

THE POVERTY TRAP

**A CRITICAL LOOK AT HOW WE DEFINE THE CAUSES OF
POVERTY**

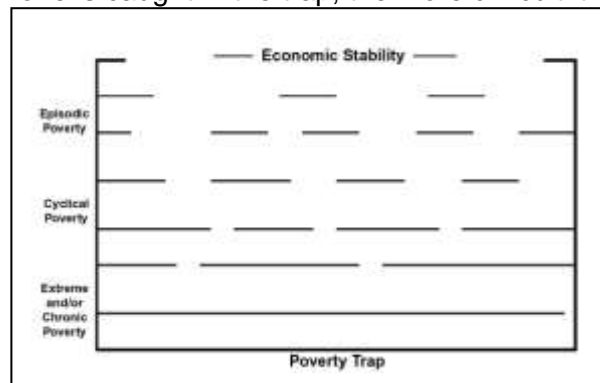
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According to the US Census Bureau approximately thirteen percent of the population lived below the poverty level in 1980. Figures released in September of 2005 indicate that 12.7% of the population presently lives below the poverty line. While these numbers have fluctuated a bit over time, there has been no significant change in twenty-five years. Looking at these facts, we must ask ourselves why, given the massive investment in poverty programs, have we failed to impact the rate of poverty in this country. Consistent failure, such as this can only result from one of two things. The theory from which we operating is wrong thereby dooming all efforts to impact poverty to failure or the theory is correct and the failure resides in the execution of the programs based on that theory. To fully assess our failure to impact poverty we must begin by examining the theory, i.e., how are we defining the causes of poverty. After all, how we define a problem dictates what we do to resolve it. There are two competing theories that attempt to explain the causes of poverty, one that points to the behaviors of individuals in poverty and one that points to the structure of the economy. Since 1980 we have increasingly defined poverty as a personal rather than social problem and have required programs to focus on individual rather than social change.

POVERTY AS STRUCTURAL

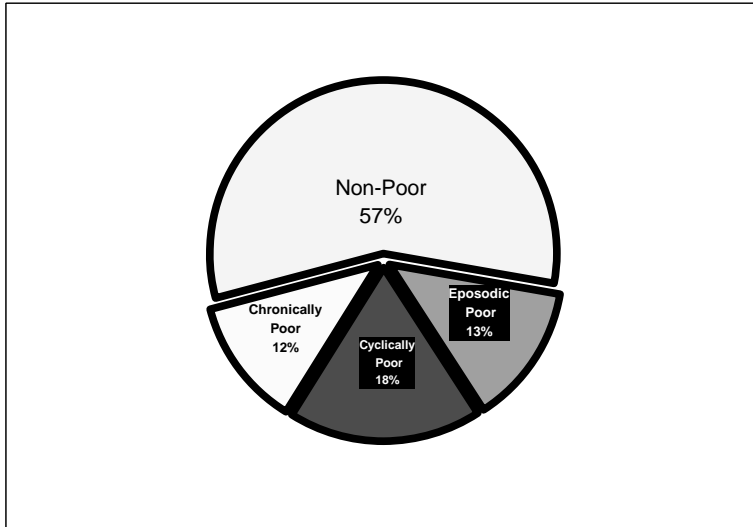
Poverty is a trap. Once one gets caught it can be extremely difficult to get out. In addition, it is a trap of varied depth and the deeper one is caught in the trap, the more difficult it is to escape. The maze to the right presents an attempt to visualize this trap. With economic stability at the top of the maze, it can be seen that the deeper into the maze one falls the more difficult it is to move upward. Those at the bottom level have but one small space through which to move up while those who are less deep have more openings, making it easier to rise. In other words, those suffering from episodic poverty will find it easier to escape their economic situation than those locked into extreme and or chronic poverty.



The maze metaphor used here assumes that poverty is structurally created rather than the direct consequences of individual choices. Drawing on the work of Robert Buck, three levels of poverty can be identified, i.e., episodic, cyclical, and chronic. The **episodic poor** consist of people who have at least one significant episode of poverty within a twenty-year period typically the result of an economic crisis caused by the loss of the breadwinner either through layoff, death, divorce, or illness. This group constitutes about thirteen percent of the total population and less than two percent of the people in poverty. The **cyclically poor** are people who move in and out of poverty on a regular basis. The people in this category experience poverty more than twenty percent of the time and make up about eighteen percent of the population. This group constitutes about two-thirds of those who are poor at any given point in time. The **chronically poor** consist of people who are poor more than eighty percent of the time, two-thirds of whom are people trapped in poverty for five years or longer. As a whole, the chronically poor make up twelve percent of the population. However, those at the bottom of category, i.e., those who are truly permanently poor, make up just slightly more than one percent of the population. While the individuals in this group spend the majority of their time in

poverty, it would be wrong to assume that people in this group do not work. Employment for those living at this level tends to be low paying and sporadic (Buck, 2003).

As important as it is to breakdown the numbers of people in poverty by situation as Buck



does, it is also important to examine it from a time perspective. The 12.7% of the population living below the poverty line in 2005 is simply a snapshot. A deeper and longer-term look at poverty gives us a drastically different and more disturbing picture. Consider this: nearly 45% of all Americans will spend some time in poverty over a ten year period (Buck, 2003); one in three children in the United States will spend a significant portion of their lives in poverty (Children’s Defense Fund, 2004). In contrast to the

numbers in the opening paragraph, these numbers paint a very different picture. In fact, the long-term view points to poverty as a structural problem facing the United States. If nearly half its citizens and a third of its children experience poverty, then there must be a deeper problem than the snapshot of poverty would suggest.

Buck’s analysis clearly points to “labor market mismatch” as key to one getting caught in the poverty trap. Identifying things such as shifts in the economy driven by a general failure to reinvest during the post WWII boom period and changes in the labor market (e.g., moving production overseas, corporate mergers, technological upgrades) coupled with government’s lack of investment in the development of the workforce has led to a situation where there are too many people who are unskilled or under-skilled competing for too few low-skill jobs while there are too few highly skilled people competing for high level occupations. Shifts in the economy have fed the existence of the episodic poor, while the lack of investment in training and education and low wages have fed and maintained cyclical and chronic poverty. Accepting this analysis leads to an understanding that poverty is created by lack of employment opportunities at livable wages, lack of access to education and training, and lack of support for displaced workers.

POVERTY AS PERSONAL

The competing theory of the cause of poverty points to the behaviors of the people in poverty. This theory has its roots in the work of Oscar Lewis who developed the concept of the “culture of poverty.” Lewis’ research in the 1960s led him to define this culture as having the behavioral characteristics of “resignation, dependence, present-time orientation, lack of impulse control, weak ego structure, sexual confusion, and the inevitable inability to defer gratification (O’Connor, 2001, p 116-117).” In addition, these traits are passed down from parent to child, thus explaining generational poverty. While many who hold this theory would agree that the original cause of poverty might have been structural (particularly due to racism), it is now a

pattern. Children born into this culture are essentially doomed to a life of poverty because of weakness in their own characters that were learned from their parents.

While the language of this theory has muted since the 1960's when many within the federal government were pushing the concept of poor people being "culturally deprived," it has not died. In fact, the basic assumption underlying this idea and the programs developed to address this culture is that people in poverty must be pushed out. They will not choose to change their situation unless threatened with the loss of their financial support. Nothing better demonstrates the degree to which this theory lives than the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA). In fact, the very name of the legislation indicates the source of the "poverty problem" lies in the individual's failure to take personal responsibility. The very purpose of the act as stated in the legislation also makes it clear that it is built upon the theory that it is the behavior of the poor themselves that creates poverty (see inset). Notice that the focus of the language is on "ending dependence" by changing behavior of individuals such as reducing "out-of-wedlock" pregnancies. The focus is on "promoting job preparation, work, and marriage." There is no mention of the availability of jobs, access to training, and the level of wages paid.

SEC. 401. PURPOSE.

- (a) IN GENERAL- The purpose of this part is to increase the flexibility of States in operating a program designed to--
- `(1) provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives;
 - `(2) end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
 - `(3) prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and
 - `(4) encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Accepting the logic of the PRWORA means that one sees poverty as rooted in the behavior of individuals and that any government efforts to address the problem must focus on changing the behavior of these individuals, especially as it relates to willingness to work and propensity to have children out-of-wedlock.

THE REALITY

The critical question becomes: "Is poverty caused by the structure of the economy or by the culture of poverty embraced by poor people?" It would be naive to think that no one has created their own poor economic situation through their life choices; however, the evidence strongly favors the theory that, with few exceptions, poverty is structurally caused.

It may be instructive to take a brief look at history. There have been two times in our recent history that the federal government has taken a structural approach to poverty, i.e., the New Deal (1930s) and the War on Poverty (1960s). Coincidentally, these are also the two times in our recent history when we have seen a significant reduction in the rate of poverty. The policies of the New Deal under Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) defined the cause of poverty as lack of employment opportunities. People were poor because the economy was failing to produce enough jobs. The solution was to create jobs and strengthen the voice of the worker. Under his leadership, the federal government initiated an enormous job creation program where people were hired to carry out a number of important tasks. These programs included the Works Projects Administration (WPA), the Civilian Conservation Corps, the National Youth Administration (NYA), Farm Security Administration (FSA), the National Recovery Administration (NRA) and the Public Works Administration (PWA). It was these interventions that are credited with lifting the country out of the great depression and changing the economic

landscape. Perhaps the most significant consequence of the New Deal was that the federal government was established as a legitimate actor in the economy. As a result of government intervention into the free market, poverty went from something experienced by the majority of Americans to one that was experienced by a minority.¹

A few decades later the Kennedy and Johnson administrations recognized that the unprecedented economic boom of the 1950's did not end poverty for a significant number of Americans. The poverty rate in 1960 when Kennedy was elected hovered around 22%, making it clear that the rising economic tide was not lifting all boats. A closer look at the demographics of poverty showed that it tended to be concentrated in urban communities of color and rural, America, which was predominantly white. The Johnson administration identified lack of power as the cause of poverty. People were poor because they did not have the power to make the economy respond to their needs. Based on this perspective, the solution to poverty was to create access, access to power and access to the means of developing ones skills. In 1964 Lyndon Johnson declared the War on Poverty and congress created the Office of Economic Opportunity to direct this war. The programs that emerged were multifaceted. They included mechanisms to assist disenfranchised groups in building political bases such as VISTA, a domestic Peace Corp charged with organizing low-income communities; and the Community Action Program that set up community agencies that were, by law, directed by low-income community residents. Additionally, programs were created that provided low-income people with access to the tools to upward mobility such as Head Start, the Job Corp, Public television and radio that offered programming such as Sesame Street and Mr. Rogers. By 1970 the poverty rate had dropped below 15% and has fluctuated between 12% and 15% since then.

When the supporters of the Culture of Poverty theory speak about people in poverty, two groups are identified, i.e., the situational poor and the generational poor. The generational poor are defined as those who have been in poverty for at least two generations. The derogatory description of the culture of poverty offered by Oscar Lewis refers to the generational poor. Ruby Payne, one of leading contemporary proponents of this theory, differentiates the two groups by what she describes as their prevailing attitudes. "Often the attitude in generational poverty is that society owes one a living. In situational poverty the attitude is often one of pride and a refusal to accept charity. (Payne, 2001, p. 65)." Unlike the structural approaches described in the above paragraphs, approaches based on the culture of poverty are focused on changing the behaviors of the generational poor. Payne's prescription is to teach poor people the hidden rules of the middle class. Once these rules are learned, poor people will be able to move up the economic ladder.

While each theory on the causes of poverty agree that those trapped in poverty at any one point in time are a highly diverse group, they differ significantly on how to understand this diversity. A comparison of Buck's classification system with Payne's highlights these differences. Buck's analysis places people in one of three categories (episodic, cyclical, chronic) based on access to employment while Payne's categories are based simply on length of time in poverty. While Buck looks at the match between an individual's skill base and the demands of the job market, Payne focuses on the attitudes of the people in each category.

The concept of generational poverty and the resulting culture is one that is rooted in the belief that American society is the land of opportunity where upward mobility is accessible to anyone who puts forth the effort. If one accepts this belief as reality, it is logical to examine the

¹ Although there was no official poverty line prior to 1963 estimates of the percentage of people living in poverty range up to 60% with the peak being estimated at 80% in 1930.

individual who is failing to move upward to understand why he or she is failing. However, when the existence of upward mobility is examined it is found to be more myth than reality. Economic analysis indicates that those who succeed at reaching a higher economic status than their family of origin are more the exception than the rule. Two economic facts belie the myth of upward mobility. First, wealth disparity has been and continues to increase over the past three decades. While the income of the top 40% has been increasing, the income at the bottom 60% has remained steady or declined (Bowles, Edwards & Roosevelt, 2005). Secondly, generational data clearly show that, with few exceptions, those born to wealth remain wealthy, those born to moderate wealth remain moderately wealthy, and those born to poverty remain poor. Changes in the tax structure and other pro-business changes in federal regulations explain the growing disparity in wealth. The causes for the lack of upward mobility are more complex. In contradiction to the culture of poverty theory, most individual characteristics have been ruled out. The most likely causes have been identified as the ability to pass one's wealth onto the next generation and the quality of education one is able to receive. Those with wealth have much to pass on to their children, allowing them to build on the achievements of the parents. Middle class parents tend only to have the wealth invested in their home to pass on if it is not consumed caring for elderly parents. The poor have no wealth to pass on. The children of each of these classes have vastly different starting points in life.

The second reason given for the lack of upward mobility, quality of education, is also affected by the economic status into which one is born. Setting aside the fact that wealthy families can afford to send their children to exclusive private schools, a glance at the public school system quickly shows that affluent communities tend to have better schools than low-income communities. Using San Diego City elementary and middle schools as an example, one can see that the schools north of Interstate 8 fare much better than schools south of the interstate. For those who know San Diego, they also know that Interstate 8 is a dividing line with wealth located to the north and poverty to the south. When the middle and elementary schools are divided into high performing and low performing schools based on state testing, all but three of the high performing and none of the low performing elementary schools are north of 8. This pattern is repeated for the middle schools where there are no high performing middle schools south of 8 and no low performing middle schools north of 8 (San Diego City School District, 2004; SANDAG, 2000).

While the data on San Diego City schools highlight how economic differences within a community can create academic differences, the mechanism for funding schools across communities also feeds the differences based on economics. Because schools are largely funded through property tax, wealthy or property rich communities have more resources than poor or property poor communities. Using San Diego County as an example, it is well known that highest performing school districts (e.g. Poway, Torrey Pines) are located in the more affluent communities in the county (Union Tribune, 2005). This data clearly indicates that where one lives dictates one's access to a quality education and one's economic status dictates where one lives.

Once the myth of upward mobility is debunked, the rationale for the culture of poverty as the cause of generational poverty is weakened. Going back to the poverty maze presented earlier, the likelihood of an individual remaining trapped in poverty is directly related to how deeply they are caught in the trap. Those at the bottom have, over the past three decades, found their incomes shrinking and their access to quality education blocked. Given this analysis, the idea that individual behavior is the reason for one remaining trapped loses its grip.

To go back to the question of where the cause of our failure to impact poverty lies; we need to seriously question the theory that dictates the approach to ameliorating or reducing it. Particularly since 1980 our approach to poverty has been focused on the individual. With the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act in 1996, we have seen a significant reduction in the number of people on public assistance. Since we have not seen a comparable drop in the poverty rate, we must conclude that the millions of dollars spent to “rehabilitate the poor” have not improved their chances of achieving upward mobility. In fact, the removal of government supports has increased the pain of poverty for those who have been dropped from the rolls.

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS:

In an attempt to show how someone can fall into and become trapped in poverty, this paper has focused almost exclusively on the economics of poverty. However, it is impossible to fully understand the poverty trap without looking at other important barriers to achieving economic stability. While many such barriers exist, the two most important are racism and sexism. A discussion of social class in the United States cannot be complete without discussing race and the feminization of poverty. It is important to note that most research on poverty has focused almost exclusively on low-income, African American and Latino families. The original concept of the culture of poverty developed by Oscar Lewis was drawn from his research of Latino families and most research published in support of this theory has focused on African American families (O'Connor, 2001). Perhaps the two most significant pieces in terms of shaping the accepted view of poor people have been Moynihan's report on the “Negro Family” in 1965 and Wilson's book The Truly Disadvantaged published in 1987. Both of these publications focus on the behaviors of poor families as the cause of their poverty. While Wilson's analysis does point to the concentration of poverty due the loss of jobs in the urban centers as a significant contributing factor, he too succumbs to ultimately blaming the victim by arguing that the loss of middle-class role models is one of the most damaging aspects of this concentration. Without these positive role models, people are left to mimic the dysfunctional behaviors that surround them. Moynihan directly places the cause of the failure to succeed economically on the matriarchal structure of the African American family and the alleged dysfunction that is caused by such things as the inability to delay gratification and promiscuousness. It is the work built on Moynihan's assumptions that points to having children out of wedlock as a major cause of poverty (Small & Newman, 2001). Wilson, on the other hand, attempts to negate race as an issue by introducing the concept of the underclass, making the argument that lack of education is the variable that blocks people from fully engaging in the labor market. Without education, one lacks the skills to obtain gainful employment in today's market. This uneducated mass becomes concentrated in the urban centers creating a culture that reinforces and maintains their dysfunction. While race appears as the understated undercurrent in poverty research, gender receives little attention from mainstream research (O'Connor, 2001; Heymann, 2005). If gender issues are raised it is typically to identify pregnancy out of wedlock as a cause of poverty.

The concepts of equal opportunity and equal access (Ryan, 1982) provide a useful framework for understanding how the poverty trap works differentially based on the issues of race, class and gender. Equal access refers to ones access to the pathways to upward mobility and economic stability while equal opportunity refers to equality in terms of obtaining a particular prize, e.g., a job, entry to a particular college, renting an apartment, etc. The metaphor of a race is useful in highlighting the differences. In this metaphor, equal access refers to the starting line while equal opportunity looks at the finish line. Do all competitors in the race start at the same point and run over the same terrain? There is no equal access if some competitors

start further behind than others or if some competitors have an obstacle course to run through while others have a straight, clear path. Equal opportunity raises the question; having reached the finish line, do all competitors have an equal opportunity to cross the line? There is no equal opportunity if some competitors have no barriers to the finish line while others need to push past people or objects that block the line. A concrete example would be two people applying for the same job. Equal opportunity exists if, all things being equal, the two candidates have an equal chance of being hired. Equal access refers to the issue of “all things being equal.” Did both candidates have equal access to the education that is needed to develop the qualifications? Did one candidate get referred by someone who knows the owner of the company or the human resource director? If one candidate was born into a wealthy family, goes to a highly rated, well resourced high school and graduates from an Ivy League college where she/he was a legacy admission² while the other candidate was born into a low-income family where none of the adults in his/her life have graduated from high school, attended a high school that was under resourced and graduates from a state university having had to work full-time while attending school, it can be said that there is no equal access in this case.

While the above example is perhaps an extreme case, the data on generational poverty and the passing on of wealth from one generation to the next are clear. Privilege begets privilege and disadvantage begets disadvantage. A review of the information presented earlier on the distribution of high and low performing schools within the San Diego school district and the demographics of the communities served by those schools support this assertion. In general, European-American children from moderate to high-income families attend the high performing schools while children of color from low-income families attend the low-performing schools. Using the equal opportunity/equal access framework, the children attending the high performing schools have greater access to the pathways to success than the children attending the low-performing schools.

A careful application of this framework shows that, when considering the issues of class, race and gender, there are differential effects. The table below provides an overview of these differences:

Variable	Equal Access	Equal Opportunity
Gender	Yes	No
Class	No	Yes
Race	No	No

As indicated in the table, females are generally not denied access to the pathways to success because of their gender. While it is true, that girls may be directed toward specific kinds of careers and there are trades that are almost impossible for women to break into, for the most part, they are not denied access to the pathways based on their gender. Looking at education, for example, individuals are not assigned to school districts based on gender and, all things being equal, girls receive the same education as their male counterparts. That being said, however, upon entering the labor market, females experience an array of barriers to success that point directly to a lack of equal opportunity. The data on salaries, promotions, access to fast-track jobs within a specific industry, family responsibilities, etc. make it clear that “all things are not equal” and women do not have the same opportunities as men (Heymann, 2005; Boris, 2005; National Committee on Pay Equity, 1995; Lopez, 1995).

² A legacy admission is an applicant who is admitted because his/her parent was an alumnus or if the family has contributed significantly to the school. For example, 41% of the entering class at Notre Dame in 2003 was a legacy admission (Union Tribune).

According to the table above, European-American children born into low-income families do not have equal access to the pathways of success because of their social class. However, those who do succeed in overcoming those barriers are likely to find equal opportunity when they enter the labor market. As indicated earlier, the very way that public schools are funded all but guarantee that school districts in wealthy communities will be better resourced than school districts in low-income communities. This variation in access to a quality education, however, also occurs within districts. The blocking of equal access within a district occurs in two ways. First, as the data on the San Diego school district show, there is a direct relationship between the wealth and educational level of adults within a particular neighborhood and the performance level of the school in that neighborhood. The other way access is affected is through the tracking or sorting children according to perceived or measured ability. This practice is almost universal across schools and there is almost universal agreement that such ability grouping discriminates on the basis of class. "Inequalities in family wealth are a major cause of inequalities in schooling, and inequalities of schooling do much to reinforce inequalities of wealth among families in the next generation . . . (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003, p. 23)"

Discrimination in education based on class does not end at the secondary level but is carried into the postsecondary level. Two factors contribute to this blocked access. The first relates to the issues raised in the above paragraph. By condemning low-income children to an inferior primary and secondary education, they are not equipped to compete with youth from better schools for slots in colleges. This effect is most greatly felt when looking at admissions to elite universities. Trend data on postsecondary education are clear. Students from low-income and low-moderate income families are increasingly concentrated in two-year, public colleges while youth from higher income families are concentrated in four-year institutions. The disparities are even greater when the data on the most selective four-year colleges are examined. From 1973 through 2001, the data show a significant drop in children from low-income families being admitted to the selective colleges and universities leading to a higher concentration of children from affluent families at those institutions (Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY, 2003).

The examination of race, as indicated in the table above reveals that people of color, particularly African Americans, are denied both equal access and equal opportunity. In fact, all of the barriers to equal access and opportunity described above exist for people of color. The high correlation between race and social class is well established and, given this relationship, all of the inequities in access to education based on class apply to low-income families of color. In fact, research indicates that this barrier is even more significant for students of color (Rumberger, RW & Palardy, GJ, 2005). In addition, people of color must confront the issue of segregation that often ignores issues of class. The high level of racial segregation in housing is irrefutable (Curley, 2005; Galster & Godfrey, 2005; Ong & Rickles, 2003; Massey, Gross & Shibuya, 1994) resulting in middle class and affluent African Americans often being barred from housing in predominantly European American communities. According to research, one of the most powerful effects of segregation on youth of color is educational attainment (Howell-Moroney, 2005). The implication of segregation is that, in many cases, even people of color who have the economic means to live in communities with highly resourced, high performing schools are blocked from those communities based on race.

When examining the issues equal opportunity, it is clear that people of color confront barriers in housing, education, and employment. The data on housing discrimination above clearly shows the lack of equal opportunity in gaining housing. Additionally, research on bank practices show that mortgage lending continues to actively discriminate against African

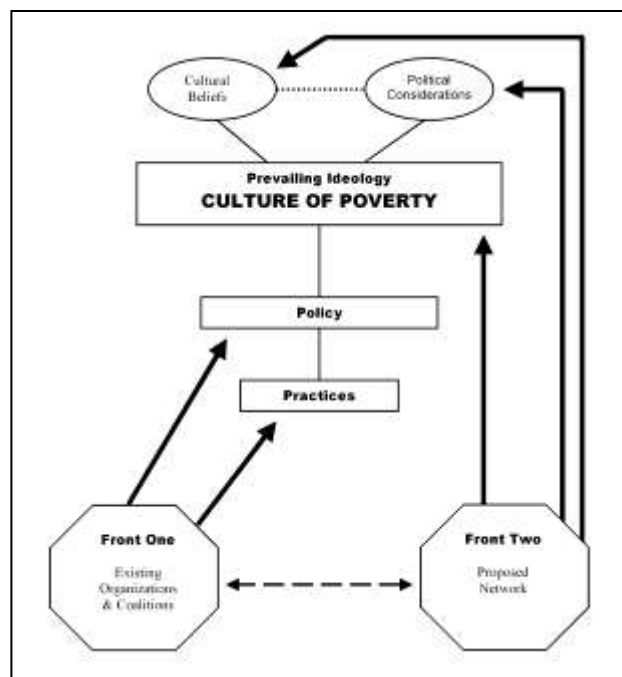
Americans (Andrews, 2005). As with low-income students, students of color also find that the barriers to quality education also occur at the postsecondary level. In addition to lack of access due to the quality of primary and secondary education, people of color (again, particularly African Americans) must deal with the racial bias found in the standardized testing used to determine college admission such as the SATs, GREs, LSATs, etc. often resulting in their not being admitted into the undergraduate and graduate programs of their choice (FairTest, 2001; FairTest 2001-02). Lastly, the research on employment opportunities shows the same pattern. While attempts have been made to show that the failure to hire African Americans is due to skill base not race, the data indicate something different. When education, skill, and experience are equal, African Americans are still the least likely to be hired and those hired are likely to be paid less and to be more likely to be part-time or temporary employees (Kantor, 1999; Coleman, 2003). Research on these trends show that the types of discrimination identified for gender, class and race are accelerating not diminishing.

THE CHALLENGE & THE APPROACH

The challenge that confronts us is not as simple as how do we get more resources for services to the poor but how do we change the very paradigm from which we are working. As long as we remain trapped within a mental model that defines poverty as personally caused, we cannot change the conditions that create poverty. Advocating for programs within the present paradigm requires us to reinforce the stereotypes that exist of poor people and do one of the following:

- **Beg:** Obtaining funding for programs such as homeless shelters, food banks, cash benefits, food stamps, etc. require us to essentially say: “Look, we understand these people are fundamentally flawed, however, they are human beings and we can’t just let them die so please give us enough resources to provide them with the bare minimum to survive.”
- **Promise Rehabilitation:** Obtaining funding for programs such as job training, substance abuse counseling, transitional housing, education, etc., requires us to essentially say: “We understand that these people are flawed, however, some of them can be rehabilitated. If you provide us with the resources we can rehabilitate some and reduce the money you need to spend on things like food and shelter.”

Because poverty is defined as individually caused, the present paradigm demands that only the barest of support be given lest we risk reinforcing the behavior that resulted in one’s poverty to begin with. In addition, this money must compete with other government programs that have higher priority – like fighting terrorism, etc. Selling national defense (or tax breaks, or more police, or better roads) to the public will always be easier than selling the giving of resources to people who are perceived to be poor because of the life choices they have made.



A new front to our struggle against poverty must be developed, a front that reaches beyond policy and practice and confronts the paradigm. As the diagram presented here suggests, the thousands of people working to end poverty today (**Front One**) are directly challenging the present policy and practices. Community groups, National and regional organizations and coalitions are fighting to stop the destruction of Head Start, to block the further deforming of welfare, to save social security from being dismantled, etc. While this fight is crucial and must continue, what is suggested here is the opening of a second front. A front that directly challenges to the rationale behind these policies and practices, i.e., challenge the culture poverty theory while pushing for the economic structure theory to be the basis for developing policies and practices relating to poverty. This **Front Two** would challenge the ideology that supports the culture of theory poverty, and changes the political costs for supporting the present policy and practices. This new front would call for new thinking that builds policies that directly confront the structural barriers outlined above.

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