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Unraveling the Effects of Pandemic Aid

M01452602

Child Development and Family Studies, Middle Tennessee State University

CDFS 4710: Economic and Social Contexts of Individuals and Families

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https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/13/business/economy/income-poverty-census-bureau.html

Event Summary

The New York Times published an article by DePillis and DeParle focusing on the effects pandemic aid had in our country. The Census Bureau of 2021, reported that poverty came to an all-time low because of pandemic aid (DePillis & DeParle, 2022, para 1). It is important to note that during this time the government had provided emergency programs that are now expired (DePillis & DeParle, 2022, para 7). These emergency programs provided resources to families which expanded their opportunities. Throughout the article, DePillis and DeParle discuss the different perspectives people have on the impact of pandemic aid and whether this triggered inflation.

Course Integration

Over the years, data has shown that a **child's socioeconomic status can affect their development,** especially at an early age. Jack Shonkoff claims that early childhood is essential to the development of children since parents begin to build a foundation for them (Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2016, 0:59). Nutrition and sturdy relationships are important foundations for a child's development. Shonkoff states, "an adult who is preoccupied with overwhelming stresses cannot be responsive to what children do" (Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2016, 1:42). If parents are more focused on their financial situation it can make it harder for them to focus on their children. DePillis and DeParle (2022), explain that financial pressure can often lead to arguments and depression within a couple (para 23). With the help of pandemic aid and other safety nets, it allowed Mrs. Ennis "to be a more attentive mother and bought time for her fiancé to find a better job" (DePillis & DeParle, 2022, para 23). This

correlates with Shonkoff's claims because it demonstrates that once parents are not worried about money, their focus tends to shift to their children. "Quality relationships between children and adults are important because they have an impact on their health, learning, and behaviors" (Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2016, 2:10). This gives children the opportunity for exploration and learning within a safe environment.

Shonkoff also discusses the importance of nutrition for children. **Food insecurity** can be more prevalent among low-income families if they are not able to access resources (Food Research & Action Center [FRAC], 2017, p. 1). Often, **families in poverty** may find it difficult to afford appropriate foods since they are more expensive. According to DePillis and DeParle (2022), food insecurity fell among households with children to the lowest level on record (para 1). With aid, families could afford healthier food options appropriate for development. If children do not have access to these resources, they are more susceptible to health implications that carry into adulthood (FRAC, 2017, p. 2).

Media Critique

The authors of this article were Lydia DePillis and Jason DeParle. Lydia DePillis graduated from Columbia College with a B.A. in History (Lydia DePillis, n.d.-b). DePillis has worked alongside people to learn how policies affect them. She has also created content about the economy, technology, and labor (Lydia DePillis, n.d.-a). Jason DeParle is a senior writer for *The New York Times*. DeParle received his B.A. in Religion from Duke University (Jason DeParle, n.d.). His content concentrates on poverty and immigration. DeParle has also followed three Milwaukee families on and off welfare. ("Author's Note," n.d.). The authors' language throughout the article suggested the idea that the government must intervene to alleviate families

in poverty. Although they did have reputable sources, it was clear they supported pandemic aid. Various links within the article supported the idea that aid from the government has a positive impact on families. If these families did not have this aid, they would be more likely to suffer from barriers thus leading to poverty. According to DePillis and DeParle (2022), "the federal government has the power to give people a better standard of living" (para 8). Their approach supports the **Keynesian theory of poverty** (Oldham, n.d.). These authors support the idea that solutions to this problem can include government-assisted programs that allow for economic growth. Even though the authors included opposing viewpoints, they emphasized the need for government intervention.

The New York Times is categorized on the Ad Fontes Media Bias Interaction Chart as reliable for news but high in opinion and analysis content. Their media tends to attract an audience with liberal views. The authors' thorough and concise language demonstrates accurate information regarding the impact of pandemic aid. Although they have expertise, knowledge, and credentials, they fail to be neutral regarding this current event. Their liberal stance has an impact on their **bias** demonstrated throughout the article.

Lateral Reading

A contrasting perspective that was mentioned in the article was by Johnathan Parker, who claims that the impact of inflation would have been less if pandemic aid was only given to those in need (DePillis & DeParle, 2022, para 17). Parker's reasoning behind inflation is that funds were not distributed appropriately. Although the authors discuss briefly what caused inflation, I would like to look more in-depth at this topic. I would like to understand this topic more since we are currently seeing a surge in prices of things like food items and gas. I examined a variety

of sources, but the Federal Reserve caught my attention. “The Federal Reserve System is the central bank of the United States” (“About the Fed,” n.d.). They focus on implementing monetary policies as well as ensuring that the economy functions in the public’s interest (“About the Fed,” n.d.). An article from the Federal Reserve points to several factors affecting our current inflation. “While the pandemic and associated public health restrictions were the main drivers of economic fluctuations over the past two years, fiscal stimulus policies might have shaped the response of consumption and production to changes in mobility” (Soyres, et al., 2022, para 6). Although fiscal stimulus accounted for a portion of our inflation, there were other factors besides pandemic aid that caused inflation. Compared to my original news media, this media provided insight and data regarding the cause of inflation. This additional information changes my perspective on my original news media because it offers a thorough explanation of inflation. If I had only looked at my original news media, I would have automatically assumed that the main cause of inflation was driven by pandemic aid.

Critical Self-Reflection

Critiquing this news media and engaging laterally challenged my current view on this current issue. Being presented with minimal opposing views challenged me to dig deeper into certain topics. Although I was presented with information on these topics briefly, it was essential to learn the rooting cause of these issues. While engaging in **lateral reading,** I learned that it is important to bring attention to all the different causes and not solely focus on one. Throughout this course, I have learned that engaging in lateral reading is essential to determining the credibility and reliability of a news source. Without engaging in lateral reading, I would not have discovered other information that was relevant to this issue. Engaging in lateral reading prevents

the spreading of **misinformation** and **disinformation** to an individual. By doing this it allows us to prevent a reoccurring cycle of **fake information**.

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