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Speaking truth about policy targets: The intersection of race and gender in the Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act.

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List of abbreviations:

ARRA: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
BLS: Bureau of Labor Statistics
CPS: Current Population Survey
EITC: Earned Income Tax Credit
NELP: National Employment Law Project
SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
TANF: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
UI: Unemployment Insurance
UIMA: Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act
US: United States
US GAO: US Government Accountability Office
WIC: The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

1 Introduction

1.1 The problem: Why look at target construction in the UIMA?

Social policy in broad terms is about distribution of common resources (Esping-Andersen 2002, 12) to minimize risk in different stages of the lives of individuals. The welfare state as a concept is understood by Esping-Andersen as institutions providing public social provisions to individuals, such as a social insurance systems, social assistance and universal entitlements. Social policy is defined slightly broader as *“a contested public discourse involving political choices and administrative decisions about the appropriate division between public and private responsibility for our individual and collective wellbeing.”* (Marston 2004, 1). With the core issue being the debate of the different conceptions on the proper amount and form of state intervention, Marston shows that social policy issues are understood through discursively mediated individual and institutional factors, a practice of both articulating and promoting policy solutions (Marston 2004, 1).

The distribution is determined in political processes, elegantly expressed as a matter of *“who gets what, when, and how”* (Lasswell 1950). To answer these questions, social science researchers have analytically approached policy problems, finding themselves not necessarily solving the problem in question, but redefining them by presenting new angles to the never-ending array of multiple conceptions. In this school of thought, Aaron Wildavsky (1979) is a significant contributor suggesting that we might be better off judging policies *“not by whether they promise final solutions – no interesting problem can be solved once and for all – but by the greater interest of the new problems to which they lead.”* Wildavsky’s points are to be understood against a theoretical understanding that views attempts to solve social problem as dominated by efforts to keep them small, as in simple and one-dimensional, since less can be done about a problem as it grows in scope. Keeping a problem small streamlines the problem definition and thus creating incentives to eliminate further problematizing and the inclusion of complicated intersections. An example of how this is part of the reality in American policy analysis is the questioning of governmental agencies to reduce the availability of datasets on unemployment broken down by gender, ultimately a pragmatic decision since the dataset in question was not used to an extent that would justify its existence. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) who tracks the American labor force discontinued data on

unemployment by gender in 2006, to reinstate it only after intense campaigning by leading feminist economists (Hartmann 2009). Subscribing to the ambitious ideal of Wildavsky's (1979) "*Speaking truth to power*" this paper hopes to contribute with pieces of truth while realizing that we, as analysts, do and should, lack power to do anything beyond defining the problem in a way that decision makers are able to build upon in the following steps in the policy process, given that we operate in a parliamentary democracy (Wildavsky 1979).

In the shaping of policy, research has found that some voices are listened to, while others risk being excluded in the policy process. This argument builds on the work of Wildavsky (1979) who suggests that problem definitions are kept narrow in order to generate politically viable solutions for decision makers. Who and what gets to influence the policy process is determined by the social construction of whose experience is important. The result of the distribution of voices has implications for power relations, which in turn risk being perpetuated in policy design (Schneider and Sidney 2009). Target construction is therefore closely linked to policy problem definition, where the definition (and who articulates it) determines what the agenda will look like. The varieties among the policy outcomes stem from socially constructed target groups, which affect individuals and their relation to program design and its outcome (Lascoumes and Le Gales 2007; Schneider and Ingram 2006). As a consequence, groups in society experience variation in policy outcome depending on their relationship to welfare institutions. An example of an activity in the welfare state is income protection in times of unemployment.

Feminist analysis of welfare states and their policies have found persistent patterns across different types of welfare states, namely a willingness to determine benefits by attachment to the labor force. Esping-Andersen (2002) calls this "welfare capitalism" in an attempt to define the institutional link between social security and labor force participation. This affects women differently than men, since the former to a larger extent are involved in unpaid household labor, at the expense of hours in paid labor (Daly and Rake 2003; Esping-Andersen 2002; Orloff 1996).

The discussion of possible inequalities in the distribution of welfare policies raises questions whether it's possible to identify circumstances that help us understand why some groups benefit from a policy while others are not. Powell (2010) theorizes this question by pointing out racial inequalities in American society and the effects on public policies. Arguing that there are structural

inequalities imply that neutral policies applied to problems where these structural inequalities exist result in differences in outcome. There is an identified gap in knowledge that acknowledges the intersection of race and gender and biases in public policy design, which is why this study wishes to build on existing knowledge of target group construction, and apply the theoretical framework on a case where race and gender possibly interact in shaping policy reform.

Racial economic vulnerability is expressed in several ways throughout the American society. While poverty levels are heavily marked by race and gender (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor and Smith 2010) even the the more well to do groups in society are experiencing different positions depending on race and gender structures. The presence of a black middle class is a relatively recent historical development. Its members are highly dependent on their own income, due to a lack of financial and property assets. In economic downturns such as the current recession, these characteristics increase economic vulnerability (Bowser 2007, 144-145). Black women are the first to be pushed out of the labor market whenever economies faces hard times, which neutralizes or undoes earlier progress made through anti-discrimination legislation (Amott and Matthaei 1981). The 2007-2009 Great Recession, was frequently labeled as a “Man-cession”, that is, a recession in which men were the primary victims. By taking a closer look at the patterns of unemployment, Grown and Tas (2010) show that this is a misleading and too simplistic conclusion. Across race, 2010 unemployment rates for blacks (15.8 percent) stands out against the rates for white and Americans (8.5 percent). Broken down by race and gender, unemployment rates show that both black men and black women have higher unemployment rates compared to white men and women. In 2010 the unemployment rate for white women was 7.3 percent. Among black women the percent unemployed was 13.2 percent. For men, white men’s unemployment of 8.5 percent while black men experience the highest unemployment of all groups, 16.5 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2011). These numbers show that there are groups of women who experience higher economic vulnerability in comparison to groups of men. Black womens’ unemployment is higher compared to both white men and women, which shows that a simple gender dichotomy does not provide us with the full picture.

The economic vulnerability of black women in an economic recession stresses the importance to critically review remedies such as public policies from a perspective that acknowledges the unique intersection of race and gender. Treated as separate concepts, they will not contribute to an accurate description of reality, and any attempt to study economic inequality will most likely describe the

experiences and patterns of white women. (Amott and Matthei 1991; Browne and Misra 2003; Collins 2005; Zinn and Dill 1996). Questions arise whether policies employed to ameliorate the dire economic environment are responsive to the diversity of the work force, acknowledging that black women are differently situated, as they compared to white women have a longer history of labor force participation and different patterns of assets and family structures (Amott and Matthei 1981; Bowser 2007, 149; Solokoff, 1992, 95). The changes in the American Unemployment Insurance that are a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 is a suitable example for a case study of these dynamics.

The Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act (UIMA) is a contemporary example of a program that allows us to study the role of target population construction. The unemployment insurance reform, part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), enacted by President Barack Obama in February 2009, aims at increasing eligibility and expanding the economic support system available to American workers. States receive funding contingent on the extent to which they implement changes to existing unemployment insurance programs. In this recent recession, a smaller share of women collected unemployment insurance, mainly due to lower earnings, shorter tenures (a result of greater family responsibilities that force women to leave employment) and greater likelihood of part-time employment (Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) 2010b). The ARRA, commonly referred to as the "Stimulus Package" and the component that include changes in eligibility requirements for unemployment insurance receipt, was broadly identified as being particularly women-friendly while at the same time generating notable mobilization among women's issues advocates and feminist economics scholars. (Hartmann 2006; Rampell 2009). In addition, the unemployment insurance reform is understood as a response to the "changing workforce", an update of a program designed in the 1930s to meet the needs of the workforce at that time (Emsellem, Stettner and Semidey 2007).

The ambition for this study is to contribute with knowledge on how public policies are designed in relation to target populations. Target populations are not created equal in relation to policies, thus it is reasonable to assume that there are biases to be found in public policies that ultimately alters the distribution of benefits. This study aims at, with the inclusion of a race and gender perspective, exploring the construction of target populations in the UIMA.

1.2 Outline

This paper wishes to make a contribution to a better understanding of how public policies work in relation to target groups. Using the American Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act (UIMA) enacted in 2009 the analysis consists of three parts, where the first is the determination of who is worst off in terms of labor force characteristics that determine eligibility. These results will provide us with a hunch regarding who will potentially benefit from the reform. Second, looking at the policy debate, it is possible to understand how target groups are constructed through the interpretation of the intersection of gender and race. Third, by comparing the findings from step one and two, conclusions are drawn about who will most likely benefit from the reform. While the problem is defined above, the following section outlines the political and social context, and serves as a background to the study. It is followed by a review of existing literature on target construction in social policy and the intersection of race and gender, which constitutes the analytical framework. A methodological discussion links prior knowledge to the empirical chapter 5 which presents the findings. The findings are discussed using the analytical framework in chapter 6, which leads up to the conclusions in the final chapter.

2 The context

To provide further context for understanding the impact of the design of the unemployment insurance system the following section will briefly examine the political and social context in the United States. The presentation of the political context is followed by differences in labor market outcomes, especially paying attention to the intersection of race and gender. Finally, American unemployment insurance policy and the Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act is presented.

2.1 The political context

The expansion of unemployment insurance in the United States, by offering additional funds to states that adjust their eligibility criteria to cover more workers, is a federal policy that incentivizes states to implement more generous eligibility criteria than the basic federal policy, which function as a minimum level. To study this reform, it is helpful to start with a broad overview of the political and institutional context. Politically, the United States incorporate some particular features that deserves attention. Variations in social policy are to large extents explained by institutional factors, such as how legislative power is distributed (Amenta, Bonasta and Caren 2001). Esping-Andersen's (2002) typologies of welfare states, distinguishes different systems with reference to three pillars of the welfare system: markets, families and governments, and the various extents to which they provide welfare services. Against this background, the American welfare system is a liberal welfare state as it relies primarily on the market for the provision of welfare services to individuals. Using Esping-Andersen's three-fold analytical approach to look at governmental programs, American programs are, compared to Scandinavian and continental European welfare models, relatively small. In addition, they are to greater extents characterized by control by means-testing and often involving a third party that further separates citizens from the government (Salomon 2002).

Research suggests that diversity in public policies among American states is a reflection of public opinion where more liberal states have more liberal policies (Erikson, Wright and McIver 1989). Allowing for such variation gives less emphasis to party affiliation and ideology in the shaping of social policy (Amenta, Bonasta and Caren 2001). At the same time, states function as policy laboratories, where adaption through the implementation of new policies or the abandonment of old ones, provides background for learning for other states, contributing to change and program diversity. In an attempt to understand under what circumstances decentralized power is more

beneficial than federal governance, Volden (2006) suggests that policy success is an important factor behind policy diffusion between states, where more successful policies have greater influence on other states than less successful ones.

2.2 The intersection of gender and race in social policy

It has been argued that race has had a notable impact in the shaping of the American welfare state, in a direction towards a weak and decentralized model. This is exemplified with how social security and UI denies benefits to domestic and agricultural workers, something that research argues is linked to political pressure from the South (Amenta, Bonasta and Caren 2001). Feminist scholars employing an institutional perspective adds to these conclusions in a discussion of the American welfare states and how it sustains a system of racial and gendered hierarchies by the mediation of power relationships between dominant (white males) and subordinate (women and people of color) groups (Quadagno 1990). A study examining institutionalization of race inequalities in the US welfare state finds that the generosity of support to black and white families differ. States with higher proportion of white single mothers have more generous support than states with greater proportion of black women. The conclusion drawn from this study is that social policy contributes to the reproduction of white privilege and black poverty (Moller 2002).

2.3 The intersection of gender and race in the labor market

To gain a comprehensive understanding of how unemployment insurance policy reform is relevant to issues of social justice, racial justice included, it is useful to highlight labor market outcomes that are connected to the determination of unemployment benefits. Labor market outcomes differ across race and gender, and challenge stereotypes assigned to black women. Focusing on white and black women and men, labor force participation has historically been higher among black women as well as for white men, but patterns of unemployment and unemployment insurance collection show disparities. In addition to higher unemployment rates, minorities tend to be unemployed for a longer periods of time compared to white men and women (Spalter-Roth and Lowenthal 2005). Regardless of whether unemployment, is structural, cyclical, short term or long term, unemployment insurance is the primary defense system (Blaustein 1993).

2.3.1 Labor force participation

Historically, black women have been participating in the labor market in greater numbers compared to white women (Amott and Matthaei 1991). Labor force participation is highest among white men. Black men have a slightly lower participation rate compared to white men, while labor force participation has traditionally been higher among black women than compared to white women. In the mid 1980s participation rates reached parity, with white women's participation rates notably being slightly higher in the 1990s (Altonji and Blank 1999). The higher participation rate among black women has been explained by a need to support families, which is linked to family patterns where black mothers often are the single or co-breadwinner due to black males' weak connection to the labor market and a greater number of single parent households among black families (Collins 2005). White women's lower labor force participation has traditionally been explained by marriage, children and the accompanying division of labor in the household where a male breadwinner provides income (England, Garcia and Richardsson 2003).

Recent data show that black women are more likely to work full time, when compared to white women, but also more likely to have been with their current employer for only a year or less (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2010a; 2010b). Collins (1991) argues that marriage for black women is seen as complimentary to workforce participation, rather than competing, as would be the case in a traditional male breadwinner model. While white men enjoy career boosts such as greater pay as they get married and have children, black men do not earn more as their wives work less. Employers do not equal black fathers with committed breadwinners (Glauber 2008) which suggests that black women in dual earner couples contribute to family earnings in greater extents than white women.

2.3.2 Earnings

It is interesting to note how black women's weekly wages almost reached parity with white women during the 1970s, only to see the gap between the groups widen again. Looking at annual earnings, the disparities are even greater (Altonji and Blank 1999). Looking at earnings across gender and race, white males earn more compared to other demographic groups, both sexes. In 2009, white women earned 77% of white male wages while the ratio between black women and white men's earnings was as small as 61.9% (IWPR 2010a). The wage gap between gender and race groups has

been persistent over years and explained by scholars as a result of occupational segregation and work arrangements with black women being overrepresented in jobs that are temporary or on-call, and typically generate low pay and lack benefits. Job segregation in turn is partly explained by education and skills, but also intangible factors such as employers' preferences which opens up for greater judgement and biases to influence decisions about the labor force (Spalter-Roth and Lowenthal 2005).

2.3.3 Family characteristics

In addition to inequalities in labor market outcomes, family patterns can contribute to paint a picture that shows black women's relative disadvantage. Black families are to great extents female headed, that is, where the mother or another female is the only parent present. Collins (2005) explains this by the rise in incarceration rates among black men, which effectively distances them from their families. Employment patterns also contributes to a different dynamic that deviates from the the male breadwinner norm. Gender norms in black families are altered due to economic and social factors, such as a higher labor force participation rate for black women, as elaborated above. Black women are consequently more likely to be self-reliant, simply because they have little choice but to compensate for black men's weaker labor force attachment (Collins 2005). Allen McCray (1980) argues that the variance we see in black families, compared to a white midle class norm, is a result of adaption to a tough social reality. Family formation during slavery has contributed to an understanding of kin and caring that goes beyond immediate family, where great focus is paid to caring for children and sharing resources (Allen McCray 1980; Stack 1974). Greater flexibility in gender roles within the family has generally been understood as more accepted within black families among all income groups, but again, a result of necessity (Allen McCray 1980).

2.4 American Unemployment Insurance

The United States is a federal system which gives states discretionary governing power over social issues. American unemployment insurance is a state-federal program consisting of state-administred policies, where federal legislation establishes minimum levels. Subject to federal guidelines and oversight, states are able to implement more generous program that exceeds the federal level in terms of conditions for eligibility; duration and levels of benefits; plus employer tax rates and exemptions. Eligible employees apply for benefits in order to receive them, and the state

administration is funded by federal payroll taxes from employers, while benefits are paid by employer payroll taxes collected by the state (Emsellem, Stettner, Donner and Cawthorne 2008; Government Accountability Office (GAO) 2006 and GAO 2007).

Unemployment insurance was established in the United States in 1935 as a response to the Great Depression, to function as a stabilizing social insurance providing workers with economic means when they face unemployment. At the time of the establishment of the American Unemployment Insurance, the workforce was primarily male. As a result, the program was designed for male heads of households with strong ties to the labor market (full-time, long term employment). A federal-state policy relying on patterns of white male urban workers, as the program did not include agricultural, household, nonprofit or government workers. After expansions in the 1970s, agricultural and household workers are still not covered, along with the self-employed. Workers who deviated from the norm of the white male worker would consequently encounter difficulties in reaching eligibility (O'Leary and Wadner 1997).

The unemployment insurance system began to face critique when it started to fail in meeting the needs of today's workers. With only 37 percent of the unemployed workers in 2008 being covered by the program, the number has declined since the 1950s where UI covered half of the unemployed workers. In the 1960s and 1970s, the coverage rate was over 40 percent. Compared to the 1930s, when the program was introduced, the workforce of today is to lesser extent dominated by male full-time workers. Women have entered the labor force in significant numbers which in many aspects is the largest economic change of the past decade (Emsellem, Stettner, Donner and Cawthorne 2008). The character of the jobs on the labor market has also shifted. Well-paid manufacturing jobs are replaced by part-time jobs with less job security and high turnover, often in the service sector. The disappearance of manufacturing jobs have decreased especially in urban areas (Emsellem, Stettner, Donner and Cawthorne 2008; O'Leary and Wadner 1997; Wilson 1998). Together these factors impose challenges for the insurance system both when it comes to income security needs for the workers and its function as economic stimulus. Women's labor force participation was 20 percent in the 1930s, by the time UI was introduced. In 1970s, the number of women in the workforce had doubled to 40 percent (IWPR 2001). In 2009 the number was 59 percent (US Bureau of the Census 2011).

In most states, the maximum length of benefits is 26 weeks. Weekly benefits vary by state, in Mississippi the maximum weekly benefit is \$235 (Mississippi Department of Employment Security), in Texas \$415, while some states give eligible unemployed workers more than \$500 per week in UI benefits to cover basic needs. In Hawaii the maximum weekly benefit is \$549 (Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations 2011), and in Minnesota \$578 (Minnesota Unemployment Insurance 2011). Unemployment insurance benefits in New Jersey go up to \$598 (New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2011). In 2010, the average UI benefit was \$307, which replaced 35.6 percent of the average weekly wage, \$863 (NELP 2010). Typically, UI benefits are provided for 26 weeks, and in some states, dependent allowance is added to the benefits, for workers with minor children or old relatives depending on their support (Emsellem, Stettner, Donner and Cawthorne 2008). Eligibility is determined by wages, and to measure if an unemployed worker has earned enough to qualify for benefits (and to determine the amount of benefits), a base period of four calendar quarters is used. The calendar month when the worker files for benefit is the “filing quarter”. Most states rely on the traditional base period and does not allow the worker to count the filing quarter or the quarter before (the “lag quarter”) to reach eligibility (NELP 2011).

Some states have been more progressive in their policies, even before the UIMA, as seen in table 1. 20 states used the alternative base period instead of the traditional, which allows workers to count earnings in the filing quarter or the “lag quarter” when they file for benefits. The policy alternatives are further explained below.

Table 1. Legislative overview: State policies before and after UIMA

	ABP	Part-time	Training	Dependent Allowance	Compelling Family Reasons		
					Domestic Violence	Spouse Relocates	Illness & Disability
Alabama							
Alaska	Enacted			Pre-UIMA		Enacted	
Arizona					Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA
Arkansas	Enacted	Enacted			Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
California	Enacted	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA		Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA
Colorado	Enacted	Enacted	Other provision		Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
Connecticut	Pre-UIMA			Pre-UIMA	Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
Delaware	Enacted	Pre-UIMA			Pre-UIMA	Enacted	Enacted

	ABP	Part-time	Training	Dependent Allowance	Compelling Family Reasons		
District of Columbia	Pre-UIMA	Other provision			Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
Florida							
Georgia	Pre-UIMA	Enacted	Enacted				
Hawaii	Pre-UIMA	Enacted			Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
Idaho	Enacted	Enacted	Enacted				
Illinois	Pre-UIMA			Enacted	Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
Indiana					Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA	
Iowa	Enacted	Enacted	Enacted	Other provision			
Kansas	Enacted	Enacted	Enacted		Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA
Kentucky							
Louisiana		Pre-UIMA					
Maine	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA	Enacted	Other provision	Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
Maryland	Enacted	Enacted	Enacted	Other provision			Pre-UIMA
Massachusetts	Pre-UIMA		Enacted	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA		
Michigan	Pre-UIMA			Other provision			
Minnesota	Enacted	Enacted			Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
Mississippi							
Missouri							
Montana	Enacted	Enacted	Enacted				
Nebraska					Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
Nevada	Enacted	Pre-UIMA			Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
New Hampshire	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA			Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
New Jersey	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA	Enacted				
New Mexico	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA		Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA		
New York	Pre-UIMA	Enacted	Other provision		Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
North Carolina	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA			Pre-UIMA	Enacted	Pre-UIMA
North Dakota							
Ohio	Pre-UIMA				Other provisions		
Oklahoma	Enacted	Enacted			Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
Oregon	Enacted		Enacted		Enacted	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA
Pennsylvania		Pre-UIMA		Other provision		Pre-UIMA	
Rhode Island	Pre-UIMA			Other provision	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA	
South Carolina					Pre-UIMA		
South Dakota	Enacted	Pre-UIMA			Pre-UIMA		

	ABP	Part-time	Training	Dependent Allowance	Compelling Family Reasons		
Tennessee	Enacted	Enacted		Enacted			
Texas					Pre-UIMA		Pre-UIMA
Utah							
Vermont	Pre-UIMA	Pre-UIMA	Enacted		Pre-UIMA		
Virginia	Pre-UIMA						
Washington	Pre-UIMA		Other provision		Pre-UIMA	Enacted	Pre-UIMA
West Virginia	Pre-UIMA						
Wisconsin	Pre-UIMA		Enacted		Enacted	Enacted	Enacted
Wyoming		Pre-UIMA			Pre-UIMA		
Total:	36	27	16	12	31	25	24
Pre-UIMA policy in place	20	13	1	4	15	7	8

Note: Other provisions indicates that some form of policy exist, but that it is not compliant with the UIMA requirements.

Source: NELP 2009; U.S. Department of Labor, 2011.

2.4.1 The Unemployment Modernization Act

The Unemployment Modernization Act (UIMA) provides a total of \$7 billion in financial incentives to states to increase coverage in their unemployment programs. The changes have to be made within a five year period that ends in 2012 if the state is not already eligible with existing policies. The extra funding that is received can be used for additional expenses in the UI program or for administrative costs.

The purpose of the policy is to expand the social safety net, generate solvency in state level unemployment insurance trust funds, and stimulate the economy. It is targeted towards traditionally underserved populations such as caregivers and workers who fail to qualify for benefits (Emsellem, Stettner and Semidey 2007.). By the time of the enactment of ARRA, a majority of progressive states already met one or more of these criteria since they already had policies in place that increased eligibility in different ways. UIMA thus builds on existing programs in states with generous eligibility criteria and incentivizes states that rely on the minimum level to update their policies and expand their coverage.

In order to get one third of the UIMA funding, a state has to have an “alternative base period”. Without the inclusion of the alternative base period, no funding is provided. The alternative base

period is different from the traditional in the sense that workers can then use recent earnings to qualify for benefits they otherwise would fail to reach eligibility for. This helps low wage workers and workers with uneven earnings to obtain unemployment insurance benefits that they would normally go without in a traditional calculation of the base period that leaves out recent earnings. The alternative base period shifts the earnings period for the worker to include the otherwise excluded “lag quarter” or filing quarter.

To get full funding, states has to provide benefits in a minimum of two of the four alternative scenarios:

1. To part-time workers who are not eligible because of requirements to search for full time work. Often, part-time workers are women and low-wage workers;
2. To individuals who leave work due to compelling family reasons (moving to follow a relocating spouse, victims of domestic violence). Even though all states provide benefits to workers who must leave their job for a good cause, the cause is exclusively understood as being caused by an action of the employer. Thus, many female workers are made ineligible for unemployment benefits as the reason for leaving is urgent family needs, or the need to relocate to accompany a spouse who is transferring for work;
3. To workers who care for dependent family members to help cover additional expenses that comes with care for a dependent, which recognizes the challenges faced by families who find their wage-earners unemployed. Unemployment benefits are often too small to provide for family members in addition to the worker in question.
4. An extra 26 weeks of unemployment benefits to workers who are permanently laid off and require training to improve their skills. Rather than searching for work, approved workers are allowed to attend training (Emsellem, Stettner, Donner and Cawthorne 2008).

3 Theoretical framework

The study of unemployment insurance reform focusing on the construction of target populations builds upon earlier research including the role of target populations in public policy design and the intersection of gender and race. In order to put the problem definition and aim of the study into a broader academic context, some of the previous research touching these areas is presented, followed by a review of theoretical concepts that are to help analyzing the case. Finally, the literature is further condensed into an analytical framework and operationalized in order to be applicable to the empirical material.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

3.1.1 Social constructivist theory

A sociological focus on public policy seems to have the potential to provide us with a holistic approach when the ambition is to study policy design and potential racial inequality. Understanding policy tools as vehicles for the distribution of resources in society facilitates the development of an understanding of inherent meanings where chosen policies represent issues and problems. Thus, they are given explanatory power over phenomena in society as they function as institutions determining the possibilities and actions of individuals and the allocation of benefits and burdens (Lascoumes and Le Gales 2007 6-11).

This distribution is affected by social constructions of target populations as they serve as an organizational device for those with the power to influence the policy debate. As Schneider and Ingram (2006) point out, western democracies are challenged by the prevalence of race and gender inequality. These issues are, however, more often than not hidden beneath a rhetoric failing to address either one. The contribution of a social-constructivist perspective on policy targets is an exploration of the assumption that normative cultural characteristics have an impact on the understanding of a policy target. It highlights constraints on decision makers who are incentivized to create policies that benefit influential groups in society, but opens up for a better understanding of the policy process and its outcomes. Acknowledging that target groups are socially constructed contributes to the understanding of how policy reform will disproportionately benefit groups, depending on their social construction. This results from the incentives to policymakers to create

policies designed to attract positively constructed groups, whose support is crucial for political reasons. It is also connected to a desire to create policies for such groups, which is more easily justified as serving the society as a whole, than appealing to the needs of negatively constructed groups (Nicholson-Crotty and Meier 2005; Schneider, Ingram and deLeon 2007 Schneider and Ingram 1993; Schneider and Sidney 2009).

In their extensive work on social construction of target population, Schneider and Ingram (1993; 2005 and Ingram and Schneider 2008) discuss the interaction of positive and negative social constructions with forces of political power, and how this creates different groups that are distinguished by their social construction and how policy relate and respond to these. Social construction theory involves an understanding of the social world focusing on *interpretations* and *meanings* as the base of rules, identities, institutions and concepts. **Advantaged** target populations are positively socially constructed as deserving individuals and have substantial political power resources. Advantaged target populations might be White (of European descent) Americans, the middle class, the military. **Contenders** might enjoy political power comparable to those of advantaged groups but to the contrary, they are negatively socially constructed based on a perceived greediness and lack of morality. Investment bankers, the rich, gun lobby are examples of contenders.

Dependents include groups with weak political power. They are socially constructed as deserving in moral terms, but that notion is limited by a frequent need to control or discipline the group.

Deviants, like for example criminals and terrorists, are socially constructed as undeserving and valueless to society. This group has very limited political power at their disposal (Schneider and Ingram 1993; Schneider and Sidney 2009).

Social construction of policy targets creates messages that signal who is important and who is not in the process of institutionalizing classifications and accompanying existing bias. This is a problematic aspect with implications for societal justice such as citizenship roles and group mobilization which both are fundamental aspects of a democracy.

Policy problems are dependent on context and existing policies (Schneider and Ingram 2008). The most convenient method for policy makers is to use a “one size, fits all” approach avoiding too much change, allowing decision makers (who are held accountable for outcomes) to maintain their

position while agencies simply try to look good to those determining their careers and resources (Bobrow 2008, 578).

3.1.2 False universalism

An example of how the construction of target population is constituted in relation to public policy is provided by powell¹ (2010) studying policy design and race. powell notes a prevalence of post-racial sentiment in mainstream American culture, as well as in the policy debate. Powell asks how we are to understand contemporary racial conditions in American society, and what role public policy is supposed to play to address or avoid racial questions. The discussion focuses on the multifaceted concept of racialization, which refers to a set of practices, including cultural norms as well as institutional arrangements, that reproduces outcomes based on the race or ethnicity of an individual. These components function as reflections of society while simultaneously producing and sustaining racialized outcomes.

American understanding of racism is primarily related to Jim Crow² or individual approaches to discriminatory practice. This understanding limits racism to either explicit laws and policies or candid actions by individuals, which fits well with broad western cultural understandings of life and individualist agency in favor of recognizing broad institutional barriers resulting in and maintaining racism. Framing the problem in these terms, racism and racialization is avoided as long as conscious racist action is absent (powell 2010).

Powell argues that this approach is problematic, as it favors a race-neutral designs of policy and programs. A race neutral design rarely equals neutral effects. powell points to the problem being alleged “race neutrality” which is better described as nothing but a false universality. Policies intended to be universal in their design are grounded in assumptions that are not universal in their origin. Universal policies often fail to address the needs of vulnerable groups, only to reinforce inequality, as the groups in most need of support are treated as if they were to have the same position in society as far more powerful groups (powell 2010, 65-68). An example of this is social security that will affect caregivers differently than people without caregiving responsibility, since

¹ john a. powell spells his name without capitalizing the initial letters.

² Jim Crow laws were US state and local laws enacted between 1876 and 1965, which mandated racial segregation in public facilities.

the latter will generate higher lifetime earnings and thus higher social security benefits when retiring. As discussed above, social security also effectively excludes large portions of black workers, who are more likely to be employed in agriculture or domestic labor, categories not included in the social security program.

The logic behind powell's reasoning is explained by differences in positioning. False universalism does not take into account that groups of people are positioned differently. If not acknowledged, this difference, expressed in multiple constraints, is what generates varying outcomes in neutral designs. Powell concludes that the dilemma of structural racialization is best addressed if attention is paid to differences in group situatedness (powell 2010, 70;74).

Blank (2005) discusses cumulative discrimination, in a similar approach to institutional settings and the impact on racial inequality. Cumulative discrimination is understood as the change in effect in one area due to discrimination in another. There are significant challenges involved in the measuring of such practice, and Blank suggests greater attention to be paid to dynamic models of racial disadvantage and discrimination involving institutional and public policies and their impact on ameliorating or worsening inequalities. The work of powell and Blank contributes to an understanding of the potential racialization through public policy and stresses the need for a holistic perspective in policy analysis, where seemingly exogenic factors are in fact determining the ultimate outcome.

3.1.3 Social construction of black women

Understanding the social construction of black women is of importance when looking at patterns in the welfare state and the policies within it, with potential effect of race and gender equality. Race and gender intersect in the discourse on welfare and poverty and have formed persisting stereotypes such as the emasculating black matriarch and the lazy and fertile welfare queen. To illustrate how attempts to define and solve an issue leads to creating new problems, Benson-Smith (2005) uses these social constructions of black women as welfare ladies (later the welfare queen) to show how poverty as a societal phenomena became a racialized issue, while simultaneously determining characteristics to individuals by race and gender. In the report released in 1965 "*The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*", later called "*The Moynihan Report*", much of the discussion focused on the possibility for black mothers to independently support themselves and their families

without a male breadwinner, and the alleged effect this had on the crumbling of the black family and accompanying family values (Benson-Smith 2005). Even though these stereotypes appeared more visible at this specific time (where the Moynihan report and the predecessor to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), are two main components of the discourse), their origin can be traced back to slavery and a historically different conception of “work” based on race and gender. Justifications of slavery relied on dichotomies and altered the understanding of femininity by allowing white men to exploit black women in the name of profit, on the basis of “natural” physical differences. Racist ideology justifying slavery portrays white women as “pure” and “chaste”, responsible for maintaining civilized behavior. Black women, to the contrary, were seen as tempting “natural whores” in need of discipline. This construction of “the Other”, indicating difference and justifying suppression originating from colonialist and slavery contexts, is still present as the underlying motivation for discrimination today (Collins 2005). Thus, the reasoning behind the 1960s’ and ongoing controversy over black single mothers relying on welfare is likely to be understood as contrasted to the white woman’s socially constructed connection to an unpaid work life in the home, separated from (but relying on) the “men’s sphere”, which is paid labor (See Amott and Matthei 1981). The image of black single mothers supported by the government, instead of a man and his salary, thus contradicts the normative (white) woman dependent on a man, and challenges the male breadwinner family pattern and gender norms.

The discussion on the social construction of policy target needs support from a further examination of theories treating racial stereotyping in order to fully grasp its societal implications. In a patriarchal society, overarching gendered power structures paired with the intersection of race and class leaves black women with a different relationship to the institutions of the labor market, marked by racially influenced patterns of exploitation (Amott and Matthei 1981). Collins (2005) argues that theorizing and understanding black women stereotyping starts with with sexuality, and how sexual associations is used to sustain and reproduce ideas of racial difference. Sexualized and racialized (often along with a a class dimension) images of black women sustain ideas of uncivilized behavior that is threatening middle class values. These contemporary images, however, are not new inventions, but rather products of history (Collins 2005:22, 85).

With origins in slavery and the justifications behind the practice of exploiting black people as unpaid laborers, racial difference assigned to black individuals are gender specific and build on

perceptions of deviance and “otherness”. Black “deviant” gender is contrasted to white “normal” gender ideology with sexual practice treating sexuality as white heterosexuality. The justification of slavery is possible through the otherness based on physical differences, treating black men as big, strong, and stupid and black women as promiscuous “freaks”. The ideological, economic and political framework that is created around slavery is transferred into perceptions of black hypersexuality and present in popular culture images and as well as in societal institutions such as public policy and the disenfranchisement of individuals, when excluded from substantial political power. Additionally, political campaigns are to large extents funded by private economic power that alters the authoritative role of the representative government to the benefit of special interests (Amott and Matthei 1991; Collins 2005, 34).

To this background, the stereotyping (and stigmatization) of black women as welfare mothers is put into a bigger perspective, and given historical framing. The same logic supporting exploitation under slavery is behind the “otherness” and negative images of black mother as welfare mothers relying on the state (and not a breadwinning husband) to support her family. Motherhood while single and poor rejects the American family ideal and gender ideology behind it, because the female is independent from a male breadwinner (although, ironically enough, also in poverty). Assigning negative characteristics such as laziness to the undeserving welfare queen, a rhetoric introduced in Reagan/Bush era, builds on the discourse initiated in the 60s with the Moynihan report. The deviation of black women and men from normative white family structures is explained by discrimination in employment, housing, education and citizenship, made possible through a social construction of the “other” (Collins 2005:123-132, 202-203).

3.2 Aim of Study

The ambition of the study is to generate knowledge on how welfare policies are created in relation to target groups.. In a parliamentary decision making process, it is reasonable to assume that target construction becomes apparent in public documents recording the political debate and arguments from participants from the legislative body as well as interest groups. As decisions are translated into policies, they reflect the constructed target groups, and if the theory on social construction of policy target is correct, one can expect a relationship between how a target group is constructed and how they benefit from a policy reform. Theories on social construction of target groups and race

and gender intersection lead to the assumption that a race and gender intersection affects policy design in a way that could generate different outcomes among race and gender groups. We have a suitable case to test these assumptions, both in terms of the potential effect of the expansion, compared to how the target groups were constructed in the decision making process, which is further explored below. However, it is necessary to modify these ambitions, according to the nature of the data used in the study. Given the fact that the documents in question reflect the policy process at a late stage, the likelihood increases that they leave little room for extraordinary deviation and unexpected additions to the debate that we wish to analyze as a step in the process of understanding the link between target population construction and policy design. The practical implications are somewhat moderate expectations in regards to the extentions and possibilities of the data to generate satisfying answers to the questions articulated below. It is reasonable to believe that data from earlier stages would contribute to a richer and more diverse picture.

3.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses

With the aim of the study being to analyze the relationship between target group construction and distribution of benefits, in order to explore social constructivist theory on target populations, the following research questions emerge:

Who will potentially benefit from the policy reform?

How were target groups constructed in the policy process preceding the reform?

How does the construction of target groups relate to the stratification of labor market outcomes that determine eligibility for benefits?

The hypotheses that arise from the theoretical framework is that the policy reform interferes little with the overarching discourse on gender, thus not favoring black women in particular. The social construction of the target groups will most likely portray white women as “advantaged” while black women are prone to be constructed as “dependents”, and as such not visible in the UI debate. The relationship we expect to see is that advantaged target groups, consisting of white women, are

highlighted in the debate, then ultimately benefit from the policy change. Black women are most likely portrayed as dependents, less likely to be included in the mainstream debate, and consequently less likely to benefit from the UI policy reforms, and instead continue to rely on targeted policies with greater control tied to them.

4 Methodology

4.1 Study design

Little can be said about the relevance of theoretical propositions without the ability to apply them to empirical material, and the argument holds when the relationship is reversed as well. Empirical observations will need a theoretical framework in order to generate new knowledge of interest to the research field in question. The study will build on a multi-methodological approach to use the theoretical body on social construction of target population to compare socially constructed target groups in the unemployment insurance reform with economic stratification that determine benefit eligibility. With the final decision on design being dependent on the research question that is to be answered in the analysis, the study relies on a quantitative analysis of micro data with ambitions to indicate what demographic groups will potentially benefit from the program combined with a qualitative case study that reviews policy documents. What is being said in the debate will be related to results from the statistical tests, in order to draw conclusions about the policy process in general and the construction of target populations in particular.

4.1.1 Selection of the case

A significant challenge in social science research is to determine why an interesting societal problem serves as the foundation for a study that ultimately is able to generate conclusions that are interesting beyond the case itself. The theoretical population has to be defined, which will tell us what the study of target groups in UIMA is an example of, while at the same time providing a base for further generalizations. The primary concern is to assure that we have a case where we can measure outcomes and compare the results to predictions of theory (for a discussion of theory building through case studies, see Ljiphard 1972). Naturally, it is possible to choose to study another policy reform, may it be social policy or another policy area. However, in order to provide the theoretical contributions of Schneider and Ingram, among others, with fair conditions, a case where ambitions to affect a given target group in a certain way are already articulated is especially helpful given the study design and research questions. As a response to the economic downturn due to the 2007-2009 recession, the reforms in the American Unemployment Insurance program corresponds to the desired prerequisites and is therefore a suitable case for testing the assumption.

The rhetoric framing the reform is that the UIMA is a particularly woman-friendly reform, and therefore the following assumption opens up for the possibility that they would also benefit from the changes in the program. In addition, eligibility criteria can be measured by a statistical analysis of micro data, looking at labor force characteristics that affect eligibility across race and gender groups.

By using the UIMA as a case study, it is possible to compare socially constructed groups with estimates of how policy design relates to the characteristics of demographic groups which ultimately aspires to contribute to general knowledge of how welfare policies are created and why some groups benefit from programs while others are left out.

4.1.2 Identifying Structure: Labor market stratification with effect on eligibility for UI benefits among demographic groups

The study begins with an examination of differences in labor market stratification that determines eligibility for UI benefits among race and gender groups. The conclusions from statistical models serve as a benchmark for a systematic test of the predictability of the assumptions that will be outlined in the theoretical body on the social construction of target population. An important aspect in relation to the study of unemployment reform is what overarching structures in society can tell us about policies and how they play out in the allocation of benefits and burdens.

Statistical analysis of micro data will provide information that will determine the relationship between demographic characteristics and unemployment insurance eligibility criteria. The quantitative analysis aims at providing an answer to how different expansion alternatives play out between different groups. The study uses the Current Population Survey (CPS) 2010 in an attempt to draw conclusions on how policy expansions might affect eligibility among race and gender groups in terms of the eligibility criteria that were introduced with the UIMA.

4.1.2.1 The dataset

The CPS data is a household survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data contains labor force and demographic characteristics and the sample is representative for the civilian, non-institutional population in United States as a whole. The universe is the entire civilian non-institutional population in US households. The universe is

represented by a sample of about 56 000 households, and the unit of observation is individuals in housing units. Labor force activity data is related to activity for the week before the survey took place. Where data on employment status, occupation and industry is provided for individuals 16 years and over, the Displaced Worker Supplement questions, which is of interest to this study since the data within this part is expected to help answer the research questions, are directed to persons 20 years or older. The statistical models applied to the data are therefore excluding individuals younger than 20, in order to achieve a uniform sample.

Data is collected monthly from households selected to represent the nation as a whole (as well as smaller specified areas such as states), based on area of residence. The selected households are interviewed for four consecutive months, which assures reliable comparisons over months and years in regards to unemployment statistics, which is the primary purpose for the data collection.

The sample, based on information from the 2000 census, consisted of 72 000 housing units that are selected within primary sampling units (PSUs) in the United States as a whole. About 60 000 are eligible for interview (the remaining could for example be vacant, destroyed or converted to nonresidential use). About 7 percent of the 60 000 are not interviewed during the given month due to absence or refusals to participate. The January 2010 Displaced Worker, Employee Tenure, and Occupational Mobility Survey contains data from interviews conducted in January 17-23, 2010 with about 56 000 households. Every individual eligible for the labor force items was also eligible for the supplement. This being a proxy response supplement, anyone in the household was entitled to provide answers for eligible household members.

The data contains employment and unemployment characteristics of interest to the research question and will be applied to answer the following aspects of the expansion of the UI: Alternative Base Period, by looking at earnings and tenure; expansion for part-time workers, by numbers of hours worked (to determine part-time or full-time employment); expansion for training by need of training to enter the workforce. To gain information on the prevalence of dependent children living in household the study looks at the number of children that lives in the respondent's household. These operationalizations of the policy alternatives are further explained below. The data is unfortunately limited in its ability to provide information that would allow conclusions about

compelling family reasons as causes for unemployment, thus this alternative for expansion of the program is not discussed further in the study.

Table 1. Frequency distribution

Race/ethnicity	Frequency	Percent	Percent of US
White, non Hispanic	45144	72%	69%
Black, non Hispanic	5810	9.3%	12%
American Indian, Alaskan Native Only	445	0.7%	0.7%
Asian Only	2839	4.5%	3.6%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Only	203	0.3%	0.1%
Other/Two or more races	828	1.3%	3.5%
Hispanic	7471	12%	12.5%
Total	64740	100%	100%

Source: Author’s calculation of Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS January 2010 data and 2000 Census.

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution by race and ethnicity, illustrating that the data does a fairly good job in catching minorities, when comparing the numbers to demographic data from the 2000 Census. Worth noting is that white people are somewhat overrepresented and the proportion of black individuals in the sample is slightly smaller than in the US population, but this deviation is not expected to affect the data analysis that follows. The analysis focuses on black and white women and men, thereby excluding other races and ethnicities. The ambition is to isolate these racial categories, and to use them as illustrative theoretical examples of the normative and “other”, ideal types which also provides the qualitative part of the study with greater chances to relate to the quantitative material and generate interesting conclusions about the intersection race and gender in the policy process. Therefore, the race groups are white, non hispanic people and black, non hispanic people, combining self reported race and ethnicity data to construct the groups we are interested to use as independent variables.

4.1.2.1 Statistical models

Initially a comparison of means is presented, with the independent variable being race and gender category (black women, white women, black men and white men). The dependent variables are the measures that affect eligibility for UI, hourly wage, tenure, number of children and part time work.

The variance from the means comparisons are tested for significance using an ANOVA table with the eligibility predictors as dependent variables and race and gender category as independent variable to determine statistical significance and how much of the variance in the dependent variable is related to the independent variable.

One-way ANOVA allows comparisons between group means when the dependent variables are interval variables and the independent is a categorical variable. Broken down by the categories of the independent variable, we are able to test the differences in the means for the dependent variables. The ANOVA reports the F statistic that determines if the null hypothesis can be safely rejected or not by finding out if the race and gender groups have the same mean for a given variable. This test aims at looking if whether eligibility for UI varies among race and gender groups, by determining whether the mean values differ significantly from each other, between the groups. The null hypotheses reads that there will be no difference among race and gender group, which can be rejected if the test generates a F value greater than 1, which simply means that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. One-way ANOVA is somewhat limited and can not tell where the difference is, only that at least two groups are different from each other. If the test result in statistical significant differences among the groups, a post hoc analysis will complete the ANOVA, with the possibility of guiding us in a direction that will reveal where the difference is. The post hoc test used in this study is the Scheffe test, which computes a new critical value for an F test when pairwise comparisons are made between groups from the larger ANOVA.

4.1.3 Outlining the Ideas: Identifying target populations in UIMA

The second part of the study involves a review of policy document, with the ambition to answer how the expansion of unemployment insurance relates to predictions made by earlier research on target group construction. The analysis of policy document aims at catching the extended verbal expression in writing. The body of literature combining research on the role of target populations in public policy design and the intersection of gender and race provides empirically verifiable explanations for the subsequent observation of relationships in the statistical test.

The policy documents that are selected for the study are publicly available Congressional Documents and Transition Memos. They are selected by their relevance in terms of subject and date

of issue. The Congressional documents are reports, hearings and testimonies which are selected if they are issued between 2001-2008 and include the words “women” and “unemployment”.

Transition memos, letters from interest- and advocacy groups to influence the new administration in a certain direction, are also filtered by the search words “women” and “unemployment”. Since interested parties had until the new President Barack Obama was inaugurated January 20th 2009 to submit their memos, no cut in time was necessary. Three of the transition memos were not possible to read in the analytical software (NVivo) and were therefore excluded from the analysis. A list of sources included in the analysis is provided in appendix II.

To determine how target groups are constructed in the debate, the study relies on the analysis of ideas, seen as judgements and perceptions regarding somewhat continuous relationships in social and political contexts (Bergström and Boréus 2000). Ideas are closely tied to ideologies, which can be understood as more systematic patterns of unity. The understanding of ideology as a concept is often limited to political ideologies, but the analytical definition allows wider interpretation (Bergström and Boréus 2000). Bergström and Boréus (2000) highlight Herbert Tingsten’s significant contributions to the study of ideology in Swedish political science. Tingsten presents three components of ideology where the first involve values and their basic principles, for example a certain understanding of the role of a welfare state. The second component is claims of the nature of reality, and finally, the third principle treats hands-on recommendations, exemplified by policy recommendations or strategies (Bergström and Boréus 2000). Along the same line, Ingersoll (in Baradat 1991) talks about ideology as providing an “*assessment of the status quo and a view of the future*”. These contributions provide helpful guidance for the development of a tool for analyzing the debate preceding UIMA to generate knowledge on how target groups were constructed.

The analysis of ideas and ideologies relies on language. Language can be approached in a quantitative fashion, for example by analyzing the empirical material through word frequency (Bergström and Boréus). The study of target group construction in the UIMA makes an attempt to understand language as a form of social action and a representation of power relationships, components of a larger discourse. Despite the inherent ambiguity of the term “discourse”, it is broadly defined as manifestations in written and spoken language, through some form of communicative media. It refers to “*larger organizational units than the sentence*” (Lynch 2007) thus reaching beyond what is expressed in sentences, stories and conversations. Additionally,

discourse is depending on language-*use* in non-experimental settings where communication or social interaction takes place. Even though the unit of analysis is set in text, it is active, reactive and inter-active (Lynch 2007, 499, 512). A discourse is hereby defined as a certain way of understanding and talking about a given phenomenon (Bergström and Boréus 2000; Marston 2004; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2007, 7). Language is given a broader meaning beyond simply reflecting reality. It contributes to shape it, breaking the dichotomies between idea and reality, language and action (Bergström and Boreus 2000). As Collins (2005) expresses it, the discourse is *“a set of ideas and practices that when taken together organize both the way a society defines certain truths about itself and the way it puts together social power”*. As a result, demographic characteristics such as race, gender and sexuality have the power to influence the organization of institutions in society (Collins 2005:17) and the ambition of a discursive perspective on policy analysis is to provide us with knowledge on how these processes are expressed focusing on the intersection of race and gender and how this play out in the target construction in unemployment insurance reform.

The assigned complexity of discourse analysis (in addition to controversy and association with incomprehensible French philosophers (Bergström and Boreus 2000)), has to be understood as both a response to and critique of a positivist line of thought in social science research that exclusively focuses on testing causal relations, with objective empirical testing as sole means to generate knowledge. Limitations of positivist reasoning appear when questions like why a societal problem is defined as a public problem arises. The useful insight that follows when giving ideas explanatory power is the acknowledgement that discourses and contexts have potential influence on policy making. Fischer (2003) argues that this approach is crucial for the understanding of social sciences in general, and particularly the policy process. Political action is understood as being a product of discourses, ranging from the hegemonic discourses dominating existing institutions, to progressive opponents trying to disseminate their alternative understanding. Discourses are never absolute, but rather in constant inter-dependent conflict (and change) over interpretative prerogative. A post-empirical position thus involves a social constructivist view that sees the world and how it is understood as a product of different social and historical contexts. This perspective is useful in the study of race and gender in policy reform, since a part of the discourse analysis involves the question about who has discursive power and how it's distributed: *“Some people can speak regularly while others can hardly ever be heard unless they threaten violence”* (Fischer 2003, 80).

Whether the hegemonic discourse acknowledges race and gender inequalities, or ignores them, has implications for power relationships and further, the nature of the allocation of resources.

Where qualitative research is often criticized for lacking generalizability, its strength lies within ambitions to generate knowledge that can provide generalizations *through theory* that in turn will enable generalizations to larger populations (Esaiasson et al., 2007, 180-183; Yin, 2003, 10-11). Learning about the relationship between the economic characteristics with effect on eligibility and target group construction in the UIMA will contribute to the overall resilience of the theoretical framework, knowledge that goes beyond the case and the scope of the study in question. Theory plays a crucial role as the foundation for all research, therefore not exclusively related to case studies (Esaiasson et al. 2007:180-183). It is expressed by Yin (2003) as a matter of the ambition of an analyst to “*try to generalize findings to ‘theory’, analogous to the way a scientist generalizes from experimental results to theory.*” The defense of the qualitative research is drawn from the notion that all research is conducted in a context that is built from the results of earlier research and the conclusions are given weight by repetition. Stronger relationships by repeated studies in different context helps building new theory that is wider applied to similar cases (Yin, 2003:35-39; Esaiasson et al. 2007:182).

4.2 Analytical framework

The methodological tool we are looking for understands language as something beyond a neutral means for communication. The social and political reality is created through the language we use (see Bergström and Boréus 2000, Collins 2005). To intellectually, and hopefully also scientifically, approach this in a fashion that makes this study structured and possible to replicate, we need an tool that keeps the empirical material in check through the analysis and generates reliable data for the final conclusion. Because economic stratification is an important divide between race and gender groups the unit of analysis will be race and gender categories.

4.2.1 The analysis of what is being said (or silenced) and what follows

With support from earlier research analyzing ideas and discourses, the analysis of target group construction in the UIMA focuses around the three concepts derived from the methodological

discussion above. 1). The “problem” as expressed in understandings of reality and individuals. It includes the presentation of facts and descriptive discussions. In the UIMA debate this aims at defining the political problem that is to be addressed by public policy. 2). The “origin” is identified in terms of reasons why the “problem” exists. At a first glance, it seems challenging to distinguish between the “origin” and the “problem”, and to fully avoid overlapping will be impossible as the “origin” and “problem” interrelate and the empirical material tied to respective concept are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but where the “problem” has a more descriptive character, the “origin” represents a step back, both in terms of analytical distance from the phenomena in question, but also in relation to distance in time. It can be exemplified with claims of stratification, situatedness and links to historic events that influences the present. 3). Finally, the “solution” is found in the formula presented to alleviate the problem, and does not involve significant interpretative challenges in the context of a political, policy oriented debate.

The reform is considered particularly woman-friendly, which by further problematization leads to questions how this relates to target group construction, and how a racial dimension is integrated in the discussion. Various reasons for the potential exclusion of some groups in society are presented in the literature on target construction, race and gender inequality, and institutional settings related to the organization of the welfare state. The practical implications for the integration of an intersectional perspective of race and gender are that when identifying empirical content supporting either field in the analytical scheme, the logical question that follows is how the intersection is manifested. The policy documents that constitute the data for the analysis of target group construction are understood as part of the larger discourse, as they are samples of a debate aiming to inform or influence decision making. This discourse might hide inequalities if failing to address them, by catering to influential groups in society in order to mobilize support for presented arguments.

For transparency and pedagogic reasons, the analytical scheme is presented in a matrix, that corresponds with the coding tree used for the first step of the qualitative analysis. The policy documents that function as sources are analyzed with the help of three broad themes that aim at outlining the policy discourse and inform us about how the intersection of race and gender is treated in the debate.

Table 3. Schematic overview of analytical tool

Source	Problem			Origin			Solution		
<i>Intersection</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Race and Gender</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Race and Gender</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Race and Gender</i>	<i>Race</i>
African American Families are Being Squeezed Modernizing Unemployment Insurance									

The fields of the matrix will, in the next step of the analysis, be completed with the type of socially constructed target group. These are the results that are matched with the results from the statistical models. Expectations and interpretations are discussed with help from the theoretical framework, especially Ingram and Schneider’s work on target population construction. We know that socially constructed target groups can be sorted into four categories. Schneider and Ingram’s typologies are used analogously to fit the design and purpose of the study of target construction in UIMA. After integrating the intersectionality of race and gender, two categories will be used to determine how target groups are constructed in the UIMA. **Advantaged** groups are the articulated targets. Typically involving a mainstream gender understanding that is not challenging white male hegemony. Examples include “workers”; “the middle class”; “women”; “families”. **Dependents** groups are marginalized from the broad understanding of who is the target of the reform. Groups typically not covered by UI but rather welfare policies are targeted as dependents: “black women” and “minorities” are examples.

4.2.2 Operationalizations of theoretical concepts.

The literature review provide a framework to understand the relationship between social construction of target populations and public policy design. More specifically, the theoretical concepts of target group construction in the UIMA are applied to the data using the following operationalizations:

By using statistical models, the study looks at the prevalence of economic stratification that potentially affects eligibility for unemployment benefits. The ambition is to compare how groups were socially constructed in the policy debate to how the expansion of the unemployment relates to workers across race and gender groups..

Unemployment insurance is a tool that aims at influencing targets in a certain way. As such they are also institutions “*partly determining the way in which the actors are going to behave; they create uncertainties about the effects of the balance of power; they will eventually privilege certain actors and interests, while excluding others, they constrain the actors while offering them possibilities*” (Lascoumes and Le Gales, 2007, 9) which stresses that political and ideological assumptions and their connection to policy design have to be questioned in order to study and understand policy variation (Lascoumes and Le Gales, 2007).

To gain support for and show relevance of the reform, policy makers try to make positively constructed, powerful groups visible in the rhetoric while other, with less power remain hidden or less visible. Therefore the study tries to identify the articulating of an *intersectionality of race and gender*. The presence of an integrated race and gender perspective is looked at in terms of the presence or absence of a race component when women’s issues are presented. *Ambitions to affect race and gender inequalities* by unemployment insurance reform is another way to identify the intersectionality. Economic indicators show that black women are experiencing a vulnerable position historically as well as in this current recession. These patterns being ignored, policy reforms might imply little attention to dependent groups, but rather cater to the needs of advantaged groups which traditionally have been excluded from the program.

The intersectionality is examined further in terms of the acknowledgement of *variations in labor market outcomes*, which are determining the access to unemployment benefits for workers, among different racial and gendered groups. This angle aims at catching a more implicit form of the discourse. It means that a range of needs in terms of dependency of the social support system are being made visible, the support system being the American unemployment insurance in this particular study.

The first criterion for states to meet, in order to receive the first one-third of additional funding, is the implementation of an “alternative base period”. Workers are allowed to count recent earnings to qualify for benefits that they otherwise would fail to reach eligibility for. With a base period reaching over four calendar quarters to determine whether a worker has enough earnings to be qualified, the traditional base period leaves many workers without benefits. The expansion of the

base period will help workers with weak labor force attachment and/or low earnings, and can be measured by looking at *earnings* and *tenure* which will provide an estimate of who could potentially benefit from the expansion.

States are able to choose between further variations of UI expansion to get the remaining two-thirds of the funding. Eligibility can be expanded to include part time workers, which is measured by the *number of hours worked* to determine full-time or part-time work. Benefits can also be made available to workers who leave work for compelling family reasons, such as moving to accompany a relocating spouse or victims of domestic violence. For workers who care for dependent family members additional expenses related to that can be covered by unemployment insurance. The *number of children living in a household* can serve as an indicator of whether this aspect of the expansion could affect racial and gendered groups differently.

In addition to these alternatives, the expansion can include an extra 26 weeks of unemployment benefits to workers who are permanently laid off and require training to improve their skills. This alternative is measured by using data on *reasons for not working*, where lack of necessary schooling or training is included, something that when compared across demographic groups can indicate if there are patterns across race and gender groups.

5 Findings

Initially, the chapter presents the statistical models and the results from the quantitative analysis of workers' labor force characteristics. The second part presents the findings from the analysis of the policy documents used in the study. Congressional documents such as hearings and congressional reports represents the debate on Unemployment Insurance reform along with Transition Memos, the channel, through which advocacy groups are able to express their concerns to a new administration in order to influence future policy. As such, they are an integral part of the overarching policy discourse. Together they will constitute empirical material in this study. The focus is on highlighting patterns in target population construction, with attention being paid to the intersection of race and gender.

5.1 Labor market characteristics with effect on Unemployment Insurance eligibility

The statistical tests are performed on CPS data from 2009, looking at labor force characteristics across race and gender for American workers³ between 20 and 65 years old.

5.1.1 Differences in earnings and tenure across race and gender

The statistical models applied to the data seek to identify stratification of labor market characteristics; generate measures that ultimately can help when comparing the results to predictions of the constructed target groups. Determining what the stratification of labor market outcomes that affect eligibility for benefits looks like among race and gender groups will indicate who is potentially affected by the policy change. Since much of the focus in the reform is on the alternative base period, with implications for low-wage earners, we would like to know who the lower earners are. A comparison of means in the sample reveals differences in earnings among racial and gendered groups, where white men have an average hourly wage that exceeds the wages of all other demographic groups \$24,5 ($N= 4463$; $SD= 20,1$). On average, black men earn more, \$18,5 ($N= 516$; $SD= 10,8$) per hour, than black women who report the lowest hourly wage, \$17,3 ($N=713$; $SD= 10,9$), but less than white women who earn \$19,7 ($N= 4595$; $SD=15$) on average. White women's average wages are thus higher than black women's. When looking at tenure across race and gender groups, similar patterns arise. The overall mean in the group is 8,5 years

³ Workers are defined as people in the labor force, either working or actively looking for work.

($N=41207$). Black women have shorter tenure than all other groups, 6,8 years ($N= 2277$; $SD= 7,5$) with their current employer, and black men 7.1 years ($N= 1747$; $SD= 7,5$).

Table 4. Eligibility criteria “Hourly wage” and “Tenure”, by race and gender

Eligibility criteria	Race and Gender				Total
	Black Women	Black Men	White Women	White men	
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>
Hourly wage (\$)	17.3(10.9)	18.5(10.8)	19.7(15)	24.9(20.1)	21.8(17.3)
<i>N</i>	713	516	4595	4463	10287

Eligibility criteria	Race and Gender				Total
	Black Women	Black Men	White Women	White men	
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>
Tenure (years)	6.8(7.5)	7.1(7.5)	8(8.1)	9.5(9.3)	8.5(8.7)
<i>N</i>	2277	1747	18107	19076	41207

Note: Unweighted estimates.

Source: Author’s calculation of Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS January 2010.

5.1.2 Differences in number of children and part-time work across race and gender

Other eligibility criteria affected by the reform are determined by the number of children and work hours of the applicant. By looking at the data by race and gender, we learn that black female workers have more children when compared to other groups, as they report a higher mean, 0.53 ($N= 3183$; $SD= 0.69$). Black men report the lowest mean, 0.39 ($N= 2627$; $SD= 0,64$). Between white men and women, the mean does not differ much, 0.42 ($N= 21506$; $SD= 0.61$) for white women, and slightly higher, 0.43 for white men ($N= 23638$; $SD= 0.64$). Part-time work is most common for white women, who report a mean value of 0.69 ($N= 21506$; $SD= 0.46$). White men are least likely to work part time (mean 0. 81; $N=23638$; $SD=0.4$), while black men and women do not differ much as black women report a mean close to, yet higher than the mean of black men (0.72 ($N=3183$; $SD=0.45$) for black women and 0.72 ($N=2627$; $SD= 0.45$) for black women) The difference between white men and women is greater than between black women and men, where black women are the ones more likely to work full time when compared both to black men and white women.

Table 5. Eligibility criteria “Number of children” and “Part-time work”, by race and gender

Eligibility criteria	Race and Gender				Total
	Black Women	Black Men	White Women	White men	
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>
Number of children	0.53(0.69)	0.39(0.64)	0.42(0.61)	0.43(0.64)	0.4(0.6)
Part-time work	0.72(0.45)	0.71(0.45)	0.69(0.46)	0.81(0.4)	0.75(0.4)
N	3183	2627	21506	23638	50954

Note: Unweighted estimates.

Source: Author’s calculation of Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS January 2010.

In determining how the expansion of unemployment insurance criteria will play out among race and gender groups black women seem to be the group where the reform is more likely to imply greater coverage since they are the lowest earners and have shorer tenures compared to white men and black men. White women have shorter tenure compared to other demographic groups, which suggests that they also would benefit from the expansion. Their hourly wages are still higher compared to black women’s wages. This difference implies a general disadvantage for black women, as they combined with short tenure (black women still have shorter tenure than men, regardless of race) contribute to a picture of weak labor force attachment in areas that are critical in the determination of UI eligibility. Without knowing how they are socially constructed as a target group, it is still too early to determine whether they will ultimately benefit from the reform in general, especially the expansion of the base period.

5.1.3 Determining statistical significance for identified differences in eligibility criteria

To test these noted differences in eligibility criteria for statistical significance between the groups, we conduct a one-way between subjects ANOVA (analysis of variance). It will compare the effect of race and gender group on hourly pay, tenure, number of children and part-time work for white men, white women, black men and black women. The null hypothesis is that the identified differences presented above are the result of chance. The following results are obtained:

5.1.3.1 Differences in hourly pay

A one-way between subjects ANOVA is used to compare the effect of race and gender group (black women, black men, white women and white men) on hourly pay, which showed a significant effect of race and gender group at the $p < .05$ level ($F(3,10283)=95.5$ $p=0.00$). The ANOVA table cannot,

however tell us where the significant difference lies, or how the independent variable affects the dependent variable, it is restricted to simply tell us that there is an overall difference, and that a small to medium size of the variation in hourly wage is explained by the independent variable ($\eta^2 = 0.027$). A post hoc test can help us here by further testing of the relationships. Using a Scheffe test when comparing the mean wage for black women to white women's wage the difference was statistically significant, whereas the other differences were not.

Table 6a. One-way ANOVA of race and gender effect on “Hourly wage”

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean square	F	η^2
Between-groups	3	83207	27735	95.5	
Within-groups	10283	2986097	290		
Total	10286	3069304	298		0.027

Note: Unweighted estimate

Source: Author's calculation of data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS January 2010.

Table 6b. Scheffe test of race and gender effect on “Hourly wage”

Row mean-column mean	Black women	Black men	White women
Black men	1.26 0.651		
White women	2.44 0.005	1.18 0.528	
White men	7.63 0.000	6.374 0.000	5.2 0.000

Note: Unweighted estimate

Source: Author's calculation of data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS January 2010.

5.1.3.2 Difference in tenure

Another important indicator in determining access to UI benefits is tenure, which is time with current employer, measured in years. The null hypothesis is that there is no difference in tenure by years across the groups. Looking at average tenure, across race and gender groups the following

pattern arises: Women have shorter tenure than men, which is consistent across race, with white women having longer tenures than black women. Among men, white men have been longer at their jobs. Overall, white men have longer tenures than all other demographic groups (Table 7a). The differences of race and gender on tenure were also significant at the $p < .05$ level ($F(3, 41203) = 141$, $p = 0.00$). A small size of the variation in race and gender category affects tenure ($\eta^2 = 0.01$). The post hoc tests determined that there was a significant difference between white women and black women, white women and white men and white men and black men.

Table 7a. One-way ANOVA of race and gender effect on “Tenure”

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean square	F	η^2
Between-groups	3	31678	10559	141	
Within-groups	41203	3086000	74		
Total	41206	3117678	75.7		0.01

Note: Unweighted estimates

Source: Author’s calculation of data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS January 2010.

Table 7b. Scheffe test of race and gender effect on “Tenure”

Row mean-column mean	Black women	Black men	White women
Black men	0.31 0.734		
White women	1.15 0.000	0.843 0.002	
White men	2.62 0.000	2.32 0.000	1.47 0.000

Note: Unweighted estimate

Source: Author’s calculation of data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS January 2010.

5.1.3.3 Differences in number of children

When looking at the differences of number of children among the group, the null hypothesis states that there is no difference in the number of children between black women, white women, black men and white men, and the dispersion of cases is the same among the group as for the sample as a whole. This tells us that if the null hypothesis is correct, in the population, race and gender group of an individual and the number of children is completely independent of each other. This implies that the expansion in additional benefits to parents would equally affect individuals across race and gender groups. The alternative hypothesis is therefore articulated as statistically significant differences among the groups in terms of number of children. A very small proportion of the variation is caused by the independent variable, as the η^2 is as low as 0.002 (Table 8a), which means that as little as 0.2% of the variation is explained by the race and gender group of the individual. The ANOVA table gives us significant results for the group differences at the $p < .05$ level ($F(3, 5950) = 29.9, p = 0.00$) and the null hypotheses can be rejected. The applied post hoc test show that the differences are significant between black men and black women, white women and black women, white men and black women and white men and black men.

Table 8a. One-way ANOVA of race and gender effect on “Number of children”

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean square	F	η^2
Between-groups	3	35.6	11.9	29.9	
Within-groups	50950	20257	0.4		
Total	50953	20293	0.4		0.002

Note: Unweighted estimates

Source: Author's calculation of data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS January 2010.

Table 8b. Scheffe test of race and gender effect on “Number of children”

Row mean-column mean	Black women	Black men	White women
Black men	-0.138 0.000		
White women	-0.104 0.000	0.034 0.073	
White men	-0.101 0.000	0.374 0.040	0.003 0.969

Note: Unweighted estimate

Source: Author’s calculation of data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS January 2010.

5.1.4 Differences in part-time work

The test of significance in the above presented differences in the relationship between part-time work and demographic categories will determine if there, in a comparison between race and gender groups, is a statistically significant difference in working part time or full time. This aims at to generate knowledge about who would benefit from the part of the reform that allow part time workers to apply for benefits. The null hypotheses states that there is no difference in part-time work or full-time work across race and gender groups. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis provides us with the possibility that the differences in the dispersion of cases are statistically significant and not a product of chance. The reported differences between race and gender groups on part-time work were also significant at the $p < .05$ level ($F(3, 50950) = 292, p = 0.00$). With a reported η^2 of 0.017, about 2% of the variance is explained by the independent variable, race and gender group (Table 9a). The post hoc analysis tell us that there are significant differences between black women and white women, and white men and all other groups.

Table 9a. One-way ANOVA of race and gender effect on “Part-time work”

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean square	F	ETA ²
Between-groups	3	163.1	54.3	292	
Within-groups	50950	9499.6	0.2		
Total	50953	9662.7	0.2		0.017

Note: Unweighted estimates

Source: Authour’s calculation of data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS January 2010.

Table 9b. Scheffe test of race and gender effect on “Part-time work”

Row mean-column mean	Black women	Black men	White women
Black men	-0.008 0.907		
White women	-0.029 0.006	-0.021 0.149	
White men	0.088 0.000	0.097 0.000	0.118 0.000

Note: Unweighted estimate

Source: Authour’s calculation of data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPS January 2010.

5.1.5 Differences in need of training

To get an idea of what the dispersion of cases for people needing training looked like, the universe needed to be adjusted to include people not in the labor force. However, the sample size for people who reported they were no longer looking for work due to training needs was too small to serve as base for statistical tests. An overview of the observations found among those needing training showed that they were predominantly white men without children, indicating that this group is the one who will probably benefit more than other demographic groups from the expansion i UI for workers in need of training.

5.2 Construction of target group population in the UIMA

The second part of Chapter 5 takes a closer look at the policy debate preceding the enactment of the UIMA. Using the analytical framework presented above to get an idea of what the discourse on the UI reform looks like, the illustrative examples are presented as either representing the debate in Congress or among interest and advocacy groups. They are presented to be representations of “the problem”, “the origin” or the “solution”. The focus on the intersection of gender and race presents a fluid perspective where multiple demographic characteristics determine the situation of a person and its relationship to institutions and other individuals in society. In short, it means that when a women’s issue is identified, it is not necessarily the same issue for a woman of color. We have learned that this affect the construction of target populations, and are interested in finding out how target groups are constructed in the UIMA.

5.2.1 *The “problem”*

5.2.1.1 *The “problem” in Congressional Documents*

Congressional documents such as hearings, where experts testify to inform decision makers before legislative action, written reports and speeches are activities in the legislative process prior to the enactment and implementation of a policy. In the congressional documents, the problem is expressed as an outdated unemployment insurance that does not respond to the changes in the composition of the labor force. The key logic behind the purpose of the benefit is presented as those who have “paid” for them are the ones deserving them: *“once contributions to the UI system have been made, the worker is eligible for benefits”* (The Needs of the Working Poor) still, most states have systems that separate contributing workers from benefitting from the program.

With the increase in female labor force participation being expressed as the greatest change in the work force, the question for policy to respond to the needs of the new workforce arises, concluding that existing policies are not doing a good job serving female workers and their families. It is stressed that the Unemployment Insurance that was created in 1935 fails to help a two-earning family. In addition, female workers are characterized by their part-time work, significant lower earnings and greater family responsibilities, and thus a proper modernization of the policy should address these factors (Hearing: Modernizing Unemployment Insurance; Hearing: The Needs of the

Working Poor). *“Since the UI program was established in 1935, the nature of both work and unemployment has changed in fundamental ways. There have been increases in the share of low-wage jobs, the incidents of temporary and contingent work, the number of women in the workforce and two-earner families and the average duration of unemployment”* (Hearing: Modernizing Unemployment Insurance). These are examples of how explicit articulation of target groups rely on a mainstream gender understanding. By stressing that “women” as a group are of particular need of an extension of the eligibility criterias, no further problematization of possible intersections is taking place. In the analysis of the Census microdata we learned about differences among women as we looked at labor force characteristics across race and gender, that indicated that black women were especially in need of the expansions. Their lower wages compared to other group support such assumptions, findings along the line with what earlier research have found similar patterns when looking at earnings among demographic groups.

In congressional documents, attention is also being paid to the vulnerability and accompanying poverty in single mother households. The lack of childcare options and how this restricts the ability to engage in paid work is mentioned as a factor worsening the prerequisites for poor women and their ability to sustain themselves (Hearing: The Needs of the Working Poor). Median income households that are female headed face greater economic hardship when costs rise, due to the male-female gap in earnings (Congressional Report: Women and their Families are being Squeezed). While it appeared as (although without showing statistical significance) black women were more likely to have more children than fathers of both races as well as white mothers, these disparities are in general not acknowledged in the problem construction in the congressional documents.

The discussion on the recession focuses on the increases in female employment and how this will form a greater threat to families and their economic wellbeing: *“unlike in decades past, families can no longer rely on women's employment to help boost family income during a downturn/.../ [w]hen women lose jobs, families lose a substantial share of income”* (Congressional Report: Women are Increasingly Vulnerable to Layoffs During Recessions). It is stressed that job losses are most frequent for working mothers, adding that *“the ranks of female heads of household who are unemployed or "marginally attached" to the labor force has grown across all demographic groups, with women of color faring the worst. Black and Hispanic women in this group are currently experiencing unemployment at rates of 13.3 percent and 11.0 percent, respectively”* (Congressional

Report: Women in the Recession: Working Mothers Face High Rates of Unemployment). The debate contributes to a picture of the challenges of an economic downturn and what they might look like across demographic groups: *“Black female heads of household started both recessions with an unemployment rate just under 10 percent, well above the average for all female heads of household/.../as the current recession intensified, the gap widened between the unemployment rates in the current recession/.../suggesting that the employment situation for these women is quite difficult”* (Congressional Report: Women in the Recession: Working Mothers Face High Rates of Unemployment). This indicates some understanding of the diversity in the target group of the reform, and that there are differences across race and gender groups when it comes to labor force attachment, and in terms of how unemployment is experienced by individuals with different backgrounds.

5.2.1.2 The “problem” in Transition Memos

Transition memos function as a channel for interest- and advocacy groups to articulate their concerns to the new administration prior to the enactment of the UIMA. The problem is expressed in terms of job losses, economic insecurity for mothers and struggles with work-life balance: *“As women's job losses have accelerated, so have the job losses for working mothers. A Joint Economic Committee analysis of published and unpublished data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) finds that increases in unemployment during this recession have been especially steep for female heads of household -mothers who are solely responsible for maintaining their families' economic security”* (Transition Memo: Women in the Recession: Working Mothers Face High Rates of Unemployment). In general, this suggests that a mainstream gender dimension is the main focus of the debate, which in turn will create a target group that relies on the labor force characteristics of white women, as a socially constructed “advantaged” target groups that is not likely to acknowledge diversity among the workers that are to be affected by the reform. To some extent, however, are the experiences of black women acknowledged (primarily by special interests groups) as part of a mainstream understanding of gender, and gender differences in relation to labor force attachment: *“African American women, though, are not alone in their need for greater flexibility/.../ lack of flexibility ultimately results in parents making tough decisions”* between child wellbeing and what they know they have to do in order to keep the job the family is relying on for essential incomes (Transition Memo: National Council for Negro Women). In relation to the construction of target groups, this opens up for the possibility of black women, who have shown to

be in great need of increased eligibility, being constructed as “advantaged” and potentially benefit from the reform.

5.2.2 The “origin”

5.2.2.1 The “origin” in Congressional Documents

The predominant logic behind the experienced problem with an outdated unemployment insurance system is that not all workers are alike in terms of their labor market attachment, and that this generates inequalities in access to benefits (Hearing: Modernizing UI). In the Congressional documents, the ambitions to get to terms with racial and gendered inequality are expressed as concerns for workers who are currently falling outside the existing safety net: *“these barriers to unemployment insurance fall particularly hard on women who are more likely to work in part-time and/or low-wage jobs”* (Hearing: Modernizing Unemployment Insurance). The barriers referred to are understood to exist due to changes in the characteristics of the workforce since the birth of the unemployment insurance program in the US, thus policies which fails to reach unemployed individuals because of outdated eligibility criteria, leaving out large part of the workforce, especially women and minorities (Congressional Report: “Pay or Play” Mandate = Job Losses and Unemployment; Hearing: Modernizing Unemployment Insurance). Inequalities are further identified as differences in labor force attachment with women of color being worst off, in terms of marginal attachment to the labor force, which is something that is expressed as a concern worth addressing with stimulus policy (Congressional Report: Women in the Recession: Working Mothers Face High Rates of Unemployment). Consistent with the problem definition, the discourse is to great extents relying on the patterns of white women, since little attention is being paid to the experiences of black women and the difference in labor market outcomes that they experience compared to white women, for example lower earnings that is one of the key aspects of the reform. Failing to reckonize the relative differences within the group of female workers who are addressed as the target group of the reform will not accurately reflect the reality and thus the real need of the workers who fail to reach eligibility.

From looking at how gender and race is expressed in the debate, it has already been disclosed that there is attention being paid to women as low-wage workers: *“although low-wage workers are more likely than higher wage workers to suffer unemployment, they are significantly less likely to*

receive unemployment insurance benefits. Thus, unemployed women are at greater risk of not receiving support from UI when they are unemployed than is the case for men. Women's UI reciprocity rate is more than 10 percent lower than men's, and in some States, the gender gap in UI reciprocity rates is much higher, up to 44 percent" (Hearing: Modernizing Unemployment Insurance). It is a recurrent conclusion in the discussion that women are the workers with the lowest earnings: *"The problem was that the vast majority of women we talked to lacked all or most of these stability factors. These were the working poor. Forty percent of them earned more than \$10 an hour, but their annual incomes were extremely low."* (Hearing: The Needs of the Working Poor). From these examples it is clear that the differences in earnings *within* the group of female workers is hardly recognized, which leads to the assumption consistent with earlier research, that a mainstream gender perspective includes white women and their characteristics. Consequently, white women are targeted as advantaged in the UI reform, while black women's experiences are marginalized and as a group, socially constructed as dependants.

Part-time work is exclusively being linked to female employment and especially motherhood, with caretaking responsibilities being the main reason behind the disproportionate amount of women among part time workers: *"When workers looking for a part-time job are denied UI benefits, women are the primary losers because 67 percent, or two-thirds, of all part-timers are women."* (Hearing: Modernizing Unemployment Insurance). The earnings of part-time workers are also brought up as having a significant importance for family income, as opposed to the understanding that female part-time workers marginally supplement a primary breadwinner (Hearing: The Needs of The Working Poor). Again, indicators of a mainstream understanding over a more diverse approach allowing for disparities within the group of women are characterizing the discourse and the target groups are to most parts excluding black women from the advantaged groups, by relying on the patterns of white women.

Family responsibilities are recognized in congressional documents as time spent taking care of family members, both in the sense of having dependents and more labor intensive caretaking for a family member with a serious illness or disability. As caregivers, women are heavily overrepresented (Hearing: Modernizing Unemployment Insurance). Including domestic violence in legitimate reasons for leaving work is a way of recognizing the variety of causes behind unemployment, which is expressed in the debate as a necessary step for making unemployment

insurance more responsive (Hearing: Modernizing Unemployment Insurance). This widened approach to women's vulnerability when it comes to possibilities to support themselves and their family in times of unemployment is however not problematized in a way that would identify differences in caretaking responsibilities, or other family characteristics, among demographic groups.

5.2.2.2 *The "origin" in Transition Memos*

Transition memos are predominantly focused on the future, and the direction they want the new administration to take. As a result the discussion is focused on policy solution rather than the reason behind the current situation. Expressions of the intersection of race and gender can be found among the articulated concerns. Identified as the cause of concerning issues in transition memos is a difference in situatedness as expressed here by Women's Organizations and Advocates for Women's Equity: *"Because women, especially women of color, are differently affected by so many laws and policies/.../ it is critical that the impact on women be "part of the picture" as each and every critical decision is made."* (Transition Memo: Women's Organizations and Advocates for Women's Equity). Along the same lines is the identification of different valuation of labor across race, where black women's labor is consequently undervalued (Transition Memo: National Council of Negro Women). Although these examples show some understanding of diversity when it comes to women as a group and why they are in need of an expansion of the eligibility criteria the mainstream approach to gender inequalities dominate the articulation of underlying assumptions that affect the identified inequalities, such as women having weaker attachment to the labor force and occupational segregation (Transition Memo: Wider Opportunities for Women). The implication of this is a limited scope in the identification of underlying factors behind the problem of an outdated UI program, which shows that the discourse is characterized by a simplified definition of gender and gendered experiences.

5.2.3 *The "solution"*

5.2.3.1 *The "solution" in Congressional Documents*

To tackle the economic recession and the burdens that the downturn has put on businesses and households, policies are proposed to affect the economy at both macro and micro level, with ambitions to alleviate identified problems. What constitutes a problem and how to tackle it is

determined in the policy process, and a closer look at how the discussion went in the initial stages of the policy process prior to the reforms in UI, and how these contribute to the social construction of target population, is described below.

The solutions brought up in Congress correspond to large extents to what was later included in the UIMA, under the umbrella of the stimulus package, ARRA. Tools to be used in order to turn the struggling economy around focus is on specific components such as the expansion through the implementation of an alternative base period, to address the changes in the workforce that makes UI ill-fitting program to unemployed low-wage workers to name an example (Congressional Report: Easing the Squeeze... Hearing: Modernizing UI). The discussion also includes less specific and more visionary aspects in relation to the need for improvement of the UI; to make it family-friendly, the potential to easier improve skills, enhance eligibility for individuals with weak workforce attachment (low wage, part-time) who doesn't benefit from the program as it is designed today (Hearing: Modernizing UI). In some instances, the discussion is widened to include other aspects of problems and how to address it, such as raising the minimum wage (Congressional Report: The Needs of the Working Poor). Programs specifically targeting families such as Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)⁴, food stamps⁵ and Medicaid⁶ are presented as vehicles to support the economies of families and lower income workers, especially families of color: *"The Recovery Act will help protect the health of low income African American families by helping states avoid cuts in Medicaid enrollment and services, and boosting funding for food stamps, WIC⁷, and food bank programs that serve as critical sources of healthy food for struggling families across the country"* (Congressional Report: Easing the Squeeze...). These excerpts from the debate show little deviation from what is outlined in the theoretical framework. While the main focus clearly is on the patterns, and needs of white women, black women are introduced in relation to policies that are framed as tools for poverty alleviation and as such involve more control over the target. This indicates that the social construction of black women as targets in the debate is as dependents rather than advantaged. As dependents they are less likely to benefit from the reform compared to groups that are constructed

⁴ EITC is a refundable income tax credit for low and moderate income individuals.

⁵ The food program for low-income people, SNAP, is commonly known as "food stamps".

⁶ Medicaid is a health insurance for people with limited income.

⁷ WIC supports mothers, infants and children with checks to buy food from authorized vendors.

as advantaged, whose needs are shown to be much easier to accommodate due to a friendlier understanding from the general public.

5.2.3.2 *The “Solution” in Transition Memos*

Besides addressing the overarching causes of gender inequality such as equal pay, and insisting on the enactment of legislation with potential to tackle the wage gap, Transition Memos point out a need for a separate agency, with adequate resources, to conduct research and outreach aiming directly to the issues of Women and Families. (Transition Memo: Women’s Organizations and Advocates for Women’s Equality; Women Work and Families II). The request for resources to a separate agency is expressed both in terms of funding to the Women’s Bureau as well as a *“new Office on Women [that] would evaluate federal programs, initiatives and policies for their impact on women /.../ improv[ing] their effectiveness through coordination and strategic planning.”* (Transition Memo: Women’s Organizations and Advocates for Women’s Equality). Articulating the need for institutional change without acknowledging the intersection of race gender is to submit to a one-dimensional understanding of gender that contributes to the social construction of white women as advantaged and black women as dependents, even though stratification of labor market outcomes show that there are differences in labor market outcomes, particularly when it comes to earnings.

Along with the debate being conducted in congress, the voices of the advocacy groups call for a more up to date unemployment insurance that would address the need for uncovered workers, especially part-time workers, who are mostly women. This would be achieved by enacting the UIMA (Transition Memo: Women Work and Families II). Advocacy groups also call for attention being paid to barriers in the work place, by requesting affirmative action policies and resources for the evaluation of their effectiveness (Transition Memo: Wider Opportunities for Women II). The transition memos also bring up the need for addressing the issues at an institutional level, *“because women, especially women of color, are differently affected by so many laws and policies – from health care to labor to the economy – it is critical that the impact on women be “part of the picture” as each and every critical decision is made”* (Transition Memo: Women’s Organizations and Advocates for Women’s Equality). Bringing up affirmative action as a tool to come to terms

with inequalities in coverage by UI, as caused by different earnings patterns is a welcomed approach that introduces a greater problematization of the political problem of an outdated UI.

Transition memos articulate critical areas for a reform such as strengthening the economy and give their opinion on proposed programs: *“suggest[ing]/.../to ensure that women are not, at this critical time left behind/.../ that the upcoming stimulus package include funding for job training programs aimed at preparing women for non-traditional work”* and then *“as movements towards investing in infrastructure projects as well as a Green economy take shape, it is critical to protect advances made through affirmative action so that women and people of color are both fairly represented among those hired as a result of this employment expansion”*(Transition Memo: National Council of Negro Women). While creating new jobs is the main goal, there is at the same time a concern for inequality of distribution of resources and opportunity (Transition Memo: Wider Opportunity for Women I and II). The importance of accompanying policies are stressed in order to ensure equal access to new jobs: *“specific provisions are needed to guarantee that women have fair access to the job opportunities created through the economic recovery plan, to preserve and create jobs in fields where women currently represent a majority of the workforce, and to provide work supports essential to vulnerable families.”* (Transition Memo: Wider Opportunity for Women I). Referrals to requests for resources to be allocated to fields where women’s representation is traditionally strong, there are in other examples, as seen above, also a call for opportunity for women to enter new areas of the labor market, that historically have been predominantly dominated by men (Transition Memo: National Council of Negro Women; Wider Opportunities for Women).

Again, the Transition Memos express a more overarching approach in their recognition of inequality in earnings, in requesting that the *“Labor Department to conduct a pay equity analysis of all federal jobs department by department, to identify areas where women or people of color are paid less for jobs that require similar education, training, skill and experience”* and by requesting legislation that addresses pay inequality. Along the lines of the debate in Congress, interest groups express similar understandings of how the part-time work force is characterized: *“Ideally, the President-Elect’s economic stimulus package would include a further extension of unemployment benefits as well as and expansion in the definition of those who qualify for unemployment insurance. Expanding that universe to include part-time workers would be particularly helpful to*

women, since women are especially likely to work part-time.” (Transition Memo: National Council for Negro Women). It is argued that the UIMA would play a great role in the elimination of inequalities in access to unemployment benefits for part-time workers (Transition Memo: Women, Work and Families II).

There is an expressed concern for policy proposals and the implication for such policy for female workers. Occupational segregation result in large fractions of the female labor force ending up in traditionally female dominated occupations: *“investing in infrastructure is/.../necessary for getting Americans working again/.../ Yet, we are concerned that a jobs program which focuses almost exclusively on infrastructure development will be a jobs program that provides employment almost exclusively, in industries that have historically failed to incorporate women in significant numbers”* (Transition Memo: National Council of Negro Women) The issue of training is of particular concern for women and minorities as the interest groups *“would also remind the administration that as movements towards investing in infrastructure projects as well as Green economy take shape, it is critical to protect advances made through affirmative action so that women and people of color are both fairly represented among those hired as a result of this employment expansion”* (Transition Memo: National Council of Negro Women) and deserve unique attention being paid in the design of stimulus policies (Transition Memo: Wider Opportunities for Women).

6 Analysis

The analysis of the empirical material presented in Chapter 5 includes the conclusions from the statistical tests, followed by a discussion about what the review of policy documents contributed with. Finally, these two components of the study are connected in order to provide answers to the research questions.

6.1. Labor market outcomes with effect on Unemployment Insurance Collection

The statistical analysis implies that differences in earnings play out to the disadvantage of, above all, black women but also black men. To large extents the findings in the study correspond what earlier research has found to be a pattern in labor market characteristics. Black women have the lowest hourly wages when comparing mean wages across race and gender (Table 4). Differences in tenure add to the picture, showing that black women is the group that has been with their employer the shortest time (Table 4). It is reasonable to believe that expansion of the UI by increasing eligibility for low wage workers (including those with short tenures, another factor that imposes challenges in terms of reaching earnings criteria eligibility) would increase eligibility for black women.

In this study, little could explain the variance in number of children (ETA^2 0.001) as it was tested against race and gender category. This is interesting since much of the debate on women's needs in the stimulus package relate to their needs as mothers.⁸ Elements in the expanded policy that caters to the needs of parents with dependent children is therefore an aspect which at first glance doesn't seem to benefit a certain race and gender group in particular. A cross-tabulation of the mean value of number of children yet show that black women are slightly more likely to be mothers of three or more children. These results are statistically significant (Table 5).

Testing differences in part-time work also provided us with statistically significant results for variance among race and gender groups. The cross-tabulation shows that white women seem more likely to work part-time compared to other demographic groups. Prior knowledge suggests that

⁸ Which, given the rich research on the topic, does not automatically lead to the conclusion that the effects of parenthood is equally dispersed. Little imagination is required to imagine combinations of factors such as low socio-economic status, single parenthood and low income contributing to especially dire economic situations. The scope of this study does unfortunately not allow further exploration of such factors.

white women work part -time to greater extents than black women, and these differences were found in this model as well, thus adding to the conclusions drawn in earlier research. Since the differences were statistically significant, these result are not the result of chance, and the models suggests that white women are more likely, in comparison to the other groups in the study, to benefit from an expansion of eligibility for part-time workers.

The need for training is poorly measured by using the CPS data from January 2010. The sample of individuals who reported they were not looking for jobs due to their need of training is too small to use in order to draw conclusions that have the ability to say something about the population as a whole. From a quick snap shot at the characteristics of the people who could possibly benefit from the expansion of the UI that involves more generous eligibility criteria, they are predominantly white men who are not parents.

6.1.1 The “problem” in the debate on UI modernization

To identify the “problem” we look for the understanding of individuals and reality, descriptive discussions of what is to be addressed by public policy.

The debate is to large extents characterized by the identified gap between contributing workers and eligible ones, where the problem is eligibility criteria that fit poorly with what the workforce looks like today. Focus is on low-wage workers excluded from the unemployment insurance program because their wages do not reach the traditional threshold. Female workers are especially vulnerable in this aspect given their greater share of part-time work due to family and caregiver responsibilities. Increased female employment, followed by a greater reliance on female worker’s wages while the insurance system lags behind in recognizing the shift in workforce characteristics. These points show how the identification of the “problem” is dominated by a mainstream gender understanding, with women as part-time workers, and that - in itself - an effect of family responsibilities. To some extent, the intersection of race and gender is acknowledged, as women of color, with greater likelihood of being single heads of households experiencing great insecurity in the face of the recession, but without necessarily relating to the overall problem, the UI eligibility rules and who they exclude and include. This suggests that power relationships play out in the construction of what is considered to be a public problem. The theoretical framework introduced the idea that problem articulation is likely to be dominated by mainstream understandings that imply

little real changes on existing systems. This approach is a way to enhance support for a political agenda since the support from powerful groups is essential for the policy to survive. Presenting the problem as one of “women” in general with little problematizing of the diversity within the group of women referred to fits with the mainstream image, without threatening comparatively influential positions in society. The intersection of race and gender is treated as a separate concept that is not necessarily an integral part of the discussion of eligibility criteria, which can be seen as another example of how the policy debate adapts to the status quo.

6.1.2 The “origin” in the debate on UI modernization

To learn about how the “origin” is expressed in the policy debate we look for analytical distance to the “problem”, seeking underlying factors that help explain the rational and the reason why there is a political problem in need of governmental intervention. By highlighting barriers to eligibility, especially for women, the problem is already defined. The assumption behind this is that a diversity in the workforce expressed in weaker labor force attachment for female workers is not met with a corresponding diversity in eligibility criteria for benefits available for workers in the event of unemployment. This discussion is dominated by conventional gender patterns with some exceptions where women of color are identified as having particularly weak attachment to the labor force. Acknowledging that there is no universal solution to a problem is a welcomed approach, but given its marginal significance it is likely to give way for a more commercial framing of the cause of the problem. In the end, the rhetoric is dominated by changes in the workforce, with women *complementing* traditional male breadwinners with part-time employment as the predominant reason behind the problem of an outdated unemployment insurance system. This indicates that there is again preferences for a framing of the issue that supports the prevailing understandings of female labor force attachment and the reasons to why it is different from men’s.

6.1.3 The “solution” in the debate on UI modernization

With the policy problem and the underlying assumptions outlined, the analysis now turns to the suggested actions to address the identified issues. Policy solutions presented in the debate are in many aspects similar to what was later enacted under the UIMA. Much focus is on the expansion of the base period, from the traditional to an alternative base period that is more beneficial to low-wage workers, and the inclusion of part-time workers. Little time is spent problematizing how this would play out among demographic groups. Worth pointing out is that when women of color is

present in the debate, it is in relation to targeted programs designed to help poor working families. Giving this little thought, this aspect could pass for a way to integrate black women's experiences into the debate, but this is rather an example of how black women are targeted as dependents in a policy with ambitions to solve a problem. Instead of acknowledging diversity in relation to the main solution; adjustments in the eligibility rules for unemployment insurance. An universal solution is applied to a problem that comprises far more diversity than is reflected in the suggested design.

7 Conclusions

In this section, the conclusions of the analysis of the findings are presented, to finally answer the research questions that were introduced in the introduction. The ambition is to conclude who will potentially benefit from the reform, how target groups were constructed in the initial stages of the policy reform and, finally, how the target group construction relates to the stratification of labor market outcomes that determine eligibility for benefits.

7.1. Who will potentially benefit from the reform?

The results from the statistical test indicates that the alternative base period will potentially benefit black women since they are the workers with the lowest hourly wages, the shortest tenure and also more likely to be parents. The policy alternative that involves increased eligibility for part-time workers tends to benefit white women in particular, who are more likely to work part-time, when looking at the dispersion of part-time workers across race and gender. Taken together, the results from the ANOVA tables and the post hoc testing the identified differences, it seems like the intersection of race and gender does affect the eligibility criteria that are part of the expansion of the UIMA. To be more specific, it is the differences between black women and white women that are the most striking, as the test show statistical difference between these two groups for all four of the eligibility criteria tested in the study.

7.2 How were target groups constructed in the policy process preceding the reform?

The case was selected because it was suitable to use for exploring the intersection of race and gender in a reform that was widely understood as “women friendly”. Earlier knowledge point in the direction of mainstreaming policy problems to keep them manageable, which creates incentives for overlooking further problematization, and target groups that are constructed as advantaged. In line with the predicted outcome, the policy debate involves small efforts to challenge a mainstream gender understanding and the constraints on decision makers are visible as there are only fragments of acknowledgement of race and gender understanding, and alternative articulation of what is constituted as a problem. “White women” female workers are highlighted as the main target in the reform, and as such a target group that is constructed as an advantaged group. Black women are targeted as “dependents”, mostly excluded from the mainstream debate and mentioned in relation to

differently structured policies. By presenting universal solutions to solve issues of inequality, the effects of not integrating the variance in the labor force in a program that has broad ambitions will be limited to predominantly affect advantaged groups. This can be exemplified by the policy solution to the problem of an UI program that excludes low-wage workers from benefits, among them many female workers. But without acknowledging that black women earn significantly less than other demographic groups, the sweeping change might as well pass them by.

7.3 How does the construction of target groups relate to the stratification of labor market outcomes that determine eligibility for benefits?

The stratification among race and gender groups found in labor force data is barely reflected in the target group construction. Consequently, the experiences of mainstream “white women” dominate the debate, and constructed as advantaged in relation to the UIMA. Therefore we expect them to also be the main beneficiaries from the implemented changes. Black women are marginalized and constructed as dependents and thus, we expect the results of the policy change to not explicitly favor them as a group. However, when comparing the results from the statistical tests with the result from the review of the policy documents, we find indications that black women, as the group with lowest average wages, shortest tenure and more likely to be parents, seem to be the group to whom the changes in policy would involve the greatest gain. To tie this finding to the theoretical framework used to help understand and interpret the empirical material, Schneider and Ingram, among many would argue that target groups typically won’t benefit from a policy change if they are not included in the advantaged target group.

7.4 Directions for future research

It seems like other tools are needed to examine if the differences in labor force characteristics that determine eligibility to find out how the potentially bigger gains for black women in the UIMA compare to white women, and ultimately, who will benefit from the reform. First, we must acknowledge the limitations in the material we used. Policy documents are inherently constricted in terms of how much of a discourse, and its nuances, they are able to catch. Secondly, the labor force data could need further examination in order to take the analysis one step further in the ambition to catch intersectionality and how it is manifested in race and gender groups and their relation to the labor market. By introducing control variables in the statistical models, some of the variation could

be explained, and potentially also approach the intersectionality still it would be helpful to integrate a class perspective to the analysis to take economic stratification and how it relates to policy design a step further. The race and gender intersectionality in focus for this study includes black and white women. There is also potential value in expanding this topic to include other intersections of race and gender and how they relate to social policy could not be stressed enough.

8 Epilog

To wrap up this paper, I want to leave a note on what happened after the UIMA was implemented. 16 states implemented changes to their UI programs, making more workers eligible. However \$2.7 billion remains unclaimed by states with less than a year left to apply, before the program expires. 18 states (6 claimed one-third) have funds left, and stick with the 1930s' design of the unemployment insurance programs. In terms of related policies, The Paycheck Fairness Act never made it through the Senate. This indicates how hard it is to push the envelope for progressive policies in the current political climate in the U.S. The elections in November 2010 changed the dynamics in Congress in favor of the Republican party. It is still a great challenge to discuss race, and a progressive discussion is undermined with arguments such as there nothing is left to do with a black man in the White House. In many ways it seems foreign to a Swede to talk about race, since Scandinavian society is not stratified in the same way as the American society. In Sweden we discuss inequality in terms of diversity and equality without pointing to the structural problem we wish to address. An example is "jämställdhet" ("equality") that encompasses gender equality but can also involve an ethnic dimension. This might indicate that we are beyond addressing "women's issues" which is the common approach in the U.S. But a loose definition might also mask the problem and give a false sense of accomplishment in an area where there is still work to be done.

9 Abstract

Titel: Speaking truth about policy targets: The intersection of race and gender in the Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act.

Författare: Annamaria Sundbye

Handledare: Stig Montin och Petra Svensson

Bakgrund: Expansionen av den amerikanska arbetslöshetsförsäkringen, en del av president Obamas omfattande stimulanspaket, uppfattas generellt som en särskilt kvinnovänlig policy. Den ämnar utöka antalet arbetare som vid arbetslöshet är berättigade ekonomiskt bidrag från en försäkring de genom skatter är medfinansierare till. Mot bakgrund av en arbetsmarknad som i många avseenden är stratifierad utifrån etnicitet (“ethnicity” och “race”) och genus, är det intressant att undersöka reformen med utgångspunkt i ett genus och etnicitetsperspektiv.

Syfte: Att studera reformen av den amerikanska arbetslöshetsförsäkringen; den politiska debatten som föregick reformen samt hur reformens utformning faller ut i olika grupper av arbetare.

Metod: En kvalitativ studie av policydokument, publika inlägg i debatten i kongressen från intressegrupper, sakkunniga och politiker, samt en kvantitativ analys av arbetsmarknadsstatistik där ambitionen är att ta reda på hur de områden på vilka försäkringen har utvidgats påverkar grupper utifrån etnicitet och genus. Tillsammans avser data ge en bild av hur intersektionaliteten i genus och etnicitet har inbegripits i reformen.

Resultat och slutsatser: Resultatet från den statistiska analysen visar att gruppen svarta kvinnor, jämfört med svarta män, vita kvinnor och vita män, är de som tjänar minst, har varit kortast tid hos sin arbetsgivare och i större utsträckning har barn i hushållet att försörja. På en punkt, deltidsarbete, är det däremot vanligare att vita kvinnor arbetar deltid. Mellan övriga grupper skiljer sig förekomsten av deltidsarbete anmärkningsvärt. Trots denna uppenbarliga ojämlikhet och svarta kvinnors svaga ställning på arbetsmarknaden är det föga troligt att reformen kommer innebära ökad utvidgning av arbetslöshetsförsäkringen för deras räkning. Detta antagande stöds av slutsatserna

från den kvalitativa analysen av policydokument där det framgår att svarta kvinnor är konstruerade som en beroende målgrupp och mot bakgrund av tidigare forskning, vilken menar att det är först och främst gynnade målgrupper som drar fördel av policyreformer, är det därför inte heller troligt att reformens utvidningen kommer svarta kvinnor tillgodo. Snarare är det grupper som redan är konstruerade som gynnade gentemot policyreformen som även i fortsättningen kommer att vara de som kan ta del av arbetslöshetsförsäkringssystemets ekonomiska bidrag.

Nyckelord: Race, gender, intersectionality, target group construction, policy reform.

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Appendix

I Programming code for the quantitative analysis:

log using "/Users/Nanna/Desktop/IWPR/Master's Thesis/Final.smcl", replace

```
set memory 500m
set more off
```

```
use "/Volumes/NO NAME/cpsjan10.dta", clear
```

```
keep if peage >=20 & peage <=64
keep if pemlr == 1 | pemlr == 2 | pemlr == 3 | pemlr == 4
```

GENERATE VARIABLE FOR NO OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE OF 18

```
gen childno = 0 if prnmchld == -1 | prnmchld == 0
replace childno = 1 if prnmchld >=1 & prnmchld <= 2
replace childno = 2 if prnmchld >=3 & prnmchld <= 4
replace childno = 3 if prnmchld >=5
label define childnobl 0 "0 children" 1 "1-2 children" 2 "3-4 children" 3 "5+ children"
label values childno childnobl
```

GENERATE VARIABLE FOR RACE/ETHNICITY CATEGORIES

```
gen race2 =1 if ptctrace ==1 & pehspon ==2
replace race2 =2 if ptctrace ==2 & pehspon ==2
replace race2 =3 if ptctrace ==3 & pehspon ==2
replace race2 =4 if ptctrace ==4 & pehspon ==2
replace race2 =5 if ptctrace ==5 & pehspon ==2
replace race2 =6 if ptctrace >=6 & ptctrace <=21 & pehspon ==2
replace race2 =7 if pehspon ==1
label define race2lbl 1 "white, non hispanic" 2 "black, non hispanic" 3 "American Indian, Alaskan
Native Only" 4 "Asian Only" 5 "Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Only" 6 "Other/Two or more races" 7
"Hispanic"
label values race2 race2lbl
```

GENERATE RACE&GENDER CATEGORIES

```
gen rg =1 if pesex ==2 & race2 ==2
replace rg =2 if pesex ==1 & race2 ==2
replace rg =3 if pesex ==2 & race2 ==1
replace rg =4 if pesex ==1 & race2 ==1
label define rglbl 1 "Black women" 2 "Black men" 3 "White women" 4 "White men"
label values rg rglbl
```

GENERATE VARIABLE FOR HOURLY PAY

```

gen hrspay=prernhly if prernhly >0 & prernhly ~=.
gen hours=pehrusl1 if pehrusl1>0 & pehrusl1~=.
replace hours=pehract1 if hours==. & pehrusl1==4 & pehract1>0
replace hrspay=prernwa/hours if hrspay==. & prernwa >0 & prernwa ~=. & hours >0 & hours~=.

```

GENERATE VARIABLE FOR FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME WORKERS

```

gen cond1=1 if prhrusl==3 | prhrusl==4 | prhrusl==5 | prhrusl==6
replace cond1=0 if prhrusl<3 | prhrusl>6

```

```

gen cond2=1 if pemjot==2 & pehrftpt==1
replace cond2=0 if pemjot~2 | pehrftpt~1

```

```

gen fulltime=1 if cond1==1 | cond2==1
replace fulltime=0 if cond1~1 & cond2~1
label define ft 0 "Part-time" 1 "Full-time"
label values fulltime ft

```

GENERATE VARIABLE FOR HOURS WORKED

```

gen hrswork =1 if pehrusl1 >=1 & pehrusl1 <=10
replace hrswork =2 if pehrusl1 >=11 & pehrusl1 <=20
replace hrswork =3 if pehrusl1 >=21 & pehrusl1 <=30
replace hrswork =3 if pehrusl1 >=31 & pehrusl1 <=40
replace hrswork =4 if pehrusl1 >=41 & pehrusl1 <=50
replace hrswork =5 if pehrusl1 >=51 & pehrusl1 <=60
replace hrswork =6 if pehrusl1 >=61
label define hrsworklbl 1 "1-10 hours/week" 2 "11-20 hours/week" 3 "21-30 hours/week" 4 "31-40
hours/week" 5 "41-50 hours/week" 6 "51-60 hours/week" 7 "61 hours or more/week"
label values hrswork hrsworklbl

```

GENERATE VARIABLE FOR TENURE

```

tab pest1a pest1b, missing
tab pest3, missing

```

```

gen ten = pest3 if pest3 > 0 & pest3 < 36
replace ten = pest1a if ten == . & pest1b == 3
replace ten = pest1a * 12 if ten == . & pest1b == 4
replace ten = pest1a/4.3 if ten == . & pest1b == 2
replace ten = pest1a/24 if ten == . & pest1b == 1

```

```

gen tenure = round(ten/12, .1)

```

ANOVA TABLE FOR RACE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN HOURLY PAY

```

oneway hrspay rg

```

EFFECT SIZE FOR RACE AND GENDER ON HOURLY PAY

```

effectsize rg

```

SCHEFFE POST HOC-TEST FOR RACE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN HOURLY PAY
oneway hrspay rg, scheffe

ANOVA TABLE FOR RACE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN TENURE
oneway tenure rg

EFFECT SIZE FOR RACE AND GENDER ON TENURE
effectsize rg

SCHEFFE POST HOC-TEST FOR RACE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN TENURE
oneway tenure rg, scheffe

ANOVA TABLE FOR RACE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN NUMBER OF CHILDREN
oneway childno rg

EFFECT SIZE FOR RACE AND GENDER ON NUMBER OF CHILDREN
effectsize rg

*SCHEFFE POST HOC-TEST FOR RACE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN NUMBER OF
CHILDREN*
oneway childno rg, scheffe

ANOVA TABLE FOR RACE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PART-TIME WORK
oneway fulltime rg

EFFECT SIZE FOR RACE AND GENDER ON PART-TIME WORK
effectsize rg

SCHEFFE POST HOC-TEST FOR RACE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN FULL-TIME WORK
oneway fulltime rg, scheffe

II List of sources for the quantitative analysis

Transition Memos

American Bar Association

Latina Business Leaders

National Women's Law Center

Policy partnership for communities of color

Wider Opportunities for Women

Women Work and Families I

Women, Work, and Families II

Women's Leadership Exchange

Women's Organizations and Advocates for Women's Equality

Congressional Documents

Congressional Report: Easing the Squeeze on African American Families

Congressional Report: "Pay or Play" Mandate = Job Losses and Unemployment

Congressional Report: Women and their Families are being Squeezed

Congressional Report: Women are Increasingly Vulnerable to Layoffs During Recessions

Congressional Report: Women in the Recession: Working Mothers Face High Rates of Unemployment

Hearing: African American Families are Being Squeezed

Hearing: Modernizing Unemployment Insurance

Hearing: Needs of the Working Poor: Helping Families To Make Ends Meet