

# Free case study on 447

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



Family structure affects the rate of poverty among societies. The number of parents in a family gets linked with the availability of quality economic and human resource available to a child. Families headed by single parents are likely to be economically vulnerable as compared to married couples. Single parent families have only one wage earner and this provides a reason for economic vulnerability (Alesina & Glaesar 42). Poverty caused by the family structure impacts on both the parent and children. The age of children also affects poverty rates. Families composed of young children who are unable to provide labor have higher poverty levels. This is so because the young children are unable to earn wages and assist to the family's economic basket. The younger the age of the children, the more higher the rates of poverty as the children are unable to seek employment. The young children are largely dependent on the parents' income for their survival.

The federal government measures poverty using two methods; the poverty thresholds and the poverty guidelines. The poverty threshold measure gets provided by the census bureau while the poverty guidelines get issued by the department of health and human services (Haughtan & Khandker 109). The first criticism of the federal government's poverty measure is on the accuracy of its results. Concern gets raised on the accuracy of the poverty measure method as it does not fully inform on who is poor and who is not. Another criticism of the poverty threshold measure is that it understates the levels of poverty. Critics of the way the government measures poverty argue that there is a higher rate of poverty than that presented by calculations using poverty thresholds. The critics further argue that poverty gets understated in places with high costs of living and high poverty rates

(Haughton & Khandker 86). They argue that the federal poverty threshold does not consider fluctuations in local markets and may thus leave out individuals who live in poverty like situations. Another critique of the federal poverty thresholds gets to be on the type of incomes to include or exclude from the poverty measure. Failure to include incomes such as public assistance given to low income earners, then the extent of poverty becomes overstated. They argue that should health insurance benefits, cash welfare payments and the value of food stamps become considered as income, then many people would not get considered as poor.

Economic growth implies a raise in the levels of family income. Use of household income remains popular as a measure of income (Haughton & Khandker 98). Economic growth has slightly affected the incomes of low to middle level earners. There has been a slight improvement on the incomes of the middle level earners during the periods of economic growth.

Poor children suffer from higher instances of developmental and adverse health than non poor children. Children living below the poverty threshold are more likely to experience learning disabilities. Duration of poverty is a vital factor on measure of cognitive ability among poor children. Children who live in persistently poor families are more likely to score less on their assessments than children who have never experienced poverty. Also, the effects of long term poverty on a child's cognitive ability are significantly larger than those of short term poverty. Timing of poverty is also vital to cognitive ability (Alesina & Glaesar 202). Long term family income may impact on achievement and cognitive ability during school years. Young poor children cognitive assessment scores are less likely to be impacted on by

their family's poverty. As the children grow older and realize their family's poverty, then there is a high likelihood of the timing of the poverty to impact on their learning ability.

Parental stress and mental health can result to internalizing and externalizing problems among children. Parental stress by taking out anger and or frustration can become harmful to a child's psychology. If parents are stressful and are always shouting at their children, then it is likely that the child may become withdrawn or full of anger toward him or herself. This may manifest through internalized or externalized behavior by the child such as bullying, anxiety, and anorexia or obesity. If the parent has an unstable mental health, this may too result to internalized or externalized behavior from the child. The child may develop fear or anxiety, and aggression towards those around him or her.

Systems of institutionalized racism have impacted on the ability of African Americans to accumulate wealth and participate in the economy. These systems such as slavery have worked at denying African Americans with opportunities such as those of learning, better employment terms, and ownership of property (Charusheela 20). The lack of education renders most African Americans unable to find skilled labor with better employment packages. Redlining is the denial or limitation of financial services to neighborhoods whose residents are of color. This has also contributed to limiting the participation of African Americans in the economy. Lack of financial services such as loans limits the creation of jobs and businesses by the African Americans.

The welfare system proposes that the state is obligated at providing services

such as education and health for all its citizens (Hacker 23). Individualists argue that such a system causes dependence as people tend to give up on their responsibilities. The individualists believe that it is down to each individual to take care of themselves. They believe that private entities in a society offer more efficient services and save money. On the other hand, the structuralists believe that poverty gets caused by societal flaws such as inaccessible jobs, racial discrimination and low wages. Structuralism creates dependence on the basis that welfare has to be contributed to an individual until he or she finds a better job out of poverty. This creates dependence upon the state by the person.

The United States offers anti poverty policies and programs to assist the poor. Some of the policies include; subsidized housing targeted at very low income families to provide them with shelter. Another is the supplemental nutrition assistance program, which provides poor families with assistance to purchase the foods they need (Hacker 45). The supplemental security income program offers income assistance for the aged, disabled and blind. The poverty rates in the United States have increased since the turn of the 21st century and were largely caused by the great recession and its consequences. In 2010, an estimated 15. 1% of the United States population lived below the poverty line. Comparison of poverty levels with other developed nations may be difficult due to these countries lack of an official poverty measure. In select studies with other developed nation, the United States has a higher poverty rate (Alesina & Glaesar 65). A higher percentage of children in the United States live in poverty compared to working age adults and the elderly.

Individualism is a social perspective that places the highest importance on the interests of the individual (Charusheela 92). Two basic set of values of the individualists are that of self orientation or autonomy and decision making. Individualists view themselves as independent people and loosely connected to the group they may be part of. Individualists place a high value on achievement and personal freedom. They are self reliant and thus undertake their own decisions. Social structuralists on the other hand, view society as a structure with interconnected parts. These parts include the economy, healthcare, political systems, and religion. The structuralists believe in collectivism where they address an issue as a whole. They place high value on the interest of the group. Structuralists place further value on the norms, duties, and obligations to groups than on a person (Hacker 102). They place a high value on group harmony and solidarity. A structuralist perspective that can get provided in TANCH is the apparent low wages of the brother's mother, which forces the family to live in a housing project that is full of social evils and poverty. The family is unable to get a good job due to the lack of an education, which results from a lack of money. Another structuralist perspective gets ascribed to societal flaws. The River's family gets failed by its government. The government is unable to provide proper amenities such as good schools and good jobs to the River's family, and thus leaves them languishing in poverty (Charusheela 34). From an individualistic perspective, the River's family suffers from its own predicament. The choice of having a large family with several kids with a low wage job squarely lies on the mother. This contributes to her poverty. The second individualistic perspective lies on the boys, Lafayette and Pharaoh. They have the

opportunity of turning their lives around and seeking education as the hope from the ghetto life. It is upon them to use education as a gateway out of their poverty.

## **Works Cited**

Alberto Alesina, Edward Edward Ludwig Glaeser. Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A

World of Difference. Oxford: OUP , 2004.

Charusheela, S. Structuralism and Individualism in Economic Analysis:. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Hacker, Jacob S. The Divided Welfare State:. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Jonathan Henry Haughton, Shahidur R. Khandker. Handbook on Poverty and Inequality. New York: World Bank Publications, 2009.