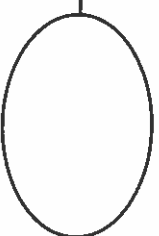

REVISIONING WOMEN, HEALTH, AND HEALING



Feminist, Cultural, and Technoscience Perspectives

edited by

ADELE E. CLARKE and
VIRGINIA L. OLESEN

Routledge New York and London

Published in 1999 by
Routledge
29 West 35th Street
New York, NY 10001

Published in Great Britain by
Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane
London EC4P 4EE

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Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

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Copyright acknowledgments

Anne Balsamo, "Public Pregnancies and Cultural Narratives of Surveillance" from her *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996.
Ruth Behar, "The Girl in the Cast" from *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology that Breaks Your Heart*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.
Donna Haraway, "The Virtual Speculum in the New World," from her *Modest-Witness@Second-Millennium. FemaleMan@Meets_Onchfouse™: Feminism and Technoscience*. New York and London: Routledge, 1997.
In Emily Martin's chapter "The Woman in the Flexible Body," the following are credited: The cover of *Science* magazine, March 14, 1993, vol. 260, used with permission from PPD Pharmaco, Inc. and Vincent Perez, artist. "Female to Male Ratios in Autoimmune Disease" by Ahmed S. Ansar, W. J. Penhale, and N. Talal, previously published in *American Journal of Pathology* 121(3) (Dec. 1985), pp. 531-51, used with permission from *American Journal of Pathology*; Flexibility ad, used with permission by Hewlett-Packard Company; Nike kids "Agile" ad used with permission by Nike.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Revisioning women, health, and healing : feminist, cultural, and technoscience perspectives / Adele E. Clarke and Virginia L. Olesen, editors.
p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN (invalid) 041591846 (hardcover). — ISBN 0-415-91846-4 (pbk.)

1. Women—Health and hygiene—United States—Sociological aspects.
2. Women's health services—Political aspects—United States.
3. Feminism—Health aspects—United States. I. Clarke, Adele E.

II. Olesen, Virginia L.

RA778.R4426 1999

362.1'082—dc21

98-9685

CIP

Virginia Olesen dedicates this book to Meg Stacey.
Adele Clarke dedicates it to Ruth Mahaney,
who have stimulated and taught us so much.
May their work go far beyond ours.

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Acknowledgments

In 1973, each of us taught our first course in women's health as the women's movement gained momentum and feminisms wended their way into the academy. Bringing critical social science perspectives to bear in new ways, Virginia Olesen organized the first research conference on women's health in the United States in 1975, held at the University of California, San Francisco. With Ellen Lewin, Sheryl Ruzek, Adele Clarke and others, she then went on to found the Women, Health and Healing Program in sociology there. To celebrate our "twenty-something" years in women's health, we decided to organize a conference.

We sought a radical revisioning of the entire domain of women, health, and healing—a fundamental reconceptualization rather than a conference-as-update-in-substantive-areas. We knew too well how very much had changed in feminism, in women, health and healing, in feminist theory, and what interesting new perspectives were being provoked by cultural studies and science and technology studies. We fantasized the conference we would most like to attend—whose voices we craved to hear revisioning women, health and healing. Our wish list of participants included many people we did not personally know and whom we did not necessarily know us or our work. Nor had many ever focused on women's health. All they had in common was our belief that they had very important things to say in terms of theoretically reframing the very foundations of women's health. We did not request participants to address particular topics; instead we simply asked what they might contribute if they chose to join us.

Only one person turned us down and we suddenly had a stunning conference on our hands! Indeed, the area of women, health, and healing was itself a powerful draw for the contributors, pulling them in directions they already wanted to move, or were at least very open to moving. It has breadth, grounding, immediacy, the difficult powers of bodies and embodiment, the lived experiences of pain, fear, and joy. Women, health, and healing is a site where all kinds of feminisms meet the world—including all kinds of sciences and technologies through all kinds of cultures. The conference was truly a success, a site of powerful conversations and the kinds of intellectual engagements that have endured.

Will the "Real" Mother Please Stand Up?

The Logic of Eugenics and American National Family Planning

PATRICIA HILL COLLINS



In the United States, motherhood as a constellation of social practices, a social institution, and an American cultural icon remains central to multiple systems of oppression. Just as mothers are viewed as important to family well-being, the status of motherhood as an institution remains essential to American health and prosperity. But in a nation-state like the United States, where social class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and nationality comprise intersecting dimensions of oppression, not all mothers are created equal.

In this politicized climate, the issue of which women are "real" mothers best suited for the tasks of reproducing both the American population and seemingly American family values takes on added importance. "Real" has many meanings, such as authentic, genuine, indisputable, and true. "Real" also has physical connotations, meaning concrete, tangible, and material. Another constellation of meanings of "real" references sincerity—earnest, honest, truthful, trustworthy, and reliable. Within these intersecting meanings of "real," dichotomies emerge that construct certain groups of women of the right social class, race, and citizenship status as "real" mothers worthy and fit for the job. Affluent, white and holding American citizenship, "real" mothers are those whose authenticity lies in their biological and natural reproduction versus their social mothering; whose physicality operates via their willingness to participate in every facet of their children's lives; whose sincerity lies in beliefs about mother love; and whose surety

lies in their indisputable ties to their biological offspring. Against these idealized "real" mothers, other categories of women of the wrong social class, race, and citizenship status are judged to be less fit, less worthy to be mothers. Within this intellectual framework, women deemed fit to be "real" mothers encounter population policies supporting their contributions as mothers to national well-being. In contrast, those deemed unfit to be "real" mothers experience population policies that are markedly different.

In this paper, I explore this relationship between motherhood, American national identity, and population policies. First, I examine how the traditional family ideal functions to structure notions of "real" motherhood and how this family ideal in turn frames American national identity. I suggest that not only does the metaphor of the biological, nuclear family operate to shape notions of an American nation whose health is assessed using family rhetoric, but that this American national family draws upon race for much of its meaning.

Second, I investigate how a logic of eugenics provides an intellectual context for assessing contemporary population policies by which the nation-state aims to attend to its health. Societies that embrace eugenic philosophies typically aim to transform social problems such as unemployment, increasing crime rates, child-bearing by unmarried adolescents, and poverty into technical problems amenable to biological solutions. Via social engineering, societies shaped by eugenic thinking see "race and heredity—the birth rates of the fit and the unfit—as the forces that shape . . . political and social developments" (Haller 1984:78). Moreover, eugenics movements that seek biological solutions to what are fundamentally social problems often arise when other mechanisms of controlling subordinate populations seem no longer adequate. The United States may be experiencing such a period, and American understandings of population policies aimed at regulating the mothering experiences of women from diverse racial, social class, and citizenship groups might benefit by viewing such policies within the context of a logic of eugenics.

Finally, in order to highlight the centrality of motherhood in these relations, I survey population policies targeted toward middle-class white women, working-class white women, and working-class African-American women. These three groups of women each occupy different social locations in their ability to be "real" mothers of the nation. As a result, population policies applied to each group demonstrate how the American nation-state seeks to regulate experiences with motherhood of women from different racial, ethnic, social class, and citizenship groups in defense of nation-state interests.

"Real" Mothers in Family, Race, and Nation

As sociologist Paul Gilroy observes, "race" differences are displayed in culture that is reproduced in educational institutions and, above all, in family life. Not only are families the nation in microcosm, its key components, but they act as the means to turn social processes into natural, instinctive ones (Gilroy 1987:43). In

the United States, families constitute primary sites of belonging: the family as an assumed biological entity, the racial family or community reinforced via geographically identifiable and racially segregated neighborhoods, and the national family symbolized via images of Mom, Dad, baseball, and apple pie.

The particular model of family is germane here, for a specific family ideal frames family rhetoric in the United States. According to the American traditional family ideal, a normative and ideal family consists of a heterosexual couple that produces its own biological children. A state-sanctioned marriage confers legitimacy not only on the family structure itself but on children born in this family (Andersen 1991). This metaphor functions as a deep taproot in American social policy. Just as individuals acquire varying degrees of authority, rights, and wealth based on their mode of entry into their biological families, a nation-state's population reflects similar power relations. The nation gains meaning via family metaphors. Moreover, this family metaphor articulates both with structures of institutionalized racism and with the labor needs of capitalism, such that the American national family is defined in race- and class-specific terms in the United States.

Several features characterize the links between the biological, nuclear family and the American national family. First, presumptions of blood ties underlie both constructs. Just as women's bodies produce children that are part of a socially constructed family grounded in notions of biological kinship, women's bodies produce the population for the national family or nation-state, conceptualized as having some sort of biological oneness. In nuclear families, the legitimate sons and daughters of a heterosexual marriage, related by blood to biological parents, are contrasted to illegitimate children who, while they may also be related by blood, stand outside state-sanctioned marital relationships. In a similar fashion, those lacking the appropriate blood ties to the American nation-state are seen as outsiders, non-family-members, and are treated accordingly. "Real" mothers remain central to reproducing these genuine blood ties

Second, family metaphors and those of nation both rely on distinctive notions of place, space, and territory. This dimension of the link can be seen through multiple meanings that people attach to the concept of home, meanings that range through levels of family household, neighborhood as family, home as the place of one's birth, and one's country as home. For example, the theme of the home as a sanctuary from outsiders and the turmoil of the public sphere creates boundaries for the biological family along lines of privacy and security. Similarly, the notion of homeland or national territory that must be defended against marauding aliens or foreigners operates in a similar fashion. Both spaces are seen as needing protection from outsiders. "Real" mothers are those who take care of the home, who provide that sanctuary that must be protected (Coontz 1992).

Third, in the same way that those born into a biologically defined family acquire certain lifelong rights and obligations to other family members, those born into the American national family as so-called natural or real citizens acquire certain rights attached to that citizenship. Citizens are also expected to

fulfill certain obligations to one another. For example, people within family units routinely help members of their own families by baby-sitting, lending money, assisting relatives in locating employment and housing, or caring for economically unproductive family members such as the very young or the elderly. Family members are entitled to these benefits merely by belonging. In contrast, those who lie outside the family orbit are not entitled to such benefits—but individuals may earn them by being redefined as fictive kin or by being particularly worthy. Since citizenship is often conferred through both birth or attachment to the mother, determining the "real" mother of a child can serve as a test of citizenship and belonging (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992).

Fourth, within biological families a pecking order or naturalized hierarchy emerges with, for example, good sons and daughters compared to their less ambitious or less fortunate siblings. This internal hierarchy parallels notions of first-class and second-class citizenship in the national family. Hierarchy may be determined by order of arrival: either birth order or immigration order. Claims that White Anglo-Saxon Protestants who migrated to the United States earlier are entitled to more benefits than more recent immigrants reflect this notion. Or hierarchy accompanies gender. In many families, girls and boys are treated differently regarding economic autonomy and freedom to move in public space. This differential treatment serves as a foundation for sex-typing of occupations in the paid labor market and male domination of public arenas such as politics and professional sports. As is the case with all situations of hierarchy, actual or implicit use of force, sanctions, and violence may be needed to maintain unequal power relations.

Finally, families contain policies or rules regulating their own reproduction. Family planning comprises a constellation of reproductive options ranging from coercion to choice, from permanence to reversibility. Within individual families, decision-making lies with family members—technically, it is they who decide whether to have children, how many children to have, and how those children will be spaced. But can this analogy from family to nation be extended to public policies on the national level? In what ways do social policies designed to foster the health of the American nation-state, especially those concerning motherhood, follow a similar family planning logic?

Planning for the National Family: The Logic of Eugenics Thinking

Eugenics movements or movements for "racial hygiene" of the early twentieth century compellingly illustrate the thinking underlying population policies designed to control the motherhood of different groups of women for reasons of nationality and/or race. Eugenics philosophies and the population policies they support emerge within political economies with distinctive needs and within societies with particular social class relations.

Common to eugenics movements throughout the world has been the view that biology is central to solving social problems. Societies that embrace eugenic

philosophies typically attempt to transform social problems into technical problems amenable to biological solutions effected via social engineering. Eugenic approaches thus combine a "philosophy of biological determinism with a belief that science might provide a technical fix for social problems" (Proctor 1988:286). Two sides typically exist to eugenic thinking. So-called positive eugenics consists of efforts to increase reproduction among the "aristogenic" or "fit," who allegedly carry the outstanding qualities of their group in their genes. So-called negative eugenics aims to prevent reproduction by the "cacogenic" or "unfit," those likely to have undesirable or defective offspring (Haller 1984).

The case of population policies enforced by the Nazi nation-state offers an unsettling example of a nation-state that was able to follow the logic of eugenics thinking grounded in national family planning rhetoric to its rational conclusion. Because German scientists borrowed from eugenics philosophies developed elsewhere in Europe and in the United States, German nation-state policies during the Nazi era of 1933–1945 provide a particularly compelling case for understanding the connections among the logic of eugenics, institutionalized racism, institutionalized sexism, and social policy. The intellectual climate characterizing the Nazi German nation-state was *not* unique. Rather, it emerged from a common intellectual heritage framing Western industrialized countries, including the contemporary United States (see, e.g., Haller 1984). Unlike other countries that held similar beliefs about eugenics or "racial hygiene" but were unable to implement them as fully, the Nazi German nation-state actually enforced eugenics philosophies.

Under the Nazis, eugenics thinking followed three main paths. First, the German population was racialized, with Jews and Aryans, among others, constructed as categories of immutable difference (Gilman 1985). Second, these putative racial differences were linked to issues of national identity and prosperity. Jews were blamed for failed economic and political policies and characterized as outsiders in the homeland of the German national family who hindered the nation-state's prosperity (Bridenthal, Grossmann, and Kaplan 1984). Finally, specific population policies were designed for the worthy and unworthy segments of the general population (Bock 1984; Proctor 1988). For example, the Jewish population encountered a continuum of policies designed to control their numbers. Stripping Jewish citizens of their property rights, legal protections, and employment opportunities; relegating the Jewish population to ghettos; deploying specific reproductive policies such as sterilization; and the so-called final solution of genocide targeted against the already born population collectively constitute eugenics as public policy.

All three elements of eugenics thinking characterize the history of American social institutions. First, because the United States has operated as a racialized state since its inception, race operates as a core concept in constructing American national identity. Despite promises of political and religious freedom for all American citizens in the Constitution, by excluding sizable segments of the population from citizenship, this same Constitution simultaneously codified race,

gender, and class into the founding laws of the country (Berry 1994). Enslaving African-Americans to exploit their labor and reproductive capacities and conducting military actions against Native Americans in order to acquire their land constituted population policies targeted explicitly for these racialized groups. Moreover, race remains important in framing the basic institutions that comprise political, economic and social institutions in the United States (see, e.g., Mässey and Denton 1993; Omi and Winant 1994). While the categories of race may shift in response to changing political and economic conditions, the fundamental belief in race as a guiding principle for viewing segments of the American population remains remarkably hardy.¹

The second element of eugenics-inspired population policies consists of associating diverse racial groups with perceived national interests. This element also has a long history in the United States. At various times, this has taken the form of restrictive immigration legislation targeted toward non-European racial and ethnic groups, a response to what was seen as the non-white threat from outside national boundaries. Slavery, de facto segregation, and other repressive policies applied to African-Americans, Latinos and other nonwhite populations within American borders also operated in response to perceived threats from nonwhite populations. While recent interconnections of racism and national policy may be more covert than in the past, operating, as sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant suggest, in a "hegemonic" fashion, such ties continue. Racialized discourses exist around themes that serve as proxies for race, themes such as poverty, crime, immigration, affirmative action and urban policy. While none of these terms directly refers to people of color, all have been used as codes to indicate how the presence of people of color is problematic for national unity or national aspirations (Omi and Winant 1994).²

The third feature of eugenics-inspired population policies, the direct control of different segments of the population through different population control measures, also characterizes American politics (Davis 1991:202-44).³ Ironically, the United States pioneered the eugenics thinking actually implemented in Nazi nation-state policies. Nazi science looked to England and the United States for inspiration in crafting its eugenics policies. Francis Galton, the founder of the eugenics movement in England, claimed that "Anglo-Saxons far outranked the Negroes of Africa, who in turn outranked the Australian aborigines, who outranked nobody. Because he believed that large innate differences between races existed, Galton felt that a program to raise the inherent abilities of mankind involved the replacement of inferior races by the superior" (Haller 1984:11).

Galton's ideas proved popular in racially segregated United States. Preceding the sterilization laws of other countries by twenty years, American eugenics laws were seen as pioneering ventures by eugenicists of other countries. The U.S. Supreme Court's 1927 *Buck vs. Bell* decision held that sterilization fell within the police power of the state. Reflecting the majority opinion, Oliver Wendell Holmes contended,

It would be strange if it could not call upon those who already sap the strength of the state for these lesser sacrifices, often not felt to be such by those concerned, in order to prevent our being swamped by incompetence. It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind. The principle that sustains compulsory vaccination is broad enough to cover cutting the Fallopian tubes. . . . Three generations of imbeciles is enough. (Haller 1984:139)

Given this intellectual context, it seems reasonable to conclude that differential population policies developed for different segments of the American population, especially those identifiable by race, citizenship status, and social class, have long existed in direct relation to any group's perceived value within the United States. Rather than the more familiar definition of population policies emphasizing reproductive policies, I define population policies more broadly. Population policies comprise the constellation of social policies, institutional arrangements, and ideological constructions that shape reproductive histories of different groups of women within different racial/ethnic groups, social class formations, and citizenship statuses. Examining population policies through this lens reveals the fallacy of viewing race-based policies and gender-based policies as basically regulating different forms of social relations. Current assumptions view African-Americans as having race, white women as having gender, and African-American women as experiencing both race and gender, with white men lacking both race and gender. Such assumptions dissipate when confronted with actual population policies aimed at regulating the mothering experiences of different groups of women. Since the 1970s, major changes in the American political economy, stimulated by four recessions and a declining standard of living, provided a social context fostering differential population policies for different groups of women in the United States. Given this context, how does the logic of eugenics thinking frame the population policies targeted to different groups of women?

Policies for "Fit" Mothers: Middle-Class White Women

According to the logic of eugenics, falling birth rates of the dominant group constitute "race suicide." In this situation, women of the dominant group are routinely encouraged to increase their reproductive capacities. In the United States, white women's reproduction remains central to American national aspirations. Currently, efforts to encourage white women to produce more white babies, a so-called positive eugenics goal, occur for several reasons. First, only white women possess the genetic material necessary for creating white babies. Thus, white women hold the key to notions of racial purity central to systems of white supremacy. Second, white women remain central in socializing young white people into a system of institutionalized racism. Their activities as mothers receive praise in light of this goal. Finally, white women allegedly fulfill the symbolic function of mothers of the national family. White women have been central as

symbols of the nation that must be protected and defended and as the group responsible for transmitting national culture to the young.

Overall, access to new reproductive technologies, dominant ideologies about motherhood promulgated in the media, and social institutions work to keep middle-class white women firmly entrenched in popular culture and scholarship as the essence of desirable motherhood that is worth protecting. Health care policies in particular reflect a fascination with increasing middle-class white women's fertility, often to the detriment of other pressing maternal and child health needs. Specifically, the construction of infertility as a national tragedy and the huge amounts of media attention paid to this condition reflect this preoccupation with increasing reproduction among women of the dominant group. Infertility is typically presented either as a human tragedy, the case of the unfortunate woman who cannot bear the child she so desperately wants, or, increasingly, as a personal failing—women who pursued careers, waited too long to have babies, and now find themselves childless because they turned their backs on their rightful roles as women (Ikemoto 1996). Middle-class women found to be infertile are assisted with a dazzling array of medical advances to cure this socially constructed tragedy. Usually insured by private insurance carriers, these women are able to defray part of the enormous costs of infertility procedures. New reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization, sex predetermination, and surrogate embryo transfer are routinely differentially distributed depending on the race, class and sexual orientation of women (Rowland 1987; Nsiah-Jefferson 1989).

Popular culture and media representations play a part in both identifying middle-class white motherhood as ideal and in creating a climate where acquiring and raising a healthy white baby takes on such importance. For example, films of the 1980s and 1990s such as *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*, whose plot centers around an affluent white woman who innocently hires a crazed nanny who tries to steal her baby, trumpet social messages that children belong at home with their "real" mothers. The mothering capacities of working mothers came under particular scrutiny. Films such as *Baby Boom*, a portrait of a successful career woman who suddenly discovers how unfulfilled her life had been when she inherits a baby, seem designed to portray the message that working mothers are acceptable just as long as motherhood comes first.

Social institutions also reflect efforts to assist middle-class white women in attaining this curiously idealized "real" mothering experience. Despite the increase in the numbers of working mothers, school day schedules that can begin as early as 7:30 A.M. and dismiss children as early as 1:30 P.M. continue to privilege stay-at-home mothers. Modest reforms designed to make the workplace accommodate the family needs of women remain more a reaction to the stated needs of middle-class white women professionals to juggle both family and career than they do any sustained national commitment to child care. While working-class mothers do benefit from corporate day care, because so many working-class women do not work for large corporations, the children of white middle-class women remain the primary beneficiaries of this upper-tier child care.

Racial segregation, and to a lesser extent social class segmentation, in American housing, education, and public services also support middle-class white mothering. The growth of gated communities and planned suburban developments designed to keep out unwelcome others speaks to the need to protect white children and their mothers. Privatizing educational and recreational experiences of white middle-class children reflects efforts to insulate this group from the perceived harm of attending school with working-class whites and working-class children of color. While the signs of racial segregation have been taken down, the results that these signs were designed to produce have not changed as rapidly. Middle-class white children still receive markedly better treatment than all other children in areas such as education, health care, housing, recreational facilities, nutrition, and public facilities such as libraries and police protection. Through public policy, ideological mechanisms, and institutional policies, their mothers receive strong messages to reproduce.

Policies for "Less Fit" Mothers: Working-Class White Women

The position of working-class white women, especially those living in poverty, differs dramatically from that of middle-class white women. On the one hand, working-class white women's ability to produce white babies renders this group "fit" to produce the biological or population base of the nation. But on the other hand, when it comes to passing on national culture, raising academically and economically productive citizens, and being symbols of the nation, working-class white women remain less "fit" for motherhood. Public policies, popular ideology, and the structure of social institutions all work to encourage white middle-class women to fulfill their expected place as mothers of the nation by encouraging them both to have children and to raise children. In contrast, working-class white women are encouraged to have children but receive much less support for their ability to raise them.

Social policies reflect this basic contradiction. With the passage of *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, working-class and poor white women gained legal access to safe abortions. As a result, many young white women chose not to carry their babies to term. The decreasing stigma attached to single motherhood, coupled with changes in eligibility for social welfare benefits, lessened the social and economic barriers confronting single mothers of any racial background. Many white women who formerly would have given their children up for adoption chose to raise their children themselves, often alone. Together, these factors, among others, resulted in a sharp decrease in healthy white babies who formerly would have been available for adoption into white middle-class families.

Recent efforts to decrease social welfare benefits, to weaken antidiscrimination legislation against women in the workplace, and to limit access to abortion and other selected family planning services for working-class and poor women have meant that working-class white women's reproductive "choices" have

changed. If working-class white women carry babies to term, the result will be an increase in the number of healthy white babies. This changing political climate suggests that young white mothers will find it more difficult to raise their children in poverty and, denied access to the choice of whether to choose to carry a child to term, will be increasingly pushed toward adoption as the best "choice."

Ideological portrayals of working-class white women as mothers must be careful to validate motherhood as a biological function yet support the notion that working-class White women do not make particularly fit mothers. In some cases, working-class white women become fit mothers by giving up their children. In her study comparing unmarried white and African-American mothers in the 1950s, Rickie Solinger (1992) reveals how working-class African-American women were actively discouraged from placing their babies up for adoption, while working-class white women encountered serious pressure to become fit mothers by releasing their children for adoption. They were told that they became good women by doing what was best for the child. Through these policies, working-class white women could gain respectability. Recent ideological representations of working-class white women must also walk this fine line between constructing them as simultaneously fit for some dimensions of motherhood, and unfit for others. Take, for example, *Roseanne* and *Grace Under Fire*, two popular American television shows of the 1990s portraying working-class white mothers. While *Roseanne* clearly violates many of the rules of fit motherhood, she remains married and thus gains legitimacy. In contrast, *Grace*, a single mother with three children, is portrayed with dignity, yet her checkered past of illicit sexuality, wife battering, and alcoholism speaks to her past transgressions. As the series continued, *Grace* also was revealed to have had an illegitimate child that she relinquished for adoption. Both *Roseanne* and *Grace* gain respectability within the parameters set for working-class white women.

Social institutions such as housing, schools, employment, and health care also collectively frame the mothering experiences of working-class white women. Many working-class white women are in the labor market, often in part-time work or in service jobs that offer less desirable salaries and benefits, especially health care benefits. Working-class white women thus encounter a specific constellation of population policies, ideological constructions, and social institutions. They are denied abortion services. They are denied opportunities to support their children financially. They encounter increased exposure to cultural messages that encourage them to have their biologically white babies but to give them up for adoption to "good" homes. Because they receive insufficient economic support in raising their children from the disadvantaged position of working-class white males, from their own position in the labor market, and from the insufficient government supports affecting poor people, working-class white women are increasingly encouraged to give up their babies to infertile middle-class white women.

Policies for "Unfit" Mothers: Working-Class African-American Women

Working-class African-American women, especially those who live in poverty, encounter markedly different treatment. In this section, I emphasize working-class African-American women's experiences not because I see these experiences as reflecting some sort of essential blackness, but because this group's experiences are constructed as normative for African-Americans as a collectivity by dominant groups. Whereas working-class white women's fitness for motherhood is measured against the assumed norms of middle-class white women, African-American women experience a reversal of this process. Specifically, working-class African-American women's experiences are stereotyped and labelled as deviant from those of middle-class white women and are simultaneously considered normative for African-American women as a collectivity. In policy discussions of reproduction, middle-class African-American women are compared not to middle-class white women, but to working-class African-American women, when they are rendered visible at all.⁴

Controlling both the biological reproduction and mothering experiences of working-class African-American women has long been essential to maintaining a racialized American nationalism. In prior eras, a combination of a need for cheap, unskilled labor and the political powerlessness of black populations worked to produce population policies that encouraged African-American women to have many children. Because they did not require costly training and could be easily fired, such children cost employers little. In Southern states, for example, school years for African-American children were often shorter and adjusted to allow them to work in agriculture. Because they were denied education and social welfare benefits routinely extended to other groups, they cost the state little. Black children were viewed as expendable.

The post-World War II political economy changed all this. The mechanization of agriculture, industrial relocation out of inner-city areas, and other economic trends fostered a decreasing demand for low-skilled labor (Squires 1994). Instead, the so-called postindustrial economy required higher skilled labor requiring expensive investments in schooling and health care. During this same period, African-Americans gained political rights unavailable prior to the passage of the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act in the early 1960s (see, e.g., Amott's 1990 discussion of African-American women and Aid to Families with Dependent Children) that allowed them to benefit from entitlement programs long enjoyed by whites. From the perspective of employers, a large African-American population with political rights of full citizenship became both economically unfeasible and politically dangerous. Since fewer African-Americans were needed, population policies, ideological constructions of African-American women, and the structure of social institutions combined to discourage working-class and poor African-American women from having children.

Providing lavish services to combat infertility for white middle-class women while withholding family planning services except sterilization from poor

African-American women reflects contemporary population policies emerging within the logic of eugenics thinking. Currently, poor women and women of color are often *discouraged* from having children and are rewarded by government policy if they do so. In the context of lack of abortion services, government-funded permanent sterilization often becomes one of the few viable methods of birth control. The introduction of Norplant and Depo-Provera as reversible quasi-sterilization methods illustrates how population policies directed at African-American women reflect notions of their seeming unfitness to be mothers. Ideological constructions of African-American women also foster a climate in which it is claimed that they make bad mothers and thus are irresponsible if they reproduce. Long-standing images of African-American women as matriarchs or "unfit" mothers are now joined by newly emerging images that portray them as sexually irresponsible, as abusive mothers, and/or as welfare queens (Lubiano 1992). Building on stereotypes of people of African descent and women as being less intellectual, more impulsive, and more emotional than whites, the image of the welfare queen in particular provides a context for quasi-coercive population policies such as Norplant and Depo-Provera. Ironically, images designed for middle-class African-American women, especially high-achieving professionals, also perpetuate views of African-American women as unfit mothers. By choosing to remain childless, such women are seen as being selfish, hoarding resources, being overly aggressive and unfeminine, and thinking only of themselves. Moreover, these new "black lady" overachievers, as Wahneema Lubiano (1992) describes them, are simultaneously constructed as affirmative-action hires, the middle-class unworthy recipients of government favors that parallel their less affluent welfare queen sisters. Within this nexus of images, while both middle-class and working-class African-American women can be constructed as the enemy within, whose reproduction or lack of it threatens American national interests, working-class and poor African-American women remain most vulnerable to attacks that result from this logic.

In this climate, where African-American women are constructed as unfit mothers, social institutions that they encounter take on a particularly punitive cast. Black working-class and poor mothers are often employed, yet are severely disadvantaged—child care remains hard to find, health benefits are limited for those in part-time or seasonal employment, and lack of job security makes it difficult to plan. A history of racial segregation mean that working-class African-American women encounter limited opportunities in their own education, housing, employment, access to health care, access to quality schools and recreational facilities for their children (Omolade 1994).

New Realities

If the nation-state is conceptualized as a national family, with the traditional family ideal structuring normative family values, then standards used to assess the contributions of family members in heterosexual, married-couple

households with children become foundational for assessing group contributions to national well-being overall. The United States may be in an important historical moment where the logic of eugenics is being appropriated by interest groups who aim to reconstruct the American national family to its former glory. In understanding these new realities, several themes are of special significance.

First, the range of reproductive choices available to white women could not have occurred without the exploitation of the labor of African-American women and of other women of color. As women of the desirable group, middle-class white women have long depended on the labor of poor women and women of color in order to fulfill their responsibilities as mothers. Historically, for example, African-American women served as child care workers and performed the domestic labor that allowed middle-class white women to maintain their social position as fit mothers. These traditional functions are more recently being taken over by new "employable mothers," namely, undocumented immigrant women of color. In her analysis of undocumented Latinas, Grace Chang (1994) notes that in the past, analyses of immigration retained a focus on male migrant laborers who allegedly stole jobs from "native" American workers. Since the mid-1980s, this concern has shifted to an emphasis on how immigrants impose a heavy welfare burden on American "natives." As Chang observes, "Men as job stealers are no longer seen as the immigrant problem. Instead, immigrant women as idle, welfare-dependent mothers and inordinate breeders of dependents are seen as the great menace" (Chang 1994:263). In this context, the treatment of undocumented Latina mothers and other women who lack the benefits of American citizenship closely resembles historical patterns of regulation of African-American mothers. In these cases, the notion of nonwhite mothers as employable exists alongside prevailing views that maternal employment harms children's development.

Second, the connection between welfare-state capitalism and perceived national interests remains significant, especially regarding women of varying race, social class, and citizenship groups. The welfare state mediates the conflicting demands placed on all women. On the one hand, social norms encourage women to remain in the home in order to care for their children and thus reproduce and maintain the labor force. But on the other hand, these same norms encourage women across social classes to perform traditionally female low-wage work in the paid labor force, such as teaching, secretarial work, and domestic work. By encouraging and subsidizing some women to remain at home in order to nurture the current and future workforce while forcing others into low-wage work, the welfare state uses race, social class and citizenship differences among women to resolve this conflict. Working-class women of color of varying citizenship statuses bear the brunt of capitalist development. Such women are simultaneously engaged in low-wage work as paid employees doing the reproductive labor for families other than their own (Dill 1988; Glenn 1992; Chang 1994).

Third, new reproductive technologies are emerging as central to reorganizing the experiences of all women with motherhood. Working with longstanding

patterns of race and social class in the United States, these technological advances fragment the meaning of motherhood. The proliferation of reproductive technologies in the post-World War II era has allowed the splitting of motherhood into three categories: genetic, gestational, and social motherhood (Rowland 1987; Raymond 1993). Genetic mothers are those who contribute the genetic material to another human being. Gestational mothers are those who carry the developing fetus in utero until birth. Social mothers care for children actually born. Traditional views of motherhood forwarded by the traditional family ideal present one middle-class white woman as fulfilling all three functions, assisted by domestic servants. But new reproductive technologies have made it possible for women to specialize in one of these mothering categories. With the growing technological ability to make distinctions among genetic motherhood, gestational motherhood, and social motherhood, African-Americans, Latinas and other women of color become candidates for gestational motherhood, supplementing and perhaps even supplanting white working-class women's participation as genetic and gestational mothers.

Fourth, the mother glorification targeted toward middle-class white women coexists with a heterogeneous collection of social policies designed to retain the *image* of motherhood as vitally important for all women while simultaneously discouraging selected groups of women from becoming mothers because they fail to attain the standards of "real" mothers. For example, mid-1990s phenomena such as the assault on affirmative action policies in higher education and the workplace, the passage of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act, which effectively abolished AFDC by placing it under the supervision of fifty individual states, the emergence of increasingly strident anti-immigration rhetoric in public discourse, and the increasing privatization of schools, health care, and selected public services can all be seen as part of an overarching framework designed to maintain differences between fit and unfit mothers. But the rhetoric of mother glorification must be tempered with a long look at how children are actually treated in the United States. Children were disproportionately hurt by social policies of the 1980s and have become the most impoverished age group in the United States. In 1974, 15 percent of American children lived below the poverty line. By 1986, 21 percent did so—a 40 percent increase in just twelve years. Approximately 40 percent of African-American and Latino children live in poverty (Katz 1989:127). Yet despite these startling statistics, infertility continues to be presented as a major public health issue affecting large numbers of Americans.

Finally, the emergence of new family forms in the United States has the potential of either supporting or challenging the traditional family ideal and the entire edifice of population policies that it sanctions. For example, growing support for the categories of "biracial" and "multiracial" in the U.S. Census speaks to newly emerging family forms that defy boundaries of race. Of particular interest are the white mothers raising biracial or multiracial children, through either adoption or biological reproduction. How are we to interpret current efforts to

include multiracial categories as part of government data? Are the efforts at reclassification an effort to make such children honorary whites with all the benefits that accrue to white middle-class children? Or are the efforts designed to deconstruct a system of racial classification that routinely distributes privileges based on such classification? In a similar fashion, the emergence of families organized around gay and lesbian couples with children raises similar challenges to the traditional family ideal and the complex social structures it simultaneously shapes and sanctions. The very existence of these emerging family forms and their increasing legitimacy within state agencies mean that the bedrock of family as defined by the traditional family ideal can no longer serve as in the same way as the glue linking systems of race, gender, class, nationality, and heterosexist oppression. What comes of these challenges remains to be seen.

Notes

1. Racial formations in the United States demonstrate a shift from theories of race based on the racist biology that characterized nineteenth-century science, and toward a cultural racism more useful in defending current racial practices. But this means neither that racism based in biology has atrophied nor that it may not take on new forms. Troy Duster (1990) offers an unsettling argument concerning the reracialization of genetic arguments in contemporary American scholarship. Duster argues that advances in genetic research show that genetic disorders are distributed differently through different racial/ethnic groups. Duster queries, "The importance of race and ethnicity in cultural history has refueled the old logic to give rise to a new question: If genetic disorders are differentially distributed by race and ethnicity, why aren't other human traits and characteristics?" (p. 3).
2. Scholarship on the welfare state reveals how state policies reflect race-, class-, and gender-specific concerns. For analyses of how social policies have had differential impact on different groups, see Mink 1990, Nelson 1990, and Gordon 1994. Gilkes 1983 and Brewer 1994 provide analyses of how race frames state policy.
3. This process is neither historical nor confined to the United States. For discussions of similar population policies, see Heng and Devan's (1992) analysis of Singapore and Kuumba's (1993) discussion of South Africa.
4. Middle-class African-American women occupy a peculiar place in the nexus of population policies targeted toward African-American women as a group. On one hand, these women clearly have the economic resources to care for their children. In this sense, African-American middle-class children will not be drains on nation-state resources. But at the same time, these children are not of the "right" genetic stock to become symbolic of the nation. They compete with the "rightful heirs" of the nation—its white children—for resources. The analogy between the king's rightful heir and the king's bastard son seems apt here—both are seen as being part of the royal family, but their status is not the same. As mothers, African-American professional women who excel in their careers and who are mothers may be cast as "bad" mothers because they do not stay at home with their children.

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The Social Construction of the "Immoral" Black Mother

Social Policy, Community Policing, and Effects on Youth Violence

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In this paper, I set out to explore the impact of social policy on the micro processes of mothering. In particular, I am concerned with how deteriorating structural conditions in low-income black communities serve as a significant backdrop to the interactions among these micro processes and social policies, and how the results are stigmatization, marginalization, and a particular construction of social problems, especially youth violence.

Few areas of social life have been as contested in social policy debates as the concept of the family. Highly charged rhetoric about gender and generational relationships surrounds most recent proposals for reform. From nostalgic calls for conservative approaches by religious right-wing forces to seemingly progressive legislative initiatives advocating gay/lesbian marriages, debates about family life are played out on various ideological templates. Even in progressive contexts, such as the recent reconsiderations of adolescent pregnancy, the problem has been constructed as the need to "strengthen fragile families" (National Center on Fathers and Families 1997). Similarly, in the field of public health, we see an emphasis on the family as the cornerstone of emotional and social well-being, examined via resiliency factors that emerge from particular forms of household arrangements (Edari, McManus, and McKissic 1995). In these and other examples, current social policy reform is increasingly attached to the organization and meaning of the role of the family in contemporary society, and overall the constructs have a distinctively conservative tendency.

Motherhood, as a subcategory of the family debates, is constituted through