

Lisa Dodson

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Current Position

Research Professor

Sociology Department, Boston College

2002-Present

Specialty area is *Poverty, Families, and Social Policy*, courses include: From Poor Law to Working Poor; Carework & Inequality; Poverty in America; Research at the Margins.

Education

1993, Ph.D., Heller School for Social Policy, Brandeis University

1983, Master of Public Health in Maternal and Child Health, School of Public Health, Boston University

1975, B.A. Political Science, Boston University

Books

The Moral Underground: How Ordinary Americans Subvert an Unfair Economy (The New Press, 2010 and paperback release 2011). Based on seven years of research, the book examines conditions of working poor families and documents dilemmas faced by both middle class and low income people in a national context of low wages and limited social welfare, affecting the status of children and families (highlights page 6).

Don't Call Us Out of Name: The Untold Lives of Women and Girls in Poor America (Beacon Press, 1999) Based on seven years of qualitative research, this book examines the life course of poor women and families in the context of welfare reform policy (highlights page 7).

Previous appointments

Policy Fellow and Principal Investigator

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University

2000-2002

Principal Investigator of the *Across the Boundaries* project, a 3-city study (funded by the Ford and Casey Foundations) that examined the family impact of low-wage employment.

Lecturer

Department of Sociology and Women's Studies, Harvard University

1998-2001

Appointed as Lecturer in the college of arts and sciences, teaching courses in public policy, economic stratification, and gender.

Policy Fellow, Radcliffe Public Policy Institute

Harvard University

1995-1999

Developed the research agenda for Institute related to low-income families and provided testimony to US Congressional hearings on welfare reform. Developed “Across the Boundaries” study and managed 3-city research team of ten people. Published *Don't Call Us Out of Name: The Untold Lives of Women and Girls in Poor America*.

Awards and Fellowships

2010: W. K. Kellogg Foundation awarded (\$50,000) grant for national book tour for *The Moral Underground*

2009: Awarded a “Teaching, Advising, and Mentoring” grant (\$25,000) to develop the *Poverty, Families, and Social Policy* specialty area at Boston College

2002-2003: Harvard Law School Fellowship for *Global Border Crossing* initiative

2000-2002: *Research Fellowship*, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study

2000: Harvard University Joseph R. Levenson Award, nominated for “*academic excellence and dedication in teaching*”

1995-2000: Policy Fellowship, Radcliffe Public Policy Center

1999: Toth Award for Best Single Author Study of American Culture, first book: *Don't Call Us Out of Name*

1999: Boston Author's Club Award for “*Don't Call Us Out of Name*”

1991: Peter Heller Fellowship, Brandeis University

1987: Frechette Award for Outstanding Contribution to Public Health Research

Funded Research – Boston College

Principal Investigator (2011-2012)

Linking youth development with parental work in low-wage labor markets: This new study funded by the Ford and Casey Foundations will examine current scholarship and policy related to the effects of the current low-wage labor market on youth development.

Principal Investigator (2009-Ongoing)

Career and Family Opportunity: Study of the Crittenton Women's Union this five-year, mixed-methods study will follow the lives of low-income single parents and their families and examine the effects of a comprehensive career development and asset-building program (approximate grant funding: \$250,000)

Co-Principal Investigator (Collaboration with Brandeis University: 2005-2007)

Engaging Workers and Improving Care: Undertaken by an interdisciplinary research team led by healthcare policy experts and sponsored by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the Commonwealth Foundation (\$200,000).

Senior Researcher 2004 - 2005

Better Jobs and Better Care: Collaborative study funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropy led by Brandeis University, studying frontline workers job and care quality (\$250,000).

Principal Investigator (2002-2004)

Lower-Income Work and Family Research Project: Funded by the Ford Foundation this study pursued themes uncovered in previous research, examining effects of unsustainable but demanding jobs on parents, children, family life and community institutions including childcare centers, schools and workplaces (\$150,000)

Co-Principal Investigator (Collaboration with Harvard Law School: 2002-2003) Study on *Border Crossings*, through fellowship at Harvard Law School (HLS), a research and public policy project comparing American and global human rights projects and economic development practices, sponsored by Harvard Law School.

Funded Research – Harvard University

Principal Investigator (2000-2002) Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study

Across the Boundaries: A national 2-year study on work, family, and community life in low-income America, funded by the Ford and Annie E. Casey Foundations (\$600,000).

Principal Investigator (1998-1999) Radcliffe Public Policy Center (RPPC)

Welfare in Transition: A study on low-income, single-mother families during welfare reform funded by Cities of Cambridge and Boston (\$150,000).

Principal Investigator (1996-1999) Radcliffe Public Policy Center

Conducted post-doctoral research on low-income girls and family work roles and produced monograph, “*We could be your daughters*” sponsored by RPPC.

Senior Researcher (1994-1996) Radcliffe Public Policy Center

Tobin Family Support Program: W.K. Kellogg Foundation research project at the Maurice J. Tobin School in Mission Hill, Boston that examined the impact of parental involvement upon children and educational programs (\$300,000).

Urban Health Institute of New England Medical Center

Senior Researcher (1993-1994)

Healthy Transitions/Healthy Futures: W. K. Kellogg Foundation research project of the Urban Health Institute of New England Medical Center that examined the career development of a young people from low-income urban neighborhoods who were involved in a multi-service youth support program (\$500,000).

Senior Researcher (1990-1991)

Designed and wrote successful million dollar program proposal to the National Office of Substance Abuse Prevention for a residential facility, the *Basta Program*, for young mothers at risk of domestic violence and substance abuse, for Casa Myrna Vazquez, the largest domestic violence sheltering network in Massachusetts (\$1,000,000).

Articles, Book Chapters, and Research Reports

Dodson, Lisa. (Forthcoming) 2011. "Work Ethic and Good Mothering: How Flexibility Stigma Differs Across Class." *Journal of Social Issues* 67 (Special issue on work and family).

Dodson, Lisa and Wendy Luttrell. (In Press) 2011. "Untenable Choices: Taking Care of Low-income Families." *Contexts: Understanding people and their social world* 10 (1)

Dodson, Lisa. 2010. "For Low-Income Americans, Work and Family are Inseparable." Democracy forum article in the *Boston Review*, a response to N. Hirschman's article "Mothers who care too much" July/August 2010

Dodson, Lisa and Leah Schmalzbauer. 2010. "Poor Women and Habits of Hiding: Participatory Methods in Poverty Research." Pp. 313-326 in *Qualitative Educational Research Readings in Reflexive Methodology and Transformative Practice*, edited by W. Luttrell. New York, NY: Routledge Press.

Dodson, Lisa and Rebekah Zinzavage. 2008. "It's Like a Family: Caring Labor, Exploitation and Race in Nursing Homes." *Gender & Society* 21(6): 905-928.

Dodson, Lisa. 2007. "Wage Poor Mothers and Moral Economy." *Social Politics: International Journal of Gender, State & Society* 14(2): 258-280.

Dodson, Lisa, Deborah Piatelli, and Leah Schmalzbauer. 2007. "Researching Inequality through Interpretive Collaborations." *Qualitative Inquiry* 13(6): 821-843.

Dodson, Lisa. 2006. "After Welfare Reform: My Children Come Before this Job." *Focus: Journal of the Institute for Research on Poverty* 24(3):25-29.

Dodson, Lisa and Leah Schmalzbauer. 2005. "Poor Women and Habits of Hiding: Participatory Methods in Poverty Research." *Journal of Marriage and Family: Special Issue on Theory and Methodology* 67 (3): Pp. 949-959.

Dodson, Lisa, Deborah Piatelli and Leah Schmalzbauer. 2005. "'Behind the Scenes' A conversation about interpretive focus groups." Pp. 174-184 in *Feminist Research Practices*, edited by S. Hesse-Biber and P. Leavy. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Dodson, Lisa and Ellen Bravo. 2005. "Managing Work and Family: Why It's Not Working for the Bottom Third." Pp.122-155 in *Unfinished Work: Building Equality and Democracy in an Era of Working Families*, edited by C. Beem and J. Heymann. NYC: The New Press.

Dodson, Lisa and Jillian Dickert. 2004. "Girls' Family Labor in Low-Income Household: A Decade of Qualitative Research." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66(2): 318-332.

Deborah Belle and Lisa Dodson. 2004. "Poor Women and Girls in a Wealthy Nation." *Handbook of Women's and Girls' Psychological Health*, edited by C. Worell and J. Goodheart. NYC: Oxford University Press.

Dodson, Lisa and Odessa Cole. 2002. "On Acting White: Mother-Daughter Talk." *When Race Becomes Real: Black and White Writers Confront Their Personal Histories*, edited by B. Singly. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books.

Dodson, Lisa, Tiffany Manuel, and Ellen Bravo. 2002. "Keeping Jobs and Raising Families in Low-Income America: It Just Doesn't Work." Radcliffe Public Policy Center Publications. Cambridge: Harvard University.

Dodson, Lisa. 2000. "At the Kitchen Table: Poor Women Making Public Policy." Pp. 177-191 in *Women and Welfare: Theory and Practice in the United States and Europe*, edited by N. Hirschmann and C. Liebert. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Dodson, Lisa. 1999. "This River Runs Deep: Single Mothers in Poor America" Pp. 109-126 in *Lost Fathers: The Politics of Fatherlessness*, edited by C. Daniels. NYC: St Martin's Press.

Dodson, Lisa. 1996. "We Could Be Your Daughters': Girls, Sexuality and Pregnancy in Low-Income America," Radcliffe Public Policy Center Publications. Cambridge: Harvard University.

Leadership and Senior Management Experience

Founder & Director of the Division of Women's Health, Commonwealth of Massachusetts (1981-1988)

During tenure, the Women's Health Division grew from a small program to a multi-million dollar state division. The Director was responsible for overall leadership and management of budget; ten contracts/programs; and hiring and oversight of staff. The Division Programs included: Black Women's Health Project, Refugee Family Health, community-based maternal and child health programs, domestic violence and sexual assault prevention project, Work/Family Life project, and a Research and Evaluation unit.

Awards and commendations during tenure:

- ***Appointment to Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence*** by Michael Dukakis to integrate the needs of domestic violence survivors with the demands of the criminal justice system.
- ***First Massachusetts Women's Health Achievement Award*** for individual who contributed outstanding contribution to the health of women in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1988
- ***Alfred E. Frechette Award for individual who performed outstanding public health service***, Massachusetts Public Health Association, 1987
- ***Finalist*** for Innovations in American Government, Ford Foundation/Harvard.

The Moral Underground
Highlights of Reviews and Publicity

2010 Selected media reviews, interviews, and talks for *The Moral Underground*

Print Reviews: Received high praise from: Time Magazine (www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1945359,00.html) as well as from Kirkus Review, Publishers' Weekly, Choice, Huffington, Booklist, and the Civil Right Book Club as well as other book clubs. The Moral Underground was also excerpted in The American Prospect http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=the_work_around.

Media Highlights: Featured on Marketplace, American Public Radio, Grittv of Air America <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvhJc7n969I&feature=related> The Bob Edwards Show, The Boston Globe (http://www.boston.com/yourtown/newton/articles2010/02/18/bc_professor_lisa_dodson_tracks_economic_disobedience/) as well as forty national and local public radio and television stations.

2010 Selected University, Public Policy, and Community Lectures

American University: *The Moral Underground* was assigned as the 2010 freshman book and I was the *Writer as Witness* orientation keynote.

Carleton College: University convocation

Drake University: University-wide lecture

Rice University: Speaker for the opening of The Center for Women and Gender

Demos: A non-partisan think tank, NYC

(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85Q6SZeC_lc)

Interfaith Workers Conference, Chicago

Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington DC

Institute for Women's Policy Research, Washington DC

Jane Addams-Hull House Museum

Family Foundation Forum, Chicago

Invisible Institute of Hyde Park, Chicago (www.wbez.org/episode-segments/sociologist-lisa-dodsons-moral-underground)

Selected Invited University Talks Scheduled for 2011

Stanford University: *The Moral Underground* lecture for Women's Community Center and Seminar for members of Working Class Student Center.

State University of NY (March)

University of Chicago (April)

Northeastern University (September)

Don't Call Us Out of Name
The Untold Lives of Women and Girls in Poor America

Selected reviews and book blurbs

“The powerful stories of poor women in this book brilliantly convey the experiences and challenges of living in and coping with poverty.” William Julius Wilson

“This book should be read by anyone who has ever used the words teen parent or welfare mom without considering the human face and complex lives those words obscure.” Philadelphia Inquirer

“Dodson’s book is a formidable deconstruction of the rhetoric behind the widely believed myth that poor young women and girls enjoy their plight as denizens of the nation’s economic underbelly.” The Boston Globe

“*Don't Call Us Out of Name* is absolutely required reading for anyone concerned about the lives of poor women in post-welfare America... it is also deeply absorbing reading – wise, compassionate...” Barbara Ehrenreich

“A well-written and eye-opening salvo in one of America’s most crucial debates. Dodson’s work is riveting...” Publishers Weekly

National Policy Testimony

2007 US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

Invited testimony to the EEOC Commission describing the barriers facing low-income families in Commission’s review of “Achieving Work/Family Balance: Employer Best Practices for Workers with Care-giving Responsibilities.”

2002 US Congressional briefings, round table, and caucus presentations

These briefings included Democratic and Republican House Ways and Means Committee Staff, House Committee on Education and the Workforce, and the Senate Finance Committee. Briefings to staff or congresspersons, including: Senators Hilary Clinton (D-NY), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), James Jeffords (I-VT), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Herb Kohl (D-WI), and Paul Wellstone (D-MN), and Representatives Benjamin Cardin (D-MD), Nancy Johnson (R-CT), Sander Levin (D-MI), John Tierney (D-MA), and Lynn Woolsey (D-CA).

Additionally, presented research at a congressional briefing organized by the Democratic Task Force on Reauthorizing the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program with Representatives Barbara Lee (D-CA) and Patsy Mink (D-HI), co-chairs of the task force, and Representative Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-CA), co-chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues

University Leadership Roles and Committee Membership

Lead Faculty: Poverty, Families, and Social Policy Specialty Area

Developed the Poverty, Family, and Social Policy specialty area, in collaboration with colleagues in the sociology department, as a new track within department. This track links academic study with field-based research projects (graduate students) and public service field placements (undergraduates).

Research Director: Family and Poverty Fellowship

In 2009, established the first externally funded *Research Fellowship* in the Sociology Department, a five-year doctoral student position. An additional one-year graduate student funded position began in 2010.

Current Courses (Syllabi available on request)

Poor Law to the Working Poor

From “warning off paupers” to welfare reform and unsustainable wages, this course offers an overview of American attitudes and public policies toward poor/low-income people and their children from colonial to contemporary society. The course examines race, gender, and citizenship versus “stranger” status in patterns of American inequality and policy responses.

Carework and Inequality

What is carework; work, family duty or a public good? This course examines historical patterns and social forces that circumscribe caring labor and traces carework as a form of family work, primarily provided by women and girls. We then explore the “commodification” of care and the development of a global class of careworkers.

Women, Families, and Survival Strategies: Race, Class and Gender

This course examines the work and family nexus with a focus on how parents manage to negotiate the labor market and also their ongoing role as primary – or sole – family care takers. Race, class, ethnic/immigration and gender issues are integrated throughout, drawing out the profound stratification of resources to which parents have access, trying to keep families safe and intact.

Research at the Margins: Research in a Context of Inequality

This advanced methods course focuses on graduate students research related to poverty and socioeconomic marginalization. The curriculum is tailored to projects that graduate students bring to the class with a focus on field research. We examine “habits of hiding” in conditions of marginalization, developing collaborative research design working with community based organizations, creative methods of data gathering, and interpretive approaches that include people “under study.”

Research Practicum

Alternating with *Research at the Margins*, this is a working seminar to support the field-based research of a small group of graduate students.

Selected Graduate Student Supervision

My work with graduate students often includes supervising their field-based research and the development of studies that lead to completion of doctoral dissertations & masters theses as well as opportunity to contribute to immediate public policy issues and publications. Selected current thesis projects include:

Co-Chairperson for Sociology PhD student Autumn Green who defended her proposal (2010, with distinction): “Surviving and Striving: Supporting Low Income Mothers in Pursuit of Higher Education” (Note: Autumn Green is the 2010 recipient of the national [Patsy Mink Legacy Award](#), founded in honor of Congresswoman Patsy Mink who was a leading voice for low-income families in US Congress. Autumn was selected for the award from a pool of over 1000 applicants, for her doctoral dissertation proposal.)

Chairperson and faculty advisor for Sociology PhD student Amanda Freeman, who defended her Master thesis (2010, with distinction): “Conversations about Working and Parenting with Low-Income Single Parents in South Boston”. Amanda is the doctoral student who was awarded the *Family and Poverty Research Fellowship*.

Chairperson and advisor for Sociology PhD student Adam Saltsman, who is conducting pilot research on the experiences of Burmese forced migrants in a refugee camp in Thailand, for his dissertation on forced migrants and sub-citizenship.

Chairperson and advisor for Sociology PhD student David Harker, who is conducting pilot research for his dissertation on public service and political activism.

Thesis advisor for Katherine Bright on her research exploring the connection between homelessness among girls and young women in the US and experiences of domestic human trafficking.

University Committee Service

2004 - 2008 *Boston College Institutional Review Board Member*

Served for four years on the university human subjects review board that review all research with human subjects.

Selected Invited Talks

“Lower-Income Work and Family: Different Meanings of Stigma and Work Flexibility”
Hasting College of Law University California, San Francisco, CA (2009)

“Family Ties and Blind Policies: Mothers and Children Climb Together”

Civil Rights Project, University of California, Los Angeles (2008)

“Sustainable Incomes as a Work and Family Issue”

Center for Research on Women, Class, and Work/Family Dilemma Barnard College, NYC (2007)

“Wage-Poor Mothers and Moral Economy”

Eastern Sociological Society Annual Conference, Philadelphia, PA (2007)

“All the World’s Kin: Carework as Social Transformation”

University of Massachusetts: Keynote speaker for “Gathering at the Well” annual address Lowell, MA (2007)

“Of Hearts and Markets”

American Sociological Society and Society for the Study of Social Problems: Session on Carework NYC, NY (2006)

“Livelihood and Family Life: Maternal Strategies among Low-wage Workers”

Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin, Madison (2005)

“Family Life and the Effects of Low-wage Work”

Annual Conference: Race, Domestic violence and Fatherhood
Center for Fatherhood and Family Policy and Practice, San Francisco, CA (2005)

“Living On and Off Welfare: Ethnographic Research on Low-Income Families”

The Bookings Institution, Washington DC (2003)

“Work, Family, and Community in Low-Income America”

Annual Conference Institute for Women’s Policy Research
Washington DC, (2002)