

>> Good afternoon, my name is Annette Lareau, I'm President of the American Sociological Association and it's a delight to welcome you to this session. One of the pleasures of being A.S.A. president is you get to help shape the plenaries and program and we're just really thrilled about the speakers we have today. Frank Furstenberg from the University of Pennsylvania is going to preside and he'll be introducing the speakers. But I want to take a brief moment to tell you one thing as we're trying to get additional input on A.S.A. about the app and on the webpage. And we have online surveys and we also have hard copy surveys. And so they are in the -- I have some with me and they're also in the hub, which is at the very back of the book exhibit. And I would be extremely grateful if you could take a few minutes to give us your feedback either online or at the hub. Okay, please join me in welcoming our panel. Thank you.  
[APPLAUSE]

>> Thank you so much, Annette, for both that introduction and also for the very fine conference you have put together. I think it's been, you know, I probably stand along with Arlie as someone who's been in the field for an awfully long time coming to A.S.A. meetings for more than a half century, I have to admit, and this is certainly among the best of the meetings I have ever participated in. It's my honor to preside over this session. As Annette wrote to the panelists, my job is primarily to be a ruthless timekeeper and to assure that the panelists don't exceed the precious time we have.

The impact of economic conditions on the family is anything but new. Since the very development of the social sciences 150 years ago or so, there's been a steady stream of attention to this problem. From the pioneering work of Charles Booth in England, in the late 19th Century to the work of DuBois in the beginning of the last century to the studies of Komarovsky and Lazarsfeld during the Great Depression, Clayton and Drake's classic work and on to Glen Elder's very accomplished analysis of the effects of the Depression on children and Julius Wilson's books, "The Truly Disadvantaged" and his other important volumes, we've had a great

and rich tradition of research on the topic of this session. We now live in hard times in the aftermath of the Great Depression it's sparking interest in a new generation of studies with innovative techniques, new questions, and fresh data. Today's panelists, as Annette already indicated, is a very all-star collection of both senior scholars and younger people. I think we figured they're rated more or less according to their age.

So first we will hear from Arlie Hochschild who truly needs no introduction as really the truly celebrated figures in our field who have pioneered in gender studies, family studies, and the sociology of emotions. Next will be David Harding at the University of California at Berkeley who's already established a considerable reputation as an innovative scholar in the study of the effects of incarceration. Following David will be Marianne Cooper now at Stanford whose qualitative studies of family life have made immense contributions to understanding the interior of family systems. And finally, we'll hear from Matthew Desmond at Harvard who is doing very important work on families caught up in the midst of the housing crisis. So no more introduction. We go right to the panelists and first to Arlie. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

>> Hi, thanks very much, Frank. So I would like to speak now to the part of us that is public sociologists and address the question of the day here. We know that the top 1% of Americans now own 40% of the wealth and 20% of the income that is earned in the U.S. and we know that next to Brazil, the U.S. among advanced nations is the highest gap between rich and poor. And we know that this gap is extreme, that it is ongoing, and that there seems to be no break on it. So the question I really would like for us to consider today is do Americans know about this gap, if they know about it, do they care about this gap? If they care about it, do they want the government to do anything about it? Or is there a dominant narrative that is getting in the way of caring about that gap. What is that narrative and how can we speak to it? So do Americans know that the rich are getting rich and poor are getting poor? Yes, they do.

In a poll by Pugh 2014, the question was asked in the past 10 years has a gap between rich and poor increased, decreased, or stayed the same or don't you know? Sixty eight percent, so some of them said no, it's increased. But then if you ask people is that a problem, it depends on how you ask the question, what the answer is. But if you ask them in a way to respond to the statement, some people think that American society is divided into two groups, the haves and have nots. Do you agree or disagree? And those who said oh, I disagree, that's not what America is like, is 63%. So yeah, we have a gap but on the other hand that doesn't turn us into the kind of society that has haves and have nots. So then what about turning to the government for doing something about that gap?

Well, here it's very interesting that research by Glen Brooks and Jeff Manza points out that in the United States if you look back decades when times are good, Americans want minimal government. But when times are bad, they turn to their government. So you have the big crash of '29 and then you had the new deal. Not this time. After 2008 what they discovered is that polls showed Americans turned away from government policy and services. So what's going on? We're facing a paradox. On the one hand we're seeing the problem of a gap between rich and poor and we are also seeing an increase in disregard of that problem. And we as public sociologists propose can disregard that disregard, and I'm speaking to that. I think that what's behind this paradox is a powerful, dominant narrative which goes like this -- free market policies, free market goes with family values and there's a goes with that turns into helps family values. So let's look at that narrative. Free market is kind of, of course, a catch phrase for policies such as lower and more aggressive taxation, deregulation of industry, and cuts in government services. And family values is also a catch phrase which generally refers to proper legal, proper marriage as heterosexual pro-life, sex and procreation contained inside marriage. I'm proposing we make one shift, one small shift from family values to valued families and ask what the link is between these free market policies and families. And, of course, there are certain rationales,

we're all familiar with them, that free market policies will increase business prosperity which will trickle down from haves to have nots, deregulation will take off the constraints on industry, lead more people to have good jobs which they use to provide for their families and service cuts will cut bloated government and get people less dependent on the government which isn't good for them. Those are the rationales you've heard.

So free market policies adding to family, the valued family, is that true? Turns out we've got a lot of evidence and I point first to a very important cross-national study. The 2007 UNESCO Report Card 7, which looks at middle school children in 21 advanced nations and looks at some of those countries, all of them are capitalists, but some pursue free market policies far more and others far less. So these middle class students were asked, do you have books in the house? Do you have a place you can study? Do you have someone you can talk to if you have a problem? Do you have breakfast with the family? Do you have fruit every day? And did you have any accidents this year? Things like that. And what we found is highest rates of child wellbeing and this covers education and this covers medical and social and poverty, those three main ones, what they found is the highest ratings went -- surprise, surprise -- to Netherlands and Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Can I have a little more water? Excuse me. And the lowest went to the United States, the U.K. and Portugal which pursue more free market policies. So the U.S. ranked dead last among the 21 affluent countries in child poverty and second-to-last in family and peer relations and behaviors and risks.

So 2010 follow-up of that UNICEF study recounted the same bad news. So what this suggests is American kids more than kids in these other societies are more likely to skip breakfast, become fat, smoke pot, get pregnant as teens and it suggests that the wealth, U.S. is one of the wealthiest countries, does not trickle down to children or adults in valued families. So what we have is a gush up and not trickle down. The second study that I think we have as evidence speaking to this narrative is one well known, I'm sure, to people here, the Wilkinson

and Pickett study in the spirit level which looks at 29 measures of adult wellbeing. So now we have the kids' story and we have the adult story. And it's looking at rates of violence, drug abuse, mental illness and so on. And overall health and life expectancy, they divide their sample not by kind of government policies but by comparing high gap societies with low gap societies. In other words, if you take the 20% richest and 20% poorest, how big that gap is. Some are high gap societies like again U.S. and Great Britain and low-gap societies like Denmark. So, of course, what we find is that in those high-gap societies the homicide rate is 10 times higher than in low-gap societies per capita mugging, rape, teen births, three times the rate of mental illness, lower levels of social trust in the high gap societies. So we can say well, that's an inner city scene, which indeed it is. But we can add to that, the kicker is that middle class people also are better off in low gap nations. They're more healthy and actually live longer.

Actually here's a quote, I couldn't believe it. So okay, here's the quote, "Those earning household incomes of \$60,000 or more in high-gap societies suffer higher rates of death from all causes than do \$60,000 a year income people living in low gap societies." These here are two big mega studies speaking to the desirability of tax redistribution policies. Another dot to connect between free market policies and value of valued families is deregulation. And here we can look at one particular example of the regulation of children's programs on television. We can look at the work of Julie Schor, her book "Born to Buy" and we can see the rise of ads for soft drinks and high-sugar products has paralleled the rise in childhood obesity. Such ads, she points out, target kids' own piggy banks and children spend a third of their piggy bank money on junk food. So there are many factors behind the rise of child obesity as we know, but one main one is the rise in ads for these junk foods and they are unregulated.

So finally how about the cuts in services, how do they affect valued families? This one is easy, Medicaid, food stamps, subsidized housing for the disabled. But we know all of these services are what put a fragile floor on this gap between rich and poor, and so if you remove

them, you increase that gap that we just heard isn't good for families. So the loss of them would expand the gap and that would hurt families. So do the dots connect? To return to this paradox of disregard to the 58% who say we are not a nation of haves and have nots to the third who think the current distribution of wealth is okay, and to the near half who oppose government policies that would reduce that gap, to them, I think we need to address their central narrative with our most reliable evidence and keenest focus on what they and we care about, because here's the final paradox. The right leads the left, only cares about the form of the family. Not that we care for Roe V. Wade, gay marriage, just the form of the family. And the left thinks that the right only cares about the form of the family. You know, whether it be pro-life and heterosexual and the like. So we both actually, I think, care about the valued family. And with the focus on that, we can locate a bridge not only between rich and poor, through policies, but between right and left, by proposing another evidence-based narrative, can do government and value families. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

>> Thanks.

>> Good afternoon, before I begin, I would like to thank Annette Lareau for inviting me to participate in this panel and for organizing a tremendous conference. It's an honor and a privilege to share the podium with my fellow panelists and to have the opportunity and to have the opportunity to talk today. I'd like to talk today about family life after prison. More specifically my focus is on the various roles that families play in the reintegration of former prisoners and the difficulties that prisoners and their families face during the challenging period of days, weeks and months after release. The current era of mass incarceration is also an era of mass re-entry with of hundreds of thousands leaving prison every year. As a result these are experiences encountered by hundreds of thousands of families. Former prisoners return predominantly to poor families and poor communities. The experience of re-entry and reintegration has important

consequences for the wellbeing of those families and communities who already facing hard times. I will return to these issues at the conclusion of my remarks.

Much of what I will discuss today is based on a long-term, mixed method study of prisoner reentry and reintegration in Michigan and I have been working with Jeff Morenoff at the University of Michigan for the last eight years. We have been fortunate to work with a number of talented graduate students and post docs whose contribution I'll also be discussing. Briefly, our data comes from two sources. The first is a longitudinal administrative data on a cohort of individuals paroled in Michigan in 2003 and followed for 2012. The second is longitudinal qualitative interview study of 22 men and women who were paroled in Southeastern Michigan in 2007 or 2008 and these individuals were interviewed prior to their release from prison and followed for up to three years.

However, our data can only address the question of family reintegration from the respect of the former prisoners themselves so I also draw on the work of a number of scholars who have been studying incarceration and family life from different perspectives and with different data sources and here's some of the work I will be drawing on this afternoon. As we consider the role of families and prisoner reintegration, it's important to keep in mind that a significant proportion of prisoners do not return to families at all, but rather to institutional living arrangements. It's important to consider a broad definition of family. As illustration here, the first residences to which Michigan parolees returned based on our administrative data, we see that only about three-quarters returned to private, non-institutional housing, about a third returned to live with parents. Only about 11% returned to live with a spouse or partner. Finally, it's noteworthy that the families to which former prisoners return are often not the households where they were living before prison. Former prisoners are often negotiating new places and households rather than returning to familiar households. These numbers, of course, understate the complexity of family life after prison. Ethnographic work by Donald Braman and Andrea

Levins, for example, shows that extended and nonnuclear families are common and there's a great deal of flux in household composition. Indeed, the median former prisoner in our Michigan data moves residences 2 1/2 times per year in the first two years after release. By any standard that's a remarkable level of residential instability.

Some of that residential mobility is surely positive. Moves from institutional or group housing to live with family or moves to better housing or better neighborhoods as former prisoners find work. This figure also suggests the fragility of early living arrangements. Our estimates indicate that about a quarter of this residential instability is generated by the criminal justice system itself in the form of short-term custody for parole violations such as drug or alcohol use. And many initial residences turn out to be temporary, whether intended to be or not. Another key finding from the literature is that incarceration reduces contact between fathers and children after the fathers return from prison. [INDISCERNIBLE] show that much of this reduction can be explained by the dissolution of relationships between mothers and incarcerated fathers and the formation of new romantic relationships among the mothers. This is another of the minor complexity of family relationships among the populations among which former prisoners are drawn.

Together these numbers suggest that family reunification and prisoner reintegration face many obstacles. The period of re-entry and reintegration is indeed hard times. Yet much is at stake in family reunification and family reintegration after prison for both prisoners and family members. For former prisoners, material and social support will be critical to meeting their most basic material needs for food and shelter after release. Our qualitative analysis of how former prisoners make ends meet after prison shows economic security and stability at even a minimum level of material subsistence was virtually impossible without familial support and all our studies showed to achieve upward social mobility and did so through the help of family members. Our administrative data shows former prisoners would live with parents or romantic



partners are the least likely to experience residential instability and homelessness. Moreover, family relations provide important forms of identity and pro-social roles for individuals who face otherwise spoiled identities. These identities and roles are symbolically important to those who face challenges achieving other forms of social status such as employment or education.

When it comes to family members, we know the most about the consequences of father absence due to incarceration for children and their mothers, thanks to a body of work by scholars such as Kristin Turney, Chris Wildeman, Jason Snicker and Sarah Wakefield. One set of consequences is economic. Half of fathers in prison were the primary breadwinner in the family before their incarceration. There's also evidence of an increased risk of homelessness following the father's incarceration and increased use of certain public benefits. Yet there are also important health and developmental consequences as well. For example, mothers experience more depression and anxiety when the father of their children goes to prison and children show increased behavior problems when a father who was involved in their lives and was not violent goes to prison. So together these findings suggest family reintegration will have important consequences for both former prisoners and their families.

Family life after prison cannot be understood without considering the period of incarceration and how it's experienced by both prisoners and their family members. For many prisoners, incarceration has a profound effect on their social ties to both family and nonfamily. In our own qualitative data we see a drop-off in social ties to nonfamily members and a corresponding increase in intensity and importance of familial relationships. Prisoners look forward to release with optimism but also trepidation. They want to make a new life for themselves. They know that family support will be critical. But they worry that rebuilding and retaining those relationships will be challenging, especially given the ways they have disappointed their families in the past. As one of our interview subjects put it days before release in prison, "In prison, I can't disappoint anyone. Out there, I can." This intensification of

family ties can lead to real changes in relationship behaviors during in prison. In an ethnography of the partners and spouses of men incarcerated at San Quentin, Megan Comfort documents and increase in communication and emotional responsiveness among male prisoners. Moreover, Comfort and Donald Braman show how family members support their incarcerated relatives both economically and emotionally and also play a role in preparing them for release.

A prisoner needs commissary money for basic necessity like toiletries not to mention food to supplement the often meager rations of prison chow halls. Family members bear the cost of phone calls and visits, often to state prisons located far from the urban areas that the prisoners call home and they provide a link to the outside world, brokering relationships with social services, educational programs, and sometimes employers in preparation for release. And even as they struggle to support their incarcerated family member both economically and emotionally, family members suffer back home. The cost of phone calls, money orders for commissary accounts, and visits accumulate. And money that an incarcerated family member brought in, whether legal or illegal, is sorely missed. As I described earlier, material security declines and the accompanying stress coupled with loss of social support can lead to more mental health and other negative outcomes. Although much is made of the physical deprivations of prison life and threat of violence that prisoners face while incarcerated, separation from family produces at least as much suffering. Mostly cutoff from regular direct contact, prisoners yearn for information about their loved ones and stress over missing important life events. For example, everywhere these days letters written on paper are a seemingly lost art form, but in prison they become prized possessions, tangible symbols of connections to loved ones. As one of our subjects explained, "Mail is everything when you're in the joint when the officer passed me my mail. There ain't no worse feeling than when he just walks right by your bunk." A prisoner's inability to help family on the outside also weighs heavily. An example from Andrea Levins' new book is striking. An 11-year-old girl runs away from the home of the woman who's

caring for her while her mother is in prison. She spends the night in the local park. Locked up miles away, her incarcerated mother is utterly powerless to protect her daughter from danger or to address whatever problems participated her daughter's flight.

The joys of homecoming are often short lived as challenges for families of incarcerated individuals only intensify after release. Almost all prisoners leave prison with little gate money, no job lined up, and many needs both material and emotional. The former prisoner is not just a new mouth to feed and new body to house. The intense regimen of parole supervision, particularly in the first days and weeks after release require social support to navigate successfully. From rides to treatment programs and meetings with one's parole officer to money for basic necessities and clothing to supervision fees, families often have little choice but to step in. Furthermore, some of the invasions of privacy that come with parole supervision are visited on the family as well. As Megan Comfort has documented, the residence of a parolee can be searched at any time without a warrant and without regard to the privacy or emotional wellbeing of other residents, whether adults or children.

Family reintegration is also critical for longer-term outcomes such as preventing former prisoners from returning to crime. Families play multiple roles in assistance from crime. They provide key forms of social support, economic support and emotional support as well as informal social control. First, the instrumental support that families provide reduce the stress of re-entry. This is particularly important for a population whose past responses to stress have been destructive. For example, one of our subjects, Deangelo, described how returning to live with his girlfriend and mother prevented him from having to live in a homeless shelter and scramble to find work right away. Their support relieved him of the uncertainty and stress of institutional living and allowed him the time focus and treatment for anxiety and depression that had driven his alcohol addiction in the past. Deangelo's girlfriend also drove him to appointments, meetings, and job interviews. Second, as Sampson and Low would predict based

on their age theory of informal social control, families can reinforce pro-social identities, monitor the behavior of their recently released family members, and structure their daily routines and activities. For example, Deangelo's girlfriend played an important supervisory role. After first he chastised her evaluation of activities and the friends he interacted with. But in later interviews praised her for keeping an eye out for him and preventing him from making some bad decisions.

Third, family members provided emotional support to help our subjects deal with the stress of re-entry and reintegration. Jake, for example, credits long talks with his girlfriend each night after work with helping him to deal with his stress without turning to alcohol. Yet family roles and relationships can also contribute to criminal behavior. Prisoners are keenly aware of the burdens they place on their families and they struggle to fulfill normative roles in the household, whether among men as a provider or among women as a caretaker. In the form of role strain, failure to meet these obligations in legitimate ways can lead former prisoners back to crime even those who leave prison with the best of intentions. For instance, multiple men in our qualitative study returned to crime in order to contribute financially to the household after they were unable find legitimate work. For women, reliance on a romantic partner for material support can put them for high risk of domestic violence and other forms of abuse. Families can prove to be obstacles to former prisoners to assist in goals in other ways as well despite the best of intentions. Due to low rates of marriage in the population, most at risk of incarceration, the days of the criminal man leaving prison to return to the conventional wife are largely over. The dark side of informal social control can be coercion and new opportunities to engage in crime.

For example, Jane returned from prison to live with her husband. He sold drugs on the side to supplement his income and he exercised considerable control over her taking her cell phone and car keys when he feared she might relapse and urging her not to try to find a job until she was really ready. Trapped in the house, she eventually relapsed on the drugs that he kept

there. Finally just as families can provide emotional support, such relationships can create emotional stressors. We saw multiple examples of the stresses of troubled or failed relationships leading to drug or alcohol relapse and the resumption of offending support substance abuse habits.

So what might we conclude from this discussion? So most research on prisoner re-entry and reintegration thus far has focused on characteristics of individual parolees. This research has emphasized employment and recidivism with families and the question of housing more generally receiving limited attention. One implication of the findings I presented is that the successful reintegration of former prisoners will depend heavily on the family resources and social supports to which they have access. This hypothesis deserves further investigation and more work needs to be done to understand the dimensions of family reintegration that matter most and the processes or mechanisms through which they have their effects.

A related point is that the burden of reintegrating former prisoners falls mostly on their families and these are often families that are ill-equipped to bear this burden. For instance in our own data, we saw numerous instances of public benefits intended to support certain family members, particularly children, the elderly and the disabled, being stretched to cover the needs of former prisoners. Social services whether targeted reentry population or poor more generally do not seem to be doing much to alleviate this burden. We can think of this as a further collateral consequence of mass incarceration and mass re-entry and an abdication of state responsibility for individuals on community supervision. As Megan Comfort has argued, families are taking on social work and social welfare function that's in prior times would have been the responsibility of parole officers who are now primarily tasked with monitoring and controlling an unprecedented re-entry population. Research thus far on these collateral consequences is focused mainly on the children of incarcerated fathers and romantic partners of incarcerated men, with some additional attention to the children of incarcerated mothers. But the data I

presented on the families receiving former prisoners indicate that these collateral consequences are felt by many others from parents to siblings to grandparents.

Braman's ethnographic work suggested other family members are also heavily impacted by incarceration re-entry and the challenge of reintegrating former prisoners. We have yet to fully investigate the full scope of the collateral consequences of incarceration and re-entry for families.

I'll close with preliminary thoughts on what we can do to ease the transition back home for prisoners and families. So of course, the simplest thing to do would be to reduce the number of people going to prison. There seems to be window for that currently in the political environment but whether that will remain open as economy improves has yet to be seen. So if we're limiting ourselves to thinking about the transition itself, one thing we can do facilitate family contact during incarceration is to reduce its cost. That includes prisons locate far from urban areas, strict limitations and hassles on visitors, and exorbitant cost of phone calls. This system is designed to serve the interest of the overburdened corrections bureaucracy rather than facilitate the reintegration of prisoners after release. Surely information technology could be better leveraged to increase contact and communication with during prison.

Secondly, we must do more to allow prisoners to assist family members while they are incarcerated as a way to build reciprocal exchange. Donald Braman suggests, for example, that material support, however minor, has symbolic value for both families and prisoners, potentially increasing or at least maintaining the strength of family bonds. The question of prison labor is tricky one, but work in prison at fair wages that could be directed to supporting family on the outside might have both economic and social benefits for prisoner reintegration and of course would benefit those families.

Third, we need to remove barriers to public benefits and receipt of social service as among former prisoners. These barriers not only represent a form of secondary punishment to the ex-offender, but this is also a punishment visited heavily upon their families who end up stepping in to fill the gap. Finally, we must keep in mind that the problems of prisoner reintegration can be thought of as instances of larger problems with our increasingly unequal economic system and increasingly desperate plight of many low skill and working class men and women trying to support themselves and their families. The hard times faced by prisoners and their families are linked to our current hard times more generally. Thank you for your attention. I look forward to hearing your comments and questions. [APPLAUSE]

>> Hard times always have a way of getting into the heart of family life, as the talks today have shown. So how do families cope in hard times? This is an important question to ask because in our era, the task of managing insecurity has become harder and more unpredictable for a larger number of families. As trends like the hollowing out of the middle class, the decline of good jobs, the rise in financial instability make clear, over the past few decades risk has increasingly been offloaded by government and corporations onto the shoulders of individuals and their families. So we know that more people are now charged with the responsibility for creating their own security. But what is much less understood is how they are dealing with it, how are they coping, and how does the growing divide in our country between the haves and have nots shape the way we experience and manage our security.

So to examine these questions I spent two years interviewing and shadowing 50 families from rich to poor in Silicon Valley. And what I learned from talking with families across the class spectrum is that people adapt to and cope with these transformations both practically and emotionally. So people in different social classes not only do different things to deal with the shift in risk, some make contributions to their 401k's while others go without health insurance. But they also rely on different emotional coping mechanisms or strategies, ways of thinking and

ways of managing these feelings. This kind of lens which pays attention to the back and forth among structure, culture and feeling enabled me to see that people were doing security. They're developing coping strategies that help them deal with the changing nature of inequality and risk in our time. And this focus on feelings extends our understanding about how families cope in hard times. Because for the most part, sociologists have examined this question by looking at the economic conditions that families face and the ways in which they acquire, allocate and manage their financial resources. But people are not just economic actors, they're also emotional actors whose feelings as we have heard are profoundly influenced by inequality. So a full account of this question requires that we also understand how families manage their feelings, anxieties, emotional burden, since these are inextricably tied to their financial troubles and to their economic provisioning. A focus on feeling provides a buried, yet illuminating perspective on these issues.

So in my research, I discovered for types of security strategies that families use, depending on their social class. And one approach I called downscaling and it was common among middle and working class people in my study. And in my book, I used the story of Laura Delgado to illustrate this downscaling coping mechanism. A way of pairing down the criteria for security, pushing away anxiety and invoking an attitude of optimism and acceptance, even when things are bad and getting worse. At the time I met Laura, she was 44 years old, the mother of three children ranging in age from 9 to 14. She worked part time as a cashier at a big box store. She was in the midst of separating from her husband and she was in the middle of an economic storm. Laura grew up in a solidly middle class family in Silicon Valley. After graduating from a local state university, she worked as a counselor in a group home for girls and her husband, Vince, worked in bartending and later he got into plumbing. After Laura had her first child, she decided to become a stay-at-home mother pointing out she didn't earn enough money to cover day care costs, especially after she had three children. So Vince was the breadwinner but his



employment opportunities were limited because he only had a high school diploma at a time when the economy was changing and better opportunities were largely reserved for those with more education. So money was always tight for the Delgados. But fortunately they had found an affordable home in working class neighborhood and only they paid \$740 a month.

The first big economic punch that hit the Delgados occurred in the mid-1990's. At the time Laura was 35 years old and Vince took a job with the company that didn't offer health insurance. And so like others with less education, Vince was on the front lines of this shift in risk. And so the Delgado family couldn't afford to pay for the health insurance on their own so they went without it and hoped for the best. And then sadly the worst happened, Laura had a seizure while driving and crashed her car into a parked car and she suffered severe internal injuries. She spent about a week in the intensive care unit and between the hospital stay and the follow-up therapy, the bill totals \$50,000. And the hospital declared the Delgados medically indigent and waved half the bill. But for a family barely getting by to begin with, that \$25,000 was a big, heavy burden for them. A few years later things started to look up. Vince got into a plumber's union, his wages rose dramatically and he began to earn about \$80,000 a year which is about what a family that size needs to cover basic living expenses in Silicon Valley where living costs are very high. And so for a time Vince's rising wages provided the family with overall financial security and great benefits, despite all this medical debt that they had. But in the wake of the dotcom bust, jobs dried up and Vince ended up being out of work for almost a year. And meanwhile the elderly woman who owned the house the Delgados had lived in died and her heiress decided to sell it so the Delgados were forced to move. At this point the point the debt they had run up on their credit card to make ends meet combined with the car loan and the outstanding medical bills meant that their debt approached \$45,000. And with Vince out of work and their housing deal about to disappear, the Delgados were on the financial edge. And in the middle of all of this, they moved from a home where they had lived for nine years to an

apartment in the same city and their rent more than doubled, rising from \$740 to \$1,800 a month. The significantly higher rent combined with Vince's unemployment financially squeezed the family and things began to buckle under the strain. So Vince began drinking a lot and even though they moved again to another apartment with lower rent, the strain became too much and Laura and Vince fought all the time and eventually Vince moved out. After the separation things continued to be really hard for Laura. She only worked part time and for low wages so her income dropped drastically.

When my research began, I expected to find Laura visibly weighed down by the burden of the debt and the financial distress that she lived with. Instead she often appeared to be doing fine, only occasionally did I see her get really upset and even then her unease was fleeting. And this finding was replicated in interviews that I did with others in really difficult economic situations and often they would tell me that things were fine, that they were okay because they could get by on very little. And at first this led me to take Laura's version of reality at face value. And I thought maybe things aren't that bad. But the more time I spent with the Delgados and the more people I interviewed, I realized what was really going on. It wasn't that Laura and other people I interview didn't feel the financial strain that they were under, instead they developed techniques to deal with their anxiety, ways of masking or managing the brutal reality that they faced.

This downscaling of security is a form of emotion management. As Arlie Hochschild has shown, people work on their feelings. They monitor, inhibit, and shape emotions in different ways so their feelings are in line for what they think they should feel or with what they want to feel. And similarly, the downscaling of security involves working to transform feelings of insecurity into feelings of security. This is an emotional adaptation that makes life and its problems more bearable. In Laura's case, she relied on several techniques. She lowered the bar on her requirements for security. She embraced the power of positive thinking, and she

worried only about today and not tomorrow. So one of the primary ways that Laura downscaled was to alter her feelings about security so that they aligned with the types of security she could actually provide her family with. Whereas affluent people in my study upscaled their definitions of security to include living in the best school districts, sending their children to the best universities, saving millions of dollars for retirement, a response that amped up their anxiety. Laura downscaled security to mean only being close to her family and being present for her children. One time Laura said to me, "Having nothing isn't always a bad thing," reminding herself that things could always be worse. So to cope with her financial trouble, Laura also held onto a basic definition of security, telling me that all she needed was just food, shelter and clothing.

So for many middle and low-income families, a main way of coping is to have definitions of security that are malleable, such that they can be paired down to what a family is actually capable of providing. Doggedly holding on to a standard of security that a family can no longer provide generates a lot of stress and actually a lot of sadness. And curtailing one standard of security helps to alleviate that burden. Another way Laura coped was by suppressing the dark reality of her situation through the power of positive thinking. This approach led her to search for silver linings even in the most dire straits to maintain a deep sense of gratitude for all that she did have and to actively avoid negative thoughts because of their potential to do her in. So Laura didn't lie about her situation, but she continually spun her interpretation of reality so that it had a rosier hue. And one way she did this was to selectively focus on particular aspects or versions of events in order to create a lighter or more encouraging view of life. When discussing her lack of retirement savings, she downplayed the implication by asserting, "But it's okay, I told my kids I really don't foresee myself not working anymore. I don't really think that when I'm in my 60's and 70's, I'm going to want to sit and do nothing." Laura also downplays the enormous difference between her life growing up in a secure middle class family and that of her children.

She said, "We don't have a whole lot of disposable income, which in a lot of ways I don't think it's so bad. I don't think it hurts my children to hear the word no. It doesn't hurt them to know that we can't afford everything that we want."

And these remarks might make it sound as though the Delgado children are simply living without frills or luxuries like latest video game or a cool new pair of sneakers. In reality they often lack such basic necessities as heat in their home. And one winter afternoon Laura told me, "I'm not turning on the heat because I can't afford it. I haven't paid the electric bill in two months. But my parents taught me to turn off the heat at night because if you're under the covers, then everything should be fine. It's kind of cute because in the morning the kids and I will be in the living room cuddled up in our sleeping bags." So Laura's repackaging renders invisible the symbols of insecurity in her life, like the lack of heat, and replaces them with symbols of security, like family bonding.

Another aspect of Laura's positive thinking strategy was to highlight the things that she is grateful for as a way to bury negative thoughts. So one afternoon, after I witnessed her take a call from a bill collector who yelled at her for being behind on her bills and this phone call lasted about ten minutes and was really difficult to watch. So given the circumstances, the browbeating call, Laura's understandable exasperation, her painful economic situation, and the potential embarrassment of me having witnessed this call, I expected her to be really upset and to maybe start crying. Instead after she hung up the phone she sunk into the couch heavily and she said, "I just try to focus on the good things in my life, the kids and my dog," and she pet the top of the dog's head and smiled at her. And then there was a pause. And she got up and told me she was going to go change out of her store uniform. And that was the extent of her reaction.

So other interviewees used similar repression strategies and this is what Katie Monroe said about how she deals with the fact at 50 she has nothing saved for retirement. "It burns a

hole in my heart when I think about it. I'm 50 and I have nothing to fall back on. I can get up some days and I can think about that and fall into like this big depression but I can't allow myself to do that. I'm glad every month that goes by that I was able to pay the rent, I was able to pay the bills, and I still have more money in the bank than I have ever had. The way I look at it is I'm in the best place that I have been in, in a long time but I can't put more pressure on myself right now because there's some days where I just feel like I'm going to snap." Other people I spoke with avoid bad news by limiting their exposure to it. A few interviewees, for example, stopped opening the mail in order to avoid having to face the stress surrounding unpaid bills. As one working class mother explained, "There's been times when I haven't opened up the mail for like three months because I just know it's nothing good in there. I have learned not to look every day. It just makes me crazy."

Over time I gradually came to realize that Laura employed the power of positive thinking all the time, almost every time I talked to her while she might start by commenting about something that was wrong, she would always finish the thought with a more upbeat remark. So one time she said, "Life can throw you curves. It's how you cope with those curves that counts. I think my life is good. I'm blessed. You gotta keep a positive attitude. I tell my kids don't whine or complain, don't throw yourself a pity party." So for Laura, this focus on the positive became a kind of self-help mantra that she told herself, her kids, and me over and over again. But the unending need to generate that positive energy sometimes revealed the darker truth that Laura was trying to cover up. So one time Laura said to me, "I don't know how I have gotten through the hardships of the last two years." And another day and in an almost confessional tone she told me that because of all of her bills, "I have been walking around with my chest constricted, like I'm going to have a heart attack." Yet just as the words left her mouth she quickly added, "But I feel like things are getting better since I paid off one credit card and I only have \$900 more to go on the other one."

So to deal with difficult reality, Laura tried not to dwell on the problems in her life that reflected economic volatility, personal indebtedness, and a heightened risk of the economy. Rather she actively worked to ignore her anxiety and stress by cultivating a positive outlook and an appreciation for all she had. And this approach enabled her to view her situation in more tolerable terms, as a life she could accept. A final strategy that many of the people experiencing financial trouble used was to take things one day at a time, focusing on the here and now rather than overwhelming themselves with thoughts about the future. As Laura often said, "It's like I don't have time to worry about it so I just don't. If it's happening today, I worry about it. If it's not happening today, I can't worry about it." Or as Jeff Kenny, an unemployed construction worker said, "I live week to week, dollar to dollar." And past disappointments help to explain the appeal of this coping mechanism. As one father said, "It seems that when I plan, things don't ever fall into place. So I think I stopped planning for things." And Molly Farmer, a young single mother told me, "I had a lot of dreams that just weren't going to become a reality that I just set my heart on. I had a plan to become a veterinarian. I had a plan to become a basketball player. I set my heart on that and it falls apart. Things out of your control can just blow it for you. I don't set my heart on it anymore so not having to plan has kind of been the best." So comments like these reveal that people with few resources often rely on an emotional plan, which is not to plan very far into the future. When people have very little control over what happens to them in their lives, the exercise of long-term planning is not only pointless, it's painful. So in talking with families across class spectrum about how they're coping in an uncertain age, I learned that we're all weighed down by something similar, which is the anxiety generated by hard times. From well-paid business executives to low-paid domestic workers, everyone feels insecure. We just feel it and deal with it differently.

In the face of sky-high inequality and widespread financial risk, the rich don't think they have enough and strive to attain more. While middle and working class families realize that

there's not much that they can do to improve their situations so they lower their expectations and try to get used to less. In an age that requires us all to be comfortable with risk and uncertainty, these emotional strategies help us do just that. They are adaptive responses for dealing with a set of difficult circumstances in which most of us feel that there are few options. This is the emotional story that goes along with the alarming economic statistics. It is how inequality works at the micro-level. How it makes its way deep inside us, shaping not only our actions, but also the way we feel, try to feel, and try not to feel. It's a dimension of inequality that many sociologists have hinted at that remains largely unexplored. But we need to pay more attention to it. To these emotional dimensions of class because they shed light on an important issue that sociologists want to understand which is how people consent to unequal situations. When we talk ourselves into feeling secure despite hard times, we compensate for the very inequality that created the hardship we must endure. And when we adopt the belief as many affluent people I spoke with did, that said \$10 million is the price tag for security, we accept the premise we alone are responsible for our security. This is the kind of emotion work people in different social classes do to shore up and perpetuate the current state of affairs. Like economic disparities, emotional disparities have real consequences. And the price we pay for pulling apart is that inequality and insecurity are experienced more as personal problems that we each individually need to fix than as social problems we need to solve together. As the rich push for more and everyone else gets used to less, we actually make inequality worse. And then because we all so busy treading water in our separate ponds, we fail to come together with the collective will to stop it. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

>> Hello, thank you all for coming. It's a big honor to be on this panel and I want to thank Annette Laureau for the opportunity. I'd like to thank my fellow panelists for doing amazing, important, path-breaking work. This talk is based on ethnographic field work that I began in 2008 with evicted tenants and their landlords in poor Milwaukee neighborhoods where I was

living. And it's also going to feature findings from analysis of hundreds of thousands of eviction records from a survey of 250 tenants appearing in eviction court, and a survey conducted between 2009 and 2011 of roughly 1,100 renters in Milwaukee which we're calling the Milwaukee Area Renter Study. These quantitative endeavors were motivated by and informed by what I was seeing in the field, and if you have any question about these methods, I am happy to answer them later.

So it had been a difficult year ever since that snowball. Jory and his cousin had been cutting up, they'd been tossing snowballs at passing cars and Jory packed a tight one and let it fly. And the car drifted to a stop and this man jumped out and he and his cousin fled into his apartment and the man followed them there and kicked in the door and he left after that. And when the landlord found out, he evicted Jory's mother, Arlene, and her two boys for damaging his property and Arlene had cussed Jory because she couldn't cuss the landlord. Jory was 14 at the same time and his younger brother, Defaris, was six. Arlene took her two sons to the Salvation Army Homeless Shelter, which everyone just calls the lodge so you can tell your kids we're staying at the lodge tonight like it was a hotel. And from there Arlene took another look for housing and she found one on 19th Street. It didn't have any water. Jory had to bucket out what was in the toilet. But Arlene said it was quiet. And for \$550 for a full house, it was my favorite place.

When we looked at the survey of Milwaukee renters, we found that renters whose previous move was involuntary were about 25 percentage points more likely to experience long-term housing problems than those who did not experience a recent forced move. If we want to know where some poor family live in substandard housing, why they live in places with no heat or water, or places with lead paint, one answers that they are compelled to do so in the harried aftermath of an eviction. The city eventually found Arlene's favorite place for habitation. Hard hatted men came and boarded up the windows and the doors and forced her and her sons out



again. So Arlene was on the hunt for a house, and she told her Jory, we take whatever we get and that's what housing in neighborhood selection is like at the bottom, taking whatever you can get.

A drab apartment complex on Atkinson Avenue accepted her application, but Arlene learned that it was just a haven for drug dealers, in fact, the whole block was a drug zone. And she feared for her boys, especially for Jory, who was hungry to prove himself to be like "just watch," just like he did with that snowball. For Arlene, why she moved was decisive in explaining where she ended up, why she ended up in such a distressed neighborhood. That is relationship is testable with our arguable data. So we did, we returned to this Milwaukee Area Renter Study and we designed a [INDISCERNIBLE] model that estimated the current neighborhood poverty rate, conditioning on your previous neighborhood poverty rate, for the most recent move of all renters that have moved sometime in the last two years. And we accounted for several important demographic factors, race, and education and family type, as well as several key shocks we thought would be important for neighborhood selection. Things like did you lose your job or have a baby. Even after I accounted for this run of important factors and on previous neighborhood characteristics, what we found is experiencing a forced move is associated with over a third of standard deviation of increase in neighborhood poverty rate, relative to families who move voluntarily. So families involuntarily pushed out of their housing relocate to poor neighborhoods, even poor than the one from which they were evicted from.

Arlene tried to move as fast as she could from the drug den on Atkinson avenue and she did when she found a two bedroom bottom duplex on 13th Street. There was a fist size hole in the living room window. The front door had to be locked with like an ugly wooden plank slid into brackets. The carpet was filthy and gray ground into the floor. Arlene stuffed a piece of clothing in the window and hung ivory curtains. The landlord didn't like cats either and Jory found a stray, a half-starved orange and white thing and named it Little. He grew off Jory's table scraps.

There were two bedrooms. The rent was \$550 a Monday, utilities not included, the going rate at the time for a two bedroom unit in one of the worst neighborhoods in America's fourth poorest city. It would take 88% of Arlene's welfare check. She knew that some months she would have to sell her food stamps to get by. The refrigerator and pantry would be empty come month end, but they would get by on oodles and noodles. There'd be no extra money for new clothes or books for Jory. No toys for Defaris and so in Defaris hands, broken mop handles and busted screwdrivers found in the back alley became tanks, and helicopters, and soldiers.

And there were no chance to put away a little money at the end of the month or take night classes at the local community college. And you also noticed the little things like aspirin or winter gloves or cigarettes to subdue hunger pains were gone. Arlene had given up looking for housing assistance a long time ago. One day on a whim, she stopped by the Housing Authority and asked about the list. And a woman behind the glass counter told her the list is frozen. On it were 3,500 families who had applied for rent assistance four years ago. It could be worse. In Washington, D.C. for example, the waiting list for public housing is 20 years long. So if a young mother applies for public housing in D.C., she might be a grandmother by the time her application is reviewed. If Arlene wanted a housing voucher, all she'd have to do would be to save a month's worth of income to pay off debt she incurred to the Housing Authority 20 years ago when she was 19. Then she'd have to wait three years until the list unfroze, and then she would have to wait until 2-5 years until the application made to the top of the pile. And then she would have to pray to God that the person with the stale coffee and the heavy stare reviewing the file would somehow overlook the eviction record she had collected while trying to make ends meet, unassisted in the private market on a welfare check.

Most poor people in America are like Arlene, they do not live in public housing. They do not live in apartments subsidized with a housing voucher. Most low income families do not benefit from any kind of housing assistance whatsoever. And during the 2000's when more and

more families were in need of help, fewer and fewer were receiving it. In the average year in the 1980's, about 161,000 additional households received federal subsidies. But after 1995, that number has shrunk to 3,000 -- only 3,000 additional households a year receive new subsidies. Meanwhile, poor people's incomes have slumped and their rents have soared. So in the last decade, median incomes rose only by 7% for households headed by people with a high school education or less. You'll notice a flatness in the bottom two lines on this graph. During that time, housing cost surged. In the past 16 years, median asking rent has increased by over 70% across the nation, adjusting for inflation. In the 2000's alone, median asking rent in the Northeast increased by 38%.

The result of these factors is that millions of low income families are dedicating the vast majority of their income to housing loss and are living precariously close to eviction. This slide shows the percentage of renting households below the poverty line who dedicate less than 30% or more than 70% of their income to housing cost. The percentage of poor renting families dedicating 30% or less broadly accepted as the standard of affordability has fallen from 55% in 1991 to less than 18% today. And meanwhile, the percentage of poor renting households that are severely rent burdened has steadily risen to the point today the majority of poor renting households, almost three out of five, dedicate 70% or more of their income to housing costs -- 70% or more. This is the American affordable housing crisis. It is the worst in several generations. This is not just about gentrification or super gentrification. This is not just about San Francisco or New York. This is about families living in some of our worst housing in some of the poorest neighbors of our poorest cities, giving almost everything they have just to keep a roof over their heads.

On 13th Street, Arlene found rollers, brushes and a five gallon bucket of paint in the basement and she gave the walls a new coat. But not long after moving in, Arlene's sister died, and she helped paid for the funeral costs. She didn't have the money, but no one else did either.

And funerals were family reunions and Arlene would have completely ashamed of herself if she didn't pitch in. The next month she missed an appointment with her welfare caseworker, because the letter announcing the appointment was mailed to Atkinson or maybe it was 19th Street. When a caseworker types something into the computer and Arlene's \$628 a month welfare check was sanctioned by \$400. Two months behind, Arlene got the pink papers, the Eviction Summons and Complaint. Milwaukee is a city of about 105,000 renter occupied households and it sees about 16,000 adults and children evicted every year; that's 16 households evicted every day in the City of Milwaukee.

With one in 14 renter occupied households in the inner-city evicted, eviction has become frankly commonplace in the majority of black neighborhoods. And that's only if you get a formal court-ordered eviction. There are cheaper ways and quicker ways landlords can get you out of their house. Some landlords will pay a tenant a few hundred dollars if you are out by the weekend. Some take your door off. In the Milwaukee Area Renters Study, we developed a new technique to count for these kinds of informal evictions which are not processed by the court as well as formal evictions that are. And we also paid attention to landlord foreclosures and building condemnations. I know you can't see this, but this is what the full module looks like in the survey. It's complicated asking why people move.

And so if you count all of these kinds of forced moves, informal and formal eviction, landlord foreclosures, and building condemnations, then one in eight Milwaukee renters was involuntarily displaced from housing sometime in the last two years. The most common type of involuntary removal was an informal eviction which suggested estimates of the prevalence of forced mobility based on eviction court records which, to me, are pretty scary undershoot the mark. Poor black women like Arlene are evicted at incredibly high rates. This graph draws on the eviction court records to show the average annual count of evicted men and women by racial composition of neighborhood. And as you can see from this figure, women from black

neighborhoods are drastically over-represented. They account for about 9% of the overall population and about 30% of the evicted population.

If incarceration has become typical in the lives of men from low income black neighborhoods, eviction has become typical in the lives of women from these neighborhoods. In eviction court the commissioner, as is court custom, gave Arlene two extra days in the apartment for each of her two dependent children. And those days came and went. Arlene had to be out on a day in early January. On this day, Milwaukee weathermen had been working themselves up. They said it was going to be the coldest day in the city in a decade so the temperature could bottom out at 40 degrees below zero with the wind chill. But if Arlene waited any longer, her landlord could call the sheriff, who days later would show up with a badge and a gun, a team of movers, and a folded judge's order and they would take everything that she had and pile it on the sidewalk; her mattresses, the meat cuts in the freeze, Defaris' asthma machine. So they got out. And Jory loaded a U-Haul moving truck that a family friend rented for them and the cold gripped him. His fingers and ears began to burn. He put on a friend's jacket, but he smiled through it. He was happy to be useful.

Arlene didn't know where she and her boys would sleep that night. She had tried the lodge and other shelters, but they were full as unusual. She's have to worry about that later. For now she is focused on what she could do to a storage unit that she had sold half her food stamps and a space heater to rent. When they packed everything in the U-Haul, Arlene, Jory, and Defaris climbed in the truck and warmed their hand by the heater. And as they pulled away, Arlene said a prayer for the cat, Little, that they had to leave with the upstairs neighbor who was recovering [INDISCERNIBLE] from a crack addiction.

Arlene did finally find a room in a domestic violence silence shelter about 30 minutes away from Milwaukee and once again she started looking for an apartment. So she called and

applied for 20 apartments, and then 40, and then 60, and then 80. She had been accepted to none of them. Even in the inner city, many were out of reach and the landlords of the places that she could afford if she threw almost everything she had in rent, weren't calling back. Part of reason had to do with her eviction record. In Milwaukee and many other cities across the nation thanks to open record laws, your record is easily accessibility and completely free online. Many landlords reject anyone with an eviction within the past two or three years.

There was another reason landlords weren't calling back. One landlord, number 82, he asked Arlene to pay an extra \$25 on top of rent for Jory. Arlene allowed herself to laugh at that. Another landlord flat-out said we don't want your kids, ma'am. Children cooped up in small apartments use the curtains for super hero capes, and they flush toys down the toilet, and they cause a man whose car has just been flacked with a snowball to kick your door in. Young children could test positive for lead poisoning. They can come with a pricey abatement order. If your child is a young black teenager and a boy, they could attract the attention of police. The children could cause landlords a headache. Housing discrimination against children is illegal, but often it's not even recognized as discrimination. Audit studies have found that families with children face discrimination in as many as seven in 10 housing searches. Arlene didn't have time to think about that. She didn't have time to turn anyone in, she just dialed another number.

So finally, number 90, the 90th landlord said yes. He had a one-bedroom apartment for \$525 a month. Arlene didn't consider the neighborhood, the size of the place, or the condition of the place. "A house is a house," she told Jory. So two months after her eviction court hearing, Arlene moved into a new place. She settled in, she enrolled the boys in new school. Bouncing from the condemned house and the drug den on Atkinson and 13th Street, staying with family members and in shelters and even with strangers in between had caused Jory and Defaris to miss long stretches of school. At the domestic violence shelter alone, Jory racked up 17 consecutive absences.

When we look at the data of the survey of 250 tenants in eviction court, what we found is the majority of them live with children. The youngest in our study was four months old. So Arlene got her stuff out of storage and she hung up pictures on the wall. She liked things neat, so over the sink she wrote a little note to Jory that said, "If you don't clean up after yourself, we are going to have problems." And one day, Defaris had an asthma attack, it was a bad one. Arlene called an ambulance which the landlord didn't appreciate because he thought police also came to the building because of the call. I spoke to Arlene the next day about it.

[RECORDING] "They ready for us to go... they fed up. He said fed up? So this is where he says one more than you gotta go? Yeah. Was he made with the ambulance came, too? Yeah, because the manager went back and told him, the manager went back and told him, that when my other had an asthma attack and the police was there. The police never came. Fire Department and the ambulance, the police never came. Right. The police don't come for an asthma attack. Right. And when [INDISCERNIBLE] building. Okay, well if it's an emergency, you can't call an ambulance from here? Right, that's the thing. What did he say? An ambulance evidently we can't because I'm getting in trouble for it. I got..."

[INDISCERNIBLE] and shortly after this happened, Jory began acting out in his new school. A teacher yelled at him and he kicked her and ran home and the teacher called the police on him, actually sending police to the building this time. When the landlords found out, he told Arlene and the kids they had to leave. Kids, they can prolong the time that you're homeless after an eviction and they can actually sometimes be the reason for your eviction.

When we looked at the court data from the tenants that came to court, what we found is what differentiates someone that gets an eviction judgment and someone that escapes with a dismissed eviction or an agreement with the landlord has a lot to do with your kids. We found that even accounting for how much you owe the landlord in income, in race, gender, and several

other factors, the presence of a child in the household almost triples your odds of receiving an eviction. Children are not a mitigating factor for an eviction, they're an aggravating one.

At this point in the year, Arlene was beginning to unravel. She told me, "It's like I got a curse on me and it won't stop for nothing. Sometimes I find my body trembling and shaking. I'm tired, but I can't sleep. I fitting to have a nervous breakdown. My body is trying to shut down." Providing low income Americans with decent affordable housing is simply not a major domestic policy priority of the of the United States government, but the \$26 billion it required just to bring the nation's public housing stock up to code. Today, policymakers aren't willing even to provide public housing residents with adequate shelter, let alone withstand programs to help more needy families. Let's be clear. We have the money. We're the richest country on the planet. We just make choices about how to spend it.

In 2008, the year before Arlene was evicted from 13th Street, federal expenditures for direct housing assistance totaled about \$40 billion. Homeowner tax benefits exceeded \$171 billion that same year. Most of that money benefited households with six figures incomes or higher. That number, \$171 billion, is equivalent to the budgets of the Department of Education, the Department of Veteran Affairs, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Agriculture combined.

The high cost of housing is consigning low income families to financial ruin not to mention severely limiting their opportunities for social mobility and self-reliance. Evictions are coursing through the American city like an epidemic. It is functioning as a cause, not just a condition of childhood poverty. Providing decent and affordable housing is a human capital investment and now it gets to job training and education. It's one that would decrease child poverty and homelessness and stabilize families and schools in communities. If we want to give poor kids a fighting chance to realize their full potential, we have to provide them safe, stable,



and financially viable places to live. Without stable shelter, everything else falls apart. And for small children like Defaris, it falls apart at a time when they are developing the brains they are going to need for the rest of their lives.

So what is our role here as sociologists? We can change the poverty debate by pulling housing back to the center of it. The housing affordability crisis is one of the most pressing and important problems facing low income Americans today. It's also among the least understood. We need the sociology of housing that reaches beyond the narrow focus of policy and public housing. We need a sociology of displacement which focuses on the prevalence and documents, the causes and effects of eviction. And we need a sociology of inequality that moves beyond income to includes a serious study of expenditures in extracted markets like the private rental market. Poverty is not a thing. It's a relationship and there's winners and losers. Jory felt bad about kicking the teacher. They stayed for a little while after that with their recovering crack addict who was supposed to have watched Little, but she had lost the cat. Then they stayed with Arlene's sister. And then they found another run-down apartment on another dangerous block. And it was not long after that before Arlene and her boys were robbed at gun point in that apartment, forcing them to flee once again to another shelter.

"Just my soul is messed up," Arlene reflected after that happened. "I wish my life were different. I wish that when I be an old lady I could sit back and look back at my kids, and they would be grown, and they, you know, become something, and we would all be together and laughing. We are remembering stuff like this, and we would be laughing at it." [APPLAUSE]

>> Well, that is one of the most brilliant panels and most depressing discussions that I've witnessed in a long time. I need to manage my emotions as Marianne Cooper talked about some of the people that participated in her study. The panelist were wonderfully succinct, and we have some time for questions or comments among the panelists. I think the themes are very

clear. Our public policies are woefully inadequate, and they are unlikely to get better without a deep cultural and political shift in this country. It seems to me that at some level, without that occurring, we are all sort of whistling in the dark. And it's important to keep that whistling going, because if we don't do anything about it, we are complicitists with the situation. I have a couple of questions, but I will defer those questions and look to the audience, or if anybody on the panel wants to comment about the other presentations, I'd be happy to call on one of the panelists. But it seems to me that we have constrained the time so the audience could have a chance to ask further questions of the panelists. So I'm looking. I can't see very well, but I'm looking for hands out there. There are mics on either side. If you'll go -- go ahead, go up to the mic.

>> This is just a very quick comment. I just want to say that for the future of the conference and the field, I hope that the last speaker, I am sorry I don't know your name, seriously will coach the whole field on giving presentations like that. I am quite serious. [APPLAUSE]

>> Comments and questions. I see no one coming to the microphone, so that puts pressure on me to ask a couple of questions.

>> Here are some.

>> Oh, good. You are first. Go ahead, excellent.

>> My name is Juan [INDISCERNIBLE], and I would like to thank you for a very emotional presentation. But I wanted to ask you about, -- what do sociologists, or public sociologists -- we are talking about creating a narrative. The right wing in this country and the corporations have control of the media. They have control of the government, and it seems to be that ever since the narrative that many sociologists seems adhere to, the promise of a socialist or social Democratic society or a more socially just society, ever since the fall of the Soviet Union, that narrative is dead. And now we are talking about a socially just society that is not really defined.

We are not really aiming towards a better society that can actually be tangible, that we can actually discuss and put this message to the rest of the society. So I was wondering if any of the panel would like to discuss or mention about what is this counter narrative that we are presenting to America?

>> Go ahead.

>> Well, that I think is an excellent question. And I feel like we have got the evidence. This is extraordinary evidence on prison life, the effect of housing, the effect of inequality itself that Marianne's describing. But we are sitting with our evidence without looking at the narratives on the other side. In the last 30 years, as we know, there has been a partisan divide between Republicans and Democrats on a variety of issues; on the environment, on inequality and poverty. It has gone like this. We are on one side of the divide and not talking to the other side. And so my suggestion is first to talk to their narrative and say, you know, we have evidence on this, stuff we know, and we agree with you on the value of family. We mean every kind of family. But they want kids that are thriving, too, I think. We can appeal to that. So my suggestion is, first, a narrative of a can-do government and valued family is my suggestion. But I would love to hear from other panelists on what the counter narrative could be that makes people listen to what we know.

>> David?

>> Thanks for bringing this up. You know, I don't think our story -- that we need to be Sweden or France, God forbid. But we need to sort of turn the clock back on some things. A lot of the things from the 70's and the 60's, we don't want to turn the clock back on. But if the incarceration rate was what it was in the 60's and 70's, if the number of people receiving subsidized housing was what it was in the 60's and 70's, if employer/employee institutions and

relations were what they were in the 60's and 70's, we'd be somewhat better off. So we could take ourselves as the comparison rather than some sort of social Democratic state.

>> That is a narrative. They are often 30 years behind in their ideals. So you could say, yeah, you know, the old times were really great where there were lower incarceration rates. Good old 60's.

>> I would just add that there is so much that we know that the general public doesn't know. And for those of you who are really committed and interested in public sociology, I would encourage you to get it out there because you might have learned a lot that's new to you today, but for like some people, they've never thought about public housing. Most people never thought about it, never thought about it and I feel like we publish, and then 20 other people read the article that we write, and they really like it, and they e-mail us, and that is where it stays. It doesn't reach out. If any community people should be public intellectuals in this country, it should be sociologists and the economists have us. So that would be my suggestion, just getting your work out into the public and I think that the other part of the narrative is that it doesn't have to be this way which builds on what you're saying. It just doesn't have to be this way. We don't have to live like this.

>> Matthew, would you like to add a comment?

>> Thanks, Juan, for your comment. I think Arlie's talks about the correspondences between traditionally left and traditionally right positions on things that are directed related to inequality. We are seeing this in Ferguson right now, where we are having opinions from right-wing political leaders align with opinions with the leaders in the Democratic party. And I think with respect to the housing crisis, there's moments of opportunities for this as well. There's deep inefficiencies with our housing voucher program. That I think folks on the right of the political spectrum would take issue with. I think the most important thing is we have to use resistance to an ancillary

conversation. We have to take broader political opinions very seriously and see how we can speak to people along the lines of a political continuum.

>> Thank you.

>> Question over there and then we'll take you.

>> My name is Susan Joel. I want to thank you both for your presentations and for the really brilliant research that you are doing. I think one of the things that I'm taking away with me from the sessions I have been going to is a real call for sociologists to take our data to the streets, which I think is really important. But in my most sort of cynical and sad moments, I think about the social psychological research that saying that the more that people are presented with evidence that challenges their beliefs, the more hardened their beliefs become. And so I don't know if you have an answer to this question, but it seems to be one that really bothers me and challenges me a lot is that how do you kind of break through the walls of resistance that have been built as a result of the growing gap not just economically, but also politically, socially and culturally. Thank you.

>> Well, another wonderful challenge. And I think these sessions are good not so much for the answers they provide, but for the questions they raise, and that is one of them. Personally, I think our counter narrative has to in fact not counter their desires, but actually say you know what? They are not so different. There are certain crossover issues and valuing kids, and valuing families is one of them. That isn't countering them. I would expect that to be an appeal. So avoid that defensive form of emotion management.

>> I'm going to take another -- that was a good question, and we could have full answers to it, but I'm going to take another question from over there.

>> I'm Jack Sawyer, Parker Street Foundation. I would like to ask your reaction to a rather widespread narrative, which is simply stated as love your neighbor?

>> That's it. That is the narrative.

>> What if your narrative is in a rich person's neighbor is not a rich person...

>> That is less a question than a useful comment. But if anybody wants to say anything, they can. Otherwise, I will take another question.

>> Hi, my name is John Blogger. I'd like to say that I think as a public sociology, it is not just the narrative that we construct, but it's the how we deliver it. And I think I'm just following-up on what my colleague Catherine said. And so, yes of course, we sociologists know lots of things that other folks don't know. But we also know as teachers that just presenting data to students doesn't change how they live in the world. So this is also connecting with what this comment that was made over here. And so I would like to invite us to think about interactions with folks in the public world as moments of teaching rather than preaching. So Michael Schwab and his fine little book, you know, written for Intro to Sociology course on the Sociologically Examined Life, Piece of the Conversation, introduced the concept called sociological mindfulness that I think would be useful for us to look at what he means by that term. And then some other folks are trying to develop that concept about how we communicate with others. And there is a growing body of literature, a movement called contemplative pedagogy so I'm helping to bring it forth in sociology but elsewhere. So how can we present our data and post questions that invite deep contemplation about what kind of people really are that would allow us to get beyond left and right and to find out what matters to us and how we might work skillfully with the suffering in the world?

>> Thank you. Thank you very much. I don't think that calls for a response, but it is a very wonderful statement. So ahead.

>> I've got a question that again going on with the narrative discussion. So going beyond thinking of left and right and the political spectrum. I am reminded of Michael [INDISCERNIBLE], you know, being really big on public sociology. And when he came and spoke at the University of Southern California years ago, he mentioned that not all sociology in the world has the tradition that American sociology has. Sociology in Latin America, for example, has much stronger ties to organized groups like labor. And so my question is in constructing a narrative, what are the different publics in public sociology that you think this work might best reach?

>> I will let the panelists respond to that because I think it is really a good question.

>> I think one public that we can pay a little more attention to are lawyers. And there's a lot of opportunities for a marriage between law and sociologists. The Fair Housing Act, disparity impact is a statistical finding. There's a lot of lawyers that could use our help and I think that often when we talk about public sociology, we talk about the general public and we talk about policymakers. But I think the law is an effective lever that we could be a little bit more engaged with.

>> Yes.

>> The church actually. There are many different kinds of church that cross the new polarization. We are living not only in different informational worlds, but different truths, and I think that churches are another way of crossing over to groups that usually don't hear what sociologists have to say. And the church has, for example, evangelicals, which have been against global warming and any environmental concerns, there is now a movement within the evangelical church. And they do environmental so differently. They say well, we value the unborn child. An unborn child needs to live in an unpolluted place. So that's our approach to pollution and so that's a bridge of I think many bridges. And I think church is one possibility.

>> I'm going to allow one more question, and then I think we have to conclude. So go ahead.

>> Hi. I am asking this question as a student. For those of us who are interested in studying things like inequality, stratification, incarceration, poverty, housing segregation, etc., the stuff that encompasses hard times, what do you think is our responsibility as sociologists or budding sociologists? Is it to do our research and write our papers and present them or does it go beyond that? And I am interested in having this conversation on Twitter. So I'm going to be tweeting it out and I'm going to use the hashtag, but I'd love to hear your responses. Thank you.

>> Well, I think there's a lot of duties, I guess if you want a word. I mean I think the duty is to do high quality research about important issues and have, you know, strong cases and compelling cases to present. I think it's also our duty to write about things in a way that people we study can read them and understand it. I think it is very bizarre that that's not a standard that many of us try to reach. And I think we can have different ways of doing that. We have our journals where we can write in a certain way, but we should have a public voice on these issues. It takes a lot of time. Contemplative sociology sounds amazing and of this is about style; there are styles in talking and presenting and writing. So what I would love is for graduate students to develop an ability to write a journal article that they can get published, but write a companion to that, that the general audience can understand.

>> Yes, go ahead, David.

>> I think this is a great question and one I've struggled with as a kind of young scholar. And I honestly think we need to train the lens on ourselves and our discipline, and think about our disciplinary culture and our disciplinary practices. Because frankly, our discipline, you know, what jobs we get, what pay we get, what students we get to work with us do not depend on doing that second thing. Doesn't at all. You can write the A.J.S. paper and not write the policy brief version of it, and no one cares. Not no one, but there is nothing professionally reward currently for that, especially for young people. When you write a tenure letter, there usually isn't



a question about the what's the public impact of this person's research. Have they made an effort to have a public impact? So I think we need to, in addition to training the lens on the outside world, we need to think about that for ourselves as well.

>> Excellent point. [APPLAUSE]

>> That is a very good concluding note, and I'd like to thank again the panelists for really wonderful presentations, the audience for good questions, and I declare this session a depressing success. [APPLAUSE]