of public housing high-rises, looking for guns and drugs. But the discovery that most dismayed him was the large number of men living with their girlfriends illegally. They weren't on the lease. In the raids, Mr. Lane found them hiding in closets and in bathtubs and in laundry baskets. At one high-rise, Mr. Lane got fed up. He told the men they could stay — if they got married. So the city hosted an all-expenses-paid (honeymoon included) eight-couple shotgun wedding.

What's happened to the couples since? Most have split up, which should come as no surprise. The stress of not having money, of living in decrepit housing, of sending children to poorly funded schools would take its toll on even the most committed relationship. So how then might we help get couples to the altar? By pushing marriage? Or by helping ease the strains in people's lives? It would be wrongheaded to encourage marriage by stigmatizing single parenthood, a process that has already begun with the reintroduction of the word "illegitimacy" into the lexicon. After all, that's the very constituency government is trying to reach.

Wade Horn, the Bush administration official who oversees the welfare program, has assured critics that the administration, by supporting demonstration projects that promote marriage, doesn't intend to coerce people to the altar. And, indeed, what tools government has available — like the relationship training seminars Oklahoma has begun to offer — seem benign enough, if unproven. When it comes to social engineering, government has turned out to be a clumsy catalyst. Mr. Moynihan, whose report was in many ways prescient — the numbers he cited for black families in 1965 now apply to all families, regardless of race — has said, "If you expect government to change families, you know more about government than I do."

Even if conservatives don't know how to get there, at least they recognize that marriage, this very private institution, has very public consequences. Liberals, who have a much firmer understanding of the obstacles poor people face, need to enter that conversation. [\[Alex Kotlowitz, wrote "There Are No Children Here," and narrated and co-produced the Frontline documentary "Let's Get Married."\]](#)