Call for Papers for a Special Issue:

Anti-Poverty Policy Innovations: New Proposals for Addressing Poverty in the United States

Edited by **Lawrence M. Berger** and **Katherine Magnuson**, University of Wisconsin-Madison; we also expect that **Maria Cancian** will join us as a coeditor when she returns from leave in 2016-2017

The Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) and the Russell Sage Foundation have historically collaborated on a series of edited volumes on poverty and poverty policy, which includes *Fighting Poverty, Confronting Poverty, Understanding Poverty, and Changing Poverty, Changing Policies*. This series has been widely used by teachers and scholars of poverty and related issues, and has traditionally been comprised of state-of-the art review chapters. The last volume, *Changing Poverty, Changing Policies*, was published in 2009. Since that time, there have been a number of volumes focusing on the Great Recession, as well as the fifty years of the War on Poverty. These works have extensively reviewed recent trends, research, and policy in the poverty arena. However, much less attention has been focused on innovative, specific anti-poverty policy proposals in light of this evidence. We believe that an issue of *RSF* highlighting such proposals would greatly serve the field. We outline our vision for the issue below.

The journal issue will showcase a collection of innovative and specific policy proposals intended to reduce **poverty in the short- and/or long-term or improve economic wellbeing**. Each article will focus on a specific social problem and/or population group. The issue aims to set the anti-poverty policy agenda for the next decade or more by presenting detailed real-world responses to current and emerging poverty-related problems. The policy or inter-related set of policies proposed in each article will include a description of the target group and problem; eligibility criteria; program/service or benefit type and amount; expectations regarding policy scope, reach, and take-up; potential heterogeneity in effects across population groups or geographic location; and expected cost and effectiveness, including public and private costs and benefits. Each article must be firmly grounded in existing social science research and present the science (theoretical and empirical research) underpinning the proposed policy. **Articles should not propose an overarching policy agenda in a particular domain. Rather each article should propose a specific, potentially high-impact, innovative, or particularly promising policy or policy approach and present evidence in support of that approach**. That is, articles should leverage existing research and policy analyses to present an evidence-based argument for implementing novel and potentially transformational policy innovations in a particular poverty-related domain.

The coeditors will contribute an extensive introductory piece that provides a roadmap of current and expected poverty-related trends, evidence on the causes and consequences of poverty, existing anti-poverty policies, and evidence on the efficacy of existing approaches to addressing poverty. They will also contribute a concluding piece that weighs the pros and cons of the various proposals, including key tradeoffs, feasibility, and prioritization. Selection will be determined by the potential for the proposed policy approach to decrease poverty and/or improve

the economic wellbeing of low-income and poor individuals and families, as indicated by the strength and quality of the scientific evidence offered in its support.

Although the final topics of focus will be determined by the proposals submitted, we are particularly interested in receiving proposals in the following areas:

Employment- and Wage-Related Policies. Access to stable employment with adequate wages is necessary for long-term poverty reduction. Articles in this area should present (supply- or demand-side) policies and programs to increase employment and/or wages for low-income and disadvantage individuals. This may include individuals with low levels of education and/or job-related skills, as well as those with other barriers to work, including a criminal justice or incarceration history. Policies are likely to include, but not be limited to, training and job placement programs; subsidized employment and apprenticeship/internship programs; incentives or subsidies to employees and/or employers; policies for retraining, incentivizing, or subsidizing disabled workers; wage regulation and protections; and youth development and employment programs and policies.

Family Support Policies. The family is the primary institution for supporting and rearing children. A vast literature documents the consequences of low-income and poverty for the goods and services to which families have access, the quality of parenting and the home environments children receive and, subsequently, child development and the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage. A host of policies and programs may have implications for short- and long-term poverty by intervening at the family level to increase income/access to resources and promote positive parenting, family stability, and healthy child-rearing environments. Policy proposals in this area may focus on family planning, access to contraceptive health, teen pregnancy prevention, two-generation interventions, policies and programs to encourage family stability, and child support policies. Policies and programs in this domain must have the explicit potential to reduce poverty rates or improve economic wellbeing in the short- or long-run.

Education and Child Care Policies. The United States education system has the potential to be a "great equalizer." Yet, there is considerable debate about the extent to which reforms in early, primary, and secondary education are effective at promoting educational attainment or reducing economic disadvantage. Proposals for reforming child care and education may address early childhood education and care programs, the entire period of K-12 schooling, or some subset thereof. They may focus on a range of education-related issues including, but not limited to, financing, organizational school design, or instructional quality. The authors must, however, provide arguments that the policy is likely to reduce short- or long-term poverty.

Postsecondary Education Policies. Post-secondary educational attainment is closely linked to economic success and stability throughout the life course. Yet, there are considerable disparities in access to and completion of postsecondary education by socioeconomic status of origin. Concerns about the high cost of postsecondary education and low levels of academic preparation, have also been the focus of much concern among scholars and policy makers. Proposals in this section should address short- and long-term reductions in poverty through innovative postsecondary education policies to improve access to and success in higher education among low-income young adults, with clear potential to affect later earnings.

Tax Policies. In recent decades, tax policy has increasingly been used to support low-income populations. Such policies include the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Additional (refundable) Child Tax Credit, as well as direct subsidies to employers who hire difficult-to-employ workers. Proposals in this domain should examine how tax rates, credits, deductions, and/or other instruments could better support low-income individuals and. They may address a variety of areas of taxation for individuals and/or corporations, including but not limited to income tax, sales tax, and property tax. As with other policy areas, the potential to reduce poverty in the short or long-run is important.

Housing Policies. Housing costs comprise a large and growing portion of income, particularly for low-income and poor households. The cost of housing also varies considerably by location. Existing housing policies and programs span rent regulation and renter protections; tax incentives, credits, and deductions; direct and indirect subsidies; and mortgage lending regulation, among others. There has also be a growing focus on policies prioritizing access for specific populations (e.g. youth aging-out of foster care, veterans, homeless families), and integrating housing and human services. Proposals in this area should present innovative policies to reduce housing costs and/or expand access to housing for low-income populations and, thereby, improve their economic wellbeing.

Immigration and Immigrant-Related Policies. Immigrants are a large and growing segment of the U.S. population and are over-represented among low-wage workers. Current social welfare benefits vary in their availability to immigrant groups based on documentation status and time in the United States. Policy innovations in this area may address immigration policy itself, eligibility and coverage of documented and undocumented immigrants in existing policy domains, and innovative immigrant-targeted programs and policies intended to reduce poverty. Again, the proposal might have clear potential to reduce poverty in the short- or long-run, or increase economic wellbeing.

Criminal Justice Policies. The criminal justice system plays an extensive role in the lives of low-income individuals, families, and communities. Criminal justice involvement has implications throughout the life course in areas such as employment and wages, health and wellbeing, family formation and stability, social welfare benefit receipt, and child support and other private transfers. Proposals in this area may address all aspects of the criminal justice system, including but not limited to policing and arrest policies, sentencing policies, incarceration policies, and reintegration policies. Articles must demonstrate how the proposed policy is likely to reduce poverty and improve economic wellbeing.

Consumer Financial Protection Policies. Indebtedness and the high cost of credit for low-income populations have been of increasing concern to policy makers in recent decades. On the one hand, access to credit allows for consumption smoothing and the purchase of high cost, often long-term, assets and human capital investments. On the other hand, accruing substantial debt—particularly that with high interest rates and fees—is associated with increased economic and other stress, poorer psychosocial functioning, and limited future consumption and access to mainstream financial institutions. Proposals in this domain may address issues such as debt regulation (interest rates and fees), access to credit, innovative financial products, and financial

literacy. Implications for short- and long-term poverty reduction or economic wellbeing should be explicitly addressed.

Anticipated Timeline

Prospective contributors should submit a CV and an abstract of their study (up to two pages in length, single spaced), plus up to two pages of supporting material (e.g., tables, figures, pictures, etc.) no later than 5 PM EST April 16, 2016 to:

https://rsfjournal.onlineapplicationportal.com

All submissions must be original work that has not been previously published in part or in full. Only abstracts submitted to https://rsfjournal.onlineapplicationportal.com will be considered. Each paper will receive a $1,000 honorarium when the issue is published. All questions regarding this issue should be directed to Suzanne Nichols, Director of Publications, at journal@rsage.org and not to the email addresses of the editors of the special issue.

A conference will take place at RSF in New York City on October 28, 2016. The selected contributors will gather for a one-day workshop to present draft papers (due on September 28, 2016, a month prior to the conference) and receive feedback from the other contributors and editors. Travel costs, food, and lodging for one author per paper will be covered by the foundation. Papers will be circulated before the conference. After the conference, the authors will submit their revised drafts. The papers will then be sent out to two additional scholars for formal peer review. Having received feedback from reviewers and the RSF board, authors will revise their papers. The full and final issue will be published in the late 2017. Papers will be published open access on the RSF website as well as in several digital repositories, including JSTOR and UPCC/Muse.