

EVOLUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR POVERTY: NEW FEDERALISM AND STATE
POVERTY REDUCTION COALITIONS

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ABSTRACT

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This research introduces a new model for understanding how narratives around poverty and federalism interact. This PovFed model uses a principal-agent structure to identify the federalism orientation of individual states and a deservingness model to identify orientation toward poverty. Putting these two together provides a tool for understanding how these two narrative frameworks interact. The PovFed model enables social workers in policy and public administration conserve advocacy resources in the short term by framing policy options in line with prevailing narratives, and provides a structure for building toward long-term narrative change.

The way we talk about policy issues conveys important evidence of the stories we form around social problems. These shared stories are more deeply held than political or ideological orientations. Narrative policy analysis provides a framework for identifying linkages between these explanatory stories and policy initiatives; creating a powerful tool for social workers and public administrators to increase the productivity of their efforts toward social justice goals. This paper tests the utility of this approach focusing on state poverty reduction initiatives and the intersectionality of causal stories related to poverty and the state-federal partnership.

The debate over whether and how to intervene to reduce poverty and/or alleviate can be described not as one coherent narrative but as several narrative frames that each remain relevant

today. Similarly, narrative frames regarding the parameters that bound state-level and federal-level intervention in poverty, the boundaries of federalism, remain both contested and enduring. Analyzing state poverty initiatives in the wake of the economic crisis of 2008-2009 reveals that states who took up these initiatives generally aligned with theories related to devolution rather than hollow state theories, as these states assign significant levels of agency to their level of government. These states also were aligned more strongly with causal stories or narrative themes related to poverty that locate cause in societal and economic spheres rather than on individual behaviors. A typology of states is proposed that may future efforts to reduce poverty within states by focusing on causal stories. While further research is required to validate this typology with larger sets of states and comparative data using a poverty measure that accounts for state actions, this theoretical typology of states may inform future state-federal partnerships that leverage the complexity of poverty-related narratives to reduce poverty.

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This work is dedicated to Christina Schmidt, who, upon being told girls don't need high school, packed a bag and walked to town to get a job so she could finish school.

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CHAPTER ONE: PROBLEM & THEORY

Problem Statement

This research addresses four inter-related issues in state policymaking related to poverty:

1. Policy research, especially the creation of predictive models, has become increasingly reliable, but doesn't fully explain state policy choices;
2. Evidence from these models can be underutilized or misused altogether;
3. Narrative analysis can be instrumental in providing context that may enable improved use of results from quantitative models, but has not been fully incorporated;
4. Narratives related to the role of government in addressing poverty and the relationship between state and federal governments are studied separately, missing the interactive nature of these concepts as a means for understanding state policy choices.

Evolution of Quantitative Models & Lack of Connection to Narrative

Research on state policy choice in regard to poverty has become increasingly reliant on evaluative and predictive quantitative analysis of specific policy areas. As increasingly sophisticated methods have been introduced, researchers have warned of an over-reliance on these and expressed concern that important information will be missed as analysis lasers in on predictability within quantitative models. Two foundational examples of innovative research on statistical modeling illustrate this enduring concern. Thompkins (1975) outlined a model for predicting welfare expenditures among states that informs much subsequent work in this area, building on foundational 1949 work of Key in *Southern Politics* and incorporating several adaptations to the Key model that laid the groundwork for understanding policy outputs through

the analysis of socio-demographic variables and political variables. Thompkins expresses concern that increasing reliance on statistical models may over-estimate the importance of the factors examined, and stresses the importance of avoiding “partialization” of factors in a search for significance; citing the already emergent practice of substituting statistical tests for theoretical coherence (p.400). Similarly, Berry & Berry (2007) proposed a “unified model of state government innovation and diffusion” that aims to predict policy outputs based on a set of internal and external variables, including the severity of the problem being addressed, resources, obstacles, other policies within the state and external factors similar to the variables used by Thompkins. Echoing Thompkins, Berry & Berry warn against assuming that even a model as comprehensive as theirs can explain policymaking within states. Citing other models that look at other aspects of policymaking such as the Advocacy Coalition Framework developed by Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith in 2006, they argue that statistical models are useful even though they can’t explain state policy choices comprehensively (248); defending the importance of mathematical models while warning against over-reliance on them.

In keeping with these two historical examples, an overview of poverty research reveals increasing reliance on quantitative models. In the latest compilation of research on poverty and public policy from the National Poverty Center series (Bailey & Danziger, 2013), each chapter focuses on a different policy area included in the war on poverty and uses quantitative modeling to isolate factors that influenced the direction of trends in these areas, from various perspectives. The effectiveness of Head Start, for example, is examined in relation to outcomes for children and the durability of these outcomes, estimating the effect of this policy initiative in light of other trends such as family investment in education, state education and early childhood funding patterns, and other factors. This type of analysis is critically important in understanding the

impact of public policy on outcomes for individuals and in understanding the interactive effects of federal and state funding patterns. Similarly, analyzing workforce development programs using models that account for changes in labor market participation and income dynamics is absolutely indispensable in understanding the relative benefits, risks and productivity of policy choices over time; helping not only improve outcomes for individuals but provide evidence for increasing the economic output in relation to government expenditures. The relevance and utility of models like these cannot be overstated; they allow for reliably isolating government intervention as a causal factor related not only to immediate and intermediate outcomes, but also to long-term broader policy goals such as durable earnings and educational attainment. However, these models don't fully examine the interactions of culture with policy; leaving a gap in our understanding of how policy shifts over time. Leading poverty policy researchers do seem to recognize the importance of how people talk about poverty; but still don't make connections to fill this gap. In their introductory chapter, Bailey and Danziger (p.5-7) trace changes in the way poverty is conceived and describe the path for poverty being elevated to and then eliminated from the national policy agenda. Using examples of political speech and even an overview of Google searches, they outline how attention to poverty has changed. Even though this discussion centers on how people have engaged the broad concept of poverty, these are not organized as narrative themes. In fact, the role of narratives is not mentioned. The incidences of political actors and the general public highlighting poverty is disconnected from the policy analyses that follow; leaving quantitative factors to stand on their own as explanations for differential impacts of numerous policy initiatives.

Issues in the Use of Evidence

More powerful analysis of government policy does not reliably lead to increasing utilization of these policy initiatives. Frustration among practitioners and researchers that research evidence is either misused or ignored in policy debates continues even while methods for describing discrete effects and predictive factors have become increasingly reliable. One might presume that this disconnection is best explained by examining enduring tensions between epistemological orientations, but even people who claim to prioritize empirical evidence over other ways of knowing still seem to incorporate evidence based on something deeper related to culture. Probably the most well-known example is the use of waiver demonstration findings from state welfare reform pilots that was instrumental in ending cash assistance as an entitlement and shifting focus to work participation. Ellwood & Bane (1995) conducted a series of research projects outlining the prevalence and duration of welfare spells and described the intransigence of child poverty, explained in part by these interruptions in work attachment and lack of earnings among young mothers in particular, and disconnection of poor people. Along with other research on work attachment, these findings formed the basis for a series of demonstration projects conducted by states, which resulted in a general framework for welfare reform that emphasized labor force attachment and work supports for vulnerable families through intensive case management by state administrative agencies or contractors. These findings were highly valued and explicitly referred to as a rational approach to reform; numerous news articles heralded the appointments of Bane, Ellwood (and Robert Reich) by the Clinton administration as a signal of the seriousness and the rigor behind President Clinton's campaign promise to "end welfare as we know it." This prioritization of evidence did not ensure rational use of research findings; evidenced by the use of outlying findings of demonstration projects to form general policy

reforms. For example, high performing pilots in waiver demonstrations revealed that increased earnings for specific welfare recipients could be achieved within four years. Research identified specific characteristics of families most likely to benefit from a focus on work participation and measured the relative effects of providing work supports and case management (Riccio et al., 1994). While this demonstration project was expertly conducted and analysis rigorously applied to identify outcomes in relation to a specific subset of participants and a specific intervention milieu, a version of these results formed the basis for broad policy directions to be applied to all welfare recipients, specifically identifying the shortest timeframe for achieving income gains among a subset of families as a time limit for welfare receipt in general. Understanding the role of narrative as a filter for interpreting research findings could help explain how this misuse of evidence occurs.

Need for Narrative to Understand Policy Context

After the Clinton administration welfare reforms, much research focused on the shift in how poverty was addressed. Mary Jo Bane describes the evolution of poverty as a policy construct as discordant; citing the continuing support of the public for government playing a role in helping those in need while also claiming the government is over-involved in providing assistance, even while participation in welfare programs was greatly reduced (Bane, 2009). Research also focused on the use of welfare participation as a regulating factor to manipulate and isolate people in poverty in light of increasing pressures on labor participation related to globalization of markets was articulated (Shram, 2007). The National Poverty Center Series on Poverty and Public Policy has compiled research in its two latest volumes edited by Martha Bailey, Maria Cancian and Sheldon Danziger (Bailey & Danziger, 2013, Cancian & Danziger, 2009).

Other research focused on the dynamics of the state-federal relationship. In “The Rebirth of Federalism,” David Walker (1995) traces the “creeping” of federal policy into state governance and outlines the case for a renewed focus on state sovereignty or a “new federalism.” (The recurrent call for a “new” focus on states’ autonomy in policymaking is evidence of the enduring nature of narrative frames related to federalism. This is more fully addressed in Chapter One). Philips, Whitaker & Time (2001) analyze the role of federalism concepts in regard to welfare reform; highlighting the inequalities between states in their ability to take up welfare reform, citing these factors as evidence of a lack of foundation for new federalism assumptions regarding devolution. More recently, the concept of “fragmented federalism” has emerged to describe the discrepant nature of state adoptions of federal policy initiatives based on political ideology (Pickerill & Bowling, 2013 & 2015).

While much research has focused on federalism and even connected federalism concepts to the adoption of welfare reform, what’s still missing is a way to understand the interactive nature of ideas related to federalism and poverty in terms of narrative. Understanding narrative as a cultural artifact that serves as a rhetorical lens for interpreting evidence can help describe the nature of the disconnect between policy evidence and policy adoption, and may also help to better understand fragmented federalism.

This dissertation research focuses on poverty in terms of narrative themes and the interaction of these themes with concepts related to federalism in order to contribute to the conversation about poverty beyond welfare and analytic measurement of specific policy and program iterations. Specifically, a new model of narrative policy analysis is proposed that describes the interactive nature of poverty and agency among governmental units; particularly in relation to the state-federal partnership.

A New Model for Policy Practice: the “PovFed” Narrative Model

The primary focus of this project is to identify how narrative themes around federalism and poverty interact, and how this interaction can be used to shape analysis of variance among states related to adopting poverty reduction as a policy target. A narrative model for organizing interactions between concepts related to federalism and poverty is proposed to increase understanding of policy context. It is intended to serve as a supplement to quantitative models and may help explain some of the disconnection between the evidence from these models and subsequent adoption of policy initiatives.

A historical overview of the evolution of government intervention in poverty in the United States will illustrate the inextricable nature of the interactions between narrative themes related to federalism and poverty. Then, interactions between narrative themes related to poverty and the role of agency as an indicator of states’ orientation toward federalism will aim to fill a gap related to questions around whether and how states take responsibility for the broader goal of poverty reduction that was relinquished, or “handed off” to states from the federal government. Lastly, a test of how this narrative model may supplement quantitative predictive models will be conducted to identify co-occurrence between shared narrative themes and other tested factors that describe variance among states related to adoption of specific welfare policies.

Research Questions/ Theses

The primary question addressed by this project is to identify how narrative themes related to poverty and federalism interact and how this interaction can be organized to improve the understanding of context in relation to policy. The goal of improving contextual understanding is to provide a framework for aligning narrative to policy ideas to improve the use of evidence.

R1: How do narrative themes regarding poverty and federalism interact?

R2: How can interactions between poverty and federalism be organized to provide additional context for policy models?

This research will focus on describing how narrative themes around federalism and poverty interact, and how this interaction can be used to supplement analysis of variance among states conducted by other research related to adopting poverty reduction as a policy target. This research will use narrative analysis to apply the PovFed model to chart the history of the state-federal partnership in relation to poverty, including the emerging trend of state-level poverty reduction initiatives, within the theoretical framework of principal-agency through the lens of narrative construction. Through looking at the formation, composition, and work products of state poverty reduction initiatives, the following theses will be examined:

T1: States with poverty initiatives independent of federal policy directives will exemplify agency in regard to their status in the principal-agency relationship with the federal government. Indicators of agency will be evidenced by similar in use language that reflects consent or agreement with their position in the relation, discretion in terms of acting independently within the scope of their authority, and specificity in regard to actions they propose.

T2: States with poverty initiatives will engage broad narratives related to poverty and deservingness rather than maintain a strict focus on welfare implementation. These states that autonomously take on poverty as a policy focus will exemplify similar degrees of resonance with narratives that define poverty beyond specific tasks related to implementing federal policies; serving as examples of devolved responsibility for generating policy related to poverty.

T3: States with poverty initiatives will be similar in how they compare to factors identified by Schram's predictive model including racial composition of welfare recipients,

proportion of persons in poverty by race and overall, and political leadership; indicating alignment between narrative orientations and rigorously tested quantifiable factors.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter One provides a historical overview of the development of narrative themes related to poverty and federalism and examines examples of how these themes have interacted over time. This chapter lays the basis for the PovFed model's structure that describes this interaction as a 2X2 model.

Chapter Three focuses on methods and describes the operationalization of key concepts and the theoretical orientation that justifies the application of specific methods. This chapter covers the key concepts of federalism and how states' orientation toward narrative frames is operationalized under the concepts of subsidiarity and agency. Next, the primacy of causal stories is explained as a key method for surfacing narratives related to poverty. Finally, samples are described and specific analysis methods justified.

Chapter Four uses published reports of state poverty reduction initiatives as subject documents as examples of federalism orientation or state agency and poverty narrative; specifically deservingness. An analysis of these documents compares recurrent themes using a grounded and critical approach to the narrative frames identified in Chapter One and tests the PovFed model assumptions related to how agency and deservingness interact to form the basis for understanding context and grouping states accordingly.

The results of this analysis of state poverty initiative reports then serve as a starting point to compare these states with high levels of agency and deservingness in regard to poverty in regard to several factors related to political ideological orientation, demographics and

comparative ranking among states in regard to poverty rates over time, based on previous research that identified these factors as predictive of policy options being taken up by states.

Chapter Five provides a summary of all findings and outlines the relevance of this research to the professions of social work and public administration; describing how the PovFed model can increase productivity of policy practice in regard to formulation, implementation, diffusion and evaluation. Chapter Five also discusses a path forward for linking the PovFed model to statistical models that aim to predict policy outputs among states, and the need for further research to test these ideas. Specific strategies for how the PovFed model can inform advanced macro practice in social work are described, including how social workers can conscientiously lead the continuing evolution of the state-federal partnership in regard to poverty in directions that align with the core values of the profession.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY OF FEDERALISM IN RELATION TO POVERTY USING A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS APPROACH

Introduction

Understanding the evolution of American federalism in relation to poverty requires the creation of a framework within which different responses to poverty in different eras can be compared. This paper relies on a narrative approach; examining the ways in which explanatory stories about poverty and federalism developed to create a narrative framework, or set of competing themes. Similarly a set of themes related to the role of government is described. The underlying premise of this approach is that there is a reliable connection between the way we think about poverty and the types of policy solutions we find acceptable, and that there is a range of such concepts that have remained relatively stable over time. This approach aligns with Stone's ideas about causal stories and the durability of themes that connect seemingly disparate policy initiatives over time (Stone, 1988) and the work of Handler & Hasenfeld (1991, 1997) that makes a salient case for the durability of ideology and cultural symbols beyond the life cycle of any particular policy initiative. The current study takes the basic structure of these ideas and applies them to a narrative analysis of tensions between the role of federal and state governments in relation to poverty over time as a way of observing the interconnectedness of metaphor and/or causal stories about both federalism and poverty that are mutually reinforcing. The PovFed model organizes the interaction between narratives regarding the role of government and poverty. Understanding the interactive nature of these two concepts provides a model for describing policy context.

Absence of the Voice of People in Poverty

A key assumption of this project is that much of what was debated, discussed and put forward as means to address poverty will not be captured in this analysis. In fact, it is not possible to capture even a majority of the narratives proffered in our current environment and so exponentially more implausible to expect that anyone can have a truly comprehensive understanding of how poverty is conceived, defined, discussed or addressed today. Most salient to this type of limitation is the relative absence of the voices of people in poverty. With some exceptions, we have very little information with which to gauge any reliable understanding of whether and how people living in poverty at various times engaged in the process of creating public and shared concepts that framed consistent narratives around poverty. Given what we can know about how history is basically understood as having been written by the most powerful (Zinn, 2003), it is very likely that a very important component of how poverty was viewed over time is simply missing. Importantly, along with the absence of the voices of people living in poverty themselves, this analysis also lacks a focus on the degree to which people who are engaged in framing public narratives around poverty have any direct contacts or could have been influenced by people in poverty, in any direction. Since much of what we think we know about our world is derived from our direct experience, this factor probably influences the development of poverty policy as much as any we could name. Therefore, two sources of information which one might argue are likely most influential in creating our shared understandings or narratives about poverty are largely missing from this analysis. Even so, there are some instances in which the voice of someone with direct experience living in poverty is accessible and has been included whenever possible.

Another significant caveat to lay out at the onset is that this analysis does not attempt to include all of the public debate around poverty that plays a role in creating relatively consistent narratives; relying primarily on state and federal policymakers. This analysis includes some information about how social workers, public administrators, and other policymakers have described poverty. In order to have some confidence in this approach, it is necessary to stipulate to two working assumptions. First, we assume that social workers, public administrators and other policymakers are making statements and crafting narratives related to poverty that are not isolated from the overall public debate. These groups may be influential leaders, followers of trends, or simply serving as echo chambers for some other influential group, but, for the purpose of this analysis, they are not disconnected from the general public debate. Secondly, a more challenging assumption requires that we entertain the idea that those who are making public statements, proposing policies and/or addressing the role of social work in relation to poverty are somehow encapsulating some sort of emerging narrative. Basically, this analysis assumes that social workers, public administrators, and other policymakers are both part of an general process of narrative formation and that, reliably if not always, they convey a sort of summary of the narrative as it has evolved so far at the point of their public statements. This can best be observed through connecting coherent components of narrative over time; identifying narrative themes resonant enough to various actors and time periods to be recognizable. This approach is supported by Quinn's seminal work on identifying culture through narrative analysis in which she addresses the reliability of using metaphor, repetition and story-telling to surface shared narratives even while important deeper personal characteristics of individual subjects remain unknown (Quinn, 2007).

How Narratives are created: Relationship to politics and religion

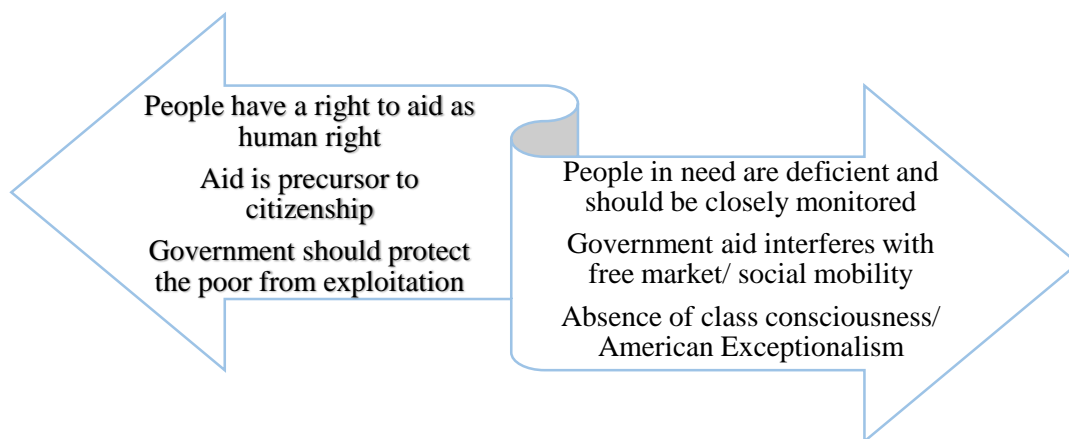
In her seminal work on narrative, Deborah Stone (2002) describes narrative as the mechanism for symbolizing our deepest values, summarizing this perspective by saying narratives “...have heroes and villains and innocent victims, and they pit forces of evil against forces of good (p.138).” Religion, morality and ethics have a bi-directional relationships with narrative; they may form the basis for narrative by signaling connections to core values, and they can also be a form of narrative themselves as the foundational stories of religions. Both Stone and Lakoff (2008) describe the interaction of narratives that resonate with core values as powerful tools for political communication. Lakoff cites the power of this connection to narrative in the human mind as a fundamental explanation for how people can connect with political narratives, even when the policies being “sold” by these narratives directly contradict that person’s opinions on issues. This process leads to a polarizing tribalization of groups with strongly held affiliations while having shared opinions about specific policies. Lakoff and Jones & McBeth (2010) also note that this process is a powerful tool in political discourse because opposing parties use exaggerated forms of narrative to reinforce this polarization. For example, a political operative may use an extreme form of a narrative about poor people being dependent on welfare to exacerbate differences between people who relate to narratives about work and opportunity. This can be especially powerful when religious themes are incorporated, such as when scripture is quoted out of context, such as citing “If a man will not work, he shall not eat (Thessalonians 3:10).” These powerful connections between core values and politics increase the resonance of narratives and cement differences among groups. In a 2003 study of sermons at the National Conference of Charities & Corrections, Schmidt noted that this process of using scripture and religious allusions is used equally by competing narratives regarding poverty

(Schmidt, 2003), as speakers invited to address the group switched from year to year between sermons that reinforced narratives about helping the poor as a core value and narratives that exhorted the value of insisting poor people take responsibility and framing aid as a deterrent to that process.

Narrative Frames Regarding Government Role in Poverty

The construction of the role of government in relation to poverty revolves around a number of different perspectives. First, there is a range of ideas about whether or not to intervene at all, then a range of ideas about whether or not intervention should be strictly private, and then debates about the roles of different units of government; resulting in a narrative framework summarized in Figure 1 and described in the text following.

Figure 1: Narrative Frames Regarding Government Role in Poverty



While poverty was clearly an issue for communities as far back as history is recorded, the most well-known starting place for understanding the role of government in the West is the Act for the Relief of the Poor in 1601 (Waldfoegel, 2010). Better known as the Poor Law, this Act has greatly influenced the development of poverty as an issue for government in the United States. The Poor Law outlined the expectation that government intervention would occur only after

individual and family responsibility was performed. People living in poverty were expected to work and show that they had exhausted efforts to be gainfully employed, and that they had not family to call upon for assistance, before the government would intervene. The Poor Law is also an early example of federalism of a sort in that direct assistance from the monarchy was not expected; rather the law outlined the expectations for local communities in relation to addressing poverty and in relation to dealing with each other on the issue of providing support. Each Easter, justices of the peace in each parish commissioned church wardens who would be responsible for “putting to work” the children of all parents who cannot support them and the parents themselves. Where parents and grandparents of the poor are able, wardens are charged with ensuring that they do care for their relatives and if they do not are charged for the cost of their care. The wardens are also commissioned to raise a tax from among the parish residents to support “...the lame, impotent, old, blind and other such among them, being poor and not able to work...” (Axinn & Stern, 10). The Poor Law also allowed for the collection of taxes to support the poor from among up to 100 neighboring parishes, and authorizes any two justices of the peace to enforce the tax, including putting those who refuse to pay in jail. Wardens also were charged with the authority to place poor children as apprentices until they reached adulthood (24 years for men and 21 years or until marriage for women). Each Easter season, parishes and justices of the peace could review the status of people living in poverty within their boundaries and review the status of resources collected to support them. The Poor Law places dealing with poverty and the creation of an equitable distribution of the burden of doing so in the realm of government, while maintaining local and family responsibility. The Poor Law most notably enforces the priority of work and ensures that those who do not work are dealt with harshly. Poor parents could permanently lose their children at the first instance of needing help at the

discretion of the parish wardens, and children and adults needing assistance would be put to work without any regulation within the law protecting them from abuse. Government intervention in poverty is primarily an enforcement of work, and secondarily a relief for those who truly cannot work, but even then only as a last resort.

While poverty policy in the Colonial period did roughly follow the Poor Law concepts, there is evidence that this period also contained the seeds of a different approach to how poverty is understood in relation to government. In 2004, the Anglo-American of the Institute of Historical Research held a conference to address the history of wealth and poverty. In Gareth Jones' summary of the proceedings (*An End to Poverty?*), Jones' defines the identification of poverty as a subject for government intervention as a "...convergence between late Enlightenment ideals and the republican and democratic revolution." (Jones, 9). Jones argues that the ideals of citizenship were incompatible with the stark discrepancies between the poor and the ruling class and that the formation of the United States included a focus on equalizing access to resources to enable this participation as a cornerstone of the democratic republic. Jones acknowledges that this focus was more like a flash point than a general and continuing consensus but avers that this focus on the connection between democratic ideals and the need to address poverty laid the foundation for poverty as an issue for government even while the articulation of policies for how to do so ranged widely over time. During the formation of the United States, many leading thinkers worried openly, about the potential for government to be used to protect the rich and enable the amassing of wealth, which was assumed would lead directly to revolt by the poor (Mink & Sollinger, 2003). The Virginia delegation to the Federal Convention initially proposed a national model of government arguing that this was the best protection against the tendency of the elite within states to overstep into tyranny and lead to the disruption of the new

nation (Virginia Commission, 1964). This first version actually passed, but there were only seven states present. Many delegates to the Convention were concerned with activities going on within the states that they believed threatened the democratic ideal. One example is the practice of seizing property and requiring people living in poverty to work as serfs, or sell their property at exploitative rates in order to pay taxes to local government, the leaders of which were amassing wealth and property. This was a system quite like the one against which the revolutionary war was fought and many delegates feared that the revolutionary impulse would be reactivated. James Madison argued that it was the smallness of government within states that allowed factions to develop to the point of confrontation, triggering the fears of many of the delegates related to the recent Shay's Rebellion in Massachusetts which was basically a revolt against exploitation that prompted George Washington to come out of retirement to advocate for a stronger national government (Diamond, 45). Dealing fairly with the distribution of wealth as a necessary condition of liberty is a key component of debate in the forming of the United States' system of government. Similarly, in keeping with these principles, Adam Smith articulated concerns that the wealthy and powerful would use their influence within government to exploit the poor, which would lead to revolt and implosion of the economic structure. Much of Smith's arguments against government intervention revolve around this concern, not only about the interference of government in the free market (Jones, 36-39). A final example of this connection between equitable distribution of resources and democratic ideals is the work of Thomas Paine in the late 1700s, especially *Agrarian Justice* (1797). Paine proposed that government play an active role in reducing poverty through the redistribution of wealth via taxation and through a system of social insurance managed by the government. For example, Paine proposed that the ideals of liberty would require that the government support education for every child, cash be

given to any mother who requested it to support her children, and that each newly married couple be given a cash stipend to help them prepare for the cost of raising a family. Paine compared his proposals to the Poor Law, arguing that the Poor Law was brutish and uncivilized in its implementation and also in its failure to address needs that could easily be anticipated, forcing people to suffer before getting any relief. Most notably, in *The Rights of Man*, Paine defined labor as a kind of property to which the laborer is entitled ownership just as much as with any other type of property (Jones, 22-24.) This window of opportunity created by this convergence of enlightenment philosophy and democratic idealism allowed for the creation of radical proposals to reframe the relationship of government to poverty, but closed quite immediately after their introduction. Even so, the competing narratives about government's role in poverty as a social construct had been outlined and remain conceptually consistent. Intervention in poverty by the government is aligned either with the need to ensure labor market participation and individual and family responsibility, or with the concept that ensuring access to resources (including education, social insurance, property, and cash), is fundamental to the concept of citizenship and core democratic values.

United States in Global Context. Understanding the evolution of causal stories or narratives frames around poverty in the United States requires awareness of poverty as a critical global issue. The overall context of the role of government in poverty reduction is affected by the United States' participation in international projects that include poverty reduction as a key indicator of state stability and economic viability. The impact of these concepts may be increased when the United States is specifically challenged. In *The End of Poverty*, Jeffrey Sachs (2005) points out that as many as 20,000 people die due to extreme poverty (living on less than \$1/day) each and every day, and warns that the developed world, particularly the United States, has not

recognized poverty's role in driving political instability. Sachs, a Chicago School economist and proponent of "Shock Therapy" in Bolivia, Poland and the former Soviet Union¹, is specifically not a proponent generally of government manipulation to redistribute wealth, but does advocate for government intervention to prevent exploitation and recognizes the centrality of poverty and income disparity to economic stability. Sachs led the Millennium Development Goals project through the United Nations. These goals were created after the Millennium Assembly in 2000, the largest gathering of world leaders in history. These leaders expressed the hope that the wealth, technological expertise and global awareness would converge to: end extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development. In the United Nations framework, targeted countries in the Millennium Development Goals report on progress under each key area, including reports related to fiscal responsibility and effectiveness of interventions. Continued support through the project is linked to these reports, basically creating a system in which the reduction of poverty is a key indicator of the political viability of a government as a recipient state.

Another set of factors that inform the narrative framework regarding government intervention involves the unique nature of government investment in the United States compared to other developed countries. The United States is relatively isolated in its approach to poverty given its overall wealth. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) the United States remains the only post-industrial economy without a

¹ PBS produced a documentary and developed a website that enables anyone to see Mr. Sachs describe the economic interventions in these countries firsthand. It is available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/> .

national health care system that guarantees access to health care for every citizen. In terms of public spending on social programs as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), the United States spent 15.9% in 2005, ranking below every OECD country except for Turkey, Mexico, and Korea. In terms of poverty and income inequality, the United States ranks 27th with a Gini Coefficient of 0.38140684 (1.0 represents income equality). The apparent misalignment between resources and poverty reduction as a priority is best explained by identifying some uniquely American narratives related to poverty and wealth.

As noted above, in the early years of the United States, there was a period in which the concept of poverty or income inequality was directly linked to economic and political stability. The concept that people could revolt against governance that was in service to the wealthy at the expense of the poor was quite salient in light of the French and American revolutions that had just occurred. In addition, there was congruence between emerging democratic ideals and taking proactive action to relieve disparity in poverty and opportunity. While equal opportunity and equality are still recognized as core democratic values in the United States, most of the awareness related to the disparity in access to opportunity and material support as a key component of a functioning system seems to have dissolved in a kind rhetorical soup of catchphrases and patriotic feeling (Pimpare, 2008). The United States is unique among post-industrial states in that there never was a sustained class revolt. While the Revolutionary War might be cast as such a revolt, dominant narratives in the United States still maintained a demarcation between Great Britain, which did exploit class differences unfairly, and the new United States in which this was no longer the case. This narrative about American egalitarianism is tightly maintained to this day. There is rarely a political speech at any level of government that does not celebrate the “fact” that anyone can accomplish great things in American, no matter

where they start. This narrative is incredibly resistant to facts. Since 2007, the Pew Charitable Trust and other partners have supported the Economic Mobility Project to compile data related to economic mobility. The project acknowledges the treasured view within the United States that income inequality is tolerable because of the importance of rewarding hard work and in recognition of the perspective that the United States believes in equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcomes for individuals. However, in a report commissioned by the project, Miles Corak (Corak, 2010) finds that economic mobility is significantly greater in Canada than in the United States. The study compared sons to fathers to gauge economic mobility. American² sons of top-earning fathers are more likely to remain in the top earners category than Canadian sons (26% vs. 18%) and American sons of low-earning fathers are more likely to remain in the bottom of earners (22% vs. 16%). Paradoxically, and probably most to the point of what makes America different, Americans were less likely to believe that chances for success are related to parental income (42% vs. 57%). People in the United States believe in economic mobility and resist the idea that parental income indicates a child's future income. Similarly, studies of perception of income distribution in the United States reveal a disconnect between the kind of country people in the United States believe they are living in and what is actually true. Michael Norton and Dan Ariely (2011) conducted a survey asking respondents to identify the current income distribution and to "build a better America" by identifying a more favorable income distribution. The findings show a surprising level of agreement among respondents between those with different incomes, political preferences, and gender. The findings also reveal a striking difference between what Americans believe about income distribution and what is

² This study used the term "American" to describe people in the United States in comparison to Canadians who are also technically "American".

reality. Respondents consistently identified a much greater level of equality in distribution of income. Similarly, when asked to choose between options for income distribution, respondents across categories chose a more equitable distribution, and finally, when asked to identify a “better” distribution, respondents consistently made the distribution even more balanced than their original predictions, creating a gaping difference between what they believed was a fair distribution and what is really happening in the United States.

Another factor that explains this disconnect is the lack of a class movement in the United States, the central concept defining American Exceptionalism in a policy context. In other developed countries, trade unions or other types of workers unions developed in response to industrialization and the emergence of dangerous working conditions imposed on average workers in order to support greater profits for owners and executive managers of companies. This union presence translated into a political force to maintain pressure on governments to implement policies that protected workers, through regulation and through social welfare policies. In Europe, a feudal system allowed workers relatively constant access to each other and consistent relationships between feudal lords and workers that enabled the creation of enduring class identity and subsequent class movements (Blau, 124). In the United States, there were periods of general social mobility, and a great deal of geographic mobility. Importantly, the worst disparities between workers and profit-makers in the United States are in the history of slavery. Slaves were unable to organize, lacked geographic and economic mobility and had no rights of suffrage or petition of grievances. This large number of workers being taken out of the equation related to generating a class movement in the United States probably plays a significant role in the exceptional nature of policies compared to other developed countries.

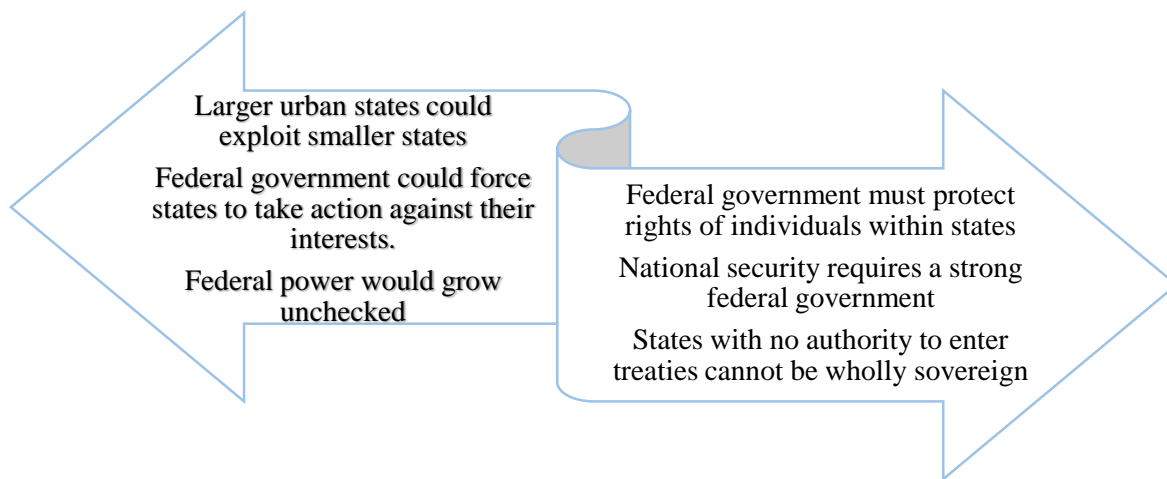
Narrative Frames Regarding Shared State-Federal Sovereignty/ Federalism

Policymaking in the United States is another aspect of exceptionalism in that there are multiple layers of government that are interconnected, myriad interest groups advocating at each level, and a party system that is weak in terms of policy leadership. In comparison, in their description of Great Britain's process of setting poverty reduction goals, Kevin Ellis and Stephen Mitchell (2003), cohesion within parties and the expectation that party leaders would set the course for policy played in role in enabling the initiative to move forward even before Parliament passed any specific laws in regard to it. Similarly, in executing Public Service Agreements, which outline the roles of various units of government, local leaders had a similar understanding of how policy was developed (Waldfogel, 2003). Even though there are certainly complexities in the British system that we don't have in the United States, in this one regard it seems likely that clarity around policy direction within parties may have a positive impact on the ease with which an initiative is implemented.

Tensions around competing narratives related to federalism or the relative agency of states to exercise sovereignty in regard to poverty are fundamental to the structure of policymaking in the United States. These tensions have endured since the formation of the country and have explicitly included elements that link ideas of state agency to narrative frames related to poverty; represented in Figure 2 and discussed subsequently. Smaller colonies expressed concern about being exploited by larger colonies, and interested in protecting their rights to harness labor and deal with foreign governments to build their economies without interference. Larger states were also concerned about a federal government that could expand its power to interfere with local economies (Statements of colonies in Virginia Commission, 1964 p.141-57). Conversely, other founders argued in favor the need for a strong federal government

to protect against the dissolution of the new nation through competing treaties with foreign governments, the lack of a shared military force and the funds to sustain it, and were keen to work toward enlightenment ideals to protect individual rights within states (Jefferson Letters in Virginia Commission, 1964 p.19-21).

Figure 2: Narrative Frames Regarding Federalism



The United States system of government is a complex balancing act between potentially conflicting ideals. At no point in history has the debate been settled about the appropriate role of government or the appropriate relationship of the national and state governments. These are constantly evolving concepts, and have been hotly contested since before the nation was even born. Contrary to some of the rallying cries in our modern debates over policy and politics (Barber, 2013), there is no such thing as a monolithic consensus among the “founding fathers” that we either should return to or evolve away from, depending on one’s political preferences. The concept of American federalism is unique in that most social welfare policy requires cooperation between the national and state governments, while the parameters of responsibility remain contested.

Federalism is broadly defined as “shared sovereignty” or a system in which supreme rule is shared between two entities. In the case of the United States, that would be the national and state governments (Bennett, 1964). The first attempt to define federalism in the United States was through the Articles of Confederation adopted in 1776. In response to years of dealing with the English Parliament, the states were adamant that they did not want a strong central government like that of England. The Articles of Confederation gave most of the power to the states and extremely limited the national government. The objects of the national government were very similar to what would become the objects of the national government in the constitution, namely, “...common defence, security of liberty, and general welfare...” (Sutton, 30). The Articles were submitted to the states for ratification in 1777 and went into effect in 1781. Within five years, most of the states realized that a more balanced approach was needed to enable the national government to meet the objectives which it was mandated to perform as evidenced by the 1787 Constitutional Convention, where drafts the Constitution of the United States were debated over a five month period. As mentioned in an earlier section, the first draft of a constitution introduced to the Convention was drafted by James Madison and introduced by the Virginia delegate. This draft gave the national government a great deal more power, including the right to review laws passed by the states before they would be adopted (State Resolutions in Virginia Commission, 1964 p.66-95).

The debate that took place during the Constitutional Convention contains the seeds of our ongoing debate today about the appropriate role of national and state government. The central question for the delegates was to determine the power of the national government. While the agreement for the convention made it clear that the national government needed more authority in order to operate effectively, it was of paramount importance to the delegates that the states not

be entirely subordinate to the national government. Not surprisingly, some of the debate revolved around money. Alexander Hamilton, a delegate from New York, is perhaps the leading proponent of the need to create a mechanism for financing the national government.

In a June, 1787 address to the convention, Hamilton claims that the states have failed to support the General government. He goes so far as saying "...the ambition of their demagogues is known to hate the control of the General Government..." and claimed that states were on a trajectory to dissolution and to being vulnerable to foreign powers (Madison, *Debates*, as quoted in Sutton, 33-34). Similarly, Rufus King, also from New York, argues that the states idea that they remain sovereign is misguided since they do not have the authority to enter into treaties, declare war, or raise troops. King points out that these powers had already been identified as residing with the national government; the national government could do all of these things and the states would be obliged to cooperate with these decisions (Madison, *Debates*, as quoted in Sutton, 34). Smaller states were generally suspicious of a stronger national government because of the potential to make them subordinate to the larger states. Oliver Ellsworth, from Connecticut, argued this point in stating that, while he could compromise on the proportional representation in the first branch but that the smaller states would "...risk every consequence rather than part with so dear a right..." in regard to a proposition for excluding the states as equal political societies (Madison, *Debates*, as quoted in Sutton, 36).

During the Constitutional Convention and the ratification period, proponents of competing points of view took their case to the public in various ways. These attempts to weave a coherent public narrative that resonated with the values of the audiences being addressed reveal a great deal about the construct of federalism during its early stages. Importantly, these public statements or, more aptly, advocacy campaigns, did not occur in a vacuum. They are not simply

objective descriptions but were written in response to concerns raised about the new Constitution that was being considered. Too often, the intended audience and the purpose of these arguments are forgotten and, as a consequence, the lengths the authors go to in order to respond to a certain concern is misinterpreted as a measure of how important that issue was to them as framers rather than as a measure of how important it was to people who held a view other than those held by the framers. This is an essential point that is in dire need of being raised in our current debates over the role of government.

One of the advocacy campaigns related to the proposed Constitution was conducted by Richard Henry Lee. Lee was the person who introduced the resolution for independence in the Second Continental Congress. He put out a series of “Letters” which were signed by “The Federal Farmer”, in which he argued for the sovereignty of states and against a strong national government. Lee argues that a small group of men have had a strong national government in their sight for a long time and have been using somewhat shady means toward that goal. Lee describes the Constitutional Convention as having been called hastily by “a few men from the middle states” (Cogan, *Contexts of the Constitution*, as quoted in Sutton, 36-38.). Lee seems to be trying to imply that there are people from the larger, more urban states who are plotting to take over the country, claiming that even delegates to the Convention were surprised to discover a proposal that the Articles of Confederation be replaced. In a tone strikingly similar to our current public debates, Lee implies that people who support the new Constitution fickle, weak, and empty. Lee also ironically describes those in favor of a strong national government as alternatively calculating and behaving in a rash manner, while the proponents of state sovereignty are more enlightened and substantial. Lee argued that “The uneasy and fickle part of the community may be prepared to receive any form of government; but, I presume, the

enlightened and substantial part will give any constitution presented for their adoption, a candid and thorough examination; and silence those designing or empty men, who weakly and rashly attempt to precipitate the adoption of a system of so much importance” (Cogan, *Contexts of the Constitution*, as quoted in Sutton, 37.)

A famous set of advocacy articles related to the ratification of the new Constitution are the *Federalist Papers*, a series of 105 essays published in New York newspapers, under the pseudonym “Publius.” These essays were written by James Madison (50 essays), Alexander Hamilton (50 essays) and John Jay (five essays). Since we know the first draft of the constitution submitted by the Virginia delegation and drafted by Madison proposed a strong national government, and we know Hamilton and Madison debated in favor of strengthening the national government during the Convention, as noted above, this information should provide a context for reading the Federalist papers. Madison and Hamilton clearly anticipated and responded to the concerns within the states to the degradation of their powers in relation to a stronger national government and much within these essays is devoted to assuring that states’ rights will remain a central component and prevailing value in the new structure (Sutton, 38-40).

A lively center for debate around this new proposed structure is found in state conventions considering ratification. In the Virginia debate in June, 1788, an exchange between Patrick Henry and James Madison lays out the basic case for each side. Henry claims that the powers of the national government as proposed are so vast that this government could make any law it saw fit and the states would be bound to follow. Henry worried that oppressive laws could be passed, a permanent army maintained to enforce them and that trust in representatives to resist the lure of unlimited power of this sort is misplaced. Madison counters with an argument about the futility of delegating powers without authority to make laws to execute those powers. At

some points during the debate, Madison seems quite animated, calling concerns superfluous and even mumbling to himself so that portions of what he said were not audible and the transcribers simply indicate at several points that “Here, Mr. Madison made several other remarks which could not be heard.” (Cogan, Contexts of the Constitution, as quoted in Sutton, 45.) It must have been an amazing experience to witness that debate and it would be great to know just what Madison was mumbling under his breath. In the end, Madison triumphs and the Constitution is ratified by eleven states in June, 1788. The first elections under the new system are held in November that same year, and the new government under the Constitution begins in March 1789.

Historical Overview of Interactions between Federalism Related to Poverty

The narrative frames described above continue to be evident in examining key phases in United States history. The interactions between these two narratives can serve as a helpful lens for understanding the context in which shifts in policies are made.

1789-Civil War. In the first 45 years under the new government, several key decisions are made that will fundamentally shape our understanding of American federalism. In keeping with the idea that “actions speak louder than words,” there was obviously a great sense of urgency in changing the structure to a stronger national government. In fact, within the first year, Hamilton announces the creation of a national bank and recommends the federal government assume payment of all state debts related to the war (Sutton, 51).

In 1803, the principle of judicial review is established which acknowledges the role of the Supreme Court to nullify laws that it rules unconstitutional; this principle is extended to state laws in 1810 (Barber, 2013). In 1832, the Supreme Court rules against South Carolina and affirms that states cannot nullify federal law individually under any circumstance and President

Jackson condemns attempts at nullification as treason. President Jackson supports South Carolina's 1835 call to stop circulation of abolitionist propaganda and describes abolitionists as plotting a civil war (Dray, 2008). This basic foundation sets the stage for a review of how state and national governments addressed issues related to poverty, either in concert or separately at various critical periods.

The main method of intergovernmental cooperation up to the Civil War continued to be through land grant agreements between the federal and state governments to support infrastructure projects and education. The first cash grant program began in this period, providing \$15,000 per year to states to support agricultural research, but land grants remained the nearly exclusive manner in which the federal government bargained with state governments (Schreiber, 69). However, these land grant agreements often resulted in a type of special purpose revenue for states that enabled them to manage a project that was a goal of the federal government. States could leverage federal land granted to them to sell bonds and therefore fund specific activities. Morton Grodzins and his student Daniel Elazar use this practice as part of their argument in 1960 that federal mandates to states have been a consistent component of the state-federal relationship (O'Toole, 1993). Notably, a proposal by Congress to create such a land grant to create a funding stream for states to support the indigent was vetoed by President Pierce in 1854. President Pierce distinguished this type of social welfare goal as outside the scope of the federal government and that coercing the states to take on this role via the land grant formula was an overstep of the federal-state relationship (Axinn & Stern, 77.)

During and immediately after the Civil War, the federal government took an active role in providing benefits to individual residents of the states for the first time. In 1862, a national system of pensions was developed for disabled soldiers that also covered widows, children and

dependent relations of soldiers who died in combat (Jensen, 2003). The reciprocal relationship between service to the Union and support afterward was outlined again in the Enrollment Act of 1963. In 1865, a system of national homes for veterans was established. By 1866, annual expenditures for veterans' pensions was \$15 million, by 1889 this amount was \$86 million. In 1890, the requirement that veterans be disabled during service was dropped and all Union army veterans who had served at least 90 days and were unable to earn a living by physical labor. These policies were driven by a veterans' advocacy group, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and in response to a desire to keep veterans from being subject to harsh assistance requirements of the state and local governments, what GAR called the "frigid bosom of public charity" (Axinn & Stern, 90). The focus of this advocacy effort was to frame the veterans and their families as worthy of assistance by definition; making them categorically eligible or entitled to help. This was in contrast to the state and local systems of the time which were largely still governed in keeping with the parameters of colonial poor laws which required work and subjected people to indentured servitude and/or the loss of their children in order to receive help. The revision of the law in 1890 that included able-bodied veterans who may have even been employed but could not earn enough money to support their families is a radical shift away from those parameters.

After the Civil War, states became more active in designing new systems of welfare. However, these systems were designed to manage the issue of freed slaves and protect white interests. These laws are described as "Black Codes" and worked to reestablish the power of former slave owners quite explicitly (Dray, 2008). For example, Mississippi passed a law in 1865 declaring that all Black children who could not be supported by their parents were subject to being placed out to work, and that preference in placement would be given to former slave

owners. In response, Congress required that all Southern states call state conventions to create more representative governments and ratify the 14th Amendment in order to rejoin the Union. All states had complied by 1870, but this did not lead to an expansion of the role of states in providing relief to those affected by the war. Overall expenditures of states did not drastically increase and each state designed its own system of orphanages, asylums and almshouses (Pimpare, 2008).

Within this context of states clearly associating the provision of aid to the enfranchisement of former slaves, the federal government continually expanded its role in the direct provision of aid to people in need within a state through the creation of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedman and Abandoned Lands, the Freedman's Bureau (Dray, 2008, Pimpare, 2008). After operating as a volunteer association supported by the federal government since 1862, the Freedman's Bureau was established in 1865, just two months after the end of the war. In fact, it is quite likely that some areas of the South did not even know the war was over by this time (Dray, 2008). The Freedman's Bureau did not have its own appropriation but depended on the military to provide direct assistance to freed slaves and to poor Southern Whites who were also suffering as a result of the war, many of whom were likely veterans of the Confederate Army who were not covered by the federal veterans' pension system.

In the debate about whether to extend the Freedman's Bureau, the poles of debates regarding federalism and the appropriateness of intervening in poverty by providing assistance were raised. President Johnson vetoed the bill, claiming that a system of support for public welfare was never envisioned as a role for the federal government, and that the provision of this type of assistance would lessen the drive toward self-sufficiency among those helped (Pimpare, 176). Congress overturned the presidential veto and the Bureau not only survived but was

granted a direct appropriation. In 1867, Congress officially authorized the use of funds for all destitute Southerners regardless of their role in the war (Hickel, 2001). The Bureau did not only distribute aid but worked proactively to improve conditions for freed slaves. The Bureau provided job training and placement assistance and helped freed slaves to organize in order to adjudicate labor disputes and protect their interests. The Bureau established hospitals, orphanages and helped to establish and administer over 4000 schools for Black children, and helped to establish five colleges. Resistance from Southern states was profound as leaders in the South claimed the Bureau was encouraging pauperism and the refusal to work because of the availability of federal jobs at military-run camps and the advocacy related to labor disputes (Pimpire 173-75). By 1872, the Bureau ceased to exist and control over questions of how to deal with poverty among freed slaves and poor Whites was returned to the individual states (Dray, 2008). However, it is likely that narratives around the provision of direct assistance continue to be informed by the Bureau's existence well beyond its termination. Wilson (1987) and Squires (1983) highlight fears of the federal provision of direct assistance to people living in poverty, and African-American people living in poverty especially, serving as a radicalizing force that threatened the distribution of power within states and local communities are raised recurrently as the roles of state and federal government in poverty continue to evolve.

While the Freedman's Bureau and veterans' benefits were mostly administered by the military, the role of people who provided social work in this period was significant at the state and local level during this period. Social work as a separate term and later as a profession would not emerge until the end of this period. Charitable Aid Societies continued to grow in number and in organizational capacity (Clement, 1984, Cray, 1988). These associations, along with associations of aid managed by religious organizations, formed the backbone for the provision of

assistance. This network of organizations formed different types of statewide cooperation, and roughly maintained the principles of the colonial period focusing on the ascendant importance of work and individual and family responsibility. After the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869, Westward migration prompted aid societies to build networks in the territories and find ways to assist families in this enormous relocation process (Higbie, 2003).

Progressive Era. The Progressive Era was a time of redefining social problems within the context of industrialization. In 1915, the Commission on Industrial Relations (<https://archive.org/details/cu31924002663197>) conducted a study examining the effect of industry on the distribution of wealth in the United States. The Commission reported that, while wealth was growing rapidly, laborers were not earning enough to care for their basic needs. Further, unskilled laborers, farm workers, and African American workers were being left even farther behind. The Commission found 50-66% of working class families were living in poverty. Three recessions took place between 1910 and 1921, leaving working families farther behind and consolidating wealth at the top (Axinn & Stern 126-27). These conditions led to the development of coalitions for reforms that would not see results for some time but that would eventually fundamentally change the nature of the government's role in social issues.

This period was also marked by high hopes for the integration of scientific concepts to facilitate the resolution of social problems. Professionalization of public administrators and social workers occurred over this period through the development of the civil service, professional organizations, unions, and training programs (Bolin, 1973, Jun, 2006). There were also significant pressures to increase the scale and capacity of social welfare programs at every level because of rapidly expanding population, urbanization, and issues related to industrialization. Southern states were allowed to continue to erode the rights of former slaves

and all people of color in their domain, and poor Whites also in dire straits were persuaded to blame their predicament on freed slaves and growing competition for jobs (Dray, 2008). This era is extremely important in the development of ideas about government competency, the role of the federal government in protecting individuals from State government, and the foundation of belief in activist government not only responding to but challenging and changing social issues.

Federalism in the Progressive Era evolved dramatically. Interest groups began to petition the federal government directly to address issues and to play an active role in promulgating a progressive agenda (Wilson, 1958, Folsom, 1991). A necessary premise to this kind of activism is a vision of the United States as one society. Specifically, Progressive activists argued that society could not tolerate unfettered industry. The concerns of Progressives ranged from the impact of industrialization of urban environments, the direct risks to families and children, and emerging realization that natural resources are not unlimited and should be protected (Mink & Sollinger, 2003). Arguments in favor of federal intervention in these areas were buttressed by the emerging professional bureaucracies within states which equipped states with the method and means to implement federal policies and a higher degree of comfort with the idea of federal mandates if that meant expanded roles for the state as well (O'Toole, 6-7). In 1913, the federal income tax was created which enabled the federal government to envision a system of grants-in-aid. These grant agreements would become the main source of federal-state intergovernmental cooperation. Grants from federal funds were tied to specific expectations of implementation at the state level, creating an expectation of oversight or monitoring for the first time. In the early years of grants-in-aid, between 1913 and 1922, the number of grants increased from seven to twelve and the amount of grants increased by 625% (O'Toole, 9). This new role for the federal government did not go unnoticed and was challenged by a series of court cases, two of which

(Massachusetts v Mellon and Frothingham v Mellon, 262 U.S. 447) reached the Supreme Court in 1923. The Court found that these grants-in-aid agreements are voluntary and therefore the conditions placed on them by the federal government do not interfere with state's rights. This ruling set the stage for a significant expansion of the role of the federal government in relation to social issues, including poverty.

Another component that characterizes this period is the professionalization of public administrators and social workers. This is important because the creation of bureaucracies and other structures for administering aid within and between states serves as a weighting factor in favor of a federalized approach. In 1887, Woodrow Wilson wrote the seminal article "The Study of Administration" which set the tone for his approach to the professionalization of the civil service, especially including the use of scientific methods to ascertain the best approaches to solving problems and the study of administrative efficiency to ensure the implementation of these approaches. Wilson describes the hopes at the forefront of the functionalist approach to identifying and solving social problems that dominated both public administration and social work for generations. Wilson acknowledges that the United States can learn a lot from Europe, stating "We have been slow to see the use or significance of those volumes of learned research...into the means of conducting government which the presses of Europe have been sending to our libraries." (Wilson, in Shafritz et al, Eds., 23). Wilson goes on to describe specific examples of how other countries have approached scientific administration and acknowledges that progress in the United States will necessarily be restrained by public opinion as people will naturally be wary of entrusting government with expanded management duties.

Similarly, Jane Addams argues in 1904 (Address delivered at the International Congress of Arts and Science, quoted in Shafritz, 39.) that people holding to 18th century views of

government against the “open-minded scientist of the present day” are ignorant of the facts and choosing to ignore facts in order to protect their theory. She argues that government must expand rapidly to meet the challenges of industrialism in two specific areas: “...in relation to the vicious, and in relation to the poor and dependent...” (Shafritz, 41). While Addams was a vocal proponent for a scientific approach, she envisioned this approach as being in service to social justice as evidenced by her address to the National Conference of Social Work in 1910 (Schmidt, 2003). This attitude is consistent with the tone of the Progressive Era that indicated that a scientific approach is itself a form of empowerment for those at the receiving end of arbitrary practices, and that poverty has external and societal causes that can be systematically addressed. During this period, many city, county and state governments created bureaus to manage welfare programs and hired professional administrators to run them.

The Great Depression & the New Deal. In many ways, the policies of the Roosevelt administrations were a continuation of the reforms began in the Progressive Era in that many of the issues raised had already been addressed by states and reform coalitions continued to push beyond the states for more comprehensive remedies. However, there were also explicit policies that revealed an agenda for significantly altering intergovernmental relations.

Although the impact of the Great Depression is central to the development of new roles for the federal government in addressing poverty, the context of the preceding decades is extremely important. For a full twenty years before the stock market crash that finally swept the nation into the Great Depression, people living in poverty in the United States, a great number of whom were working, suffered through recurrent bouts of recession (Pimpare, 2000: 68-71). During each of these periods, lasting several months to two years, people suffered greatly. It is not that people were suddenly struck by the stock market crash but that it was the final blow in

an intensely strained period for people living in poverty. At the same time, these recurrent recessions swept increasing numbers of middle class families into the working poor and decreased the attribution of poverty to individual deficits – over an entire generation before the beginning of the Great Depression. Similarly, various strategies employed by states to deal with increasing poverty were insufficient since they could not influence the macro-economic factors that continued to drive more people into poverty.

While the stock market crash in October, 1929 was probably the final straw in a stream of market failures that set the stage for major shifts in the federal role, the response was not immediate or a knee-jerk reaction to crisis. As Harry Hopkins describes in his account of New Deal programs *Spending to Save: The Complete Story of Relief* (1936), it is not until 1932 that President Hoover introduces the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to provide loans to banks, insurance companies and railroads in an attempt to get the economy moving. Congress gives the Corporation the authority to borrow up to \$2 billion, a significant extension of federal authority (Sutton, 2002:186).

President Roosevelt comes into office in 1933 with a 100 day plan toward recovery which includes the Agricultural Adjustment Act (establishing a system of price supports for farmers) the National Recovery Act (establishing codes of fair competition and guarantees workers' collective bargaining rights), and the Tennessee Valley Authority (creating a massive program of dam construction). All of these were passed by Congress and generally based on interviews of people struggling with poverty organized by Harry Hopkins on behalf of the President.

In 1935, the National Industrial Recovery Act is declared unconstitutional and is replaced by the Wagner Act which guarantees collective bargaining and creates the National Labor

Relations Board. (In 1937, the Supreme Court finds the Wagner Act constitutional.) The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) is created to help states deal with the enormous demands for assistance from poor citizens, and the Social Security Act is passed. FERA is instrumental in creating additional “temporary” programs to deal with the economic crisis including the Public Works Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, and Works Progress Administration. While all of these represent a significant shift of responsibility toward the federal government, the FERA and the Social Security Act are of particular interest in the evolution of American federalism.

The FERA was developed in response to requests for assistance from states overwhelmed by growing demands for assistance. Previous proposals for the provision of this sort of direct aid to states were unsuccessful, which only increased the volume of requests for help coming from the states. Many components of the administration of FERA fund led to the creation of practices that had profound influence on the state-federal relationship. First, the allocation of funds to states introduces the concept of the matching grant. For every \$3 spent by state and local authorities, the federal government would provide \$1. This formula applied to half of the funds available. The other half were made available to states with greatest need without regard to matching funds. Providing this direct relief to states went against the Roosevelt administration’s primary approach to the crisis which was to create jobs. Roosevelt was uneasy about this role and both he and the FERA administrator, Harry Hopkins, repeatedly framed FERA as a temporary stopgap rather than a permanent plan. Harry Hopkins addressed the National Conference of Social Workers in 1933 stating “...our job is to see that the unemployed get relief, not to develop a great social work organization throughout the United States...”(NCOSW, 1933). President Roosevelt appointed the Committee on Economic Security to develop a plan for

income security for individuals and families based on employment that would prevent the need for direct government assistance. In his 1934 address to Congress, President Roosevelt outlined a plan based on analysis done by FERA. FERA estimated that 3.5 million of the 5 million people on relief rolls were employable and the President was determined to employ as many of them as possible until private employment increased enough to absorb them (Axinn & Stern, 185).

The Social Security Act was based on the recommendations from the Committee on Economic Security and as such should be viewed as related to the charge of that group which was to create recommendations to reduce the likelihood that people would need government relief in the future through securing economic security. It was intended to reduce government relief over the long term. The Committee's report is made to the President in January, 1935 and the Social Security Act is signed by President Roosevelt in August, 1935. The Act creates a sweeping array of direct federal intervention. Again, as with the FERA, most states had adopted some portions of the Social Security Act, attempting to provide assistance to the elderly or providing a system of mothers' pensions, and systems for unemployment compensation. These state programs largely resulted from the work of the reform coalitions formed during the Progressive Era. The Social Security Act was mostly conceived as social insurance program, but also provided for maternal and child health services, services for crippled children, and child welfare services. In addition, the programs' dependence on a social insurance model required a period of time to develop assets against which to draw benefits. Because of this, another type of grants-in-aid program was established between federal and state governments that made persons eligible under the social insurance programs immediately eligible or categorically eligible, for assistance under the grants-in-aid programs. These categorical grants would be basically "passed

through” states in order to get federal assistance directly to eligible persons. In addition to the basic shifts in responsibility inherent in the Social Security Act and FERA in general, these two new forms of managing the state-federal partnership in relation to poverty, formula matching grants and categorical grants, are critical turning points in the development of American federalism (Keller, 1993). In 1936, the Republican Party Platform (Shi & Mayer, 1999 & Sutton 203-205) included an argument for states’ rights and personal liberty in opposition to the expanded reach of the New Deal programs. Using a rhetorical convention similar to the Declaration of Independence, this platform lays out the grievances against the Roosevelt administration and then lists a number of formal pledges. These pledges include:

- Maintaining the “American system of free enterprise,;
- “Return of responsibility for relief administration to non-political local agencies familiar with community problems,”
- “Stop the folly of uncontrolled spending,”
- “Balance the budget – not by increasing taxes but by cutting expenditures, drastically and immediately.”

Post WWII: Civil Rights and Great Society. In *The Idea of the Nation* (1982) Samuel Beer argues the experiences of the New Deal and the coalescing of federal policies helped to form a national identity that equipped the United States to endure the challenges of World War II. Certainly, the national identity was fixed by the end of the war to a degree that it had never been before. This national identity is critical to the evolution of American federalism in this era, an era of great confidence in the American idea and in the capacity to address exceedingly great challenges.

Between 1946 and 1976, the number of grants to states from the federal government increased from 38 to 448, (O'Toole, 9). During this period, federal grants supported a vast array of activities and represented an increasing share of local and state government expenditures. In 1976, 24.7% of local expenditures were supported by federal assistance. Conversely, 21.7% of federal domestic expenditures were made by way of grants to other units of government (U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1977).

In this period the Supreme Court is occupied with other aspects of American federalism, most notably the degree to which the federal government can mandate the provision of civil rights. President Truman's 1948 Message to Congress (delivered Feb. 1949) provides a good example of framing federal power as a protector of individual rights, citing the need to address civil rights as central to democracy. Truman includes access to opportunity along with equal protection as key elements and describes the United States as "...the hope of the oppressed everywhere (80th Congress, 1949)." In 1954, the "separate but equal" standard established after the Civil War is declared unconstitutional (347 U.S. 483), leading to massive resistance among Whites throughout the South summarized in a declaration of 96 Southern legislators published in the New York Times (*New York Times*, 1956) and in President Eisenhower's statement justifying federal troops being sent to Arkansas to enforce the Supreme Court ruling on desegregation (D. Eisenhower, no. 198 in *Public Papers of the Presidents*). In 1958, the Supreme Court re-affirms that only the Court can interpret the Constitution and that states do not have the ability to nullify federal law or the Court's ruling (358 U. S. 1). Continuing into 1962, Southern governors continue to disrupt desegregation; President Kennedy orders federal marshals and troops to enforce compliance. In 1964, the Civil Rights Act passes Congress. In no time since

Reconstruction had the relationship between states and the federal government been so contentious (O'Toole, xx-xxiii).

In this environment, President Johnson's Great Society programs were introduced. The status of the relationship with the states on issues related to civil rights greatly influences the approach to intergovernmental partnership envisioned as the means to implement Great Society programs. As Great Society programs represent a curative strategy related to poverty, similar to the concepts espoused by Thomas Paine in the colonial period as exemplified by President Johnson's annual message to Congress (*Public Paper of the Presidents* 1:114). The concept of providing assistance so that suffering could be prevented, rather than requiring a degree of suffering to discourage seeking aid, along with recognition that access to resources is essential to citizenship, is a cornerstone of Great Society programs. The Great Society programs included the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which directed federal funds to schools impacted by high levels of poverty. The Food Stamp Act of 1964 provided direct food assistance through providing vouchers/ stamps for food purchases directly to recipients. The Social Security Act was amended to include Medicare and Medicaid, providing health insurance to the elderly, disabled, and to the poor. The Manpower Development and Training Act provided for job training and assistance for low-income job searchers and youth from high poverty areas. The Public Works and Economic Development Act and the Appalachian Regional Development Act provide mechanisms for funding support to encourage development in economically distressed areas (DiNitto, 358-59.) Except for Medicaid programs, which are grants-in-aid programs that states choose to participate in and which are jointly administered through a series of matching formulae, all of the Great Society programs contain some element of bypassing state jurisdiction over the program (Bailey & Danziger, 2013). This approach of the federal

government to use federal programs as a means to get around state governments, which may actually not support the goals of the programs, is not unique to the Great Society agenda, it was certainly a strategy of the Freedman's Bureau, but is certainly exemplified by it. There is evidence that Johnson's commitment poverty as a centerpiece of his administration was prompted by a direct experience between the President and the coal miner living in poverty (Bailey & Danziger, p.6)

A particularly good example of this new approach to American Federalism is the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The purpose of Act was to address poverty directly rather than only its consequences and to open opportunities for participation to people living in poverty in order to realize the potential of the United States in general. Poverty is framed as a key barrier to the full realization of the American ideal for the nation, not just for individuals living in poverty (Clark, 58). Even though it contained provisions for a number of new programs and a new federal office, the Act moved from initial drafting to final passage in six months, passing the Senate July 23 and the House on August 8th. Sargent Shriver, brother-in-law to President Kennedy was identified as the proposed director of the new Office of Economic Opportunity before the bill was sent to Congress (Clark, 61).

The Economic Opportunity Act contained a number of Titles, and separate programs authorized within each Title.

- Title I identified youth programs including Job Corps, Job Training Partnership, and work study programs.
- Title II authorized the creation of "urban and rural community action programs", adult basic education, and voluntary assistance program for needy children.

- Title III authorized “special programs to combat poverty in rural areas” through a series of grants and loans, assistance to migrant and other seasonally employed agricultural workers and payments to dairy farmers.
- Title IV authorized employment and investment incentives to promote the establishment of small businesses through a loan program administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration.
- Title V established work experience programs for unemployed father and “other needy persons” to obtain employment.
- Title VI established the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program, the Economic Opportunity Council and a National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity made up of members of the public.
- Title VII modified the Social Security Act by changing the method for counting income used to establish eligibility for public assistance.

The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) was located within the Executive Office of the President, even though the Bureau of the Budget recommended placing it within an existing department. The OEO immediately established a research and evaluation team and set to work deciding on plans for the implementation of each of the programs. Because of the number of new programs and the interdepartmental coordination required of the OEO, there was tension from the beginning between whether the OEO would be an administrative agency or a policy office for the President. Administrative pressures eventually led to more of a focus on administration and development of new programs over time. However, the OEO maintained a commitment to policy research, conducting several experiments on the potential impact on poverty of new policy options, most notably the negative income tax experiments (Clark 64).

Of particular interest in the evolution of the state-federal partnership, the creation of community action programs created a direct link between the OEO and local agencies designated as community action agencies. Eventually states would create state offices to coordinate with the federal OEO, but these offices did not have the authority to decide on designations of agencies as community action agencies. In addition, the focus on the “maximum feasible participation” of people living in poverty with the community action programs put the federal government directly in between state interests related to segregation and civil rights and the civil rights movement. This radical shift in the use of federal influence within states would not go unnoticed. Carter (2009, quoted in Bailey & Danziger, 2013) describes how community action agencies infuriated state officials. Ultimately, the Johnson administration diminished local power to implement parts of the OEO portfolio when the Senate Appropriations Committee threatened to stop all funding, including funding for the Vietnam War (Bailey & Danziger, 8).

New Federalism and Welfare Reform. The term “New Federalism” was used by President Nixon to describe a commitment to “return” to the principles of federalism by returning responsibility to the states. Nixon’s underlying premise was that American federalism had gotten out of balance in favor of the national government (Walker, 1995, p.134). Nixon’s creation of a welfare reform plan and a revenue sharing program to return authority to the states (Walker p. 136) in 1972 is the beginning of period in which a series of strategies are considered to reduce the role of the federal government in the direct provision of services related to poverty.

Early approaches to poverty in President Nixon’s administration centered on modest incremental reforms to rein in welfare spending (Steensland, 86). However, as part of the process of developing this proposal, a sub-Cabinet committee was formed which included experts from what had been the Office of Economic Opportunity under President Johnson’s administration.

Exposure to the idea of a guaranteed annual income (GAI) after a presentation from the researchers who had conducted experiments on this concept prompted members of the Nixon administration to move toward more fundamental welfare reform, eventually viewing a type of GAI program as a viable replacement for a number of welfare programs (Levine, 1975). By 1969, this concept had evolved to become the Family Assistance Plan (FAP) and was introduced to Congress. The FAP included an element of GAI, provided assistance to working people who met work participation requirements, and provided block grants to states. The net impact of the FAP would have been a shift in assistance to working families, including those with two parents, and away from poor single mothers (Walker, 136). The net result would have been increased support for rural White families and reduced support for urban Black families. Nixon used this information to persuade Southern leaders to support the proposal and consciously allowed the perception among civil rights leaders that the FAP would empower poor urban Black families as well (Walker, 140). Even though the War on Poverty had just been declared less than a decade before, by 1970 discussion of welfare reform did not address poverty but focused on work behavior, program costs, revenue sharing and a renewed focus on people in poverty as having some kind of personal or cultural deficit (Steensland, 122). The Nixon administration paid close attention to “prevailing understandings and stereotypes” (Steensland, 123), and crafted a marketing campaign to sell the FAP, focusing on narrative rather than policy details. In the end, the FAP did not pass. It was revived as FAP II and failed again. However, the debates over the FAP were crucial in setting the stage for the passage of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) in 1975. The EITC retained the GAI elements of the FAP for the working poor without the thorny issues of combining welfare programs, enforcing work requirements, or providing a type of GAI benefit to people who did not work. Even though the most vocal resistance to the FAP proposal

was related to the idea of providing a GAI to people who were working and not receiving welfare, this element ended up being the only piece of Nixon's proposal that was enacted during his term (Steensland, 178-9).

In 1972, the Revenue Sharing Act is passed that distributed \$30 billion over five years to state and local governments to address problems they identify in the manner they choose (Sutton, xxiv). Revenue sharing was one strategy President Nixon pursued to counter the social activism of the Johnson administration, and to provide justification for the reduction of categorical grants. President Nixon also proposed a new reliance on block grants. Block grants up to this point had been used only twice, once in health care and once in law enforcement. In these cases, block grants were formed through the combination of several related categorical grants with similar purposes. This idea was appealing to the Nixon administration as it met both goals; reducing categorical grants and loosening controls on states. President Nixon's final strategy in his vision of New Federalism was a series of administrative initiatives. For example, units of government applying for grants were allowed to consolidate applications. The net impact of all of these strategies by the end of the Ford administration in 1975 was that federal spending in categorical grants continued to increase significantly, totally swamping any efficiencies gained (O'Toole, 18-20).

While President Carter did not propose any system of reform to the intergovernmental system by way of a new funding mechanism, events during his administration played a significant role in increasing calls to reform. As a fiscal conservative, President Carter's refusal to increase spending caused federal spending increases to slow and then to reverse by 1978, even while economic pressures increased demand for services. The Carter administration focused on

efficiency efforts (Walker, p.143). Even with actual decreases in funding, the federal government did not relieve states of mandates related to the receipt of funds (O'Toole, 21).

In his 1982 State of the Union Address, President Reagan lays out his case for redefining American federalism and returning power to the states (Conlan, 1988). He identifies the increase in categorical programs (from 132 in 1960 to 500 in 1982), and the large number of legislative committees to oversee all of these programs (166), as evidence that the federal government has lost its focus. His first response to this issue is identical to Nixon's ten years earlier; a return of \$47 billion in federal programs to State and local government. Reagan's plan also includes the federal government taking full responsibility for the cost of Medicaid while shifting responsibility for the AFDC program and food stamps to the States. The Reagan plan also includes the creation of a "grassroots trust fund" that will belong to the States. States could choose to continue with federal programs and use their trust funds to pay for grants or they could choose to forego participation in the federal grant programs and do whatever they wanted with the money as long as a specified portion was passed through to local units of government. This plan envisioned complete control over 40 federal grant programs by 1988, at which time the trust fund would begin to phase out and States could decide to create their own taxes to fund the programs they choose to keep (Walker p.153-57). Also in keeping with previous administrations' reform agenda, President Reagan also proposed allowing States for apply to the federal government for urban areas to be designated as enterprise zones.

The Reagan administration's "new" approach to federalism carries a certain narrative strength that has a life of its own. According to Timothy Conlan's (1984) assessment of President Reagan's efforts to reduce federal roles, the effort had mixed results in terms of shifting power to the States. The administration achieved consolidation of 77 categorical

programs into nine new block grants through the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981, and produced the first absolute decline in federal grant amounts since the 1950s. This Act also authorized state waivers to conduct demonstration projects to test alternative means of providing welfare assistance. While successfully consolidating categorical programs into block grants, overall budgetary reductions in federal block grants substantially exceeded the amounts State governors had agreed to accept in exchange for more authority over spending. In the end, many analysts came to see the Reagan administration's rhetoric about strengthening the role of state and local governments as mere cover for cutting spending (Conlan, 362). Even so, the power of this prevailing narrative about the role of States in designing effective interventions seems to have inspired renewed leadership around innovation among State governors. According to David Beam's (1988) assessment, States had taken on new roles as incubators of innovation. Beam points out that, while States have taken more active roles in many regulatory functions, some of the "...most notable actions have been in areas directly or indirectly related to the economic wellbeing of their citizens..." (Beam, 1988). Similar to the two previous administrations, George H. W. Bush created a task force led by Vice President Dan Quayle to identify ways to reduce the federal regulatory function experienced little success in actually reducing the federal imprint on policy in relation to the states. Bureaus within the federal government tend to take on a life of their own with the object of their existence becoming their own survival (Carpenter & Lewis, 1997). Bureaucrats tend over time to see at least part of their job being to maintain their department, its staff and its standing and so will find ways to be relevant within changing policy environments.

The 1990s mark another critical period in the evolution of American federalism as all three branches of government renew an interest in redrawing the boundaries between state and

federal governments. The Supreme Court begins a period that earns the nickname the “federalism revolution” with a series of new constraints on congressional laws and expanded immunity from federal mandates for States (Sutton, xxvii). These rulings center mostly around issues related to discrimination and affirmative action, but include a wide range of issues in which the Court rules that the federal government is out of bounds in regulating actions of States. In 1994, Republicans take control of the House of Representatives after promoting the new “Contract with America” that embodies a renewed conservative movement committed to conservative values. This “Contract” includes pledges to balancing the budget, cutting taxes, enacting term limits for Members of Congress, promoting family values, broadening the death penalty, and reforming welfare programs (Sutton, xxvi); making it very similar to the Republican Party Platform of 1936.

On this last item, Congress found a partner in President Clinton who also ran on a platform of “ending welfare as we know it.” Drawing from the experiences of states demonstration projects that began in the early 1980s, the Democratic Leadership Council identified opportunities for reforming welfare that would both resonate with prevailing narratives held by the voting public in regard to perceptions of people who received welfare and could also lead to real improvements in policy (Bane, 2009). This made welfare reform a winning proposition, appealing to people concerned about policy and hitting resonant notes with people who held stereotypes about people on welfare (Handler & Hasenfeld, 5). The Clinton campaign approach to welfare reform as a policy narrative mirrors the approach used by President Nixon in his attempt to get the Family Assistance Program passed. Clinton proposed a two-year limit on welfare with a focus on early attachment to work; requiring work in order to continue to receive benefits. After two years, the government would provide direct employment to former welfare

recipients in type of public works program (Greenberg et.al, 2003 p.211-12). By 1995, a proposal to create a block grant of programs including AFDC, food stamps, Medicaid and child welfare was being considered by Congress. After failing to find agreement, the federal government actually shut down. However, by August 1996 welfare reform was passed by way of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA). In the end, the Act created a new block grant, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and ended the AFDC program (PRWORA Conference Report, 104th Congress, 1995). PRWORA also authorized significant increases in the child care development block grant and allowed for more flexibility in the transfer of funds between the new block grant and the child care grant (Axinn & Stern, 319). The TANF block grants allowed states significant discretion in enacting provisions under the new program in its first years, focusing the States almost exclusively on caseload reductions by granting credits to States based on caseload reductions of significant amounts of money that could then be used in quite flexible ways to address needs in their respective states. States almost immediately became dependent on this regime of caseload credits and incentives and enjoyed the flexibility to create targeted programs. State grants to local units of government increased dramatically during this period, relying on TANF to fund an array of local projects.

In keeping with other periods in which States had flexibility in designing systems of aid for people in poverty, choices States made about whether to implement the more punitive measures available within TANF reinforced racial disparity. Specifically, reviews of State options after TANF to implement lifetime limits, cap assistance regardless of the number of children and enact whole-family sanctions rather than parent-only sanctions for presumed non-compliance found that African Americans were more likely to be subjected to these harsher policies (Soss, Schram & Fording, 2003).

In 2003, the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) included a rigorous new set of standards for documenting work participation of welfare recipients, severely limited caseload reduction credits by changing the benchmark year against which reductions would be measured and subjected states to penalties and grant reductions for failing to meet work participation targets (TANF-ACF-PI-2014-01). DRA and other federal initiatives in this period, including identifying TANF, the child care block grant, and the Medicaid program as high risk programs because of their size and therefore subject to both the single audit process and to new requirements under the Improper Payment Information Act (IPIA, 2002). IPIA requires all high risk programs to establish a national improper payment rate and to require states to identify strategies for reducing improper payments. These trends for all practical purposes retract any flexibility gained by states under the new welfare reform block grants and severely limit the ability of states to design effective interventions. In effect, while the guarantee of welfare no longer exists for poor families, the flexibility that was promised in exchange is also gone. Current welfare programs are managed with as much federal control as was exercised under the AFDC program even though neither states nor individuals are entitled to funds over the block grant amounts, regardless of need. Welfare reform from 1996 to the present time is an excellent example of the lack of coherence between the prevailing narrative about how state and federal governments are addressing poverty in terms of decreasing federal oversight, and what is experienced by states taking up greater reporting burdens.

Conclusion

The interconnectedness of narrative themes related to poverty and government roles in addressing it endures over time and is not linear. State and federal actors over time have articulated narratives that support a high level of government involvement in poverty and fought

against government involvement in poverty, both in terms of whether government should be involved at all and in regard to the level of agency exercised by different levels of government. Concurrently, the idea that poverty is a personal deficit that should not be “encouraged” through the provision of aid has endured along with beliefs that addressing poverty is a social concern and central to a viable democracy and the equality of citizens; reflecting dialectical poles related to deservingness. While these concepts are inseparable in forming an understanding of poverty policy, combining them does not ensure adoption of specific policy directions. Over time, expanded state agency has not predicted increased focus on reducing poverty. Since the formation of the United States, colonies and then states on either side of the federalism debate have argued for more or less attention to government as an equalizing force. A model that connects these two concepts and allows for bi-directional influence is needed to better understand this interdependence.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Methodological Orientation

While three principal sources inform the methodological orientation and the selection of methods for this study, it is generally characterized as relying upon a General Inductive Qualitative Model as described by Bryant & Charmaz in *Handbook of Grounded Theory* (2002). First, both poverty and federalism are viewed as socially constructed concepts and so this work is informed by a constructivist view of knowledge creation, writ broadly in terms of research regarding how social constructs differ from specific beliefs held by individuals (Drisko, 2012). Viewing these concepts in this way, the study does not seek to isolate “federalism” or “poverty” as specific empirical categories but rather to view them as social ideas that may represent different things to different people. More specifically, this work relies on subcategories of interpretive or inductive methodological orientations, especially grounded theory and critical theory (Bernard, 2006). While not a Grounded Theory study, this research relies on two aspects of this theory as described Ritchie & Spencer (2002) in *Qualitative Researcher’s Companion* chapter on qualitative data analysis for applied policy analysis: the identification of concepts grounded in the lived experience of specific groups, namely poverty reduction groups formed by states, and the type of purposive sample used is in keeping with selecting a sample based on process elements related to a theoretical approach rather than a generalizable sample.

Critical theory is applied by specifically searching for the representation of marginalized people, especially people with direct experience of poverty, and through critical analysis of the degree to which these voices are reflected in the content of reports generated by state poverty groups. Critical theory is also relevant to the analysis of actions states propose in relation to options available to them at the time of their initiatives’ work. Finally, a phenomenological

approach is applied. This approach is exemplified by the expectation of meaning being developed through an iterative process that is informed by both the subjects (state poverty groups) and the observer (researcher). This orientation informs the recurrent search for themes, which results in additional layers of analysis informed by these results, so that meaning is iterative and informed by intentionality. Themes identified through hermeneutical analysis of written reports, or the use of purposeful searching based on key questions, reflect a hypothetico-deductive model that includes both induction and deduction as part of this iterative process (Fortune, 2012). For example, as new ideas surface from the content of reports generated by state poverty groups, qualitative analysis software facilitates the identification and comparison of similar word usage or word patterns within each source and across sources using counting and co-occurrence methods. However, this use of some deductive concepts is in service to the qualitative aim of informing the hermeneutical process, or identifying additional layers of interpretation that may be salient to future comparisons. Therefore, this research is best understood as a qualitative study that makes use of some quantitative data in service of those methods. Therefore, this study is best characterized as using a General Inductive Qualitative Model.

Operationalizing Key Concepts

Agency as an indicator of federalism orientation

As a foundation of federalism, the theory of subsidiarity maintains that the most effective way to ensure the common good is to align functions within organizations or society at large so that the most subordinate unit that can perform the function effectively and efficiently is responsible (Buckley, 1973, Rescher, 1972). Subsidiarity is the basis for the social construction of federalism. Agency theory operationalizes subsidiarity by creating a set of characteristics that

describe the degree to which states take responsibility for enacting policy choices. Mitnick introduced the concept of agency to describe the relationship between actors with different degrees of responsibility in his 1973 presentation to the American Political Science Association (Mitnick, 1973). Three main characteristics inform this dynamic: consent, specificity, and discretion. Mitnick also includes conditional or context-dependent factors as a fourth factor that can influence the level of agency among actors.

All of these factors *together* constitute agency:

- Consent can be understood as any form of acknowledgment of responsibility for taking action from simple agreement to complex contractual structures.
- The specificity of action is also a marker of agency in that more detailed action is indicative of a higher level of taking on responsibility for achieving a goal.
- Discretion drives agency in a similar manner because the ability to design and execute specific actions within the scope of authority available is a marker of a higher degree of agency.
- The fourth characteristic of agency provides a placeholder in this model for idiosyncratic or context-specific factors. In this study, emergent trends regarding changes in poverty, collaborative policymaking and results-based accountability are assumed to be similar for all states. Other idiosyncratic elements related to any individual state remain unknown.

Mitnick outlines the parameters of principal actors in terms of the degree of control over these four factors. Sanford Ross developed principal or broker-agency in terms of economic theory the same year using similar characteristics framed around incentives and disincentives and economic self-interest, but Mitnick's model specifically incorporates the use of agency to describe a broad

range of actors from individuals to units of government, applies agency to loosely formed issue groups, and includes actions taken that further broad policy goals as evidence of agency, stating that “The agent may be a person, organization, system, or even if we stretch the analysis to include common usage, an idea.” (p.3). Mitnick uses the relationship between state and federal governments as one example of how agency is expressed. Sanford Schram examines this dynamic in detail in his 2006 compilation of studies on welfare (Schram, 2006). As the federal government’s role has become less direct, policies have evolved from direct agency to principal-agency relationship(s). This means that rather than a single rational agent making choices based on incentives, a principal interest (such as the federal government) takes on the role of attempting to create incentives that it predicts will drive the behavior of the acting agent; a state or local government or non-governmental organization. Some of the artifacts of this principal-agency relationship include performance contracts, benchmarking and goal-setting schemes that attempt to define incentives aimed at promoting action of lower-level units of government. Schram describes this set of governing principles as the Economics-Therapeutic-Management (ETM) approach to poverty wherein poverty is measured via econometrics, “treated” as a personal deficit, and programs emulate business management systems.

This research identifies agency as a principal indicator of acceptance by states of a subsidiary role in relation to the federal government; such that evidence of greater discretion, specificity and consent serves as evidence of a state’s federalism orientation.

Deservingness as an indicator of poverty orientation

The work of Handler & Hasenfeld (1984, 1989, 1992, and 2007) on the moral construction of the concept of “deservingness” in relation to poverty forms the basis for using this concept as an indicator of poverty orientation. Handler & Hasenfeld make the case for

deservingness as a narrative theme that trumps empirical evidence and magnifies perceived differences between people who receive assistance and others who are not currently in need. While there are myriad factors they identify as connected to deservingness, this research focuses on two main concepts: likeness or inclusivity and causal stories. In their earlier research, Handler & Hasenfeld identified tracing how people assign blame for poverty as a key component of deservingness. This concept has subsequently evolved to not only include explicit blame, but also any causal story that describes the origins of poverty as signals of deservingness.

This research identifies deservingness as an indicator of poverty narrative orientation as evidenced by origin or causal stories and by inclusion of people in poverty; either rhetorically or tangibly in the process of conducting the work of state poverty initiatives.

Narrative Policy Analysis

In order to identify the themes related to federalism and poverty, a narrative policy analysis process is used, based on the concept that narratives are critically important as a means to understanding how people prioritize information. In *The Symbolic Species*, Terrence Deacon describes the co-evolutionary processes of language and the brain. Deacon claims that early humans used shared stories to determine who was a valid member of group, impacting the survival of group members by regulating access to food, shelter and security. In the end, shared metaphors are so central to our identity that a challenge to them can literally feel like a challenge to our physical selves, like a tangible threat to our existence (Deacon, 437). It may have been true in the early days of our evolution, and in some cases just as true today, that a miscommunication about shared metaphor can pose a real threat. The apparent universality of myth-making as a binding force within groups in primitive times is likely no less true today.

In the policy arena, Emery Roe (1994), Deborah Stone (2002) and George Lakoff (2002) have described the salience of metaphor and narrative frameworks to understanding the policymaking process. Roe highlights metaphor and repetition as indicators of narrative. Stone describes equity, efficiency, security and liberty as goals which provide a framework around which policy debates revolve. In this way, these concepts can both unite and divide political factions. Lakoff also defines the creation of narrative frames as a means to make sense of or impose a moral order on our experience, making them quite central to personal and group identity; explaining why these frames are so well protected. Penetrating or changing someone else's narrative frame is futile (Lakoff, 2002); only through engaging with the dominant narrative theme is there any hope of moving beyond stalemate. Finally, the usefulness of studying narrative frames as a window into how various people understand poverty policy could be one of the most important things we can do to improve the degree to which policymaking is informed by evidence. Challenging people with evidence without aligning this evidence within a narrative framework is likely to fail. For example, after years of experience and some formal experiments, Karen Bogenschneider and Tom Corbett recommend "changing the cultural milieu in which knowledge producers' function" and getting familiar with the culture of policymakers as two of the most important ways in which policy researchers can better inform social welfare policy (Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2010).

Quinn (2005) prioritizes three key types of language indicators of narrative: metaphor, reasoning and repetition. Metaphors are especially salient in the work of identifying cultural schema because they tend to be used frequently and people tend to use them to "flag" what is important (Quinn, 49). The analysis of reasoning focuses on "cultural stories" and the ways in which subjects make sense of different metaphors or how they fits these metaphors together in

some coherent narrative. Finally, analyzing key words and their frequency can serve to test assumptions about connections between themes.

This research identifies indicators of narratives related to federalism and poverty by identifying components of these narratives, namely agency and deservingness through focusing on references to causes of poverty, searching for metaphors, and analyzing key words. Specifically, these components of narrative are related to agency factors (consent, discretion, specificity) and deservingness factors (inclusiveness and blame/cause).

Because of the need to focus on policymaking related to states, the subjects for this narrative analysis are state poverty initiatives formed subsequent to the devolution of responsibility for poverty reduction to states. Even though the federal government eliminated poverty reduction as a policy goal in the early 1980s (Reagan, 1982), the passage of welfare reform in 1996 through enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) is generally recognized as a threshold moment in the devolution of responsibility for implementing public assistance programs to states. However, there seems not to have been a correlate devolution of responsibility for the goals that formed the framework for the old assistance programs; especially those formed as part of the 1964 War on Poverty. The focus of regulatory frameworks developed subsequent to PRWORA on the process of administering grants-in-aid and block grant programs crowded out any focus on the goal of poverty reduction (Schram, 2006).

As outlined in Chapter One, while states were occupied with navigating the task of implementing block granted programs and creating contracting and oversight processes to manage these new responsibilities, the federal focus did not pivot to focus on broader goals or organizing principles. Instead, shortly after states had figured out how to manage the new block

grant programs, a system of federally mandated measures of accountability for specific process elements was instituted via the Deficit Reduction Act in 2005; shifting the focus even further from outcomes to precise measurement of specific activities people receiving assistance were required to perform.

Even within this broader context, there is an emerging trend of states adopting poverty reduction as a responsibility linked to public assistance programs and other programs within the state (Bane, 2009, Levin-Epstein, 2011). Many states have adopted targets for poverty reduction; specifically choosing accountability for an outcome that is rife with challenges and affected by myriad factors outside of the control or influence of public assistance programs. This research tests the idea that states taking on poverty reduction as a policy goal are similar in regard to narrative themes related to federalism and poverty.

Sample Selection

A purposive sample of state poverty initiatives was chosen based on accessibility and depth of state initiative reports on poverty. Every reasonable effort was made to include all states with a poverty initiative during the study period. Inclusion was based on the degree to which the reports aligned with the goals of the research as follows:

- Poverty initiative formed by state government, not an external party interested in the state's progress on poverty;
 - Work products contained information on the authorizing mechanism for the initiative;
- Time period of 2008-2010 was selected to increase the likelihood that contextual factors related to federal policy directions were similar, and to provide enough time after the initiative to compare states after the initiatives concluded;

- Work product or report of initiative contained enough information to conduct narrative analysis, with at least some means to identify:
 - causal stories either directly by providing a separate section or through other means such as recommendations;
 - inclusion of people in poverty;
 - specificity and discretion in state policy recommendations.

Epstein & Gorzelany's research on state poverty initiatives (2008) was used as a starting point to identify state initiatives that produced work products, or written reports that resulted from the state initiative's work. Their work identified 23 states with some type of poverty initiative and twelve states with poverty initiatives working toward issuing formal public reports. Center for Law & Social Policy (CLASP) Spotlight on Poverty project that tracks state reports resulted in the identification of a similar set of 21 states. In order to find any additional states with poverty initiatives that resulted in reports amenable to analysis, each state's entry in the TANF rules database was searched for any mention of a poverty initiative, which resulted in no additional states being added. The Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) state plans were also searched for any mention of a state initiative. Only one state was found this way, and this state was already included in the CLASP list. Subsequently, every state's official website was searched for any mention of a poverty initiative. Several states were identified this way, but none that were not included by CLASP. Finally, alerts via Proquest online index, Proquest ECHO (also referred to as Proquest Open), and Google were established and were continuously used to surface new state reports or research related to state poverty initiatives. These processes resulted in eleven states that had poverty initiatives that included a written report that met the

criteria for selection: Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Vermont.

Secondary Data Sources

Schram's (2002) work, which identified factor predictive of states' taking up welfare reform options will be used to compare these factors to the PovFed model's classification of agency and poverty themes among states. Schram found significant relationships between choices by states to take up welfare reform options and several factors, including the racial composition of welfare recipients, the overall proportion of welfare recipients as a function of total population, and the political ideology of the state's leadership. These factors will be identified for the sample states to compare whether the results of narrative analysis comport with Schram's predictive modeling. In order to conduct this comparison, secondary data sources that are publicly available are used to group states on these factors. These sources include Data from the U.S. Administration for Children and Families which is used to identify welfare recipient demographics. Schram's typology used the BRFH (Berry, Ringquist, Fording & Hanson, 1998) model as a measure of government ideology. However, subsequent to Schram's work, the BRFH model has been recognized as a more reliable measure of political mood than ideology. In order to align with this typology, this project uses the same measure, relying on the modeling of Enns & Koch (2013) to assign states to groups based on political mood; changing the label of this group compared to Schram's work but maintaining the model. These sources are further described in Chapter Four.

Methods

Comparative analysis using secondary data sources

States with poverty reduction initiatives will be compared in regard to Schram's factors such as racial, ethnic and gender composition of people in poverty within each state, political

dynamics or ideological orientation of state political leadership. This will be achieved using the secondary data source described above.

Because of the small sample size and purposive nature of the sample states, analysis will be limited to comparing results of narrative analysis to their co-occurrence and membership within similar groups as identified by previous research. Each state within the sample will be compared based on the alignment or group membership suggested by narrative analysis vs. data related to predictive factors from Schram's predictive model. Data from the U.S. Administration for Children and Families will be used to identify welfare recipient demographics. Finally, Research from the Pew Center on the States will be used to group sample states according to change in poverty over time.

Content Analysis and Thematic Coding

General content analysis methods such as word counts and the co-occurrence of words or phrases within each state report and across all reports. This method is used to identify:

- connections between state reports and federal programs or policies;
- inclusiveness of types of people involved in the state poverty initiatives;
- identifying key words related to the construct of deservingness related to blame or causal stories.

Thematic coding is used to organize content analysis of state documents including authorizing legislations and/or executive orders, reports and recommendations. First, initial codes are identified based on deductive reasoning that portions of text relate to the key concepts of the study: federalism as indicated by agency, and poverty as indicated by deservingness. However some inductive codes are also identified based on content that didn't align with concepts previously identified in order to respect the voice of sample subjects.

These codes were then organized into code families and super families, according to the nomenclature of Atlas.ti, to create a code structure. Integrative diagrams based on frequency of codes and co-occurrence of codes are then created using Atlas.ti and Tableau Public to map connections between themes, among states, and third level connectivity according to subthemes.

Applying the PovFed model

The PovFed model uses agency determinants to assign states as either high or low agency based on the three main characteristics of agreement or consent, discretion and specificity. States with high agency take up their role in relation to the federal government by designing specific policy interventions within their span of discretion. The type and scope of these interventions is also informed by the way states perceive poverty as a policy problem. If poverty is viewed as intractable or explained as a consequence of personal choice, actions by states may embody agreement with their role as an agent in regard to implementing specific federal policies but avoid governmental responsibility for poverty reduction as a broader policy goal. The assignment of states is determined by the degree to which states talk about poverty in terms of the narrative frame of “deservingness.” This results in the following four types of states:

- **High Agency/ High Deserving.** These states will take actions related to poverty that express a high level of consent in regard to their role in implementing federal policy, and use their discretionary power to design specific interventions targeted at reducing poverty as a broad policy issue rather than as a personal problem.
- **High Agency/ Low Deserving.** These states will exercise high agency in regard to implementing federal policy and may use discretion to design specific interventions related to this role such as innovative approaches to detecting fraud

and abuse or meeting other contract expectations, but will not address poverty broadly as a responsibility of government.

- Low Agency/High Deserving. Examples of states in this category would include states that either fail to implement or refuse taking up federal policy initiatives related to poverty but do design state policies directed at tangible poverty reduction.
- Low Agency/ Low Deserving. States with low alignment with both agency and deservingness will either refuse taking up federal policy or implement these on a limited basis, and would not design or support state interventions.

Through this use of comparative analysis, narrative analysis and the application of the PovFed model, the interaction between poverty and federalism narratives will be demonstrated. This will lay the foundation for further research, especially in regard to measures of poverty that account for state government policy choices; especially the Columbia Population Research Center's work modeling state data based on the Supplemental Poverty Measure.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF STATE POVERTY INITIATIVES

State Poverty Initiatives

As described in Chapter Three, every effort was made to find and include states with a poverty initiative. Inclusion was based on the degree to which the reports aligned with the goals of the research as follows:

- Poverty initiative formed by state government, not an external party interested in the state's progress on poverty;
 - Work products contained information on the authorizing mechanism for the initiative;
- Time period of 2008-2010 was selected to increase the likelihood that contextual factors related to federal policy directions were similar, and to provide enough time after the initiative to compare states after the initiatives concluded;
- Work product or report of initiative contained enough information to conduct narrative analysis, with at least some means to identify:
 - causal stories either directly by providing a separate section or through other means such as recommendations;
 - inclusion of people in poverty;
 - specificity and discretion in state policy recommendations

In order to be as inclusive as possible, state initiative reports that met some but not all of the criteria were included. Where these reports did not contain information related to the theme under review, this is noted in the relevant sections below. Table 1 describes the state reports that are included.

Table 1. Description of State Reports

State	Active Period	Report Type	How Accessed
Alabama	2008	Legislative report “ <i>Poverty Task Force: Final Report</i> ”	Link via email from Chair
Arkansas	2009	Report to governor “ <i>Arkansas Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty and Promoting Economic Opportunity Act 722 of 2009 Final Report</i> ”	Link via email from member
Colorado	2009	Report to general assembly “ <i>Economic Opportunity & Poverty Reduction Task Force</i> ”	Link via web search
Connecticut	2009-2010	Report to governor “ <i>Child Poverty & Prevention Council: Progress Report</i> ”	Link via email from Chair
Delaware	2008-2009	Report to public “ <i>Analysis of Child Poverty & Economic Opportunity</i> ”	Link in CLASP report: http://archive.delawareonline.com/assets/pdf/BL133342422.PDF
Illinois	2008-2010	Report to governor “ <i>Building a Pathway to Dignity & Work</i> ”	Original document from governor’s staff
Kentucky	2009	Report to legislative committee “ <i>Report of the Poverty Task Force</i> ”	Link in CLASP report: http://www.lrc.ky.gov/lrcpubs/rm504.pdf
Louisiana	2009	Report to legislature “ <i>Child Poverty Prevention Implementation Plan</i> ”	Link via in CLASP report: http://www.clasp.org/documents/CPPEC-Implementation-Plan-2009.pdf
Michigan	2008-2009	Report to governor “ <i>Alleviating Poverty in Michigan: Report to Governor Granholm</i> ”	Original document from member
Minnesota	2008-2009	Legislative report to public “ <i>Commission to End Poverty in Minnesota by 2020: Legislative Report</i> ”	Original document from member
Vermont	2008-2009	Legislative report to governor & public “ <i>Improving the Odds for Kids</i> ”	Original document from member

Description of States

The states studied in this project had a wide range according to population, poverty dynamics, but were quite similar in regard to political representation. Table 2 provides a broad description of these states based on the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey summary file dataset (http://www2.census.gov/census_2010/04-Summary_File_1/) Some states were above and some below the national poverty rate of 15.4.

Table 2. States by Population, Poverty and Political Leadership

State	Population	Poverty Rate	Initiative Leadership
Alabama	4,779,736	18.6	Rep. Patricia Todd, Democrat Rep. Mike Ball, Republican
Arkansas	2,915,918	19.2	Gov. Mike Beebe, Democrat Sen. Bob Johnson, Democrat Rep. Robbie Wills, Democrat
Colorado	5,029,196	13.2	Rep. John Kafalas, Democrat Sen. Paula Sandoval, Democrat
Connecticut	3,574,097	10.2	Gov. M. Jodi Rell, Republican
Delaware	897,934	11.7	Rep. Terry Schooley, Democrat
Illinois	12,830,632	14.1	Gov. Pat Quinn, Democrat
Kentucky	4,339,367	18.8	Sen. Brandon Smith, Republican Rep. Gregory Stumbo, Democrat
Louisiana	4,533,372	19.1	Sen. Willie Mount, Democrat Rep. Kay Katz, Republican
Michigan	9,883,640	16.8	Gov. Jennifer Granholm, Democrat
Minnesota	5,303,925	11.5	Sen. John Marty, Democrat Sen. Claire Robling, Republican Rep. Carlos Mariani, Democrat Rep. Morrie Lanning, Republican
Vermont	625,741	11.8	Gov. Jim Douglas, Republican

Shared Contextual Factors

In order to understand states that formed poverty initiatives, it is important to understand elements of shared context; especially related to changes in poverty generally, and the emergence

of collaborative policy making and results-based accountability. These emergent trends constitute the contextual factors that make up the fourth component in Mitnick's model of agency. This study assumes that states are similar in their standing in regard to these factors.

National changes in poverty & Impact of Great Recession.

In the introduction to *Changing Poverty, Changing Policies*, Maria Cancian and Sheldon Danziger (2009) describe some of the characteristics of poverty that have remained and those that have changed. First, there remains a persistent gap between racial and ethnic groups. For example, while the gap between blacks and whites remains substantial, interventions in poverty have significantly decreased the gap. In the first few years of the War on Poverty, the gap between the white poverty rate and the black poverty rate was nearly cut in half, from a 40 point gap to a 23 point gap, during a time when the rate for each group had declined. By 1993 the gap had decreased slightly to 21 pts., and in 2007 the gap was 16 pts., representing a roughly 60% overall decrease in the gap over this period (Cancian & Danziger, 3-4). In addition to changes within the group of people actually living in poverty, there have also been significant changes in vulnerability between groups. The proportion of women who work continues to increase, along with the proportion of mothers who work, the proportion of women who are educated and the proportion of women who delay childbearing. While women continue to be more vulnerable to poverty if they have children without being married, they are having fewer children overall. Women who work at low-wage jobs that do not require education beyond high school have experienced very small gains in income whereas men in low-education jobs have seen their incomes decrease (Cancian & Danziger, 6-8). These changing dynamics could influence the way states address poverty and the narratives they use to explain its causes. During the Great Recession, as these changes in poverty dynamics were taking place, the likelihood of knowing someone directly experiencing or at risk of poverty was greatly increased. This personal

knowledge is a strong motivator for action. Ideas about deservingness can change when a person finds themselves in need or someone close to them is struggling with needing assistance.

Poverty Measures Used by States.

All states used the federal poverty measure as the primary measure of poverty. Illinois focused on extreme poverty as defined by less than 50% of the federal measure income guidelines. Several states focus on the proportion of children in poverty based on this measure. Connecticut and Minnesota contracted with the Urban Institute to model policy alternatives using adapted versions of the Transfer Impact Model, Version 3 (TRIM3) simulation system adjusted to their specific state policy framework and economic factors

Target setting and results-based accountability.

State initiatives should be understood in the context of the accountability framework within which they all operate. This is critically important to understanding how states could have high levels of consent with their role vis-à-vis the federal government and great specificity in action; indicators of high agency, without any concurrent focus on poverty reduction. This context is important for two reasons. It can help explain why so few states formed initiatives that resulted in reports, and it provides insight into the policy options available to states.

Chapter One provided an overview of land grants, block grants and grants-in-aid. These agreements between federal and state governments included some elements of measurement to gauge the success of these transfers and provide incentives to states to cooperate with broad federal goals. Expectations related to identification and measurement of results continued to evolve. A key component of welfare reform in the 1990s was the incentive structures to states to measure caseload reductions as the primary indicator of successful implementation of welfare reform via the block grant process.

As this evolution continued, more emphasis has been placed on increasingly specific measurement of results, and a renewed focus on stakeholder engagement related to these measures. Understanding context for states that formed poverty initiatives requires more detailed information regarding how accountability systems developed. Dwyer (2007) proposed a model for logically modelling disparate components of policy related to poverty reduction in an integrated approach. This approach is described as a viable mechanism for addressing increasing complexity in specific administrative structures while maintaining a broad focus on poverty reduction. This model differentiates between inputs, outputs, intermediate outcomes and impact or results. Dwyer argues that using an integrated approach to model these different components of poverty policy could increase public confidence in public administration, and advocates for increased focus on education in these areas for public administrators in order to ensure the effectiveness of public programs and contribute to a focus on longer term impacts or results. Similarly, Szekely (2011) describes the need for greater management accountability and stakeholder engagement in poverty reduction from a global perspective, advocating that poverty reduction efforts be evaluated not only via outputs but in relation to impact.

In this same time period, public mechanisms for monitoring accountability for results and government performance played an increasing role. The passage of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) in 1993 signaled the commitment of the Clinton administration to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public programs. In general, GPRA required members of the senior executive service within federal agencies to engage in strategic planning to ensure coherence between policy goals and implementation plans, and to institute a system of performance indicators related to those goals and the process elements designed to ensure implementation (Kravchuk & Schack, 1996, Bruel, 2003).

However, the implementation of GPRA was attenuated by several factors. While there was an expectation of stakeholder engagement and a focus on results from the perspective of members of groups identified as intervention targets for public policies, the bulk of the energy in developing systems and leadership was contained within the senior executive service (Radin, 1998). This level of complexity, along with the urgency of identifying measure of policy effectiveness, probably contributed to increasingly complex and specific measures of program outputs and processes not balanced by lived experiences of people in communities nor even by state administrators expected to adhere to these measures (Breul, 2003, Long & Franklin, 2004). A lack of experience with strategic planning, logical modelling and designing performance measures among senior staff primarily responsible for implementing GPRA also contributed to this complexity (Franklin & Edwards, 2003, Breul, 2003). Under the Bush administration, performance measurement was operationalized using the Program Assessment and Review Tool (PART). Lavertu, Lewis & Moynihan (2013) analyze the implementation of PART and found that administrative agencies with a more liberal political ideology were required to perform more reviews with less capacity for doing so, and were more likely to assign political motivations to the review process; likely inhibiting the foundational goal of increased confidence in government administration of public programs.

As outlined in Chapter One, increasing surveillance of program participation to ensure compliance with the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 and the Improper Payment Information Act of 2003. So, state level administrators of programs administered under the auspices of shared responsibility were swamped with myriad performance and accountability measures competing for scarce resources under their control. These dynamics strengthened the economic-therapeutic-management model of poverty intervention outlined by Schram (2006), which emphasizes the

monitoring of specific aspects of program administration and the personal behavior of welfare recipients above any focus on poverty reduction.

Although states were required to address all of these mandates for setting program targets and meeting accountability standards; reducing poverty was not a requirement of any of these. States had to take independent autonomous action to form poverty initiatives. Identifying policy goals is a valid indication of the level of responsibility or agency a collaborative policymaking group embodies. Setting measurable targets for poverty reduction is evidence of greater levels of accountability and therefore signal a higher degree of agency among those states. The exercise of this component of agency is evidenced by the bases of authority and the purpose(s) for the state initiatives.

Basis of authority. Mechanisms for authorizing the work of the poverty initiative included a state constitution, executive orders, legislation, and legislative committees. Some states have more than one source of authorization. The level of importance of the poverty initiative can be inferred based on the specificity and type of authorization due to concepts of priority in regard to state constitutions over state statutes.

Only Illinois cites the state constitution as a direct source of authorization for the focus on poverty, noting in that state's report that "The preamble of the Constitution of the State of Illinois identifies the elimination of poverty as a fundamental goal of our state government (Illinois, 7)." Illinois' initiative is also supported by a specific public act.

Five other states formed their poverty initiatives after enactment of a public act specific to that purpose: Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Michigan and Vermont.

Delaware's initiative was formed via executive order from Governor Rendell.

Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky and Louisiana formed their initiatives under the auspices of legislative commissions without the benefit of specific enabling legislation.

Purpose(s) of State Initiatives. States varied in their identification of the purposes of their poverty initiatives; ranging from clearly articulated charges outlined in authorizing legislation or orders to vague statements regarding the need to address poverty. In order to be as inclusive as possible in coding these statements, all references to the purposes of the state initiative were included regardless of where the statements appeared in the documents.

The most common purpose identified by states was to work toward reducing some type of poverty by half over ten years. Seven states identified this “half in ten” policy target including Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana and Vermont. Of these, four states (Connecticut, Delaware, Louisiana, and Vermont) focused their poverty reduction targets to reducing child poverty and Illinois focused on reducing extreme poverty by half. This finding prompted me to cross-check membership in the Center for American Progress’ Half in Ten initiative (<http://halfintennet.org/2013/10/28/half-in-ten-annual-report-2013-2/>). This initiative started in 2007 based on research conducted by the Center that identified policy strategies that could viably cut poverty in half in ten years. Unfortunately, during the period of the formation of the state policy initiatives that are the subject of this study, the Half in Ten advocacy project was relatively inactive as the Center searched for permanent leadership and formed as a separate entity linked to the Center. Even though no external evidence of participation with this work can be found, it seems likely that states that framed such specific poverty reduction targets had some exposure to the work of the Center for American Progress and subsequently to the Half in Ten project.

Five states (Colorado, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, and Vermont) identified assessing current conditions related to poverty as a purpose of their initiatives. Alabama, Kentucky and Michigan also identified reducing conditions related to poverty as a purpose.

Four states identified targeting state resources to address poverty through improved budget targeting (Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, and Michigan) Three states identified improving service delivery systems as a purpose of forming their initiatives, including Colorado, Michigan and Minnesota.

Other purposes identified include preserving the dignity of people living in poverty (Illinois and Minnesota), and promoting full civic participation of people living in poverty (Illinois and Michigan). Louisiana and Michigan also identified increasing public-private partnerships as an explicit purpose of their state initiatives, while Vermont identified increasing public will to address poverty as a purpose.

Finally, along with other purposes noted above, Minnesota identified the purpose of its initiative as the complete elimination of poverty.

Especially compared to the level of complexity and specificity found below regarding recommendations developed by state poverty initiatives; it seems apparent that the work of these groups expanded and became more specific over time.

Collaborative policymaking.

State poverty initiatives are examples of collaborative policymaking. Recently, research has begun to look at collaborative networks as not only responding to policy initiatives but as playing in role in the development of policy initiatives. A collaborative policy network does not only pass information along its nodes but the network members actually act in concert in some way. Collaborative policy networks are assumed to have at least some degree of shared ideology

and have in common at least one policy goal (Prell, 2008, Ansell et. al, 2009, Weible and Sabatier, 2005).

Similar to how membership in a collaborative group may not predict action, policy outputs of these groups may not predict results. This research respects the difference between policy outputs of groups like these state initiatives and end results. No claims are made that studying state reports serves as evidence that states actually implemented any of the recommendations in the reports. The nature of participation in state initiatives serves as evidence of collaboration.

Participation in State Initiatives. Every state included a broad range of participants. Participation was divided into two primary categories: representation on the governing body of the state initiative, and all other participation that resulted in tangible evidence such as public testimony or presentations.

In terms of representation, all state initiatives included participation by state legislators and state agency staff. In Colorado and Kentucky, legislators were the only group serving on the leadership body. The next most frequently represented group was community agencies. Seven states (Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Vermont) included this type of membership on their governing bodies. Local government was officially represented in Michigan. Only Louisiana included representation from a university, and only Vermont included a federal legislator as a member of its governing group with the participation of Sen. Bernie Sanders, while Kentucky included direct participation of a representative from the federal agency of Veteran Affairs. Michigan and Arkansas explicitly identified a person in poverty as a member of their respective governing bodies, but it is possible that other states simply did not explicitly identify members in this way. Women comprised almost half (78 of

160) of the total governing body membership across states, and were present in every state. Race or ethnicity was not provided.

While official representation by federal partners was minimal, states did access national experts related to poverty. Six states explicitly invited participation of national experts including Connecticut, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Vermont. Most of this participation was from either the Urban Institute or one of three national poverty centers sponsored by federal grants from Health and Human Services located at that time in New York, Michigan and Kentucky. The Urban Institute participated directly in Connecticut and Vermont, and experts from Tulane University participated directly in Louisiana.

Participation by way of testimony or presentation was more inclusive. All states documented significant public participation, with the mean of the number of instances of this type of participation equaling 31 per state, with each state identifying some of this participation as coming directly from people living in poverty. Specific examples of this participation are included below in relation to the states' identification of causes of poverty and policy areas related to poverty. One group almost completely absent is organized labor. Upon noticing that no codes related to participation contained any labor union participation, a search was conducted of all documents using several key terms and strings and found that labor union participation is mentioned only once, in Louisiana. This was interesting given that, as noted below, states identified exploitation of low-wage workers and inadequate wages as potential causes of poverty.

Interactions of poverty and federalism narratives

Recommendations as evidence of narrative. Recommendations made by states to address poverty are critical for three main reasons. They can signal the prioritization of causal stories or narrative frames through the choice of interventions by type or target. For example, if a

state initiative recommends creating incentives for employers to hire people who were formerly incarcerated, this resonates with causal stories based on economic or labor market causes of poverty and with narratives related to deservingness. Secondly, the level of agency exercised by state initiatives can be inferred from the specificity and scope of actions they propose to take. For example, a recommendation that uses active language to identify specific actions within the state's discretion is evidence of a high level of agency. Similarly, recommendations that make general thematic statements about things that should happen to reduce poverty without identifying any state actor are signaling less agency. Finally, the degree to which state recommendations address actions related to federal policies and the nature of these recommendations supports the identification of states relative to their propensity to work as partners with the federal government; indicating a sense of shared or dual sovereignty.

Thematic coding of recommendations. In coding state initiative recommendations, initial coding included all statements regarding what should be done to address poverty, resulting in 556 coded quotes within the reports. Recommendations within the same report that were identical or nearly identical were linked, resulting in 244 recommendations. Codes were assigned to code families based on type of actions recommended, persons or groups targeted by the recommendation, and policy area impacted by the recommendation, resulting in the code structure described in Figure 3. Each coded recommendation may appear in several of these code families; membership in each is not unduplicated. After assignment to families, recommendations were reconnected with state initiative source documents and analyzed by theme and by state. An additional code family was created to identify any code from any category that addressed actions to be taken by states with any level of involvement with the

federal government. This code family includes 13 recommendations, which were analyzed separately.

Figure 3. Code Structure of Recommendations

Recommended Action	Intervention Targets	Policy Area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative • Customer Service • New Program • Expand Current Program • Increase Access to Current Program • Engage Partner • Further Study • Increase Funding • Regulation/ Enforcement • System Reform • Tax Reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses • Communities • Young Children • Families • Minorities • Rural Areas • School-Age Children • Single Adults • Gender/ Sex • Urban Areas • Older Children/ Youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Building • Child Welfare • Education • Energy • Food & Nutrition • Health • Housing • Transportation • Income Supports • Workforce Development

Narratives Related to Poverty

Causes of Poverty Identified by State Initiatives

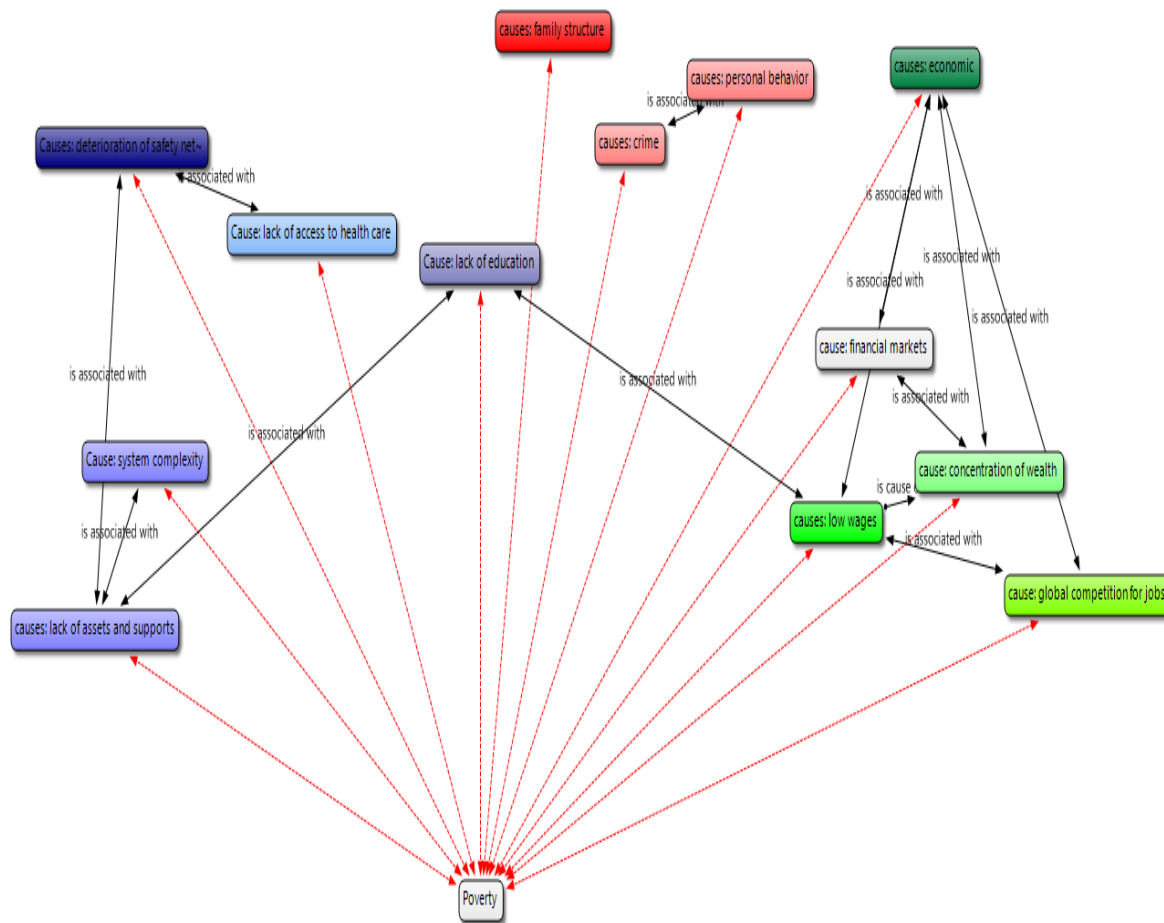
“It is important to recognize this range of opinion and thought about the root causes of poverty because the ways in which we believe people get into poverty strongly influence the strategies we favor for helping people get out of poverty (Louisiana, 17).”

State poverty initiatives identified a wide range of causes of poverty in their reports. The choice of including narrative descriptions of what state initiative bodies consider as causes is the best source of information to surface narrative frames around poverty. However, in the cases of Kentucky and Colorado, it was not possible to identify any references to causes of poverty. These states used a similar format for conducting their work, moving from a description of poverty in their state to presentations regarding programs related to poverty and then making recommendations. One could infer a causal narrative based on the content of presentations or

recommendations of these states, but these states are not included in this section because these inferences do not support the analysis of narrative themes in an ethical manner.

In regard to the remaining nine states, openly coded quotations were sorted into the code family “Causes” based on a number of factors. For the purposes of this study, any explanatory factor is counted as a “cause.” This is in keeping with narrative analysis, since the objective is to identify narrative frames or causal stories rather than make a substantiated case for specific proximate causes of poverty. A single speaker or even a single quote could be linked to multiple codes in the cause code family. Causes identified were color-coded by theme and according to the frequency of their appearance in the narratives of state poverty initiatives. Depth of color was matched to frequency via the creation of custom colors. In this manner, different color-coded themes with the same frequency have identical color saturation values even though they are different colors, so that the darkest colors represent the most prevalent causal stories.

Figure 4: Causes of Poverty



Nearly all of the public testimony heard by state poverty initiatives was dedicated to describing causes/relaying causal stories. Whether this is because the initiative bodies were soliciting testimony in order to build a case to justify particular recommendations or whether this testimony was organic is unknown. It is common for stakeholders to take advantage of opportunities to participate in agenda-setting of this nature; similarly it would not be surprising to learn that much of the testimony was specifically solicited.

The most frequent cause identified within state poverty initiative reports was the deterioration of the public safety net. This code family includes subthemes related to decreasing

capacity, scope or accessibility of safety net programs. It may be that concerns over the inadequacies of safety net programs to respond in times of increasing need were proximate causes for the formation of these state initiatives. Through public testimony and via reports from state agencies, narratives around the public safety net conveyed a sense of crisis, as people described the safety net as being unable to meet current needs and frighteningly inadequate in the face of a crashing economy.

“This significant increase in poverty in Illinois demonstrates our failure to adequately support individuals living in or at risk of poverty. Illinois’s safety net, for example, now protects a smaller number of children from deep poverty than it used to. In 1995, Illinois’s safety net moved 88% out of extreme poverty. By 2005, the safety net in Illinois lifted only 76% of poor children out of extreme poverty. Our safety net also does less to protect unemployed workers from falling into poverty than it used to. In 1995, the safety net lifted 70% of extremely poor unemployed workers (who were looking for work in any given week) out of extreme poverty, but by 2005, the safety net only protected 60% of these workers from extreme poverty (Illinois, 12).”

“In Louisiana, as in 15 other states, the income eligibility limit remained the same between 2006 and 2007. Therefore, as a percentage of the federal poverty level, the income limit decreased. Louisiana is one of 18 states in which these income limits did not keep pace with the increase in the federal poverty limits. Between 2001 and 2007, Louisiana experienced a decrease in eligibility when measured as a percentage of poverty (Louisiana, 46).”

“The inability to provide personalized customer service only compounds the challenges faced by people who are seeking help. Further, employees who are overextended by regulatory requirements, high caseloads and inappropriate performance measures simply cannot provide quality help (Michigan, 14).”

“There are gaping holes in the safety net. Survival for poor and low income families is becoming more tenuous because the federal safety net has been dramatically underfunded (Vermont, 4).”

The second most frequent causes were economic in nature. In light of the fact that much of the work of these state initiatives was done in the midst of the aftermath of the financial and housing markets in 2008, this is not surprising. Testimony related to this theme included stories about predatory lending, foreclosure, job loss and decreasing wages.

“While poverty was a serious problem when the Commission first met, it is an even greater problem now due to the economic crisis and the rapidly changing national and global economy. Until the current crisis, predatory market practices and home foreclosures appeared to some to be distant problems confined to low income communities. Now we see how these problems in the housing market point to weaknesses in financial systems that led to the unraveling of many aspects of our economy. (Minnesota, 2).”

“I used to make twenty dollars an hour. Now, I don’t carry a GM card - I carry my bridge card. (Michigan, 12)”

“The results of the Great Recession, which began in 2007 and officially ended in 2009, brought more families who had been living on the periphery into full-fledged poverty (Arkansas, 6).”

“The Land of Opportunity does not exist for a vast majority of low income families. All too often even those families with two working parents do not earn enough to get ahead (Vermont, 2)”

“There are no jobs, we are not allowed to take college classes, and there is no training available that has a job at the end (Michigan, 12).”

Lack of access to education or low educational attainment, and family structure are equally represented as causes of poverty by state initiatives. States describe both of these causal stories similarly in that they are identified as mutually reinforcing causes and conditions.

“Children in single-parent families are also more than eight times as likely to grow up in “chronic” poverty, which has even deeper and longer-lasting effects on children. Two thirds of the children living in poverty live in single-parent households (Arkansas, 12).”

“There are many reasons why families are living in poverty. Many low income parents grew up in poverty themselves. Some slip from a middle class life because of job loss, divorce or separation, or leaving an abusive relationship. Many others lost what they had due to addictions from alcohol, drugs, or gambling. Still others are children raising children. Each of these factors then complicates a family’s ability to succeed in the workforce, get an education, or take advantage of training programs. These factors make it more likely that children in these families will also struggle to succeed (Vermont, 4).”

System complexity was identified as a separate causal story/ cause. Members of state poverty initiatives and persons testifying were specifically passionate about system complexity or difficulty accessing help as an explanation for disconnection from services and being stuck in poverty. These stories seem different from those in the code family of deterioration of the public safety net. These causal stories are also the most direct in regard to addressing deservingness; evidenced by participants describing a sense of isolation or exclusion, which includes forcing people through numerous barriers or tests before accessing help. For example, a participant in Michigan exclaims “Do we need a [sic] lawyers or personal advocates to help navigate the system (Michigan, 13)?” Also in Michigan, the state initiative identifies over-regulation and system complexity as distracting from providing help that is needed and contributing to a causal story related to poverty.

“...eligibility and other requirements - particularly the more restrictive regulations - are confusing, difficult to meet, contradictory, and/or poorly explained. Rather than responding to individual and community needs, service delivery increasingly responds to complicated and restrictive regulations (Michigan, 14).”

Exposure to crime was identified as a causal story related to poverty three times throughout the nine state initiative reports under analysis for this section. Two of the incidences

relate to a subtheme of domestic violence while the third conveys a causal story regarding the intersectionality of race, incarceration and poverty.

There are only two incidences of a causal story related to welfare dependence with Alabama's example coming directly from public testimony from a person in poverty. *"To be totally honest, I have checked into things like food stamps, section 8, etc....but...I see so many individuals who get on assistance and become stagnant. It is not because they want to be stagnant, it is just that the government assistance enables them to just stay where they are (Alabama, 27)."* Louisiana also makes note of welfare dependence but the report creates some rhetorical distance between the state initiative and this causal story. *"Some writers even point to the structure of the American welfare system as a type of quicksand in which families can easily become trapped (Louisiana, 17, emphasis added)."* Intriguingly, Louisiana's report also references *"A history of public corruption, and until recently, a tolerance for such"* (Louisiana, 19)" as an explicit explanation for poverty in that state. There is no further reference to public corruption in the report.

Narratives related to deservingness: Recommendations by target group

In general, the target of any intervention reveals that they are central to the causal story; especially to the concept of deservingness. For example, recommendations to regulate or monitor targeted groups indicate a lower level of deservingness while recommendations to help or include a target group indicates a narrative orientation toward greater deservingness. Examining state recommendations based on the identity of persons or groups targeted by proposed interventions reveals interesting information, both according to who is targeted and according to who is not.

Children and families. Associated with 125 recommendations, the most frequent target of interventions is families. Most safety net programs are targeted to families as well, so this is not a surprising finding. Adding all the children's categories together results in 108

recommendations that target children, similarly unsurprising since children are generally perceived as deserving help. Usually younger children are featured as symbols of deservingness; several states featured young children on their report covers, so it is somewhat unexpected that more recommendations target older youth. However, there are some much more confounding disconnects within this subgroup of recommendations. Even while family structure, especially single-parent families, was included in state reports in regard to identifying causes of poverty, there are no recommendations related to promoting marriage, although some do address supporting healthy marriages. This is especially interesting given that promoting marriage is one of the four goals of TANF (Lawrence, 2007). Instead, recommendations focus on helping families connect to services, to jobs, and to each other. While the absence of recommendations aimed at regulating single mothers may be promising, there are also no interventions specifically targeted to help these mothers.

Sex. In fact, there only three gender-specific recommendations: to decrease teen pregnancy, improve birth outcomes, and support fatherhood programs, even though almost half (78 of 160) of all members of state initiative bodies were women.

Race. Similarly, there is a disconnection between poverty narratives and targets of state recommendations related to race, but there is no identification of state initiative members by racial or ethnic identity. Louisiana provides a potentially helpful example of this disconnection, articulating a clear connection between poverty, sexism and racism, “*Social structuralist factors include limited employment benefits, lack of access to health care or education, low wages, globalization of jobs that result in loss of employment for Americans, and historical realities of racism and sexism* (Louisiana, 19);” but making no recommendations targeting women or people of color.

Age/ older adults. Finally, another significant group missing from recommendations are elderly persons. No recommendations targets the aging population directly. In regard to the four state initiatives which were formed with the specific purpose of reducing child poverty, this result may be unsurprising, but is no help in identifying why recommendations targeting older people are not addressed by the remaining seven states.

Geography. Rural targets (14) and urban targets (18) are fairly equal compared to the range of other factors. However, it is intriguing that seven of the eleven states target either rural or urban areas.

Businesses. The most polarized distribution is related to businesses; with Minnesota accounting for almost half (16 of 38) of all recommendations with businesses as the target. Minnesota identified a number of recommendations related to regulating financial services and protecting consumers, and specified interventions to increase employment for formerly incarcerated persons; these were described earlier. At least in regard to this one state, the narrative related to government having a role to play in addressing poverty extends to targeting private sector businesses. Table 3 displays recommendations by target group by state.

Table 3. Target Group of Recommendations by State

	AL	AR	CO	CT	DE	IL	KY	LA	MI	MN	VT	Totals:
Business	2	8	0	0	6	0	0	0	4	16	2	38
Communities	0	2	0	3	6	2	2	0	14	9	5	43
Early Childhood	2	1	0	2	7	2	4	6	5	5	4	38
Families	0	3	3	10	12	14	10	15	20	20	18	125
Minorities	0	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	0	1	10
Older Children/Youth	0	2	0	5	2	4	5	3	9	10	5	45
Rural	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	5	3	14
School-Age Children	0	3	0	2	1	1	5	2	4	3	4	25
Single Adults	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	8	1	14
Specific Gender	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Urban	2	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	5	2	18
Total	6	27	3	24	39	26	29	27	66	81	45	373

Narratives Related to Federalism

Specific federal programs and policies. Awareness of the states' roles in relation to the federal government is a critical measure of the agency component of consent. In order to analyze the degree to which state initiative bodies acted from an awareness of shared responsibility for poverty programs and policies, each reference states made to a federal policy area was coded. These codes were generated in one of three ways: direct reference to a policy or program area as jointly administered, reference to a federal policy or program by name, or inferential evidence of a federal policy or program. For example, in some instances state initiatives might discuss "cash assistance to families" rather than name the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program, the block grant that supports it or the authorizing legislation and regulatory policy that governs this area. In this case, contextual clues were used to ensure that the state initiative member or testifier was not referencing some other program solely administered by the state or any other

jurisdiction. While this characterization of cash assistance was fairly clear, and the most common non-specific identification of shared responsibility, other instances required more evidence gathering to build confidence in the attribution. This evidence gathering included a search of that state's document for any other uses of the term or descriptive phrases. When found, these other linkages confirmed the coding and the subject quote was added to the appropriate code family. These code families were then organized as a super code family called "FedPolicy." When connections could not be established, the subject quotes were either left as stand-alone codes or assigned to the family "FedPolicy: Unknown." These were included for analysis of how often state's explicitly addressed a federal role but were not counted in any other manner such as assigning frequencies of particular federal policy references by state. Every specific reference to a federal or jointly administered program, regulation or policy was coded separately whether or not state initiative reports contained any further discussion around these. There is some divergence between and/or clustering among states related to the frequency of including specific federal policies in their discussions. In terms of non-duplicated counts, the largest subgroup of states made very little reference to federal policy, making only two or three references. This group includes: Alabama, Colorado, Illinois, and Louisiana. Three states (Arkansas, Delaware, and Vermont) made between six and ten references to specific federal policies in their reports, while the remaining four states (Connecticut, Kentucky, Michigan and Minnesota) made 18-20 references. This preliminary clustering of states will be used as a starting point in comparing state initiatives level of partnership with the federal government.

Sorting by policy frequency across states reveals an unsurprising pattern. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid are each mentioned by eight states, followed closely by Head Start with seven

references, Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) mentioned by six states. Several federal partners were referenced by five states: Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS), American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Special Needs Housing. Four states included: Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI), Low Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Three states discussed federal funding for foster care services (Child Welfare/ Title IV-E), and two states addressed the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program. Several other federal policies were noted by only one state. In Kentucky, for example, where a representative from the Veteran's Administration participated in the state initiative, four specific veteran's programs were noted: the Veterans Supported Housing, Homeless Veterans Reintegration, Veterans Compensation and Pension Service, and Incarcerated Veteran Transition programs. Kentucky references the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) Small Dollar Loan pilot program, and Delaware discusses the Partnerships for Success pilot program administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Narratives related to devolution: Policies targeted by state recommendations. If states accept the hand-off of responsibility for crafting policy solutions related to poverty that was relinquished by the federal government, their recommendations should reflect broad themes. This concept is central to understanding these states as high agency states; understanding the broad parameters of their discretion and acting accordingly. Examining recommendations by policy area should reveal a wider range of policies than those related to implementing federal mandates.

After welfare reforms of 1996, as described in Chapter One, work supports were defined as cash assistance, child care, and transportation. State TANF administrative agencies were required to ascertain that child care and transportation are available or that the state has provided some relief to those barriers before establishing work requirements related to TANF. Because of this background, transportation was separated out of the work supports category to highlight the absence of state focus in this area. There were eleven recommendations specific to transportation; taking out those made by Minnesota leaves only two. The only policy area less likely to have recommendations associated with it is energy. While Minnesota made a large number of recommendations, it made none related to energy; somewhat surprising since most (four of seven) recommendations related to energy focus on LIHEAP, which helps people deal with cold weather. Outside of work supports, six of the remaining nine policy areas are the subject of between 30 and 40 recommendations, leaving child welfare (15), transportation (11) and energy (7).

Table 4. Policy Area Recommendations by State

	AL	AR	CO	CT	DE	IL	KY	LA	MI	MN	VT	Totals:
Asset Building	2	1	1	0	7	0	1	0	9	13	1	35
Child Welfare	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	4	3	3	1	15
Education	0	7	0	3	3	2	4	2	4	12	3	40
Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	3	7
Food & Nutrition	0	3	3	3	4	3	2	1	3	6	4	32
Health	0	5	0	1	1	1	5	6	4	7	2	32
Housing	0	0	1	4	2	2	1	0	7	10	7	34
Work Supports	0	3	2	7	8	12	3	6	9	9	12	71
Transportation	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	9	0	11
Workforce Development	1	1	0	1	0	5	0	1	8	14	1	32
Totals:	3	20	7	20	28	25	17	20	52	83	34	309

Narrative related to agency: Recommendations by type of action.

State agency, or the degree to which states perceive they have authority to act without consulting with the federal government, is mainly derived by analyzing the types of actions they purportedly plan to take upon completion of their poverty initiative's work.

State initiatives identified a wide range of actions under their control that they recommend as government interventions under their purview that they framed as likely to impact poverty in their respective states. Table 1 shows the breakdown of all types of actions recommended by states.

Increase access to existing programs. The most frequent type of action recommended by states was to increase access to existing programs. Every state initiative identified this type of action. Within this group, the scope of actions ranged in terms of difficulty from increasing awareness of programs to creating categorical eligibility definitions that would automatically enroll eligible targets into programs. States also proposed easing the process by which potentially eligible persons apply for programs, including automating the application process, enlisting the help of navigators within communities, reaching out to underserved communities, and ensuring cultural competency among workers charged with assisting people to access existing programs.

Expand program eligibility. The second most frequent type of action recommended by state initiatives is to expand existing program eligibility. These recommendations require a greater level of agency on the part of states since changing eligibility for programs usually requires an extensive process, often including legislative or executive office action. The most common type of eligibility expansion proposed by states was to expand Medicaid eligibility to cover a broader range of low-income families, followed by eliminating asset test related to SNAP eligibility to increase the number of families who can maintain their participation in this

program. Different eligibility changes for child care assistance were proposed included eliminating all co-pay requirements and staggering income eligibility to decrease the “benefit cliff” effect on families as they increase earnings from work. Other recommendations in this area include extending the age of eligibility for foster care to age 21, increase eligibility for financial aid for non-traditional students, and expanding eligibility to the state’s EITC.

Improve administration of programs. Some form of administrative action was recommended by all states, the most frequent subcategory being the recommendation to use some form of results-based accountability to evaluate the effectiveness of programs related to poverty. Other actions in this area included similar elements related to accountability such as linking poverty impact assessments and health impact assessments to all policies, requiring transportation plans be included in program planning, and adopting new poverty measures . States also recommended convening state agency directors to improve coordination between programs and integrating data systems to provide more reliable information about program participation and assist with aligning eligibility across programs.

Reform tax structure. Tax reform was the fourth most frequent type of action recommended by states. Almost half (32) of the 65 incidences of tax reform is accounted for by recommendations to increase existing state EITC or create a state EITC. Ensuring that tax incentives for businesses are linked to jobs, and revising the tax structure to increase fairness are the next most frequent recommended tax reforms, each appearing six times. Interestingly, the only recommendation related to reducing taxes is a recommendation to reduce the sales tax because of its impact on purchasing power of low-income families.

Create a new program or policy. Nine states recommend creating a new program or policy; the most common types of new programs being transitional employment programs and

financial literacy programs. Both of these comport with the economic crisis at that time. While only mentioned by one state, the release of ARRA funds was pending concurrent with the work of these initiatives, which included significant encouragement to states to create transitional employment programs. Other new programs recommended included creating process for no-fee banking accounts accessible by low-income families, several programs related to assisting formerly incarcerated persons access housing and jobs, and some new programs related to sustainable energy. Illinois proposed starting a general assistance program for single adults to guarantee an income for this group at 50% of the federal poverty level.

Engage state partners in poverty work. Seven states recommend actions related to engaging partners, with partners ranging from the general public, communities at large and individuals living in poverty. Creating new ways for the public and private sectors to work together to address poverty is the most frequent among this group of recommendations, accounting for 14 of the 58 references to this type of recommendation. States also recommended partnering with the business community to accomplish tasks such as create food markets in underserved areas, to encourage employers to create savings accounts or individual development accounts for their employees. States also recommended partnering with the business community to accomplish tasks such as create food markets in underserved areas, to encourage employers to create savings accounts or individual development accounts for their employees.

Engage federal partners in poverty work. Notably, ten of the recommendations regarding engaging partners relate to the federal government. Five of these ten involve working with the federal government and local partners to bridge differences between programs to increase accessibility and effectiveness. Four recommendations revolve around working with the federal government to increase funding. Minnesota specifically recommends strengthening the

state-federal partnership: “*Develop a federal and state partnership to restore work as a means out of poverty* (Minnesota, 3).”

Reform workforce development system. Reforms to the workforce development system are the most frequent type within the group of recommendations requiring state action, accounting for thirteen of 53 recommendations in this area. States highlighted disconnections between program activities and access to jobs for low-income persons and the need to update the system in keeping with the changing nature of jobs available. States recommended that this system work more closely with employers, develop short-term trainings directly connected to jobs, and improve accountability systems. Several states appeared to have undergone a review of their workforce development system either before or during the poverty initiative’s lifespan, mentioning that the state should implement the recommendations generated by this process but not documenting specific details.

Corrections system reform. Corrections reforms were the next most common, followed by education reform. States recommended reducing incarceration through establishing specialty courts or through other means and providing more supports for formerly incarcerated persons reintegrating into communities. School reforms centered on improving learning and ensuring that low-income students were accessing services via funds intended for them, although only Minnesota specifically mentions the federal funding source dedicated to addressing the achievement gap of low-income students (Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) funding directly.

Increase funding for poverty programs. Recommendations related to increasing funding were widely distributed. No single recommendation in this area is cited more than five times; that being the recommendation to increase state EITC amounts. Four recommendations related

to some increase in funding to a housing program. Beyond these two areas, states recommended a number of small funding increases for a range of programs from scholarships for quality early childhood programs to small grants to communities to sponsor building informal networks of support.

Further study related to poverty. The category of further study includes a number of recommendations that states included related to researching what other states have done in addressing poverty, and searching for best practices in particular policy areas. Except for the use of the poverty measure itself, there are no recommendations in this area related to accessing information collected by the federal government or using any of the technical assistance programs available to states.

Improve customer service. The preponderance (12) of customer service recommendations came from Michigan, where this topic was a prominent feature of the poverty initiative's work. Within the report, members of the initiative describe being dismayed by the stories they heard during public testimony regarding how people were treated. *"The Commission members were deeply affected by what they heard at the Poverty Forums, and the stories told there have fundamentally impacted their every subsequent decision (Michigan, 13)."* Michigan also articulated Schram's Economic-Therapeutic-Management frame and its relationship to deservingness quite specifically. *"Negative, blaming or overwhelmed systems and/or caseworkers often lead to clients feeling judged and shamed. The inability to provide personalized customer service only compounds the challenges faced by people who are seeking help. Further, employees who are overextended by regulatory requirements, high caseloads and inappropriate performance measures simply cannot provide quality help (Michigan, 14)."*

Improve regulation and enforcement. Recommendations related to regulation and enforcement provide useful clues about the narrative frames resonant with state poverty initiatives. ***Every instance of increased regulation recommended relates to protecting people in poverty.*** There are no regulations or enforcement schemes proposed that address making sure people in poverty are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Recommended actions include enforcing laws against predatory lending and protecting consumers from financial exploitation. Other areas include ensuring housing codes are enforced to protect renters and requiring public utility companies to meet their obligations to provide energy efficiency programs. In light of the durability of narrative frames related to deservingness and increased monitoring of program participants, this absence of focus on regulating poor people is impressive. Table 5 describes all the types of recommendations and their frequencies by state.

Table 5. Type of Recommended Action by State

	AL	AR	CO	CT	DE	IL	KY	LA	MI	MN	VT	Totals:
Administrative Changes	1	10	5	2	13	1	2	5	17	15	6	77
Customer Service Improvement	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	11	4	1	20
Engage Partners	0	3	4	1	3	0	0	0	19	17	11	58
Expand Existing Program	2	6	1	6	12	6	1	11	13	21	16	95
Eligibility												
Further Study	1	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	2	7	5	21
Increase Access to Existing Program	6	15	6	16	16	12	10	17	22	23	16	159
Increase Funding	0	4	0	0	3	3	1	3	3	7	6	30
New Program or Policy	1	3	0	0	10	4	2	1	15	22	3	61
Regulation & Enforcement	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	7	1	15
System Reform	1	7	4	1	7	4	1	3	11	8	6	53
Tax Reform	4	25	2	4	8	4	3	6	1	6	2	65
Totals:	17	76	25	30	81	34	20	46	115	137	73	654

Grouping by Level of State Agency.

Preliminary identification of states according to agency in state initiatives revealed a potentially promising stability within sets. First, there must be a polarity in the distribution among such a small sample before considering a grouping process. States did seem to sort according to extreme differences between the highest and lowest range on three categories.

Using content analysis and other tools in Atlas.ti scientific software, every instance of any state within the sample making a reference to a federal program, policy or partner was including to create a set of 374 separate references. Reconnecting these to their source documents, and

therefore their states of origin, resulted in a differentiation between the state with the highest number of references (MI) and the lowest number of references (AL) with a range of 103. If all states were equal, each state would have an average of 34, making the range for this element more than three times what would be expected for an equal distribution. Based on this promising development, states were sorted into preliminary groups. Next, state agency was characterized by analysis of recommendations made by states. Of 581 recommendations, states had a range of 108 to 15; a range almost twice the size of an equal distribution. Lastly, states were grouped according the level of agency they expressed directly in relation to the federal government. Only three of the eleven states' group designation changed after this process. Michigan and Minnesota were consistently in the high agency group, while Alabama, Colorado, Illinois and Louisiana were consistently in the low agency group. While this grouping is not strong enough to form the basis of typology; these assignments with included to continue to develop ideas about these groups.

Table 6. Preliminary Groupings of States by Agency

	Group By FedPolicy	Group by Rec	Group by FedPartnership
AL	Low	Low	Low
AR	Mid	Mid	Low
CO	Low	Low	Low
CT	High	Mid	Mid
DE	Mid	Mid	Mid
IL	Low	Low	Low
KY	High	Low	Low
LA	Low	Low	Low
MI	High	High	High
MN	High	High	High
VT	Mid	Mid	High

Comparing states based on Schram's model

As described in Chapter Three, these states with high agency will be compared according to factors identified by Sanford Schram in *Praxis for the Poor* (2002). Schram conducts quantitative modeling of states to isolate predictive factors related to adoption of options opened to states as part of the devolution of responsibility for welfare program implementation subsequent to 1996 welfare reforms. In this work, his independent variables related to the adoption of stronger or more punitive policy options. Schram found the following factors to be predictive: percent African American among state welfare recipient population, percent Latino among state welfare recipient population, caseload to population ratio, unmarried birth rate, government political ideology (p.151).

Additionally, Schram devotes much of the following chapter in *Praxis for the Poor* proposing how myths about the poor and poverty influence the differential adoption of punitive welfare options, especially related to race, aligning this discussion to earlier findings of research done in partnership with Joe Soss that defined these stories about poverty as an aspect of the narrative of deservingness. Since the states in the current study evidence high agency and deservingness, the expectation is that these states will be similar in terms of these factors. If this research included independent quantitative analysis, the expectation would be that the probability scores for these states on those factors would mirror rather than replicate the scores of punitive states. This research simply compares states based on their standing in regard to these predictive factors as a way of examining the potential for the PovFed model.

In order to match secondary data sources to Schram's secondary sources, the sources and measures he describes in the Appendix are used as a guide. Table 7 includes information on

Schram's sources and how they were matched for the purposes of the current study. These sources are described in more depth later in this section.

Table 7. Secondary Sources Aligned with Schram's Factors

Schram Factor	Source Used	Source for Current Study	Notes/
Government ideology	BRFH model from Berry, Ringquist, Fording & Hanson, (1998)	Ens & Koch (2013)	Challenges to the use of BRFH and recommendation from Berry (2012) to use of Ens & Koch (2013)
Per capita welfare caseload	U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services Annual Report to Congress, 1997.	U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services Welfare Caseload data; TANF databook.	This is the same source without the text of the report to Congress.
Percent of caseload African American	Same	Same	
Percent of caseload Latino	Same	Same	Data definitions have been updated by HHS to include all Hispanic origin in current HHS data.
Unmarried birthrate	U.S. Census Bureau statistical abstract		Specific measures of this group now exist in HHS data.

Grouping states by welfare receipt. Percentage African-American, percentage relative to state population, percentage of Hispanic origin and unmarried birth rates by state. The TANF Datafile for the year 2008-2009 (released in August 2010), was used to identify welfare participation dynamics and the Center for Disease Control VitalStats database (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/VitalStats.htm>) was used to identify the rate of unmarried births in 2008- 2009 fiscal year.

Table 8. Grouping States by Welfare Receipt and Unmarried Birth Rate

	% TANF AA	% TANF Hispanic	% TANF of Population	Unmarried Birth Rate
AL	68.4	1.4	0.4	39.9
AR	47.3	4.3	0.3	44.6
CO	6.6	19.3	0.2	24.9
CT	30.7	37	0.5	36.4
DE	59.3	10.8	0.6	48
IL	59.3	7.2	0.2	40.7
KY	25.8	2	0.5	40.7
LA	77.6	3.5	0.2	53
MI	51.9	7.2	0.6	40.2
MN	34.2	10.4	0.5	33.3
VT	2.2	1.2	0.5	38.8

Grouping states by political mood. State were grouped by political mood according the Enns & Koch (2013) model and sorting into three rough categories anchored around percent liberal leaning: High (70- 100%), Mid (30-70%), and Low (0-30%).

States were assigned an overall poverty ranking and sorted according to level of preliminary level of agency from previous research. There was no discernible grouping of states using this assignation. In order to visualize any possible parameters for group assignation, the poverty rank of states before they formed their poverty initiatives was used, in an attempt to display a broader range of data that might start to pull states apart; resulting in the data represented in Table 9.

Table 9. Overall Grouping of States.

	Agency Overall	% TANF AA	% Hisp.	% of Pop.
AL	1	68.4	1.4	0.4
CO	1	6.6	19.3	0.2
IL	1	59.3	7.2	0.2
KY	1	25.8	2	0.5
LA	1	77.6	3.5	0.2
AR	2	47.3	4.3	0.3
CT	2	30.7	37	0.5
DE	2	59.3	10.8	0.6
MI	3	51.9	7.2	0.6
MN	3	34.2	10.4	0.5
VT	3	2.2	1.2	0.5

Visualizing the data according to Schram’s predictive factors reveals a promising avenue for future research in that high agency states also have the highest welfare participation in this small group of states.

Discussion

There are some alternative explanations for state initiatives that are not related to agency or deservingness. Although very difficult to quantify, some states may not have been exercising agency by forming initiatives, but may have been using this process as one form of within-group communication. This form of communication is especially rich to observe because it likely conveys essential elements of what defines membership status in that group (Quinn, 2005). While this dynamic was impossible to document via only one side of this conversation, there are hints in several reports that the poverty initiative group is aiming its remarks at some entity within their group or within their respective states. For example, as noted above in the analysis of causes identified by state initiatives, Louisiana notes one cause as “*A history of public corruption, and until recently, a tolerance for such*” (Louisiana, 19)” as an explicit explanation for poverty in that state. No other mention of corruption is made in this report. Similarly, Louisiana’s report

begrudgingly acknowledges the welfare dependency narrative frame by couching comments related to this cause of poverty with the term “some people...” Kentucky also shows hints of uncertainty as to the state’s responsibility to address poverty. Each of the recommendations made by this state initiative include some version of “consider” rather than stronger action words. This may be simply an idiosyncrasy of the authors of the report. Connected with other aspects of Kentucky’s report, it may take on more meaning. In Kentucky’s introduction, demographic information about poverty in the state is shared, a pattern similar to every state. However, Kentucky’s report alludes to reasons one might consider the poverty rate information as skewed toward over-representing poverty in that state. The report makes note that the poverty threshold may over-identify Kentuckians because the cost of living is so low in that state, speculating that people in Kentucky could be below the poverty line but still have higher standards of living than similarly situated people in other states. Similarly, the issue of racial disparity is shrugged off. In comments related to a chart of federal poverty data depicting that African Americans in Kentucky are more than twice as likely to be poor (34% vs. 16%), the initiative report simply says that “minorities seem to be more likely” to be poor (Kentucky, 2-4). These comments are not noted to indict Kentucky; but they do seem significant in terms of this study. There may be several shared schema that explain these dynamics, but this author favors either that these comments are evidence of within-group communication, or evidence of a lack of agency.

States that formed poverty initiatives do exhibit a great deal of agency as expressed by consent, discretion and specificity. According to Handler & Hasenfeld (2007), a high level of action among subsidiary actors likely indicates a level of resolution (consent) regarding the parties. In this regard, state poverty initiatives certainly reflect this narrative frame related to

federalism in that they did a significant amount of work to engage the public and craft their recommendations, and made an impressive array of hundreds of recommendations, almost all of which involve actions the state would implement. These findings support a high level of specificity. Evidence of shared sovereignty or the use of discretion in relation to federal policy is mixed. States did make broad recommendations reflecting their use of discretion in keeping with the concept of devolution, but make very limited claims on their relationship with the federal government. In terms of recommendations directly related to partnering with the federal government, states talk about the federal government in a fairly distant manner. Only one state specifically names a federal partner with whom they would work on issues related to poverty. In the evidence gathering process, data from federal sources were used but no state accessed any component of technical assistance or referenced any federal sources that document opportunities for states to partner with the federal government

State with poverty initiatives do engage broad narratives related to poverty. States identified causes and made recommendations accordant with the narrative frame that access to basic needs is a precursor to full civic participation and that poverty reduction is an important component of economic strength. Economic causes were most frequently cited by states, with all states making some statements related to this causal explanation for poverty. There were only two references to the narrative frame related to welfare dependence, and these were somewhat weak, but there was certainly a great deal of emphasis on work. So, there is strong support evidence of resonance with the narrative frame related to poverty as a societal and economic issue, rather than resulting from personal deficits. There is little evidence that states identify negatively with narratives related to deservingness in what they explicitly say in their reports. For example, there is no recommendation by any state to further restrict access to assistance

based on the narrative that people are accessing help that they don't actually need or deserve. However, there is also very little evidence that states are interested in undoing retrenchment of welfare that hinges on this narrative. While two states include discussion of how their state might take advantage of economic recovery funds announced to states during the time they were implementing the work of their poverty initiatives, no state recommends recovering assistance funding for people who lost this assistance in the previous decade. For example, no state recommends waiving time limits due to economic crisis; an action available to states at that time. No state recommended reinstating persons who were sanctioned in the past, and only one state proposes specifically offering cash assistance to single adults; a group that is often in the category of undeserving of help. One state does propose a number of actions specifically targeted to help formerly incarcerated persons. States apparently hold conflicting narratives regarding who is poor and what government should do to help. In fact, while several states include a discussion of disparate risk of poverty for African Americans in the introductory sections of their reports, no state make a specific recommendation targeted to reduce this risk. Similarly, women and especially single mother with young children are noted to be extraordinarily likely to experience poverty; but not state makes a specific recommendation to address this issue. No state proposes lifting requirements that single mothers with very young children participate in work. This finding may be explained by states initiatives being composed of members with very specific subsystem knowledge. In this case, it could be that the complexity of following exhaustive federal regulations is so encompassing that little rhetorical space is left to generate new ideas.

While states clearly reveal a consensus regarding poverty as an important economic issue that government should address, other narrative frames are murky; indicating that apparently

contradictory causal stories are held concurrently. This hypothesis seems supported in that, while some contradict, states do engage broad narratives related to poverty.

However, it is not as clear that states engage these broader narrative frames *rather than* maintain a strict focus on welfare implementation. Introducing additional accountability, in the form of results-based accountability structures or other forms of administrative review, was a recurrent theme among states; accounting for most (10 of 15) recommendations in this area. While states address the need for data reform to integrate the complex system of data collected to monitor programs related to poverty, no recommendation is made to limit the amount of data collected nor advocate for lightening the burden of monitoring. Consistent with other findings, states apparently identify with the apparently conflicting narratives of broad focus on poverty and increased monitoring of welfare implementation.

Even though there is evidence that state poverty initiatives do not propose working with federal partners to change major aspects of poverty-related programs, states created a vast array of recommendations that are apparently actionable via independent state action. On balance, there is a preponderance of evidence that states identify with a high level of autonomy in keeping with a devolution rather than hollow state orientation. Several states established strict targets to reduce poverty within ten years by half; evidencing a strong resonance with increased state autonomy. In light of this evidence, states in this sample do exhibit increased autonomy in the area of poverty reduction; supporting the concept of devolution.

Findings of interest not addressed by the PovFed model

There are some alternative explanations for state initiatives that are not related to agency or deservingness. Although very difficult to quantify, some states may not have been exercising agency by forming initiatives, but may have been using this process as one form of within-group

communication. This form of communication is especially rich to observe because it likely conveys essential elements of what defines membership status in that group (Quinn, 2005). While this dynamic was impossible to document via only one side of this conversation, there are hints in several reports that the poverty initiative group is aiming its remarks at some entity within their group or within their respective states. For example, as noted above in the analysis of causes identified by state initiatives, Louisiana notes one cause as “*A history of public corruption, and until recently, a tolerance for such*” (Louisiana, 19)” as an explicit explanation for poverty in that state. No other mention of corruption is made in this report. Similarly, Louisiana’s report begrudgingly acknowledges the welfare dependency narrative frame by couching comments related to this cause of poverty with the term “some people...” Kentucky also shows hints of uncertainty as to the state’s responsibility to address poverty. Each of the recommendations made by this state initiative include some version of “consider” rather than stronger action words. This may be simply an idiosyncrasy of the authors of the report. Connected with other aspects of Kentucky’s report, it may take on more meaning. In Kentucky’s introduction, demographic information about poverty in the state is shared, a pattern similar to every state. However, Kentucky’s report alludes to reasons one might consider the poverty rate information as skewed toward over-representing poverty in that state. The report makes note that the poverty threshold may over-identify Kentuckians because the cost of living is so low in that state, speculating that people in Kentucky could be below the poverty line but still have higher standards of living than similarly situated people in other states. Similarly, the issue of racial disparity is shrugged off. In comments related to a chart of federal poverty data depicting that African Americans in Kentucky are more than twice as likely to be poor (34% vs. 16%), the initiative report simply says that “minorities seem to be more likely” to be poor (Kentucky, 2-4). These comments are

not noted to indict Kentucky; but they do seem significant in terms of this study. There may be several shared schema that explain these dynamics, but this author favors either that these comments are evidence of within-group communication, or evidence of a lack of agency.

In analyzing state reports over time, it became clear that key participants were likely using the initiative process as some sort of communication with each other or another unidentified party. Understanding the likelihood that hidden agendas or communication below the surface of formal activity plays a role in engaging partners to move forward can empower social workers and public administrators to attend to these dynamics more thoughtfully. As noted in Chapter One, social workers are especially suited to integrate group dynamics and interpersonal dynamics within their role as leaders or participants in collaborative policymaking groups. It is also clear that, once state initiative groups convened, they were amenable to expanding the type of testimony they heard and the scope of their work. This dynamic, common to group formation in general, highlights the potential of social workers and public administrators serving as conveners from the beginning of collaborative processes.

One interesting finding regarding participation is the absence of faith-based groups within governing bodies. This may explain the lack of recommendations around strengthening TANF goals regarding marriage promotion or reducing out-of-wedlock births. However, these may also be explained by the change in political leadership as these goals were highlighted during the Bush administrations but not a focus of the Obama administration.

State poverty initiatives reports also reveal an influential role for social workers in that invited or public testimony to the governing bodies of these initiatives had significant impact. In the case of Michigan, commission members expressed such a high level of impact from this testimony that it resulted in governing the structure of "...every subsequent decision...

(Michigan 12).” Social workers could focus more attention on this type of opportunity to exert influence. Similarly, facilitating the participation of vulnerable persons in this sort of public information gathering could be both empowering and impactful. Conversely, the absence of testimony from advocates for seniors may have contributed to the lack of focus on this group among state initiatives. It is critically important that social workers ensure inclusiveness. Great care should be taken to identify groups underrepresented in any policymaking process.

Finally, analysis of state reports confirm that there is much work to be done to increase awareness of sexism and racism as current constructs. It is disturbing that no state explicitly acknowledged a role in combating these issues as part of an overall plan to reduce poverty. Social workers need to continue to expand their leadership role to reverse the invisibility of racism and sexism in policymaking. The durability of narrative themes related to regulating the lives of women and all African Americans, noted in Chapter One, should compel social workers to continue to redouble efforts to align with poor single mothers and especially poor single mothers of color.

Implications for research and practice

Social workers and other advocates can use the PovFed model as way to estimate the interaction of federalism and poverty themes to identify opportunities for moving policy in favorable directions. For example, understanding that a state is a high agency/low deserving state suggests that focusing energy on conscientious implementation of federal programs is a promising strategy. Tactics under this strategy could include maximizing access to federal benefits, and focusing on the underpayment error rates for programs such as SNAP and Medicaid. A state with a low agency/ low deserving orientation might be a good place to aggressively pursue local collaborative strategies that either are independent of government or bypass state government to connect local groups with the federal government directly. A state

with a low agency/ high deserving orientation may be a good place to low impact policy solutions that don't include significant administrative burdens, such as low-income tax credits or automatic child savings accounts linked to registering for school. Finally, a state with a high agency/high deserving orientation is singularly situated to advocate for changes in the state-federal partnership that would fill gaps in access to assistance programs, such as eliminating asset tests and prohibitions against assistance for previously incarcerated persons, expanding eligibility to include single adults, and myriad other policy directions that are fundamentally enhanced by an active state partner.

Future research could build on these findings to investigate the degree to which states envision their role in poverty reduction; not only in regard to existing narratives but possibly to surface new constructs. The apparent finding that states identify with conflicting narratives could mean that we simply don't have a grasp on narrative frames resonant with lived experience. Also, more research is needed to understand whether and how states are differentiated into discrete groups and what role, if any, narrative constructs play in this differentiation. A next step in this direction is taken up in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Overview of findings

Rather than following a linear progression, or even a series of competing linear progressions, poverty policy is driven by narrative frames so important that they can feel like who we are rather than stories we share. Meeting the challenge of acknowledging the centrality of narratives is a key to understanding the policy environment. Narrative frames are central to our sense of identity. Often, contradictory frames inhabit the same rhetorical space, and these types of frames related to poverty and federalism are indivisible.

Examining the role of causal stories around poverty and the intersection of these with narrative frames around federalism, reveals that for all our attempts to trace linear paths back and forth across history, there is strong evidence that competing narrative frames continue to have resonance. Two people can read Thomas Paine or James Madison and hear opposite causal stories about how the United States was formed. One person may note that Paine argued in *Agrarian Justice* for aggressive public redistribution of wealth while the other may cite Madison's misgivings about suffrage for non-landowners. There has been a system of shared sovereignty connected with aid to the poor since the Elizabethan Poor Laws when principal groups could have dozens of parishes below them. The frames have been with us since the very beginning and so the principal-agent relationship between federal and state partners is not something that just happened in the 1980s when the Rehnquist Court created the Tenth Amendment "rule" that nearly disintegrated states' rights to relief from federal requirements attached to funding. It is also true that there has been a real retrenchment in welfare programs driven by states exercising their own agency over programs largely funded by the federal

government; and that people are truly suffering as a result. Narrative frames around poverty and defining the state-federal partnership are not only related but interlocked; they are inseparable.

In examining these powerful explanatory mechanisms through analyzing the work of state poverty reduction initiatives, both the consistency and the contradictions that make causal stories so powerful were quite evident. The formation of initiatives aimed at poverty is itself evidence of agency shared by all the states studied. In addition, states showed significant autonomy in identifying a broad range of recommendations for future action. Also in keeping with the concept of consent to a subordinate role, states did not prescribe taking aggressive action to change federal policies they believed were inadequate. In fact, only one state named a person or position within the federal government with whom they would work to implement a specific recommendation, and only one state had any specific plan for how to improve the federal policies about which they were concerned.

While states were similar in terms of narratives related to deservingness, their recommendations for addressing people most affected by poverty were limited. While most states acknowledged that race and gender are overrepresented in poverty; no state made specific recommendations to counter these trends. In fact, the only two recommendations specific to gender were related to teen pregnancy and birth outcomes; both justified as improving outcomes for children rather than explicitly targeted toward helping women. Similarly, there were no specific recommendations to close the racial gap, other than broad ideas about reaching out to minority communities.

The coherence of these states as a group with similar orientations toward agency and deservingness was tested by comparing them on factors that make up Schram's 2002 model. The factors include, percentage of welfare recipients who are African American, the percentage of

welfare recipients who are of Hispanic origin, the rate of births to unmarried mothers, percentage of welfare recipients by total population, and political mood. This typology of states was supported in a limited manner in that states preliminarily identified as high agency from the state initiative study also were highest in percentage of their total population receiving cash assistance.

Strengths of research

The use of reports specifically created by states to address an issue that had been removed from federal policy in favor of state responsibility provides a great opportunity to observe the “hand-off” of responsibility central to the concept of devolution. While significant research has been done on specific policies and their implementation by states, very little is known about how states take autonomous action to address poverty as a broad social problem. This type of study is essential to increasing understanding of the nature of state responsibility in poverty, and may also inform further study on the nature of devolving responsibility in other policy areas.

State initiatives made an impressive array of recommendations, and this helped to counter some of the limitations related to the small purposive sample of eleven states. Both the timeliness of the initiatives and this research project align well with potential opportunities to link growing concerns about income inequality to previous efforts.

The theoretical approach of critical theory was essential in providing the framework within which clues to meaning could be found that would otherwise have gone unnoticed. This theoretical orientation provided a strict disciplinary lens to “listen” faithfully to the subject material. The critical theory lens prompted continually searching for what is missing or whose voice is not being heard. Together with the substantial policy background of the researcher, this

critical orientation allowed for a comparison of what was recommended by states to what could have been recommended by states.

Limitations of research

While the use of state reports provides a singular opportunity to observe how states conceive of their role in relation to poverty, the limited number of states with reports is a limitation. Similarities inherent among states that chose to form initiatives complicated the process of testing the viability of the PovFed model. Similarly, while the policy background of the researcher was instrumental in identifying policy options available to states that were not addressed, the absence of additional coders is also a limitation. Technical tools were extremely helpful to limit the impact of this weakness. These tools identified inconsistencies in coding by word or phrase across all documents, and the Coding Analysis Toolkit site provided access to other qualitative researchers and problem-solving. Inter-rater reliability would strengthen the validity of the findings related to narrative themes. This research provides a foundation for a path forward to develop the model. As this process continues to unfold, other methods should be used to test construct validity and to test the strength of these concepts via empirical means.

In regard to the comparative study using Schram's predictive model to begin a path toward linking content analysis to assignment of agency to states; there were clearly limitations regarding sample size. Even while it was not expected that any correlate relationships would be uncovered, stronger group assignment based on these factors might be more discoverable with a larger sample.

Implications for social work education, practice and research

This research may inform social workers and public administrators attempting to work effectively in complex systems; especially in collaborative advisory groups like the ones formed

to govern state poverty initiatives. For example, it is important to be involved in this type of group as early as possible, in order to serve in a convener role. Understanding the importance of shared narrative can inform how this convener role is exercised by ensuring that the structure and process of the group are conducive to and respectful of these shared stories.

Collaborative groups like the state initiatives are susceptible to invited or public testimony; social workers can play key roles in either of these areas and greatly multiply their level of influence. Even though it can be disheartening because people who are encouraged to speak in a public forum may be disappointed by the pace of the process, it really can have an impact to facilitate vulnerable people having personal conversations with policymakers. Members of state initiatives were clearly affected by hearing directly from people in poverty. This matters not because of a direct or indirect policy outcome that may be linked to this activity but because it is an example of joining, central to inclusiveness and without which there is no collaborative policymaking. Connecting people living in poverty, with each other and others in their community is essential to building stronger commitments to narratives related to deservingness.

In regard to federalism, it is essential that social workers understand the dynamics of the relationship between state and federal partners. It was striking to not find more evidence of that relationship or knowledge about that relationship in the state initiative study. There is a disconnection between state and federal partners that social workers have a role in resolving. Every social work student should have an opportunity to provide public comments on a state plan that governs the state –federal partnership for programs like TANF, Medicaid, SNAP, LIHEAP, Title IV-E, and so many others. One of the original intentions of this process was to provide a regular means by which the public can provide feedback and assist the state in charting

a direction for the program. It is common for these plans to go through all of their stages without a single comment. There are existing mechanisms by which social workers might engage and become essential partners that are underutilized. Ideally, every social work student should provide comments during a public rule making period; ideally in regard to a jointly administered program.

Need for Social Work Leadership

Social workers need to become increasingly comfortable with their role as leaders in identifying ways to use the PovFed model to frame policy options. Using this model can provide insight into ways in which policy ideas can fit within the narrative frame of the group targeted for advocacy efforts; conserving advocacy resources by finding ways into existing narrative structures rather than resisting them. However, over the longer term, social work leaders need to develop strategies for shifting the dominance of narratives so that more states take responsibility for poverty reduction and attitudes toward people struggling with poverty are centered are core values of equality rather than based on polarizing concepts that stigmatize people in poverty. Sherwood (2014) found that social workers are still unsure about taking on leadership roles and don't always conceive of the profession as responsible for generating change on a broad policy level. Subjects in her study were more comfortable leading advocacy efforts for individuals and more likely to identify social work leadership as essential at the organizational level. These ideas of what it means to be a leader and the role of social work as a leadership profession need to continue to evolve. One of the ways this can be encouraged is through expanded ideas related to field education.

Role of Social Work Field Education

Field experiences could also be strengthened by creating more collaborative field placements, both with other schools and other fields. Field education is an excellent opportunity to gain exposure to the policymaking process; and credit should be more flexible so that students can participate in more informal opportunities to gain experience. Placement experiences should include some exposure to identifying and applying narrative frames; providing opportunities to practice listening for causal stories and for aligning communication with them.

All social work placements should include some exposure to macro practice environments so that students can increase their level of comfort working in those areas and practice identifying narrative frames and other cultural aspects. The expansion of access to policy work at various levels could be facilitated by creating opportunities for virtual or remote access/ telecommuting placements. In addition to exposing students to policy work, practitioners could experience increased support from universities and increased access to research and other tools, even as students are learning to use these themselves.

For macro practice concentrations, these types of telecommuting options for exposure to various levels of policy and administration practice could be especially helpful in helping students understand how different layers of administration and governance relate. This would be a very helpful means for social work students to gain competency in working with local, state and federal agencies, and also could be instrumental in expanding the role of social workers as catalysts to increase awareness of intergovernmental relationships and opportunities to leverage these relationships to improve policy and practice. In order to maximize the efficiency effectiveness of these placements; especially at the state, regional and federal levels, schools of social work should consider jointly administered virtual placements so that the over-arching

goals of strengthening practice and the role of social workers as catalysts can be shepherded. Ideally, students would work in teams connected to placements sites according to policy area and networked with other students in other policy areas and within other levels of administration. The goals of these placements should be specific enough that meaningful contributions can be made by the student teams; focused on solving a specific policy problem for example rather than getting general exposure to the work environment. These targeted projects should ideally be negotiated jointly by the schools of social work and field educators connected around leading student teams comprised of students from different schools. The field educator leadership team should remain as stable as possible over time to bridge projects as student groups change, and to continuously develop the recognition of social workers as valuable assets in solving the most intractable policy problems over time.

In terms of curriculum development, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has not identified a set of standards related to advanced macro practice but does support and distribute the standards developed by the Association of Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA), which were released in 2010. These standards align with the CSWE Education Policy & Accreditation Standards (EPAS) core competencies for all accredited social work programs. Below are some specific examples of how narrative analysis and specifically the PovFed model may equip social work students to meet these advanced standards.

EPAS Competency 2.1.1 Identify as a professional social workers and conduct oneself accordingly

Advanced Standards:

- Integrate the legacy of social work macro practice with communities and organizations as demonstrated by *integrating knowledge of historical social work leadership in the development of poverty and federalism.*
- Conduct themselves professionally in their demeanor and communications as demonstrated by *respecting the centrality of narratives related to poverty and federalism to identity and respecting these in all contacts....*
- Effectively use personal reflection, self-correction, supervision and consultation to enhance their professional practice as demonstrated by *being cognizant of narratives related to poverty and federalism that form a key component of personal identity and being open to how these factors influence all aspects of work....*

EPAS Competency 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice

Advanced Standards

- Apply ethical standards and laws for professional social work practice in work with organizations and communities as demonstrated by *recognizing the validity and relevance of diverse narrative orientations related to poverty and federalism in each community of practice....*
- Promote inclusive communities and organizations as demonstrated by *advocating for the acceptance of diverse narrative orientations while finding connections to equitable practice for all persons affected by poverty.*
- Advance effective and efficient social service delivery and access to resources in organizations and communities as demonstrated by *aligning policy ideas and implementation systems for narrative frames related to poverty and federalism....*

- Apply ethical reasoning in promoting human rights and social justice in assessment, intervention and evaluation of organizational and community practice as demonstrated by *demonstrating the connections between narrative frames and constructed ideas related to what is ethical and how these are influenced by inclusiveness...*

EPAS Competency 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

Advanced Standards

- Synthesize multiple frameworks and sources of information to make professional judgments as demonstrated by *using quantitative models and narrative models to create a comprehensive understanding of how policies ideas are interpreted through cultural lenses.*
- Inform and engage diverse constituents in critical community and organizational analysis and problem solving as demonstrated by *leading groups to understand the potential impact of underlying narratives on agency within groups, organizations, states and national governments...*
- Use logic, critical thinking and creativity in written and oral communication with organizations and communities as demonstrated by *using creativity to connect seemingly discordant policy ideas through aligning with deeply held and broad narrative frames...*

EPAS Competency 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice

Advanced Standards

- Utilize strengths of differing life experiences to build inclusive communities and multicultural organizations as demonstrated by *focusing on and advocating for the power of inclusiveness as a determinant in underlying narratives regarding deservingness.*
- Recognize, understand, and communicate the environmental and ethnic constructs that shape realities for different people and groups as demonstrated by *continuously building a repertoire of strategies to advocate for the recognition and the salience of narrative frames and the limitations of orientations regarding federalism and poverty.*
- Engage with and ensure participation of diverse and marginalized community and organizational constituents by identifying and accommodating multilingual and non-literate needs, gender power dynamics, and, access for disabilities in assessing, planning and implementing interventions as demonstrated by *focusing on the determinative power of inclusivity and agency in regard to the adoption or implementation of policy changes....*

EPAS Competency 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice

Advanced Standards

- Advocate for human and civil rights individually and collectively as demonstrated by *advocating for expanding narrative frames related to deservingness by focusing on inclusion....*
- Advance specific principles in national and international professional documents to eliminate social, economic and environmental injustice within communities, organizations, institutions and society as demonstrated by *representing the central*

importance of interactions between poverty and federalism, especially the historical connections between citizenship, poverty and inclusion....

- Demonstrate understanding of indicators that show improved well-being for communities and organizations, and, where possible incorporate evaluative measures of well-being that integrate improvements in social, economic, political and environmental realms, as demonstrated by *continuously developing expertise in all types of indicator measurement, including narrative analysis as a contextual factor in understanding other types of data....*

EPAS Competency 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

Advanced Standards

- Utilize theories of community and organizational behavior in assessment and analysis of macro interventions as demonstrated by *using advanced quantitative models of effects of public programs related to poverty along with maintaining focus on narrative elements of inclusiveness and shared causal stories as drivers of policy adoption....*
- Construct and utilize best practice, evidence-informed research to develop and implement community and organizational interventions as demonstrated by *using collaborative approaches that align tangible goals with group identity dynamics, including narrative frames....*
- Advance research that is participatory and inclusive of the community and organizational constituencies with whom they practice as demonstrated by *conducting and using research that constantly measures the level of inclusiveness as a determinant of deservingness....*

EPAS Competency 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Advanced Standards

- Assess and analyze communities and organizations as social systems with life cycles and roles that sometimes impede and/or degrade, but often maintain well-being as demonstrated by *using changes in group or organizational identity as a signal to re-evaluate shared narratives or causal stories related to service populations, and advocate for strategic advancement of social justice in light of these opportunities. ...*
- Incorporate a broad understanding of cultural and political contexts in planning interventions as demonstrated by *use of complex quantitative models that include measures of political ideology and socio-economic factors along with a recognition of the importance of narrative frames. ...*
- Recommend and evaluate interventions that enhance the connectivity of persons to the communities and organizations that improve their lives as demonstrated by *highlight the primary importance of inclusion and agency and how these interact to create environments for change; ensure that persons affected by interventions are always included in evaluation, and include measures of narrative frames to provide additional context to determine intervention effects and also what they mean to the persons, groups or organizations targeted by the interventions....*

EPAS Competency 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services

Advanced Standards

- Analyze policies from historical, current, and global perspectives with particular understanding of the role of social, economic, and political forces on policy formulation, and the implications for less powerful and oppressed groups as demonstrated by *consistently linking historical analysis and policy research findings to cultural factors related to deservingness (including causal stories and inclusion) and agency (including consent, discretion and specificity)*. ...
- Actively engage in the policy arena on behalf of community and organizational interests, working in collaborative efforts to formulate policies that improve the effectiveness of social services and the well-being of people, especially for the most vulnerable, as demonstrated by *understanding the narrative frameworks of advocacy targets and aligning policy proposals to these in the most effective manner...*

EPAS Competency 2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice

Advanced Standards

- Provide leadership in organizations and communities for effective, ethical interventions that improve the well-being of individuals, families, organizations and communities as demonstrated by *taking the time to understand determinants of narrative frames before planning interventions, and practicing the recognition of key signals of narrative such as causal stories, inclusivity, and metaphor*.
- Apply theoretical frameworks to assess and analyze the task domain of organizations, communities and the constituencies they serve as demonstrated by *using narrative analysis to understand underlying factors that may be influencing*

the degree to which organizations, communities and groups exercise agency and the interactions of these factors with ideas related to deservingness....

- Facilitate and strengthen the development of civic society and grassroots community groups that are most often excluded from community decision making as demonstrated by *actively identifying opportunities to connect inclusion and deservingness to core democratic values and always challenging oneself to use critical lens to identify who is missing....*
- Strategically plan organizational and community change and development relative to improved social, economic, political and environmental well-being as demonstrated by *prioritizing change targets based on viable estimates of narrative frames; focusing on changes that align with these first and maximizing the effectiveness of these approaches while also looking for group composition changes that may signal a shift in these frames; preparing in advance for how policy directions not aligned with a dominant frame can be quickly adopted to exploit such an opportunity....*
- Make use of technological and scientific advancements that contribute to understanding and solving problems affecting organizations and communities as demonstrated by *ensuring access to technical areas of policy and administration by rigorously tracking developments in these areas and looking for signals that new technological, data access, or other methods may become available; do this work regularly and in advance of any changes....*

EPAS Competency 2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Advanced Standards

- Engage with communities, their constituencies, and organizations that serve them to assess and analyze community/organization capacities, strengths, and needs as demonstrated by *adding narrative frames such as causal stories as a component to other assessment and planning projects such as strategic planning, performance management, community assessment processes, and agency accreditations reviews by including focus groups and other methods that provide access to metaphor, repetition and other indicators of narrative frames rather than relying on quantitative data or interpolation of national datasets to gauge local characteristics...*
- Disseminate both positive and ineffective outcomes of evidence-informed interventions to help understand when and why interventions hinder or improve human well-being as demonstrated by *taking advantage of “failure” as a critical opportunity for understanding causal stories by listening to the assignment of blame or lack thereof in relation to different actors...*
- Plan with communities and organizations to apply interventions through a variety of models, methods, strategies, and tactics identified as appropriate to the local, regional, national and international contexts and needs for change as demonstrated by *ensuring a comprehensive understanding of practice models and systematically matching local data to gauge the likelihood these models would be effective in a different setting; including awareness of cultural artifacts such as narrative frames...*

- Demonstrate leadership and skill in human service organizations, in areas such as policy and task analysis, advocacy, governance, planning, program development and program management, financial development/management, supervision, evaluation, human resources and staff development as demonstrated by *consciously developing strengths in these areas and creating a collaborative network to ensure access to other skillsets; create a working environment that prioritizes inclusion and agency by maximizing contact between diverse work groups and maximizing consent, discretion and specificity at every level of staff...*
- Demonstrate leadership and skill in working with communities and community based organizations in areas such as organizing, planning, collaboration, sustainable development and progressive/effective change, measured through self-assessment, field assessment, and curriculum assessment, specifically demonstrated by *scheduling regular reviews based on interactive feedback models that provide feedback to staff from all levels of an organization and from external partners; align effectiveness measures with process measures that include a focus on cultural artifacts and regularly use practices that help surface underlying causal stories such as life or professional narratives and creating collaborative networks to both build professional strengths and ensure access to other skillsets...*
- Use participatory methods to involve community and organizational constituencies in evaluating the effectiveness of interventions in order to recommend future actions as demonstrated by *linking focus groups, interviews,*

narrative analysis of written feedback or other tactics to every stage of implementation; building an expectation of shared learning through every component of an intervention....

Role of Schools of Social Work

Finally, the schools of social work and their universities writ large are enormous assets and have resources by way of experience, awareness and expertise that are profoundly needed in the policy arena. Some structure that could provide a durable connection between social work education and research and the programs that most need their help would be incredibly helpful; but very difficult to create. This structure could mirror federally supported research centers, but does not need to rely on federal discretionary grants to be effective. Leveraging the power of universities is critical to facilitate increased access for individuals and marginalized groups. While the PovFed model may hold some promise for making connections between policy and components of culture; its efficacy will be constrained by the degree to which this access expands. One example of how this might be done is outlined above in the section on jointly administered virtual field placements focused on policy areas; but other opportunities to leverage the power of schools of social work are also viable. Several states' schools of social work have collaborated through Title IV-E child welfare training grants to work with state agencies to improve social work preparation and find efficiencies in training and job fit factors. Opportunities for similar projects can be found in relation to maximizing the impact of other federal fund sources related to poverty programs such as TANF, Title I, CSBG, WIA/ WIOA and CDBG. Schools of social work have significant influence when they work together and leverage their roles as gatekeepers to university resources; including students, research and expertise.

Implications for social work research

In terms of research, understanding the formative role of narratives around poverty and federalism is instrumental to the task of increasing the use of valid evidence in designing policy solutions that work to strengthen citizenship and participation. Future research should continue to find connections between narrative and quantitative models to form a more comprehensive understanding of the policy process. Of particular promise is the work in progress at the Columbia Population Research Center that is just starting to identify poverty changes in time by state using the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM). This work builds on their national analysis using the SPM in 2013. Because the SPM accounts for the impact of state policy choices and economic environment, the potential to organize change over time and link this analysis with various models for grouping states is extraordinary. When this state-level analysis is finished, connecting the pattern of change in poverty over time among states categorized according to a PovFed model will be instrumental in determining the efficacy of this model as a statistical factor. This work will be especially helpful in informing expectations for how future policy directions regarding poverty might be taken up by individual states, and predicting the impact these directions are likely to have in regard to deep divisions based on gender and race. Through expanding awareness of the person-in-environment model to a policy-in-environment model, social work can play a critical role in guiding the continued evolution of poverty and federalism to work toward social justice.

The Future of Federalism

In the review of the evolution of the state-federal partnership related to poverty in Chapter Two, narrative tensions are both enduring and fluid. It seems likely that this dynamic relationship will continue and that these tensions will remain. However, the dominance of

narrative frames related to deservingness can change in tough economic times such as the Great Depression and Great Recession. When this happens, states are also more accepting of federal intervention; so greater state responsibility and more intervention at the federal level can evolve together; how federalism may shift does not fully explain potential impacts on people in poverty because of these interactions. However, there are differences among states in regard to how they exercise greater responsibility. As Schram and others have found, these differences can be predicted based on racial divisions and the inclusiveness of access to welfare programs. If this trend continues uninterrupted, the likely result is increasing polarization between states around poverty dynamics; with extreme differences in assistance amounts and duration, and eligibility factors. These times are opportunities for shifting the level of state agency or responsibility for intervening in poverty, and it is critically important that social work leaders navigate states through this evolution so that the marginalization of most vulnerable people in our country is interrupted and eventually reversed.

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