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Richard Rodems

Hidden Hardship in the United States. Material Well-Being Above the Poverty Line.

# **Hidden Hardship in the United States: Material Well-Being Above the Poverty Line**

Richard Rodems, MSW, Ph.D.  
Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan

## **ABSTRACT**

Studies of poverty typically rely on income-based definitions of poverty, such as the Census Bureau's official poverty threshold. Studies of material hardship, in contrast, measure who can afford food, shelter, medical care, and the like. Shifting the focus of poverty research away from a definition based solely on income and towards one that examines the actual material conditions of households reveals far more widespread hardship than typically thought. Using data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation, I estimate that about 1 in 4 households experience some type of material hardship, a larger share than those considered poor based on income measures. Most importantly, of these households experiencing hardship, 75% have incomes that place them above the poverty line, i.e. their hardship is not captured based on income-poverty measures alone. Hidden hardship is thus the normative experience of material hardship in the United States. Descriptive and multivariate analyses reveal that households in hidden hardship are less affluent, younger, non-white, and have more children than economically secure households. As households in hidden hardship are often ineligible for key social safety net programs, these findings reveal henceforth undetected areas of need and call for a re-orientation of current social safety net policies directly towards material needs.

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## INTRODUCTION

The question of who should or should not be counted as poor is a fundamental and recurrent question in poverty research. At some point, any empirical investigation of poverty is forced to pick a clearly defined poverty measure (Smeeding 2016). The question of how to categorize people, families, or households as poor or non-poor has occupied the attention of social scientists, state officials, and their predecessors dating back at least to the 17<sup>th</sup> century Elizabethan Poor Laws (Katz 2013), while contention over the definition of needs has assumed a central role in Western political life in the modern era (Simmons 2015). Michael Harrington (1962: 176-177) acknowledges that “in such a discussion it is inevitable that one gets mixed up with dry, graceless technical matters.” Despite this seemingly arid terrain, the scholarly and practical stakes for any such definition are high. Harrington continued on to note that this “should not conceal the crucial fact that these numbers represent people.” (ibid: 177)

The dominant summary measure of who is counted as poor relies on a threshold of a household’s income. For instance, when the U.S. Census Bureau releases its annual report based on the Current Population Survey in which the new poverty rate is announced, it is income poverty alone that is behind this new poverty rate and, as a result, behind headlines and public debate. At the same time, it has long been acknowledged that poverty is a complex, multidimensional social phenomenon imperfectly captured by measures of income. Proponents of multidimensional approaches of conceptualizing and measuring poverty (e.g. Dhongde and Haveman 2015) often draw upon the capabilities approach of Amartya Sen which understands poverty not just as an issue of too little income, but as the deprivation of the capabilities individuals need in order to “lead the kind of lives they value” (1999:18). Poverty, then, is a social problem because it deprives people of the capabilities necessary for some minimum level

of human freedom. This shift in the conception of poverty away from income—which is only instrumentally but not intrinsically important— opens up the possibility that factors beyond income determine one’s poverty status and suggests that the relationship between poverty and low income may not be as direct as the classical approach to poverty measurement implies.

In contrast, measuring material hardship provides a direct assessment of the concept at the core of poverty research: deprivation. This contribution considers common measures of poverty, in particular the Official Poverty Measure (the federal “poverty line”), and compares them to measures of material hardship. Instead of two groups, the poor and non-poor, I find four: 1) economically secure households that avoid both poverty and material hardship, 2) households that despite being below the poverty line manage to get by without reporting material hardship, 3) down-and-out households that report both hardship and income poverty and, most importantly, 4) households in hidden hardship above the poverty line. I focus on these households in hardship above the poverty line as they make up a surprisingly large share of the population, namely 19.37 percent. I refer this category of hardship as hidden hardship because it is invisible using conventional income measures of poverty and therefore largely excluded from key social safety net programs. I describe this group in hidden hardship in terms of their demographic characteristics and household resources available to them. I also assess the extent to which hidden hardship exists even when the poverty threshold is set at higher income levels. Finally, in regression analyses I demonstrate that the relationship between household income and material hardship remains imprecise even when accounting for various demographic factors and household resources. I conclude by calling for an expansion of material hardship measures in major surveys, a shift in public policy priorities from poverty reduction to meeting material needs, and for further research on hidden hardship.

## BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS LITERATURE

### *Measuring Poverty*

In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the US government devised a measure of poverty, the Official Poverty Measure (OPM), which has profoundly shaped the social scientific understanding of poverty in America, and in turn social policy responses to the problem of poverty. For both social scientists and in every day speech, to speak of poverty in the United States is nearly always to speak of income poverty as defined by the poverty line (O'Connor 2001).

Despite wide-spread criticism of the OPM – to be discussed in a moment – it remains, on a practical level, a powerful measure of poverty because it is related to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Thresholds. The HHS Poverty Thresholds are essentially equivalent to the poverty line and serve as the eligibility guidelines for numerous safety net programs. Thirty-one safety net programs use the HHS Poverty Guidelines<sup>1</sup>, or multiples thereof, to determine eligibility whereas only six means-tested programs do not use the poverty

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<sup>1</sup> Programs that use the HHS poverty guidelines are the Community Services Block Grant, Head Start, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), some elements of Medicaid, Hill-Burton Uncompensated Services Program, AIDS Drug Assistance Program, Children's Health Insurance Program, Medicare – Prescription Drug Coverage (subsidized portion only), Community Health Centers, Migrant Health Centers, Family Planning Services, Health Professions Student Loans — Loans for Disadvantaged Students, Health Careers Opportunity Program, Scholarships for Health Professions Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds, Job Opportunities for Low-Income Individuals, Assets for Independence Demonstration Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly Food Stamp Program), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) National School Lunch Program (for free and reduced-price meals only), School Breakfast Program (for free and reduced-price meals only), Child and Adult Care Food Program (for free and reduced-price meals only), Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Weatherization Assistance for Low-Income Persons, Job Corps, National Farmworker Jobs Program, Senior Community Service Employment Program, Workforce Investment Act Youth Activities, Low-Income Taxpayer Clinics, Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Companion Program, Legal Services for the Poor.

guidelines<sup>2</sup>. Finding oneself on one side of this the HHS-defined line can mean the difference between receiving food stamps, heating subsidies, and health insurance, or not (US Department of Health & Human Services n.d.).

The disadvantages of this measure are well known: it is based on pre-tax income and thus ignores the effects of key antipoverty policies; adjustments for inflation since 1963 may not be sufficient to fully reflect changes in the standard of living; essential costs such as transportation, child care, and medical expenses are ignored; geographical disparities are not addressed; and family size adjustments do not reflect the complexity of contemporary household arrangements (e.g. cohabiting non-married couples, child support obligations, etc.) (Citro and Michael 1995). As a result, some sociologists have called for researchers to abandon absolute measures such as the OPM in favor of relative measures of poverty in which a specific point in the income distribution is chosen as the poverty threshold (Brady 2003; Townsend 1979). In the United Kingdom, for example, the poverty line is often defined as 60% of median income (Townsend and Kennedy 2004) and the OECD often defines poverty as half of the median income (OECD 2014).

In contrast to absolute measures of income poverty that define a clear poverty line that may change over time to keep pace with inflation, relative poverty lines function more like measures of inequality than poverty. At their core, relative income measures of poverty acknowledge that full participation in a given society is dependent upon one's ability to purchase the goods and services necessary to partake in mainstream social experiences. This concern over being able to fully participate in society has led to the concept of social exclusion taking center

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<sup>2</sup> The means tested programs that do not use the HHS Poverty Guidelines are Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), state/local-funded general assistance (in most cases), some parts of Medicaid, Section 8 low-income housing assistance, and low-rent public housing.

stage in many European studies of poverty (Atkinson and Davoudi 2000). Recently, the Census Bureau has developed a new quasi-relative measure, the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SMP), which addresses these concerns while combining some of the strengths of both the absolute and relative measures of income poverty (Johnson and Smeeding 2012).

Income poverty measures, whether absolute like OPM or relative income poverty measures favored in European and comparative research, all run the risk of failing to capture income volatility or instability. Much poverty research relies on surveys which capture annual or biannual data from respondents, and as a result cannot capture the weekly and monthly income instability that is increasingly a feature of household finances in the United States (Morduch and Schneider 2017).

The OPM and the SPM, as well as the relative measures of poverty favored by Brady and most European social scientists, are all measures of *income poverty*. All measures of income poverty set some sort of income cutoff below which an individual or household is considered poor. Recently, some economists have called for an increased focus on consumption measures of poverty, a perspective that leads to lower estimates of poverty compared to income-based measures of poverty (Meyer and Sullivan 2012). The idea behind these consumption measures is that material well-being is quantified through detailed reporting of consumption rather than attempting to have respondents report income. While conceptually interesting, trends in the consumption measure of poverty as put into practice by Meyer and Sullivan do not match trends in either material hardship or income poverty measures, raising some concerns over the validity of this measure (Shaefer and Rivera 2017).

Another alternative to income poverty is to focus on wealth, or asset, poverty. This perspective asks if households “have a stock of assets which is sufficient to sustain a basic level

of needs consumption during temporary hard times” (Haveman and Wolff 2005). Asset poverty measures of this type define asset poverty as not having a net worth or liquid assets sufficient to provide for a household at the OPM threshold for four months. This approach too ultimately relies upon the OPM as the socially accepted arbiter between a household that should have sufficient resources to meet its material needs and one that does not. Like income poverty and consumption poverty measures, it assumes that the OPM threshold represents a meaningful figure above which households can meet their material needs.

One possible way to move past the debate between relative and absolute measures of income poverty, and between income, consumption, and asset poverty, is to directly investigate the material consequences of poverty (Ouellette et al. 2004). Consider the most sophisticated measure of poverty devised by the Census Bureau, the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM). This measure establishes an income cutoff adjusted for household composition and geographic area that is based on a rolling average of the cost of food, clothing, shelter, utilities, and medical expenses (the measure then adds an extra 20% to this figure to account for unexpected expenses). The implicit assumption behind the SPM is that an inability to afford food, clothing, shelter, basic utilities, medical care, and other essential life expenses is at the heart of contemporary concerns over poverty, to not have these basic material goods and services is to be poor. The core concern in the SPM is not income per se, but these material necessities. Income in and of itself is thus a proxy for a household’s ability to acquire these goods and services. Material hardship measures dispense with the proxy and measure the material wellbeing of households directly.



### *Material Hardship as a Poverty Measure*

Despite extensive scholarly research related to poverty, particularly since the War on Poverty in the 1960s, the question of material hardship was not raised directly until the late 1980s. As part of her dissertation research, Susan Mayer (1986) fielded a survey of Chicago area residents to understand how income was related to material hardship. In this survey, she collected measures of material hardship that were clear and easy to recall by survey respondents. These measures included questions about the inability to secure enough food, to pay rent, to afford needed medical care, etc. She found that the link between material hardship and income poverty was surprisingly weak. At best, income poverty could explain 14% of the variance in material hardship (Mayer and Jencks 1989). Families' place in relation to the official poverty line and their experiences of concrete material deprivation, such as hunger and housing instability, showed a surprisingly small overlap.

Measures of material hardship have only been used by a handful of scholars, such as Kurt Bauman (Bauman 1999, 2002; Carle, Bauman, and Short 2009), Sondra Beverly (Beverly 1999, 2000, 2001), Sandra Danziger (Danziger et al. 2000), Colleen Heflin (Heflin 2006), John Iceland (Iceland and Bauman 2007), Gesemia Nelson (Nelson 2011) and Luke Shaefer (Shaefer, Edin, and Talbert 2015; Shaefer and Gutierrez 2013; Shaefer and Ybarra 2012). Matthew Desmond has focused on one select form of material hardship, eviction (Desmond 2012, 2016; Desmond and Kimbro 2015). Compared to income-based measures of poverty, material hardship has remained a niche measure in part due to data limitations. Full-fledged material hardship questions in the vein of Mayer and Jencks (1989) do not appear regularly on any national survey. They do appear sporadically as special topical modules to the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and have appeared in targeted surveys such as the Women's Employment Survey

(Danziger, Sandra K. et al. 2000; Sullivan, Turner, and Danziger 2008) and in qualitative work (e.g. Edin and Lein 1997). Measures of food insecurity, although they were also developed as recently as the 1990s, have spawned a much larger literature (e.g. Coleman-Jensen et al. 2015, Gundersen and Ziliak 2015) and are available in a larger set of national surveys, such as the Current Population Survey, the American Housing Survey, the Panel Study on Income Dynamics, and others.

As in the United States, European poverty has primarily been assessed using various measures of income. However, it is worth noting that there is a parallel literature on material deprivation and social exclusion in Europe (Nolan and Whelan 2010). Kus, Nolan, and Whelan (2017) provide an overview of this literature and the development of these hardship and exclusion measures. While not the same as the Mayer and Jencks derived material hardship measures in the SIPP, both European material deprivation measures and US material hardship measures try to assess the material well-being of households. Brady, Oselin, and Blankenship (2016) among others have called for increased attention to material measures of well-being, calling them “relatively neglected” (ibid: 3), which is “unfortunate given the recent progress in conceptualizing and measuring material deprivation” (ibid: 4) both in Europe and in poverty research focused on developing countries. Research in material deprivation and social exclusion in Europe has, since its earliest days, also noted the poor fit between income poverty and material deprivation (Ringen 1988).

There are a number of advantages to using measures of material hardship. First, the idea of material hardship gets to the core of what most people mean by poverty. Rather than relying on income as a proxy for the ability to eat, live indoors, and enjoy basic utilities like electricity, heat, and water, it is possible to directly inquire about these matters. Second, material hardship

closely matches the preferred form of safety net delivery in the United States. Rather than giving cash directly to the non-elderly poor, the US social safety net is dominated by in-kind assistance like Medicaid or near-cash transfers such as food stamps, housing subsidies, and subsidies for heating, in addition to the geographically varying and non-profit based direct service provisions (Allard 2009). One function the US social safety net is currently not set up to fulfill is to deliver cash to poor households. Perhaps then, in addition to measures of income poverty, we should attempt to assess the well-being of the population in the very terms by which it is conceived of by policy makers: material well-being.

## **DATA AND MEASURES**

### *Data*

This article uses the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), a longitudinal survey representative of the non-institutionalized civilian population of the United States conducted by the US Census Bureau. The data are freely available to the public through the Census Bureau or the National Bureau of Economic Research. Panels in the SIPP vary in length, from as little as three years to as many as five years. Unlike many panel studies that interview subjects annually or biannually, the SIPP collects data from respondents every four months, thus enabling researchers to investigate sub-annual income and program use dynamics. This article relies on a pooled sample of all Adult Well-Being Topical Modules from the 1996 Panel through the 2008 Panel. This topical module was fielded five times, in 1998, 2003, 2005, 2010, and 2011. The sample is restricted to households yielding a sample of 160,253 observations. All analyses are weighted using the appropriate household weight. This is done because hardship is measured at the household level rather than the individual level. Households are defined as resource sharing

units, and many material hardships are similarly borne by an entire household (eg utility shutoffs) (Census Bureau 2014:3-1). All reported analyses are based on pooled samples between 1998-2011. Separate stability analyses that assess trends in material hardship between these years are reported in Appendix A and yield and overall picture of stability.

### *Measuring Material Hardship*

Because material hardship is inherently a multidimensional issue, researchers have struggled to find consensus on how best to communicate and summarize the various dimensions of material hardship. Three approaches have been used: indexes, scales, and subjective evaluation of individual criteria. Indexes are often a simple summation of a set of measured material hardships. This approach is widespread but risks ignoring or improperly weighting the severity of any particular form of hardship (e.g. the experience of being evicted is likely more impactful than having a phone disconnected). To construct scales, some approaches such as cluster analysis, correspondence analysis, latent class analysis and factor analysis have also been used to identify underlying associations between measures of material hardship. The most notable approach to examining an underlying structure of material hardship has been pursued by Heflin, Sandberg, and Rafail (2009) who use a confirmatory factory analysis to argue for the use of four categories of hardship: 1) health hardship, 2) food hardship, 3) bill paying hardship, and 4) housing hardship. I use a slightly modified versions of the approach identified by Heflin et al to summarize this potentially unwieldy list of hardships by counting households as experiencing any hardship if they fall into any of these four domains.

1. Health hardship: any item in this list marks a household as experiencing a health hardship
  - a. Unable to see a dentist due to cost
  - b. Unable to see a doctor due to cost
2. Food hardship: any two of the following five items mark a household as food insecure

- a. Food did not last and could not afford to buy more
  - b. Unable to afford balanced meals
  - c. Meal size cut due to financial constraints
  - d. Eating less than you should due to lack of money
  - e. Ever not eat for a whole day due to lack of money for food
- 3. Fiscal hardship: any item on this list marks a household as having bill paying hardship
  - a. Unpaid utility bills
  - b. Telephone disconnection due to nonpayment
  - c. Unable to pay essential expenses
  - d. Unable to pay rent or mortgage
- 4. Housing hardship: either item a or b counts as housing hardship
  - a. Housing quality: reporting 3 of 5 items counts as poor housing quality
    - i. Pests
    - ii. Leaking roof or ceiling
    - iii. Broken windows
    - iv. Nonfunctioning plumbing
    - v. Holes in the floor
  - b. Overcrowding, defined as having 1.5 or more people per room in a household.

Item 1, health hardship, differs slightly from the measure used by Heflin et al (2009).

They include a lack of public or private health insurance as a type of material hardship whereas I conceptualize health insurance as a type of non-monetary resource that households depend upon in order to access medical care. The questions measuring food insecurity in item 2 were developed by the US Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) and are in use across a number of major national surveys (Coleman-Jensen et al. 2015). The SIPP food insecurity questions are a shortened version of the full USDA food security measures and have been successfully benchmarked against the full USDA food security suite of questions (Shaefer and Gutierrez 2013). A household is counted as experiencing food insecurity if two or more questions are answered affirmatively.

Item 3, fiscal hardship, is the area of most contention in the literature. There is some disagreement on whether or not to consider measures of fiscal hardship, such as missed bills, as measures of material hardship. Nelson (2011), for example, does not include fiscal hardship arguing that a missed bill is not an actual material hardship such as a utility shutoff. In light of

recent scholarship examining the consequences of living with too little cash (Edin and Shaefer 2015), I do include measures of fiscal hardship. If a household is unable to pay rent or utility bills, there is clearly a greater demand for resources than the household can meet, and there may be other types of hardship or social isolation not captured in the SIPP hardship measures. Furthermore, such inadequate levels of cash puts households at risk of falling into debt traps the kind of which have been likened to a new sharecropping system (Seefeldt 2017). Even the logic behind the construction of the SPM argues that some cash—20% of income—not directly tied to material necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, and utilities is necessary to meet the vagaries of life (Johnson and Smeeding 2012). To be unable to pay essential bills shows that not only is a household unable to afford food, clothing, shelter, utilities, or some other necessity, such as childcare or transportation, but also that the twenty percent in unaccounted for cash the SPM factors in to its estimate of the poverty line is also not met.

Item 4, housing hardship, draws on the research of Nelson (2011) who adopts a measure of poor housing quality as responding affirmatively to 3 out of 5 items in 4a and defines overcrowding as having more than one person per room (ppr) in a household. Rooms here include all rooms, not just bedrooms. A report prepared for the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs suggests that 1.5 ppr is a more commonly used measure of overcrowding (Blake, Kellerson, and Simic 2007). Erring on the side of conservatively estimating overcrowding, I have adopted the 1.5 ppr threshold. For example, a two bedroom apartment with 5 people is not considered overcrowded because there are 4 rooms (bedroom 1, bedroom 2, kitchen, living area, while the bathroom is excluded from this count) and only 5 people resulting in 1.25 people per room, whereas 6 people in the same two bedroom apartment would push the household into the overcrowding category at 1.5 ppr.

As for the precision of these measures, the SIPP data do entail three challenges. First, as Nelson (2011) notes, the types of material hardship measured by the SIPP often impact the entire household, not individuals. It is not possible to know how the burden of material hardships is distributed within households. Second, the SIPP is limited to the civilian, non-institutionalized population thus making any analysis of the material well-being of the institutionalized population impossible. This is particularly worrisome given the current policies of mass incarceration. Third, while the SIPP deliberately oversamples the poor, the most unstably housed are difficult to keep in the sample, which is likely to result in strong downward bias in estimates of some forms of hardship, in particular eviction. Because of this concern, I do not include separate estimates of eviction. Note, however, that due to the skip patters in the topical module itself, any households that report eviction would also report difficulty paying housing bills and would thus be included in the measure of bill paying hardship.

### *Other Measures*

A variety of demographic and resource measures are used in this study. Race and ethnicity variables from the SIPP are recoded into 5 categories: non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic Asian, non-Hispanic Other, and Hispanic. The Hispanic group includes respondents from any race. The Other group includes multiracial individuals, Native Americans, and any others that did not clearly fall into one of the other four categories. Education is categorized to less than a high school diploma (including GED), a high school diploma, some college (including associate's degrees), a bachelor's degree, and more than a bachelors degree (masters, professional degrees, or doctorates). I also draw on variables for the gender of the

household head (male or female), age, and number of children under 18 years old in the household.

A number of different resource measures are used in this paper. Income poverty is measured by the Official Poverty Measure provided by the Census Bureau unless otherwise noted. OPM status is determined based on the mean income to poverty threshold ratio in the year prior to the measurement of material hardship. Households with means below one are counted as poor. Measures of total household income, earned income (that is, only income from labor market activity), and welfare transfers from all cash or near cash safety net programs (SNAP, UI, Social Security, SSI, Section 8) are measured for the year prior to the wave in which the Adult Well-Being Topical Module was fielded.

I also construct a decommodification index (the percent of household income not dependent upon labor market participation) to measure the impact of the safety net on a household in order to summarize the impact of the welfare state. All cash transfers such as SSI, SSDI, and TANF are included as well as quasi cash transfers such as SNAP and WIC. Decommodification rates are a commonly used metric in the measure of welfare state strength (Esping-Andersen 1990). These decommodification rates are calculated by taking the total of all cash and near cash transfers and dividing by total household income. Because near cash transfers such as the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) are included, it is possible for some households to have decommodification rates above 1 if they have particularly low cash income.

Measures of wealth and debt are found in the Assets and Liabilities Topical Module, which is not fielded in the same wave as the Adult Well-Being Topical Module, so I draw on measures of wealth and debt immediately before and after the wave of a given Adult Well-Being



Topical Module and average them. These measures include total household net worth, total household debt, and total household unsecured debt. All dollar figures have been adjusted to 2017 dollars using the Consumer Price Index. I also include a measure of income instability, the coefficient of variance of total household income. The coefficient of variance is the mean income over the past year divided by the standard deviation, an increasingly common and parsimonious measure of income volatility (see Morduch and Schneider 2017).

## RESULTS

The empirical analyses begin with an exploration of the relationship between poverty and material hardship to determine how much they overlap in the general population. I then proceed to examine the relationship between material hardship and basic demographic characteristics (namely, race, education, age, and marital status) and, in a next step, available resources (namely, income, wealth, credit, and the welfare state). In a final set of analyses, a series of multinomial logistic regression models clarify the relationship between income and material hardship by delineating the independent contribution of household income to the risk of experiencing various forms of hidden hardship.

### *Poverty and Material Hardship*

Table 1 categorizes households by OPM poverty status and material hardship. It shows that, as suggested by earlier work based on non-nationally representative samples, there is a difference between households in income poverty and households in material hardship: 69.12% of households report neither material hardship nor income poverty (what I call economically secure), 5.48% reports income poverty without any material hardship (getting by), 6.04% report both income poverty and at least one material hardship (down and out), and 19.37% of

households are above the poverty line but report at least one type of material hardship (hidden hardship). It is worth noting that this segment of the population in hidden hardship is substantively larger than the percentage of households in income poverty. For every household below the poverty line, 1.7 households experience material hardship above the poverty line.

TABLE 1. HARDSHIP, POVERTY, AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

	Poor				
	Has Hardship		No Hardship		Total
	Hidden Hardship	Down and Out	Getting by	Economically Secure	
<i>All</i>	19.37%	6.04%	5.48%	69.12%	100%
<i>Race*</i>					
White	16.92%	3.80%	4.33%	74.96%	100%
Black	26.80%	14.05%	9.17%	49.98%	100%
Asian	14.99%	3.97%	7.52%	73.51%	100%
Other	28.88%	11.86%	6.17%	53.10%	100%
Hispanic	27.14%	11.86%	8.45%	52.56%	100%
<i>Education*</i>					
Less than high school	22.66%	14.69%	12.69%	49.96%	100%
High School	21.73%	6.98%	6.14%	65.15%	100%
Some college	22.17%	5.68%	4.61%	67.54%	100%
BA	13.47%	1.86%	2.76%	81.91%	100%
BA+	10.21%	0.93%	2.04%	86.82%	100%
<i>Age*</i>					
Head under 65	21.66%	6.94%	5.11%	66.28%	100%
Head over 65	10.78%	2.67%	6.84%	79.72%	100%
<i>Gender*</i>					
Male household head	18.00%	4.20%	4.00%	73.80%	100%
Female household head	20.70%	7.83%	6.92%	64.55%	100%
<i>Children*</i>					
No children in household	17.09%	4.30%	5.34%	73.27%	100%
Children in household	23.67%	9.32%	5.74%	61.27%	100%
<i>Marital status*</i>					
Married, spouse present	17.23%	2.79%	2.62%	77.36%	100%
Married, spouse absent	22.33%	11.21%	10.84%	55.62%	100%
Widowed	13.49%	4.64%	9.25%	72.62%	100%
Divorced	24.42%	8.79%	6.42%	60.37%	100%
Separated	28.97%	17.33%	9.78%	43.93%	100%
Never Married	22.56%	11.19%	9.18%	57.08%	100%

\* Statistically significant difference between hidden hardship and economically secure group using adjusted Wald test

### *Demographic Characteristics of Hidden Hardship*

Households in hidden hardship differ from both economically secure households and poor households in a variety of ways. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics of various demographic measures of these four groups. Black, Hispanic, and Other households are overrepresented in all categories save for the economically secure, all report hidden hardship levels over 25%, compared to 17% for white households. There is also a clear relationship between educational attainment and hardship category, with households heads with less than a college reporting hidden hardship rates of just over 20% compared to BA and BA+ household with hidden hardship rates of 13% and 10% respectively.

In general, households in hidden hardship are more likely to be younger, headed by a woman, have children, have more people total, and less likely to be married. Poor households that experience material hardship resemble households in hidden hardship while households that avoid material hardship, both above and below the poverty line, are older, much less likely to have children, and have smaller mean household sizes. Of households in hidden hardship, 88% have a household head under 65, and 42% have children in the household, compared to 75% and only 30% respectively for economically secure households.

TABLE 2. HOUSHEOLD RESOURCES

Standard errors in parentheses

	Poor				Total
	Has Hardship		No Hardship		
	Hidden Hardship	Down and Out	Getting by	Economically Secure	
Mean Total Household Income*	\$57,274.50 (282.75)	\$12,015.03 (88.82)	\$10,779.95 (83.93)	\$83,338.62 (232.78)	\$70,033.31 (181.90)
Mean Total Household Earned Income*	\$47,241.78 (291.22)	\$6,307.65 (102.85)	\$5,051.53 (98.45)	\$67,944.89 (242.56)	\$56,769.50 (185.62)
Mean Welfare State Transfers*	\$7,113.17 (69.99)	\$8,279.32 (91.28)	\$6,713.85 (85.92)	\$7,299.08 (37.87)	\$7,290.23 (30.37)
Mean Welfare State Transfers Excluding Social Security*	\$2,711.26 (42.07)	\$5,187.49 (70.15)	\$3,111.49 (62.77)	\$1,159.04 (15.58)	\$1,809.83 (14.85)
Median Net Worth*	\$17,155.00	\$841.50	\$6,038.50	\$118,079.50	\$72,100.00
Median Total Debt*	\$20,000.00	\$600.00	\$0.50	\$34,290.50	\$21,750.00
Median Unsecured Debt*	\$2,100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$900.00
Mean CV of Income*	0.2847 (0.00)	0.5214 (0.01)	0.4663 (0.01)	0.2165 (0.00)	0.2599 (0.00)
Mean Decommodification*	0.2082 (0.00)	1.3259 (0.15)	0.8947 (0.06)	0.1796 (0.00)	0.2879 (0.01)
Mean Decommodification Exclusive of Social Security*	0.0749 (0.00)	0.958 (0.13)	0.5014 (0.06)	0.0254 (0.00)	0.1132 (0.01)
Debt to Income Ratio*	0.1959 (0.01)	3.7116 (0.71)	6.8151 (1.35)	0.1073 (0.00)	0.6561 (0.08)

\* Statistically significant difference between hidden hardship and economically secure group using adjusted Wald test

### *Household Resources*

To further understand the profile of households in hidden hardship, Table 2 reports different kinds of resources available to these households. I begin with a comparison of the overall level and types of incomes. Of course, since the poverty threshold applied here to identify hidden hardship is based on income, a relationship between income and hidden hardship is given by definition. I return to a discussion of the impact of setting the poverty threshold at different income levels in the next section. Still, there is a relationship between income and hardship above the poverty line as household in hidden hardship have a mean annual income of approximately \$57,000 whereas the economically secure have a mean annual income of over \$83,000. The mean household income for households in hidden hardship is more than \$25,000 less than the mean annual household income of economically secure households. Poor households, due to the definition of income poverty, have considerably lower incomes than either group. Welfare transfers are highest for poor families in hardship, similar for households in hidden hardship and poor households without hardship, and lowest for the economically secure. For the two oldest categories, poor without hardship and the economically secure, the bulk of welfare state transfers appears to be from the Social Security program. Decommodification rates, both inclusive of and exclusive of social security, show that hidden hardship households have generally low rates of support from the welfare state and tend to resemble economically secure households despite their material hardships.

Measures of net worth and credit show that households in hidden hardship are generally less wealthy than economically secure households, and at the mean have a net worth similar to poor households that avoid hardship. While economically secure households may have more total debt than those in hidden hardship, the later have a higher mean load of unsecured debt,



such as credit card debt, and higher unsecured debt to income ratios. Levels of unsecured debt are lower for income poor households, but the unsecured debt to income ratios are highest there due to lower incomes. The mean CV of income measures income instability and shows that poor households have much more unstable incomes than non-poor households, but again households in hidden hardship have less stable incomes than the economically secure. In general, households in hidden hardship earn less, have less wealth, receive less government support, have less stable incomes, and more debt than economically secure households. On some measures, such as net worth, and lack of health insurance, they resemble some segments of the income poor population.

TABLE 3. HARDSHIP BY PERCENTAGE OF FEDERAL POVERTY LINE

	Income poor	Hidden Hardship	Distribution By Official Poverty Measure				
			100-150% OPM	150-200% OPM	200-300% OPM	300-400% OPM	400%+ OPM
Any hardship	23.77%	76.24%	16.10%	13.76%	19.85%	11.66%	14.87%
Health Hardship	22.17%	77.82%	17.01%	14.56%	20.55%	11.81%	13.89%
Doctor	23.98%	76.03%	17.79%	14.85%	20.15%	10.94%	12.30%
Dentist	22.17%	77.83%	16.86%	14.76%	20.59%	11.92%	13.70%
Food hardship	31.58%	68.43%	18.94%	13.86%	17.73%	8.40%	9.50%
Fiscal hardship	25.67%	74.33%	16.49%	14.07%	19.63%	11.12%	13.02%
Essential expenses	26.09%	73.90%	16.61%	14.24%	19.40%	11.04%	12.61%
Rent or mortgage	28.27%	71.74%	16.88%	14.22%	19.21%	10.34%	11.09%
Utility bill	28.25%	71.75%	16.96%	14.31%	19.36%	10.39%	10.73%
Phone disconnection	33.49%	66.52%	17.00%	14.98%	17.38%	8.59%	8.57%
Housing Hardship	32.18%	67.81%	17.88%	13.26%	16.63%	8.39%	11.65%
Housing quality	29.79%	70.20%	17.06%	12.81%	16.57%	9.71%	14.05%
Overcrowding	38.56%	61.44%	19.71%	14.41%	16.26%	5.09%	5.97%

### *The Poverty Line and Hidden Hardship*

One reasonable response to these findings is that the OPM threshold may simply be set too low. Many social safety net programs recognize this issue and use some multiplier of the OPM as an eligibility guideline. For example, to be eligible for SNAP, a household generally has to be under 130% of the poverty line (Center for Budget and Policy Priorities 2016). Table 3 shows each category of material hardship broken down by poor and hidden hardship, and then further breaks down the distribution of hardship rates for each item in the hardship index described above by various fractions of the poverty line. In every type of material hardship, the majority of households that experience material hardship are in hidden hardship. This ranges from as little as 61% for overcrowding to as high as 77% for health hardships. Looking at the distribution by percentages of the OPM, it is clear that households in hardship do not merely cluster right above the poverty line. The percentage of households experiencing various types of hardship in the 100-150% of OPM category often exceed the open ended 400%+ of OPM category by a handful of percentage points. The normative experience of material hardship in the United States, across all types of material hardship, is in a household above the poverty line. The combination of income poverty and material hardship is the exception, not the rule. To focus only on material hardship that takes place below the poverty line is to miss majority of material suffering in the United States.

How can it be that any household earning over 400% of the poverty line, nearly six figures, struggles to make ends meet? Mayer (1993) proposes a simple theoretical model to explain material hardship: when material demands exceed available resources, hardship occurs. The SIPP contains data on available resources, but the material demands on a households, such as utility bills, housing costs, transportation costs, and the like, are not directly measured. Since

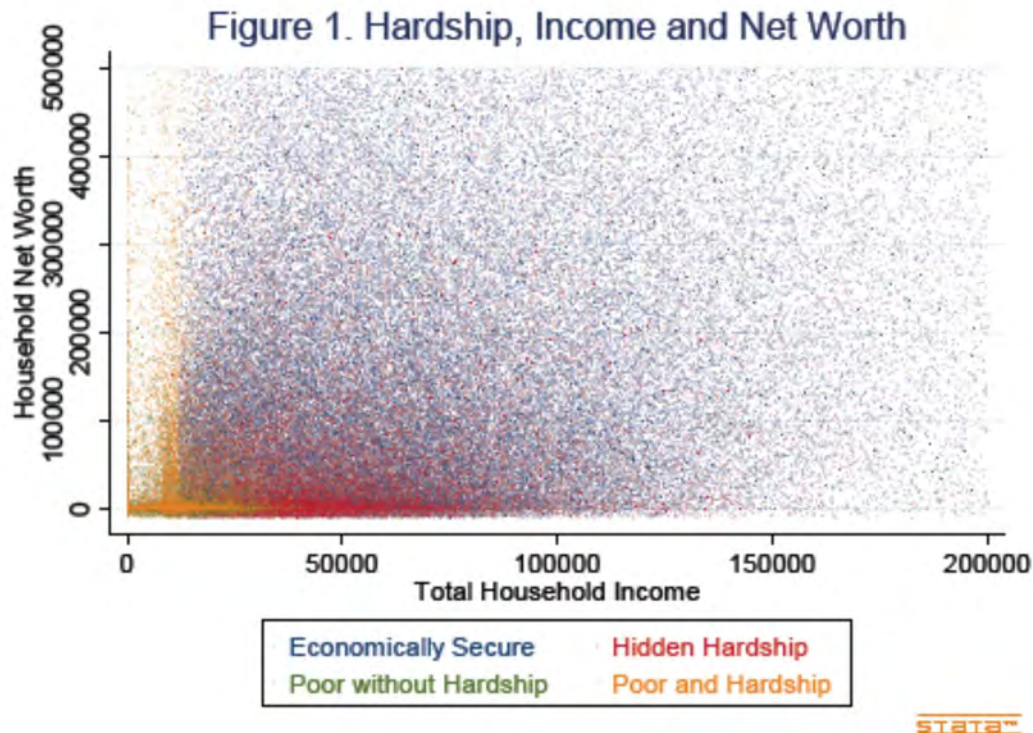
the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, American households are increasingly bearing the brunt of risk as other institutions, such as employers and the state, shift risk on to them (Hacker 2006). Perhaps as a consequence demands on household resources are more varied than previously imagined.

### *Regression results*

To estimate the separate contribution of different demographic and socio-economic characteristics to the experience of hidden material hardship, I apply multinomial logistic regression analysis. Before doing so, I visually examine the relationship between hidden hardship and the two most fundamental economic resources of households: income and net worth. Figure 1 is a scatterplot of household income and net worth with different colors indicating poverty and hardship status. Most of the sample is clustered in an inverse “U” shape between zero and \$100,000 income and slight negative net worth and about \$150,000 in net worth. This figure excludes household with a net worth above half a million dollars or below \$-10,000 or an income above \$200,000 so more clearly focus on the bulk of the population. With these restrictions, 81% of households are included. Poor households with hardship (orange) and without hardship (green) are clearly clustered at the bottom of the income distribution, but with a surprising variation in net worth. Despite that variation, most household net worth clusters around zero. Moving up the income distribution, orange fades to red, indicating households in material hardship above the poverty line. Intermixed throughout are blue dots indicating economically secure households. While additional household resources help, there is no immediately discernable relationship between household resources and hidden hardship. The red

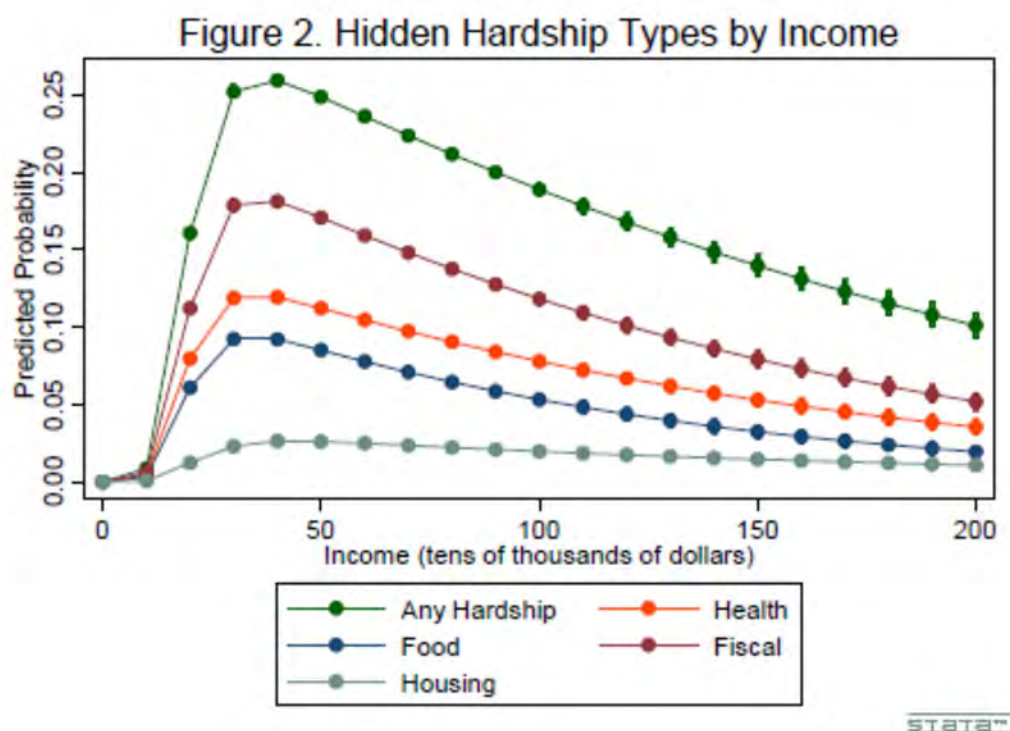


dots are marbled throughout the blue ones; hidden hardship is truly hidden when relying on standard indicators of economic resources.



Multinomial logistic regressions examine five outcomes: any hidden hardship, hidden health hardships, hidden food hardships, hidden fiscal hardships, and hidden housing hardships. The reference groups for these multinomial logistic regressions are the corresponding economically secure group which avoids both income poverty and the material hardship in question. Control variables include demographic factors (race, education, gender, presence of children in household, marital status, age, age squared, number of people in household), and household resources (safety net transfers exclusive of Social Security, total household cash income, CV of income, health insurance status, net worth, and unsecured debt). Full regression results are shown in Table 5, in the appendix. However, since odds and odds-ratios should not be

directly compared across models (Mood 2010), I report adjusted predictions (Williams 2012) of these types of hardship by representative values of income in Figure 2.



As income increases, the predicted probability of experiencing a given type of hidden material hardship first rises and then falls. This initial increase in hidden hardship is due to a definitional issue: low income households are by definition poor and thus by definition not in hidden hardship. The predicted probability of experiencing any type of hidden hardship peaks between about \$25,000 and \$50,000 of annual income and then begins to drop as income rises for most types of hardship. Both the catch all category of all hardship and fiscal hardship appear to be the most sensitive to increased income. Health and food hardships do decrease as income

risks, but the slopes are considerably more flat than those for fiscal hardship or any hardship. The slope for hidden housing hardship is essentially flat, meaning that increased income has little bearing on a household's predicted probability of experiencing housing hardships. Perhaps this is due to the difficulty of moving to less crowded housing, changing the composition of a household, or the cost of household repairs.

It is worth emphasizing here that increased income, once accounting for various demographic and resource variation, is related to material hardship above the poverty line, but that this is of course not a causal story. Perhaps the most important part of the story told by Figure 2 is that there does not appear to be any clear income cutoff within the realm of hidden hardship. As a result, a social safety net based on the assumption of a clear line above which households are able to meet their needs is not a social safety net based in empirical reality.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Material hardship and income poverty provide different understandings of the well-being of US households. While only 11.5% of households are categorized as poor in this sample, 25% experience material hardship. Hardship above the poverty line, hidden hardship, makes up 19% of all households. Put another way, of the nearly 25% of households that report any material hardship, over 75% of them are above the poverty line. Hardships reported by these households are hidden by our reliance on the poverty line itself, and will be obscured by any measure of poverty that does not incorporate material hardship as a component of the definition of poverty. The existence of hidden hardship demonstrates that not only is our definition of poverty lacking, but that the US social safety net—a welfare state targeted to address only those in need—is not reaching the bulk of the population experiencing material hardship precisely because because it

is predicated on a conception of poverty that bears little relationship to the material conditions faced by American households.

All measures of income poverty contain within them the implicit view that one should be able to make ends meet, to be able to secure basic goods and services, if one falls above the poverty line. This normative component of income poverty measures ends up obscuring the very material reality it attempts to measure, creating a situation in which a significant portion of the population falls into material hardship largely unnoticed.

The evidence presented in this paper also points towards a number of questions that await future investigation. First, a closer examination of the geography of hidden hardship is needed. Given the spatially concentrated nature of the social safety net (Allard 2009) and the broad shift towards suburban rather than urban poverty (Kneebone and Garr 2010), trying to better understand where households in hidden hardship live is a necessary step in determining how best to meet the needs of this population. A next step in a spatial direction also invites questions about the political implications of hidden hardship. Does the experience of material hardship lead to any particular type of political engagement or non-engagement? Given how geographically sensitive the US political system is, it is possible that even a weak relationship between hidden hardship and political engagement could have outsized consequences. In order to address some of these next steps and unresolved questions, additional data may need to be collected. The SIPP does not ask any questions related to political engagement. As a result, scholars may need to find ways of assessing material hardship using fewer measures of hardship (such as food insecurity alone) on other datasets. Furthermore, nearly all of the qualitative study of material hardship takes place on samples drawn from explicitly income poor or recently income poor households. It is reasonable to suspect that some of the qualitative results for middle and

upper middle class households may differ considerably. Indeed, the findings presented here may call for a qualitative study of the experience of hidden hardship to establish its importance as a social problem, especially among households far above the official poverty line.

The data source for this paper, the SIPP, is deliberately designed to capture the experiences of lower-income Americans and is used extensively in poverty research, often producing estimates of poverty, unemployment and the like that are more conservative or lower than other nationally representative surveys (Czajka and Denmead 2008). It is possible then that the SIPP may report similarly conservative estimates of the prevalence of material hardship compared to other national surveys. On the other hand, if the source of the conservative estimates of income poverty in the SIPP have to do with the measures of income themselves, then it is possible that the SIPP provides an overestimate of hidden hardship. Only implementing full batteries of material hardship measures in other established national surveys will provide clarity on this matter. The results of the analyses reported here strongly suggest that doing so, as part of a wider shift away from unidimensional definitions of income poverty and towards multidimensional assessments, is important.

The policy challenge presented by hidden hardship strikes at the core logic of the US welfare state. As a liberal welfare state, the US has traditionally used targeted, means tested programs focused on poverty alleviation at the very bottom of the income ladder (Esping-Andersen 1990). Over time, anti-poverty efforts have increasingly become hidden in the tax code (Howard 1997; Mettler 2011), and funneled through non-profit organizations (Allard 2009). Since 1996, the demise of cash welfare has resulted in the creation of a group of households disconnected from both the welfare state and labor market (Danziger 2010) resulting in the

existence of extreme poverty in the United States (Shaefer and Edin 2013) all the while non-income based forms of welfare spending continue to rise (Kenworthy 2014).

The existence of hidden hardship calls into question the current, exclusive focus on the poorest Americans via targeted, means tested social assistance programs. While households below the poverty line do have high hardship rates (52%), the bulk of households with hardship live above the poverty line (75%). Means-tested programs that depend upon the poverty line as a cutoff point will, by definition, fail to assist households in hidden hardship. Furthermore, existing social safety net programs are difficult to access in a timely manner (Seefeldt 2017) thus making them of little relevance to households with inconsistent incomes that may occasionally fall below the poverty line for small periods of time.

The social policy problem is intertwined with a broader political concern. Poverty, broadly defined, is the result of the distribution of power in an advanced capitalist society (Brady 2009). If the existence of hidden hardship indicates the failure of the consumer-credit fueled attempt to avoid the distributional crisis of capitalism (Krippner 2011; Seefeldt 2017), we will be confronted with such a crisis again, perhaps a far more dire one given the rapid advance of the global climate crisis. Indeed, there are already some qualitative indications of these questions surfacing via the politics of resentment and far right political movements (Hochschild 2016). If Sen (1999) and Simmons (2015) are right, and our primary concern about poverty is whether or not human beings have access to the resources necessary to live the kinds of lives they value, and that politics in the modern era is fundamentally about securing these vital resources, such widespread material hardship in the United States calls into question not just the daily lived freedom of the people in these households, but may suggest the failure of the state to create and maintain the expected social conditions of the population.

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## APPENDIX

TABLE 4. HARDSHIP OVER TIME

	1998	2003	2005	2010	2011	Total
Hidden Hardship	18.97%	17.31%	18.78%	20.94%	20.64%	19.37%
Poor and hardship	5.56%	5.32%	5.68%	6.53%	7.00%	6.04%
Poor without hardship	4.83%	5.43%	4.85%	6.15%	6.00%	5.48%
Economically secure	70.65%	71.94%	70.69%	66.37%	66.36%	69.12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Health Hardship	10.42%	9.93%	11.07%	12.28%	12.65%	11.31%
Hidden Health Hardship	8.23%	7.78%	8.71%	9.47%	9.69%	8.80%
Food Hardship	9.05%	8.14%	8.99%	10.94%	11.47%	9.76%
Hidden Food Hardship	5.94%	5.50%	6.16%	7.71%	7.89%	6.68%
Fiscal Hardship	16.68%	15.46%	17.21%	19.06%	19.30%	17.59%
Hidden Fiscal Hardship	12.72%	11.48%	12.80%	14.15%	14.09%	13.08%
Housing Hardship	3.26%	2.69%	2.72%	2.54%	2.67%	2.77%
Hidden Housing Hardship	2.22%	1.89%	1.94%	1.65%	1.72%	1.88%
Mean Hardship Count	0.59 (0.01)	0.56 (0.01)	0.62 (0.01)	0.69 (0.01)	0.70 (0.01)	0.63 (0.00)
Mean Hardship Count if Any Hardship	2.40 0.02	2.48 0.02	2.52 0.02	2.51 0.02	2.55 0.02	2.50 0.01
Mean Hardship Count if Hidden Hardship	2.28 (0.02)	2.35 (0.03)	2.39 (0.02)	2.40 (0.02)	2.44 (0.02)	2.37 (0.01)
Mean Hardship Count if Hardship and Poor	2.81 (0.04)	2.89 (0.05)	2.95 (0.04)	2.89 (0.04)	2.88 (0.04)	2.88 (0.02)

When examining hardship rates over time, between 1998 and 2011, there is surprisingly little variation. Table 4 reports type of hardship over time as well as hardship rates above the poverty line. Across kinds of hardship, both in total and above the poverty line, there is a vague “U” shape in which hardship rates decline slightly in the early 2000s and rise again in the aftermath of the Great Recession. It is possible that only examining hardship through a dichotomous variable might be obscuring some substantive differences in the type of material or depth of hardship. Table 4 also reports mean hardship counts households that report any hardship

by poverty status. When looked at through this lens, the depth of hardship below the poverty line rises from 1998-2005 and falls slightly in 2010 and 2011. This could have something to do with increased social spending in the aftermath of the Great Recession, or a change in the composition of the income poor (more families with a variety of assets upon which to draw from) during that time. In contrast, the mean hardship count for households in hardship above the poverty line rises at each measure from 1998-2011. The depth of hidden hardship has increased over time, consistent with the shifting of various forms of risk onto households.

TABLE 5: MULTINOMIAL LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS

		Any Hardship	Fiscal Hardship	Food Hardship	Health Hardship	Housing Hardship
		b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
		Hidden Hardship				
Race	White (ref cat)					
	Black	1.432***	1.549***	1.391***	0.866***	1.203**
		0.038	0.045	0.054	0.033	0.086
	Asian	0.757***	0.556***	1.028	0.623***	1.447**
		0.044	0.042	0.092	0.052	0.172
	Other	1.701***	1.654***	2.026***	1.295***	2.704***
		0.093	0.099	0.145	0.092	0.289
	Hispanic	1.075*	0.945	1.217***	0.765***	1.654***
		0.034	0.035	0.054	0.033	0.117
Education	<HS (ref cat)					
	HS	0.858***	0.961	0.789***	0.907*	0.749***
		0.025	0.032	0.033	0.035	0.052
	Some college	0.905***	1.017	0.773***	1.063	0.705***
		0.026	0.034	0.032	0.041	0.051
	BA	0.651***	0.685***	0.523***	0.788***	0.616***
		0.024	0.029	0.03	0.039	0.058
	BA+	0.620***	0.606***	0.514***	0.737***	0.748**
		0.029	0.035	0.039	0.047	0.083
	Female	1.259***	1.298***	1.238***	1.274***	1.021
Marital Status		0.023	0.027	0.035	0.031	0.054
	Children in household	0.984	1.192***	1.001	0.866***	0.676***
		0.028	0.039	0.044	0.033	0.049
	Married, spouse present (ref cat)					
	Married spouse absent	1.267**	1.293**	1.298*	0.94	1.114
		0.097	0.109	0.137	0.095	0.217
	Widowed	1.191***	1.122*	1.125*	1.066	1.441***
		0.045	0.051	0.067	0.056	0.143
	Divorced	1.491***	1.359***	1.513***	1.205***	1.631***
		0.04	0.042	0.062	0.043	0.126
	Separated	1.625***	1.628***	1.533***	1.114	1.705***
		0.082	0.088	0.104	0.073	0.219
	Never married	1.330***	1.168***	1.403***	1.041	1.504***
		0.04	0.04	0.063	0.041	0.13
	Age	1.056***	1.076***	1.046***	1.072***	1.038***
		0.004	0.005	0.006	0.005	0.011
	Age squared	0.999***	0.999***	0.999***	0.999***	1.000***
		0	0	0	0	0
	Total number of people in this household	1.231***	1.155***	1.150***	1.132***	1.605***
		0.012	0.013	0.017	0.015	0.031
	Welfare State Transfers (thousands of dollars)	1.030***	1.026***	1.031***	1.019***	1.015***
		0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.003



	Total household income (thousands of dollars)	0.992*** 0	0.990*** 0	0.989*** 0.001	0.991*** 0.001	0.994*** 0.001
	CV of income	1.609*** 0.051	1.698*** 0.061	1.502*** 0.07	1.478*** 0.06	1.312** 0.113
	Lacked health insurance	2.001*** 0.048	1.619*** 0.043	1.546*** 0.054	2.822*** 0.084	1.461*** 0.1
	Net worth	0.998*** 0	0.998*** 0	0.998*** 0	0.998*** 0	0.999*** 0
	Unsecured debt	1.002*** 0	1.002*** 0	1 0	1.001* 0	1 0
	Constant	0.065*** 0.006	0.032*** 0.004	0.035*** 0.005	0.023*** 0.003	0.004*** 0.001
	Down and out					
Race	White (ref cat)					
	Black	1.459*** 0.103	1.516*** 0.112	1.379*** 0.107	0.873 0.073	1.334* 0.156
	Asian	0.655* 0.122	0.488*** 0.1	0.802 0.171	0.631* 0.135	1.039 0.287
	Other	2.236*** 0.34	2.152*** 0.336	2.335*** 0.374	1.677** 0.281	2.910*** 0.627
	Hispanic	1.429*** 0.124	1.261* 0.115	1.696*** 0.161	1.014 0.1	2.277*** 0.272
	<HS (ref cat)					
	HS	0.743*** 0.049	0.848* 0.059	0.725*** 0.053	0.721*** 0.056	0.718** 0.074
	Some college	0.750*** 0.054	0.866 0.065	0.645*** 0.051	0.846* 0.07	0.688*** 0.078
	BA	0.475*** 0.067	0.477*** 0.072	0.457*** 0.074	0.573*** 0.09	0.506** 0.109
	BA+	0.353*** 0.077	0.367*** 0.086	0.277*** 0.07	0.406*** 0.099	0.450* 0.176
Education	Female	1.188** 0.073	1.221** 0.08	1.116 0.076	1.275*** 0.091	0.877 0.087
	Children in household	1.013 0.125	1.322* 0.167	0.926 0.122	0.8 0.107	0.535*** 0.087
	Married, spouse present (ref cat)					
	Married spouse absent	2.782*** 0.634	2.727*** 0.642	2.775*** 0.654	2.127** 0.544	2.399** 0.728
	Widowed	1.789*** 0.195	1.735*** 0.206	1.837*** 0.229	1.299* 0.169	2.240*** 0.402
	Divorced	1.971*** 0.197	1.751*** 0.182	1.898*** 0.21	1.513*** 0.167	2.007*** 0.285
	Separated	2.126*** 0.315	1.973*** 0.299	1.975*** 0.308	1.478* 0.236	2.041*** 0.4
	Never married	1.692*** 0.172	1.420*** 0.15	1.694*** 0.19	1.183 0.134	1.693*** 0.249
	Age	1.089*** 0.012	1.098*** 0.013	1.103*** 0.013	1.109*** 0.014	1.052** 0.018

	Age squared	0.999*** 0	0.999*** 0	0.999*** 0	0.999*** 0	0.999*** 0
	Total number of people in this household	37.092*** 4.573	33.797*** 4.185	33.147*** 4.102	32.843*** 4.12	50.587*** 6.345
	Welfare State Transfers (thousands of dollars)	1.054*** 0.005	1.055*** 0.005	1.052*** 0.005	1.042*** 0.005	1.045*** 0.006
	Total household income (thousands of dollars)	0.413*** 0.012	0.413*** 0.012	0.413*** 0.012	0.415*** 0.012	0.411*** 0.012
	CV of income	1.312* 0.145	1.406** 0.156	1.073 0.123	1.133 0.13	1.045 0.138
	Lacked health insurance	1.728*** 0.127	1.473*** 0.111	1.308*** 0.103	2.470*** 0.198	1.258* 0.131
	Net worth	0.997*** 0	0.997*** 0	0.997*** 0	0.998*** 0	0.997*** 0.001
	Unsecured debt	1.005* 0.002	1.005** 0.002	1.002 0.002	1.005** 0.002	1.002 0.002
	Constant	156.699*** 64.075	100.663*** 42.265	82.140*** 35.683	47.903*** 21.604	24.722*** 13.315
Getting by						
Race	White (ref cat)					
	Black	1.144 0.079	1.163* 0.078	1.125 0.074	1.155* 0.076	1.117 0.072
	Asian	1.029 0.182	1 0.171	0.985 0.168	0.941 0.161	0.952 0.162
	Other	1.256 0.196	1.332 0.199	1.354* 0.199	1.383* 0.2	1.369* 0.194
	Hispanic	1.331*** 0.115	1.352*** 0.113	1.296** 0.107	1.354*** 0.111	1.324*** 0.107
	<HS (ref cat)					
	HS	0.754*** 0.047	0.757*** 0.046	0.773*** 0.046	0.792*** 0.047	0.785*** 0.046
Education	Some college	0.753*** 0.052	0.749*** 0.05	0.782*** 0.051	0.774*** 0.051	0.773*** 0.05
	BA	0.642*** 0.08	0.654*** 0.08	0.642*** 0.079	0.641*** 0.079	0.648*** 0.079
	BA+	0.736 0.136	0.690* 0.126	0.706 0.129	0.687* 0.126	0.665* 0.12
	Female	1.139* 0.068	1.109 0.064	1.1 0.062	1.074 0.061	1.078 0.06
	Children in household	0.927 0.117	0.898 0.111	1.021 0.124	1.022 0.124	1.024 0.121
	Married, spouse present (ref cat)					
	Married spouse absent	2.676***	2.663***	2.531***	2.535***	2.470***



	0.599	0.585	0.557	0.548	0.533
Widowed	1.343**	1.385***	1.349**	1.439***	1.373***
	0.135	0.135	0.13	0.138	0.13
Divorced	1.292**	1.356**	1.319**	1.354**	1.329**
	0.128	0.13	0.124	0.128	0.123
Separated	1.377*	1.486**	1.365*	1.405*	1.383*
	0.209	0.219	0.198	0.201	0.194
Never married	1.443***	1.476***	1.395***	1.440***	1.368**
	0.147	0.146	0.135	0.14	0.13
Age	1.009	1.019	1.011	1.017	1.022*
	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Age squared	1.000**	1.000***	1.000***	1.000***	1.000***
	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of people in this household	34.161***	34.145***	33.142***	33.182***	31.863***
	4.188	4.191	4.065	4.05	3.882
Welfare State Transfers (thousands of dollars)	1.016**	1.019***	1.021***	1.024***	1.024***
	0.005	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004
Total household income (thousands of dollars)	0.414***	0.414***	0.415***	0.414***	0.415***
	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012
CV of income	1.232	1.142	1.134	1.134	1.053
	0.133	0.123	0.121	0.121	0.112
Lacked health insurance	1.287***	1.197*	1.159*	1.159*	1.112
	0.098	0.087	0.083	0.083	0.078
Net worth	1	1	1	1	1
	0	0	0	0	0
Unsecured debt	1	1	1.002	1.001	1.002
	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002
Constant	1133.632***	1058.128***	1329.251***	1359.660***	1378.794***
	455.767	419.661	522.704	530.732	536.403
Economically secure (ref cat)					
n	122123	122123	122123	122123	122123



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